



# WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC NEWS

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## FROM THE MANAGER

# Co-ops Power Communities With Purpose



Tom Ruth

Communities come in all shapes and sizes. Some are based on geographical proximity, some on shared interests or hobbies, and some can even

be found in virtual spaces like social media groups. Communities can bring people together and create a sense of belonging regardless of where or how they are formed.

Western Cooperative Electric is deeply committed to our members, and we're glad you are part of the electric cooperative community.

This October, more than 30,000 cooperatives across the U.S. are celebrating National Co-op Month. It's a time to reflect on all the aspects that set cooperatives apart from other types of businesses, but more importantly, it's a time to celebrate the power of co-op membership.

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit utilities built by the communities they serve. For Western, our mission has always been to provide you with safe, reliable power. We care about your quality of life, and because we are locally operated, we're uniquely suited to meet our members' evolving energy needs.

Beyond the business of electricity, our employees and directors are equally invested in our local communities.

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*October is National*

**C O - O P M O N T H**

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit, community-led utilities. Because we are a co-op, we can adapt to our local members' needs, providing the programs and services you care about most.

*That's the power of co-op membership.*

# Western Cooperative Electric Powers Community Revitalization With \$5,000 Grant to Ransom VFW

In the heart of western Kansas, a community beacon for veterans and local residents alike, the **RANSOM VFW POST 7972** is receiving a much-needed revitalization thanks to a \$5,000 Sharing Success grant from Western Cooperative Electric. This funding boost is part of a larger effort spearheaded by The Forgotten Stewardship, a veteran-led nonprofit committed to enhancing rural community spaces across the region.

The project, affectionately dubbed “Move and Groove,” aims to breathe new life into the VFW post by upgrading its facilities to better serve its members and the broader community. The updates include replacing ceiling tiles, carpeting, adding footers and applying concrete sealer, among other improvements. These enhancements are crucial not only for the aesthetic and functional uplift of the space but also for ensuring it remains a safe and welcoming environment for the numerous community events it hosts, from weddings to dances.

“Supporting The Forgotten Stewardship’s project at the Ransom VFW Post aligns perfectly with our mission to empower and uplift the communities we serve,” said Nolan Numrich, assistant general manager of Western Cooperative Electric, expressing his enthusiasm for the initiative. “We are proud to assist in preserving a place that holds tremendous significance for our veterans and the Ransom community.”

The involvement of Western Cooperative Electric in this project is a testament to their commitment to community development. The Sharing Success grant, funded in part by CoBank, a national cooperative bank, is designed to match contributions by cooperatives toward nonprofit organizations and charitable causes.

Dylan Nuttle, founder of The Forgotten Stewardship and a United States Marine Corps veteran, shared his vision for the project, highlighting the crucial role of community support in bringing such initiatives to fruition. “We all have to work together,” he noted. “It’s going to be communities that build this back. With Western Cooperative’s generous contribution, we’re set to make significant headway in not only repairing but fundamentally enhancing this beloved



**Western Co-op Assistant General Manager Nolan Numrich (left) presents a \$5,000 grant to Dylan Nuttle, founder of The Forgotten Stewardship, in support of their efforts to upgrade the Ransom VFW facilities.**

local landmark. Community support is vital to our success.”

The Ransom VFW Post has been an all-state post 33 times and serves veterans and military members from active duty, the National Guard, and reserve forces. It’s a vital part of the community, offering a place of camaraderie and support for those who have served their country.

For those interested in supporting the “Move and Groove” operation, donations can be made directly to The Forgotten Stewardship. Contributions will help cover costs not only for the immediate repairs but also for future projects aimed at supporting rural communities and veterans.

As the project moves forward, it’s clear that the impact of such work extends beyond physical renovations. It’s about creating a sustainable environment where the community can gather, support one another, and thrive. Thanks to the support of Western Cooperative Electric and the dedicated efforts of The Forgotten Stewardship, the Ransom VFW Post is set to continue its legacy as a cornerstone of community life in western Kansas.

For more information on how to donate or get involved, please visit The Forgotten Stewardship’s website or contact their office directly. Your support can make a real difference in the lives of our veterans and the vitality of our rural communities.

# A Safe Fall Harvest: Prioritizing Electrical Safety

As farmers across Kansas gear up for a busy harvest season, safety is essential. The long hours and heavy workload can make it easy to overlook hazards, but taking the time to focus on electrical safety is critical, especially when working with large equipment around power lines and electrical systems.

Jay Scott, Western Cooperative Electric safety manager, reminds us, "Harvest season is a crucial time, but if we don't stay mindful of electrical safety, it can be one of the most dangerous. Always be aware of power lines and electrical equipment in the field. It could mean the difference between returning home safely or serious injury."

## ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS FOR FALL HARVEST:

**1 LOOK UP AND AROUND:** Be constantly aware of overhead power lines when moving tall machinery like combines, grain augers, or sprayers. Always maintain a minimum 10-foot clearance between your equipment and the lines.

**2 USE A SPOTTER FOR NAVIGATION:** When working near power lines, particularly in unfamiliar or tight areas, have someone outside the machinery to guide you safely. This

helps prevent accidental contact with electrical wires.

## 3 KNOW WHAT TO DO IF EQUIPMENT CONTACTS A POWER

**LINE:** If your machinery touches a power line, stay inside the cab and call for help. Stepping out can cause electrocution. Only exit the equipment if there's fire, and jump clear, keeping both feet together to avoid becoming a path for electricity.

