

**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

If you only want to heat or supplement inadequate heating in one room, small space heaters can be less expensive to use than your central heating system.

Danger: Posting Items to Power Poles

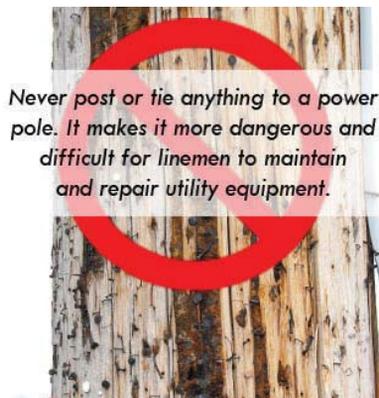
All kinds of items end up on a utility pole including “no hunting” signs, deer stands, satellite dishes and electric fences. These attachments are not only illegal but also a safety issue. Attachments, even a small

nail or tack, place the lives of Western’s linemen in danger regardless of size. Foreign objects that are embedded in utility poles can also snag or damage the protective clothing that keeps line

workers safe from electrical shock. These men and women already work in extremely hazardous conditions, so everyone who relies on electricity should take steps to make their job as safe as possible.

Other items that have been found on utility poles include tree stands for hunting. If you plan to hunt, do not place tree stands or other objects on utility poles. Attaching fence wire to or placing fence posts alongside an electric utility pole is prohibited. Not only do these attachments put West-

ern’s linemen at risk, anyone illegally placing these items on poles could expose themselves to thousands of volts of electricity. It’s always wise to keep any structure at least 10-feet away from utility poles.



Unauthorized pole attachments violate the National Electrical Safety Code. Western follows this code that includes a section stating, “signs, posters, notices, and other attachments shall not be placed on supporting structures without

concurrence of the owner (in this case Western). Supporting structures should be kept free from other climbing hazards such as tacks, nails, vines and through bolts not properly trimmed.”

By not attaching unauthorized items to electric poles, you help keep your Western linemen and our communities safe. Western is required to remove fixtures not belonging to Western. Should such unauthorized item be damaged or destroyed during removal, responsibility for the item falls with its owner, not with Western.

Daylight Saving Time Reminders—March 13

On March 13, remember to spring your clocks forward one hour. This is also a great time to check fire, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, and change out batteries. Make sure smoke detectors work properly by using the alarm test option. Use a vacuum to make sure there are no cobwebs, spiders or other



little insects taking up residence that would hinder the effects of the smoke alarm.

Detectors play a larger role in survival than one might think. A recent study showed that inoperable smoke alarms caused two-thirds of fire-related deaths due to damage, defects and missing batteries. It is recommended writing the date on the new battery in the detector so there will be no question as to when it was last replaced.

Daylight saving time is also a great

time to review home safety with family members including escape routes and checking all electrical outlets. Practice a home safety review and test procedures on getting out safely in an emergency situation. Look through the house for any hazards, such as overloaded or improperly placed extension cords. It is recommended to make sure areas around the furnace, water heater and stove are clear of debris that can cause fire.

Choosing the Right Trees for Electrical Safety

Whether planting trees to provide a wind break, reduce carbon in the environment, or beautify your landscape, Western Cooperative Electric reminds everyone of the importance of planting tall-growing trees safely away from electric power lines. Seek help in choosing and placing trees and bushes that provide shade, color and screening but will not grow to interfere with the electric system.

Take time to research tree selections by consulting your local forester, tree nursery or extension agents who can provide assistance in designing a beautiful, shade-filled yard with trees appropriate for each area of the landscape.

Choosing the right tree for the right place is crucial, especially when it comes to electric power lines. Trees, and wood in general, conduct electricity and can create a safety hazard if grown close to electric lines. Power

outages or momentary interruptions can occur when branches come into contact with overhead lines. Electrical arcing and sparking from a wire to a nearby branch also can cause fires.

However, a greater concern is the safety risk when children climb trees near electric power lines. Accidental contact of electric wires with a tree limb, or playing and trimming around the tree, can be fatal. Parents and caregivers are urged to teach children to never climb trees near power lines.

