



# WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC NEWS

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co-op news, energy tips, photos from co-op events and more!



# What are GFCIs and are They Required Outdoors?

Did you know ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection is required for all outdoor outlets, which are also known as outdoor receptacles?

The National Electric Code began requiring GFCI installation on all outdoor outlets in 1975. Today, that rule stands with one uncommon exception — when homeowners have a dedicated branch circuit for outdoor outlets.

GFCIs serve as important electrical system protection since they automatically trip as soon as anything goes wrong in a circuit. When working properly, they keep us from getting shocked or electrocuted. This is especially important around the home where water and electricity have the chance to mix, such as bathrooms, basements, kitchens, garages, and of course, outdoors.

If you are planning a new outdoor

space (or a remodel in any area of your home) that requires additional outlets, consult a licensed electrician. Outdoor outlets must be installed in outdoor-rated electrical boxes and must have special covers based on type and location, among other requirements.

If you are still not convinced about the importance of GFCIs, consider this easy-to-understand explanation by “This Old House,” a home-improvement TV series:

▶ A ground fault happens whenever electricity escapes the confines of the wiring in an appliance, light fixture or power tool and takes a shortcut to the ground. When that shortcut is through a human, the results can be deadly. About 200 people in the U.S. alone die of

*Continued on page 16D ▶*



As a consumer-member of Western, you have a voice in the decisions made by your democratically elected Board of Trustees. You are invited to attend public meetings regarding the rate change as well as attend

the Western Board meeting on December 19, 2019, during which the Board will discuss and vote on the proposed change. The rate change, if approved, will be effective for usage on or after January 1, 2020.

# YOUTH PROGRAMS **BUILD**

## Apply for Trips & Scholarships



Jordyn Coonrod (left) and Hayden Rogers enjoy the view outside the U.S. Capitol during the 59th Annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.



Hayley Keller (left) and Cora Anderson attended the 45th Annual Cooperative Leadership Camp.

Each year, Western Cooperative Electric offers free trips to four youth from our membership and a fifth place scholarship only. If you are a high school junior whose parents/guardians are Western members, submit your application for a trip to Washington, D.C., or Steamboat Springs, Colorado, and for scholarships too!

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp are much more than sightseeing and adventures. Students spend every waking minute together for a solid week, and it's not uncommon for lasting friendships to form. In fact, many of Kansas' past participants ended up being college roommates, professional colleagues and lifelong friends. Most importantly, these youth programs inspire many students to discover who they want to be.

### Tour Our Nation's Capital

Imagine — a chance to visit our nation's capital for one week, meet with more than 1,800 students from across the U.S. and visit with Kansas' senators and congressional representatives. The best part? It won't cost you a penny.

Western will choose two winners to go to the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., from June 18-25, 2020.

### Scan these Codes to Get More Information

Scan the code with your phone's camera to get the information.

The weeklong trip to Washington, D.C., is jam-packed with sightseeing. Students will visit many of the major monuments and memorials, including the Lincoln Memorial, the Jefferson Memorial and Mt. Vernon.

While in Washington, D.C., students will meet with state and national legislators and nationally recognized speakers to talk about current topics important to our rural communities. Many past participants were so inspired by this experience that they later served as interns on Capital Hill, and many have pursued a career in politics.

To see what's in store, visit <http://bit.ly/dcytvideo2015>.

### Adventure in the Rockies

Two winners will also be chosen to attend Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, July 10-16, 2020.

Rafting, hiking and building memories — it's not just another trip! Campers

Electric Cooperative  
Youth Tour



Cooperative Youth  
Leadership Camp



will stay at the scenic Glen Eden Resort in the beautiful Rocky Mountains. At camp, you will join winners from other co-ops in Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma and Wyoming to build valuable leadership skills, while forming lasting friendships.

So pack your sunscreen and hiking shoes and get ready to build memories that will last a lifetime.

Learn more at <http://bit.ly/cylcvideo>.

### There's More — Winners Earn Scholarships, Too!

In addition to the trips, each of our top four winners will receive a \$250 scholarship. Our fifth place winner will receive the Darrell J. Brown Memorial \$250 scholarship.

To apply, students submit an application and résumé, take an open-book quiz and write a short essay on a topic to be announced. Based on these items, finalists will be selected for an interview at the Western office on Sunday, Feb 2, 2020.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, Cooperative Youth Leadership and scholarships are just a few of the ways we're investing in our future leaders. Western does so much more than provide safe, reliable and affordable power — we are dedicated to improving the futures of students in our community because we know they are next in line to lead the way.

