

An Equal Opportunity Provider & Employer

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

P.O. Box 278, WaKeeney, KS 67672
800-456-6720

www.westerncoop.com
www.facebook.com/WesternCoopElectric

**WESTERN
COOPERATIVE
ELECTRIC**

**WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC
NEWS**

**Western Cooperative
Electric, Inc.**

Darrin Lynch—General Manager

Board of Trustees

Larry Evans
President

Craig Crossland
Vice President

Richard Schaus
Secretary-Treasurer

Terry Hobbs
Trustee

Frank Joy
Trustee

Melvin Keller
Trustee

Charles Luetters
Trustee

Donald Schultz
Trustee

Dale Weinhold
Trustee

Office Information

635 S. 13th Street
P.O. Box 278
WaKeeney, KS 67672
785-743-5561
FAX: 785-743-2717
www.westerncoop.com

Tip of the Month

Reduce energy for water heating. Take simple steps like lowering your heater's temperature and installing low-flow showerheads to reduce your water heating bills.

Western Launches WCEA program
Round Up Your Bill for a Good Cause!

Effective November 1, 2015, Western Cooperative Electric member-owners are now able to enroll the **WESTERN CARES EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE (WCEA)** program to help other member-owners.

You can choose to round up your bill to the nearest dollar or to designate either a recurring or one-time amount you would like to donate.

Your donations will be put into the Western Cares fund, which will be comprised of contributions from both members and employees. These funds will be administered through the WCEA program committee, who will be working on details as the program develops.

Applications for assistance can be requested by calling 800-456-6720.

You can donate on our website at www.westerncoop.com or complete and return the form at right.

Sign Up to Round Up!

- Yes! I would like to contribute by rounding my bill(s) to the nearest dollar
- I would like to contribute a recurring monthly amount of \$_____.
- I would like to contribute a one-time amount of \$_____.

Member Name _____

Account Number _____

Signature for Authorization _____

Date _____

Return form to: P.O. Box 278, WaKeeney, KS 67672



Happy Thanksgiving!

Western's office will be closed on November 26-27 for Thanksgiving. We hope you have a safe and happy holiday.

Why Western Replaces Electric Utility Poles

Paying attention to the electric utility poles found throughout Western Cooperative Electric's service territory is probably not high on your list, but did you know these tall structures are the backbone of Western's electrical distribution network?

Strong, sturdy poles ensure a reliable electric system, which is why Western's line personnel routinely inspect poles carrying conductors and supporting anchor guy wires. Whether completing line maintenance and repairs or building

new line, Western linemen check poles for decay caused by exposure to the elements. They can identify the age of poles and conduct inspections through a rotational process. Typically, a standard wooden distribution pole is expected to last 30 years, depending on soil conditions, stress, and a host of exposures.

Occasionally, poles need to be replaced for other reasons besides decay and age. Weather disasters, relocations, and accidents involving vehicles and farm implements are potential causes for immediate replacement as well.