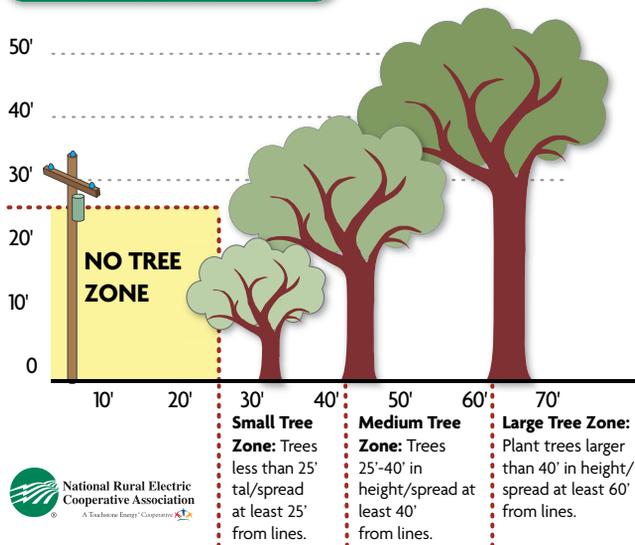
If you have trees that appear to be growing into electric power lines, contact Western Cooperative Electric. Never try to prune them yourself. Western can recommend skilled professionals trained to safely prune and trim trees for electric line clearance.

To avoid future electrical hazards, safe planting tips to remember include:

- ▶ Consider the mature height of a tree. Never plant a tree that could grow to 25 feet or more near an electric power line. Tall growing trees should be planted a minimum of 20 feet away from power lines and 50 feet away to avoid future pruning. A mature height of less than 15 feet is recommended for trees planted near electric power lines.
- ▶ Do not plant near underground utility services. Tree roots can grow to interfere with underground pipes, cables and wires. Future repairs to these facilities also could damage the health and beauty of nearby plants and trees.
- ▶ Keep areas around electric meters, transformers, or other electrical equipment free of any vegetation that could limit Western's service access.
- ▶ Before digging, call 8-1-1 to have the locations of underground utilities marked so that accidental contact, damage and injuries can be avoided.

For further information, contact Western's office at 1-800-456-6720 or 785-743-5561.

Tree Planting Guide



Cleaning Coils Could Save You Money

Timely cleaning of the inside of the refrigerator is necessary, but how many of us do timely cleaning of the outside also?

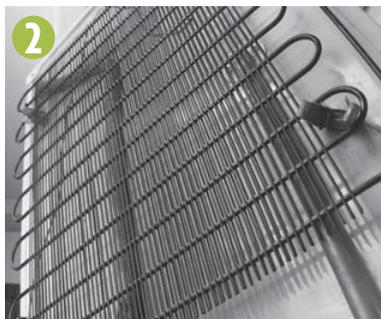
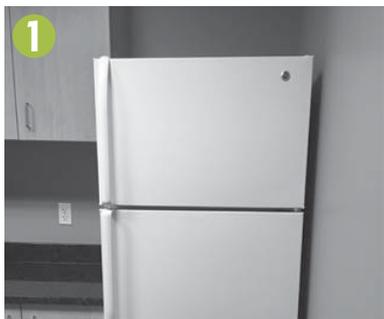
Your refrigerator is one of the largest, most-used appliances in your home. It requires only minimal maintenance—just simple cleaning of the condenser coils, which disperse heat. If the coils are covered with dust, lint or pet hair, they cannot diffuse the heat properly and will not run efficiently. A bigger problem can result if the compressor burns out from having to run constantly because of the grimy coating. This can be an expensive problem. The bottom line is a minor investment in time once or twice a year can save you money on your electric bill.

► **Step 1** Locate the refrigerator's coil, a grid-like structure, or fan that will likely have a covering or grate protecting it. The coil is usually concealed behind the front toe kick or in the back. Some newer models have internal coils, so if you don't find them in the front or back, this may be the case with your fridge. If so, check your owner's manual for

cleaning recommendations.

- **Step 2** If the coil is in the back, slide the refrigerator away from the wall, removing the plug from the electrical outlet when possible. You may also need to disconnect the line to the water dispenser or icemaker to allow enough room to work.
- **Step 3** Gently vacuum and clean the coil. Using the brush or crevice attachment, carefully vacuum the dust and dirt. If you have pulled the fridge out, this might be a good time to also clean the sides and back of the fridge to prevent future accumulation on the coils.
- **Step 4** Once the floor is dry, plug in the refrigerator and rearrange the power cord and supply lines so they don't get a kink or stuck under the weight of the refrigerator. Slide the refrigerator back into place. Be sure to replace the toe kick panel if it was removed.

A little TLC will not only improve the outside appearance of your fridge but extend its life, improve efficiency and be ready to keep perishables crisp, fresh, and tasty.



Get to Know Your
Western Co-op Electric Staff

Gary Yahne

Journeyman Lineman

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY. I have a girlfriend, Leah, no children, and two cats.

WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY? Great Bend

HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED AT WESTERN?
7 1/2 years

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME? I enjoy riding my Harley.