To apply for a chance to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour or Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, please complete the form below and return to Western Cooperative Electric Association Inc., 635 S. 13th St., P.O. Box 278, WaKeeney, KS, 67672. Applications can also be downloaded from Western's website [www.westerncoop.com](http://www.westerncoop.com).

**ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY DEC. 13, 2019.**

For more information contact Christina Lowry or Shelli Nowlin at 785-743-5561 or 800-456-6720.



Campers go rafting during Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. Next year's camp is scheduled for July 10-16, 2020.



During the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, students visit memorials across D.C. In 2019, Hayden Rodgers created an etching from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Next year's tour will be June 18-25, 2020.

## Application for Youth Tour Contest – Due Dec. 13, 2019

To apply for a chance to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour or Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, please complete the form below and return to Western Cooperative Electric Association Inc., 635 S. 13th St., P.O. Box 278, WaKeeney, KS 67672, by Dec. 13, 2019.

Name of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

School \_\_\_\_\_ Year in School \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Parent(s) or Guardian(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s) or Guardian(s) Phone Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Western Cooperative Electric Account Number \_\_\_\_\_

I agree that all information supplied in this application is accurate and true.

Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_



## Simplify Your Payments, Win \$25

Simplify your bill-paying process with Western Cooperative Electric, and be entered in a monthly drawing for a \$25 voucher to a local business of your choice. Payment options include bank draft with checking/savings or recurring card, debit/credit. Additional options include enrolling for e-business (ebiz) or going green by opting for paperless billing. With paperless billing, you may opt to receive text or email notifications to get your information.

Ebiz allows you to see your monthly bill, view daily electric usage and historical data, store a payment method and make payments. Using ebiz allows you to enroll in automatic payments. If you need assistance contact us at 800-456-6720. There are no forms to complete so signing up is fast, friendly, and convenient. Automatic payment guarantees on-time payments, while maintaining an excellent payment history.

Selecting any one of these payment options makes you eligible for the monthly drawing. Already signed up for these payment options? Your name will also be included in the drawings. This month's winner is **MICHAEL MCCURRY, HOISINGTON.**

## GFCIs and the Outdoors Continued from page 16A

ground faults each year, accounting for two-thirds of all electrocutions occurring in homes.

- ▶ The GFCI was invented in 1961. Most of the time, it just monitors the difference in the current flowing into and out of a tool or appliance. But when that difference exceeds 5 milliamps, an indication that a ground fault may be occurring, the GFCI shuts off the flow of electricity in an instant — as little as 0.025 seconds. So with the advent of the GFCI, how do people become electrocuted by ground faults? Probably for one of

several reasons:

- ▶ Their GFCIs are not working properly. Test GFCIs monthly to make sure they are working and if not, have new ones installed.
- ▶ They live in an older home built prior to GFCI requirements or in a dwelling that is not up to code.
- ▶ They took on an electrical DIY project and were not qualified to do so. "Take GFCIs seriously. Oftentimes, they are only as reliable as the person who installs, services and tests them," said Sam Adair, Energy Education Council board member.



GETTYIMAGES/TAMMYJERRY6465



Available for residential rate consumer-members

PrePayPOWER is a pay-as-you go billing option.

The new PrePayPOWER program (prepaid metering) gives you greater control over your budget by making smaller, more frequent payments when it is right for you, instead of a single, larger payment on a fixed due date. No deposit. No late fees. No due dates. No monthly statements.

Beginning with an initial \$50 payment credited to your electric bill, you can make daily, weekly or monthly payments to your account. Your electric charges are subtracted daily from the credit on your account. You can easily check your account and monitor your energy usage online.

PrePayPOWER could also help you lower energy consumption. Since you are paying as you go, PrePayPOWER makes you more aware of your energy consumption.

If this option seems right for you, call 800-456-6720 to find out more and make the switch.

-  You put credit on your account.
-  You make your payments when you want and how you want.
-  Your electric charges are subtracted daily from your pre-paid account.
-  No deposit, late fees, or due date!
-  This program gives you the power to monitor your electricity usage online and adjust your usage to save money.

Call us today  
1-800-456-6720  
to switch to  
PrePayPOWER!