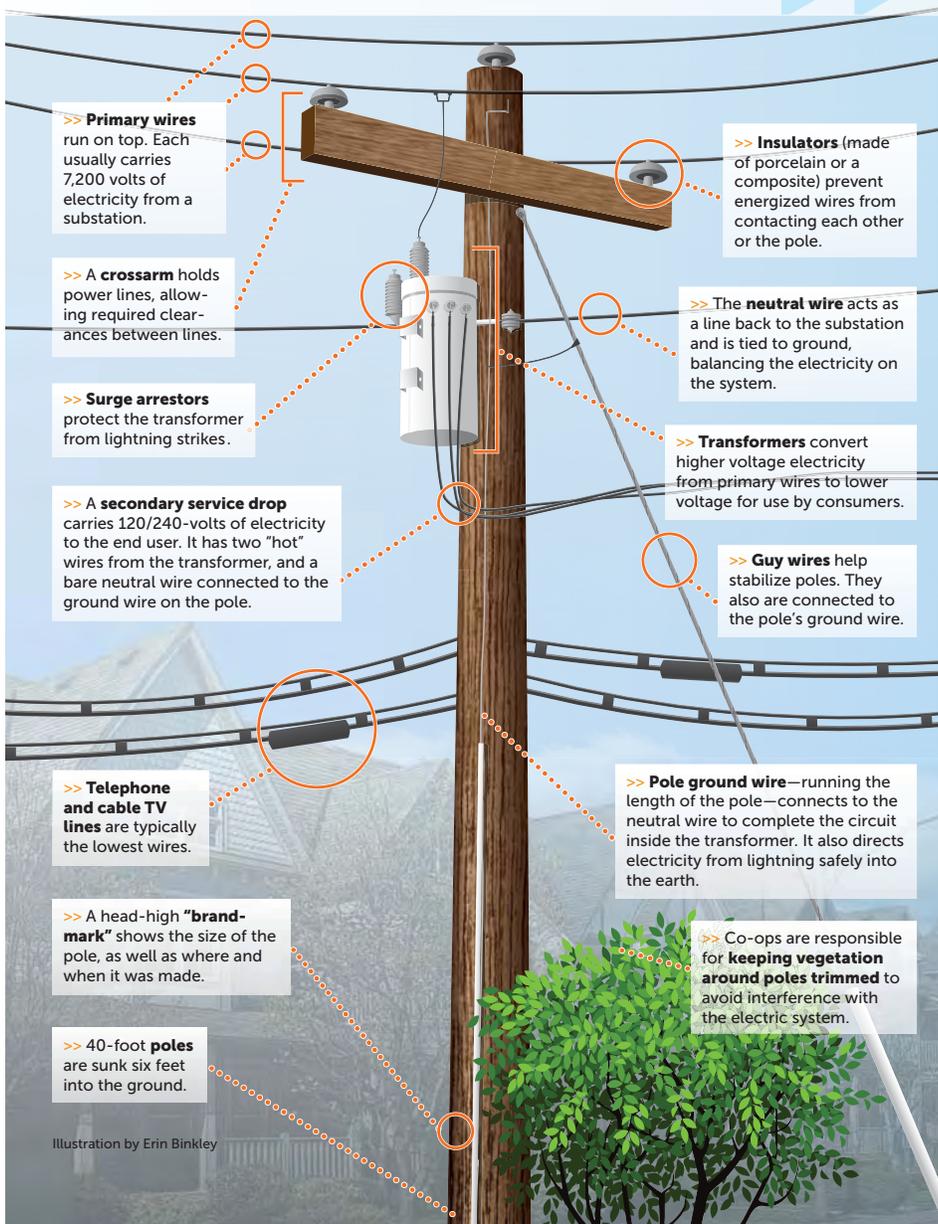
A quick "pole replacement" breakdown:

When a pole needs replaced, Western's crews will start the process by removing the existing conductors from the insulators on the old pole. The conductors are then attached to an insulated arm operated from a bucket truck. After raising these conductors to a safe distance above the pole, which is sometimes energized or "hot", the existing pole is removed. The new hole is dug and the new pole carefully placed, fitted with hardware, a cross arm, insulators, and ground wire. The raised conductors are then lowered into position onto the insulators and secured with pre-formed ties. Many times this process is completed without interruption to your electrical service.