**4 INSPECT ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS:** Before the busy season begins, ensure all farmstead electrical systems are up to code. Check for frayed cords, exposed wiring, and faulty equipment, which could pose a risk during operation.

**5 USE CAUTION AROUND IRRIGATION SYSTEMS:** Electric-powered irrigation systems are common on many farms. Always turn them off and disconnect power before performing any maintenance to avoid electrical shocks.

"The key to a safe harvest is taking the time to identify hazards and preparation," Scott said. "By being aware of electrical hazards, we can ensure that everyone finishes the season safely."

Following these tips can prevent accidents and ensure a productive, safe fall harvest for all. For more safety tips, visit [www.westerncoop.com](http://www.westerncoop.com) or follow us on Facebook.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you recently made or plan to make energy efficiency improvements to your home, you may be eligible for federal tax credits through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022. Homeowners can save up to \$3,000 annually to lower the cost of efficiency upgrades. Covered upgrades through the IRA include new exterior doors, windows, insulation, heating/cooling equipment and other major appliances. Visit [www.energystar.gov/federal-tax-credits](http://www.energystar.gov/federal-tax-credits) to learn if you qualify. **SOURCE: WWW.ENERGY.GOV**



## LOOK UP Before You Climb

Using a ladder near overhead power lines could cause electrocution.

1. Keep yourself and equipment 10 feet from overhead power lines.
  - ▶ Electricity can arc or jump if a ladder gets too close.
  - ▶ A ladder could make direct contact with the line.
2. Use a ladder during ideal weather conditions.
  - ▶ Rain can make the ground slippery.
  - ▶ Wind could blow a ladder into a power line.
3. Do not trim trees/branches that are near power lines.
  - ▶ It is dangerous to trim near overhead power lines.
  - ▶ By law, only certified line clearance tree trimmers can do so.
4. Do not use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near overhead lines.
  - ▶ All power lines can cause electrocution, including those feeding your home.
  - ▶ Always follow the 10-foot distance rule when working or playing outside.

Follow manufacturer's safety recommendations when using a ladder. Look up before you climb.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFELECTRICITY.ORG



## Co-ops Power Communities With Purpose *Continued from page 12A ▶*

Why? Because we live here, too. That's why we work hard to support local economic development projects, youth programs and scholarships, charitable giving initiatives, and additional programs that make our community a better place to call home.

All co-ops, including Western, are guided by seven cooperative principles that embody the values and spirit of the cooperative movement. These seven principles are a framework to help all co-ops navigate challenges and opportunities while remaining true to our purpose:

**1 OPEN AND VOLUNTARY MEMBERSHIP:** Co-op membership is open to anyone who can use the co-op's services.

**2 DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL:** Members make decisions that shape the cooperative. Why? Because

co-ops are created by the members, for the members.

**3 MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION:** Members contribute money to the co-op to ensure it runs smoothly now and in the future. At Western, this happens when you pay your energy bills.

**4 AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE:** Co-ops are independent and can operate on their own, which ultimately benefits the members.

**5 EDUCATION, TRAINING, AND INFORMATION:** Co-ops continuously focus on education to ensure employees and the board of trustees have the training and information they need to make the co-op successful. At Western, we also provide electric safety training and

demonstrations for our members and communities.

**6 COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES:** Co-ops share with and learn from other cooperatives. We help each other out in times of need because we want other co-ops to thrive.

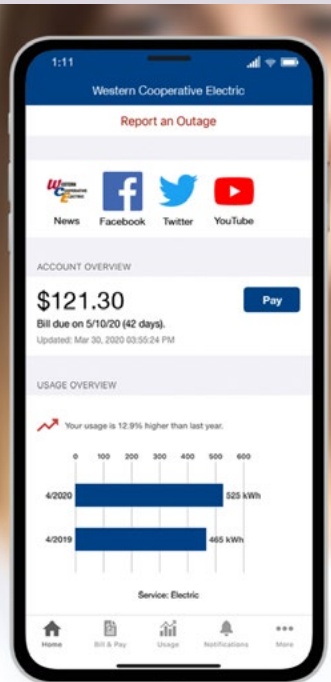
**7 CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY:** All cooperatives work for the greater good of the local communities they serve. Co-ops give back to their communities to help them thrive and grow.

This October, as we celebrate National Co-op Month and the power of membership, we hope you will recognize the many aspects that set electric cooperatives apart. Our mission is reliable power. Our purpose is people — the local communities we're proud to serve.

## SWITCH TO SMARTHUB AND GO PAPERLESS



**CONVENIENCE AT YOUR FINGERTIPS**



[www.westerncoop.smarthub.coop](http://www.westerncoop.smarthub.coop)

With postage costs continuing to rise, now is the perfect time to switch to SmartHub and paperless billing with Western Cooperative Electric. This change not only helps reduce the costs associated with traditional mail but also offers a range of benefits that make managing your account easier and more efficient.

SmartHub provides a user-friendly platform for handling all your account needs. From paying bills and tracking usage to receiving updates, everything is accessible right from your smartphone or computer. This streamlined approach means you can handle your electric account with just a few clicks, saving you time and effort.

By opting for paperless billing, you eliminate the need for paper statements and the associated postage expenses, allowing you to manage your account more cost-effectively.

Make the switch today to enjoy the convenience and efficiency of SmartHub. For more information or to get started, scan the QR code, visit [www.westerncoop.com](http://www.westerncoop.com) or contact our member service team at 785-743-5561.