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF? Becoming a lineman and getting where I am today.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION? Going anywhere on my Harley.

WHAT IS SOMETHING PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU? I'm not telling.

IF YOU COULD BE ANY ANIMAL, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY? My cat, Harley. I wouldn't have to do anything but eat and sleep.

WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR LIFE AND WHY? I have always looked up to my dad.



Gary Yahne

Happy St. Patrick's Day



Thursday,
March 17

Celebrate Easter



Sunday,
March 27

Sincerely, Your Electric Meter

I have been accused of a lot of things. Creeping, making too much noise, running at outrageous speeds, causing health problems, and the list goes on. I am currently being replaced with

electronic circuitry and digital display and am still being blamed for everything in the book. I wonder if I am being blamed for running too

slow or not registering enough, as well. I'm really very capable. I am one of the most accurate measuring devices. Even more accurate now with electronic circuitry instead of gears and moving parts. I work day and night, mild or extreme temperatures,

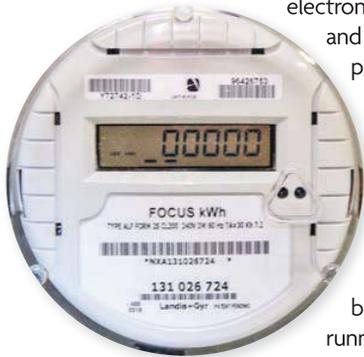
holidays, weekends, and do not play favorites. I only do my job of letting you know how much electricity has been used. In fact, sometimes, when an electrical short or arcing occurs, I register usage even though the electricity was not being utilized. I am your electric meter, "just doing my job"!

In the past, because of a loose glass seal, I may have become dirty or moisture might have found its way inside, causing me to slow down. Now with electronic circuitry and no moving parts, dirt and moisture shouldn't affect my accuracy. Lightning may continue to strike me dead, but Western will know immediately to answer my distress call for a new replacement. Once in a while, I will malfunction. If suspected, please contact Western and have them send me in for testing!

Some people ask, "How do I register so many kilowatts at my house? My neighbor has more

appliances than I have, and his meter doesn't have that many." Customers may not realize their neighbors have different habits. Some families use more hot water, cook more, and have homes with different efficiencies for heating and cooling. Even if all the appliances in homes were identical, living habits could make the difference in electrical usage, not to mention the possibility of a faulty wiring system.

Sometimes, I am really depressed. I work tirelessly, and I do what I consider a good job and, still, I am criticized. When most people think it over, they begin to realize that I do my job well, and that electricity is one of the most economical and dependable servants to be found. So you see, I am just doing my job by recording only the amount of work your efficient electric servants do for you. Glad to be of service!



Safely Clean up and Dispose of Broken CFLs

Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs) are an affordable and efficient alternative to traditional incandescent light bulbs. CFLs last longer than incandescent bulbs, require a fraction of the cost to use, and lead to fewer carbon dioxide emissions.

CFLs do contain a small amount of mercury. To put it in perspective, you would have to break 100 CFLs to equal the amount of mercury in an old style thermometer, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The level of mercury in a CFL is nothing to fear, but you should handle them with care. When you are done with a CFL, take it to an approved drop-off. Retailers, including many hardware stores, will properly dispose of CFLs for you.

If you break a CFL, follow these clean up and disposal procedures:

- ▶ Have children and pets leave the room.
- ▶ Before you start to clean up the broken bulb, shut off the heat or air conditioning to prevent the mercury from circulating. Then open a window, and leave the room for 5 to 10 minutes.
- ▶ Do not vacuum the broken bulb—unless broken

glass remains after all other cleanup steps have been taken—because it could spread mercury-containing powder or mercury vapor.

- ▶ Using a stiff piece of paper, sweep the broken pieces into a glass jar with a metal lid. Place the cardboard in a sealable container (jar or plastic bag).
- ▶ Use sticky tape, such as duct tape, to clean up the remaining pieces; put the tape in the jar. If the CFL broke on a hard surface, wipe it down with a damp cloth, and place the cloth in the jar or plastic bag.
- ▶ If the CFL broke on carpet and you cannot pick up all the pieces, use a vacuum, but dispose of the vacuum cleaner bag when you are done.
- ▶ Be sure to place the jar or bag with broken bulb and cleanup materials outside in a trash container or protected area until it can be disposed of properly. Some recycling centers accept CFLs, but not all of them do. The EPA suggests checking with your local and/or state household hazardous waste authority for disposal requirements in your area.
- ▶ Keep the heating or air conditioning system off and continue to let the room air out for several hours.