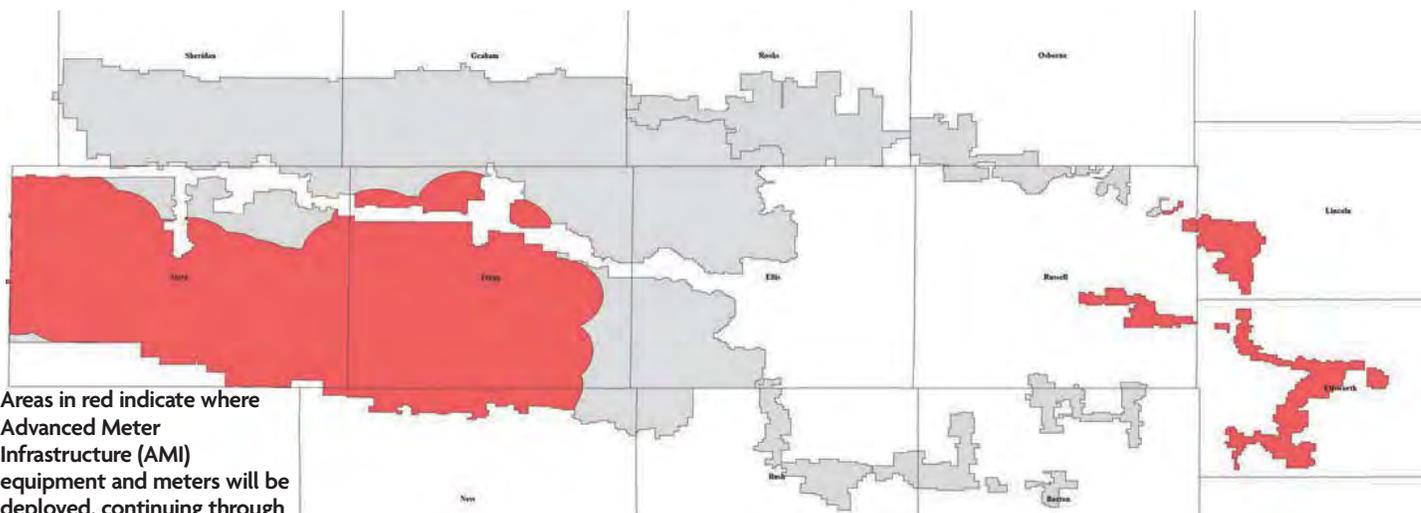
So the next time you come across one of Western's crews replacing a pole, slow down and be aware of equipment and linemen. Use caution and know that this process ensures a more reliable electric system for you, Western's members.

>> What's on that pole?

This illustration shows basic equipment found on electric power distribution poles. Not all poles have all this equipment on them. They vary according to location and the service they provide.



Western Personnel Deploying AMI Equipment



Areas in red indicate where Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI) equipment and meters will be deployed, continuing through June 2016 for the red highlighted areas. Gray areas indicate Western's certified service territory.

Western Cooperative Electric personnel have started the deployment phase of the planned Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI) system in the Western Territory, as shown in the map above. The installation will continue through June 2016 for the areas highlighted in red, and the remainder of the service territory in the next two to three years.

Technology used by utilities continues to evolve. Methods of measuring electrical usage have become more intelligent, as a result. Disappearing are the old electromechanical meters,

making way for modern digital electronic meters and support structure, allowing for more than just reading a members' electricity usage in their homes. AMI will help keep the lights on, lower energy costs, and promote energy independence.

Western and the new Gridstream AMI system (from Landis + Gyr) will help keep the lights on by replacing aging meters, allowing for more efficient operation of the system. That, in turn, helps decrease brownouts, blackouts, and surges.

The meters will also work in con-

junction with equipment on the lines and in substations to make sure that members receive reliable and consistent power. When there are issues, Western will be able to more readily identify, troubleshoot, and remediate the causes, restoring power more quickly. AMI technology has been proven to provide benefits and pay for itself rather quickly, though it is no doubt a fairly large undertaking.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call 800-456-6720, stop by our office in WaKeeney, or email western@westerncoop.com.

Get to Know Your Western Co-op Electric Staff

Janet Geist, Office Manager, 42 Years of Service

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY. Married to husband, Don, for 42 years. Have two grown daughters and two grandchildren. I love visiting the kids and grandchildren as it can be so much fun!

WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY? Oakley. I received my elementary and high school education there.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME? Flower and vegetable gardening, crafts, crocheting, quilting, embroidery, cake decorating, and painting.

WHAT SPORT OR TEAM IS YOUR FAVORITE? Kansas State

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION? Great Wolf Lodge with grandkids and their families.

IF YOU COULD BE ANY ANIMAL, WHAT WOULD YOU BE AND WHY? A kitten, because I could curl up and sleep in the sun whenever I wanted, especially on cold winter days. (Can you tell I'm looking forward to retirement?)

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF? Very proud of our children and grandchildren. Also, working at Western more than 42 years.

WHAT IS SOMETHING NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT YOU? I grew up without electricity in our home.



Janet Geist

Western's Cold Weather & Collection Policy

1. This policy is effective November 1, 2015.
2. This policy replaces any portions of present Cooperative billing standards pertaining to the Cold Weather and collection regulations.
3. The Cold Weather period for Western runs from November 15 through March 15.
4. Western Cooperative shall not disconnect a residential service during the Cold Weather period when the National Weather Service forecasts that the temperature will drop below 35 degrees within the following 24 hour period unless:
 - ▶ a. It is at the member's request;
 - ▶ b. The service is abandoned;
 - ▶ c. A dangerous condition, as determined by the Cooperative, exists on the member's premises;
 - ▶ d. The member violates any rule of the utility which adversely affects the safety of the member or other persons, or the physical integrity of the utility's delivery system;
 - ▶ e. The member causes or permits unauthorized interference with, or diversion or use of utility service (meter bypass) situated or delivered on or about the member's premises;
 - ▶ f. The member misrepresents his or her identity for the purpose of obtaining or retaining utility service; or
- ▶ g. The member makes an insufficient funds payment as the initial payment or an installment payment under a payment plan and does not cure the insufficient payment during the 10-day period after a disconnection notice is sent to the member.

If any condition listed under a, b, c, d, e, and/or f of this section occurs, the Cooperative may disconnect service immediately.
5. This policy replaces any portions of present Western Cooperative Electric billing standards pertaining to collections of past due accounts of the Cooperative. This policy may be altered or changed with approval of the board of trustees.
6. After the due date of the bill, as printed on the face of any individual member's bill, a 10 (ten) day written notice will be sent to the member at the address of record, which expires thirty (30) days after the written notice date.
7. After the due date noted on the delinquent notice, a phone call will be made to the primary phone number as listed on the account at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to disconnection.
8. Not less than forty-eight (48) hours after the delinquent bill phone call, disconnection will occur.
 - ▶ a. If a crew is dispatched, no personal contact will be attempted before the service is disconnected. Crews are, however, authorized to accept non-cash payment to avoid disconnection.
 - ▶ b. If an AMI meter with remote disconnect capability is in place, disconnection will occur remotely on the date of disconnection.
9. Payment, or payment arrangements, will need to be made to reconnect the service. Members will need to notify the office when payment arrangements are needed, or payment has been made by any means.
9. Applicable fees will be added to the delinquent bill amount.
10. Reconnections will be made on the same day as payment is received, whenever possible. Reconnection will occur within one normal business day of the Cooperative. Reconnections may not be possible outside normal Cooperative business hours.
11. For a member to qualify for payment arrangements, he/she must:
 - ▶ Inform the utility of the member's inability to pay the bill in full,
 - ▶ Not be in default on any other current payment arrangements, and
 - ▶ Have paid a minimum of 50% of their monthly bill each month during the Cold Weather period, which runs from November 15 through March 15.
12. Payment arrangements are available up to a maximum of 4 months.
13. In no event will any payment arrangement extend beyond the delinquent notice due date in October of any year.
14. All payment arrangements require the member to pay 50% of outstanding charges upon inception of the arrangement.
15. A member may only have one payment arrangement at any time.
16. Exceptions to the policy can be made by management on a case-by-case basis.

Approved by Western Cooperative Electric Association, Inc., Board of Trustees on September 17, 2015.



The Cold Weather and Collection Policy ensures you will have electric service for your home during the winter. You must make pay arrangements with Western Cooperative Electric to use this policy.