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**WESTERN
COOPERATIVE
ELECTRIC**

WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC NEWS

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Tip of the Month

Use small electric pans, toaster ovens or convection ovens for small meals rather than your stove or oven. A toaster or convection oven uses one-third to one-half as much energy as a full-sized oven.

Staying Safe from Lightning

The National Weather Service (NWS) reports that every year lightning strikes at least 25 million times. In the U.S. alone, an average of 49 people are killed and 400 injured as a result of lightning each year.

To avoid accident or injury, the NWS advises, "When thunder roars, go indoors." It is simply not safe to be outdoors during a thunderstorm. However, once inside a safe shelter, there are additional safety steps to take.

A report was made of a girl and her family taking cover inside of their home during a tornado warning. Thinking they were safe from the effects of the storm, the girl opened the refrigerator. Following a scream and a loud boom, the house was struck by lightning. Even though the girl was in the path of the strike, she was not seriously injured.

Staying inside reduces the risk for lightning strikes, but according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately

one-third of lightning strike injuries occur indoors. Below are some recommendations to help keep you safe inside your home during a thunderstorm:

- ▶ During a storm, stay away from anything that conducts electricity inside of the home—this includes corded phones, plumbing or running water. Cellular or cordless phones are safe to use during a storm.
- ▶ Never use your computer, gaming systems, washer, dryer or any other appliance that connects to an electrical outlet.
- ▶ Stay at least a few feet away from electrical appliances that are plugged into the wall.
- ▶ Do not lie or lean on

concrete floors or walls, which can conduct electricity.

- ▶ Lightning can enter inside through wiring, such as cables or pipes or through an open window or door. Do not watch a storm from a porch or through a garage door.
- ▶ Stay away from all water. Do not take a bath, shower or wash dishes during a lightning storm.

Check weather forecasts so you plan to be in a safe shelter during a storm. After the storm, make sure that you stay inside and follow the safety rules for at least 30 minutes after you last hear thunder. Remember, lightning can strike up to 10-15 miles away from the storm.



Remember, "When thunder roars, go indoors."

Western Welcomes Summer Interns



Chance Demel

CHANCE DEMEL, DALTON MILLER, and CHASE WERNER are employed at Western for the summer to train and experience the challenging field of electric utility work.



Dalton Miller

Demel is employed at the Olmitz warehouse. He is not far from home, graduating from Hoisington High School.



Chase Werner

Since graduating from Norton High School, Miller has been employed at the WaKeeney warehouse. Miller knows the challenges of being a lineman as his dad

is a journeyman for Prairie Land Electric Cooperative in Norton. Both Miller and Demel attend Manhattan Area Technical College and will return this fall to complete their degree in electric power and distribution.

Werner is employed at the Plainville office. After graduating from Plainville High School, Werner enrolled in the Electric Power Technology program at Pratt Community College.

When asked about hobbies all three responded with hunting, fishing and being outdoors. These men are not only gaining experience, but are realizing how important safety and focus are within the daily work of an electric cooperative lineman.

Air Conditioning Safely and Efficiently

Since air conditioners run much more in the summer months, there is a higher potential of air conditioner malfunctions and safety concerns. Research has shown that energy safety and efficiency often go hand-in hand. Western Cooperative Electric offers the following tips to help keep your home safe and your cooling bills lower:



Sealing ducts in your home can help improve the overall efficiency of the air conditioner.

- ▶ Common problems leading to air conditioner malfunction often include faulty installation and inadequate maintenance. For this reason, always check to be sure that your equipment is being used in compliance with manufacturer instructions.
- ▶ Before running your air conditioner, inspect the equipment and be sure that all coils, filters and circuit breakers are clean and functioning properly.
- ▶ Consider upgrading your air conditioner to a more energy efficient model, which can save you money in energy costs. When looking at various units, look for the Season Energy Efficiency Rating (SEER), the most well-known efficiency rating. Also check that the air conditioner has a label indicating that it has been tested by a certified laboratory.
- ▶ When running your air conditioner, be sure that all windows and doors are closed to increase operating

efficiency. Sealing ducts, increasing insulation and plugging leaks in your home can also help improve the overall efficiency of the air conditioner. Exhaust and ceiling fans can increase the air flow in your home and reduce humidity in rooms that are often warmer, such as bathrooms and kitchens.

- ▶ Trim foliage at least two feet around the air conditioner. Clearing the area around the unit ensures that airflow to the appliance is not blocked.
- ▶ Turning off lights that are not being used and closing drapes to keep out the sun can also help reduce the amount of cooling that is needed.
- ▶ Timely maintenance to your air conditioning system means safe, efficient operation and reduced energy costs.

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Safety Tips for Outdoor Playtime

Since summer temperatures are here, children can often be found climbing trees, flying kites and playing outdoor games with friends. However, before you send your kids outside to have fun, make sure they are aware of electrical dangers that could put a frightening halt to their activities.

One of the messages to share with children is to look up and look out for power lines. It is important to keep yourself and any play items away from power lines.

Kites should only be flown during good weather conditions in large open areas, like a park or a field. In addition, kites should be flown away from overhead power lines or other electrical equipment. A kite string can conduct electricity from an overhead line directly to the person on the ground.

Children also need to be aware of how dangerous it is to climb trees near power lines. Climbing a tree tangled in a power line can energize the tree with electricity and lead to electric shock or death.

Ensure your children are protected from the electrical service connection to your home. Be aware of these lines around pools. Pool skimmers can be long enough to reach service connection lines.

Want to learn more about electrical safety? Call Western to set up a demonstration at 800-456-6720.



Additionally, teach your children to never play around pad mounted transformers. These are green metal boxes that contain the above ground portion of an underground electrical installation. Pad mount transformers carry high voltages and are safe when locked, but they can be deadly if someone reaches inside. If you see one in your neighborhood that is open, call authorities and your electric utility immediately.

Teach your children to never enter an electrical substation for any reason. If a ball or other toy enters the fence surrounding the substation, call your electric utility for assistance. Substations hold deadly amounts of electricity and should only be entered by trained line personnel.

In addition to talking to your children about outdoor safety, there are additional steps parents and caregivers can take to help ensure safe outdoor activities.

- ▶ Make sure all outdoor outlets are equipped with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to help prevent electric shock.
- ▶ Keep all long-handled tools out of reach of children so they will not be tempted to or accidentally hit an overhead power line.
- ▶ Pay attention to trees and power lines. Do not plant trees near lines, and if a tree has grown into the line, call a professional to trim the tree.

As a reminder, Western offers safety demonstrations addressing these hazards and how to avoid them. For more information call 800-456-6720 or 785-743-5561.

Get to Know Your Western Cooperative Electric Staff

Christina Lowry Office Manager

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

I have been married to Trevor for 23 years. We have three sons: Tyler, 20; Tanner, 17; and Toby, 13.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED AT WESTERN?

16 years

WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?

I grew up in WaKeeney.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

Spend time with my family—watch my kids' events and go to the movies or bowling.

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

Learning to type with one hand.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION?

I loved going to Branson with my family. The music, shows and performers are great. There is so much to do.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MOVIE OR BOOK AND WHY?

There are too many to choose from.

WHAT IS SOMETHING PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I went to kindergarten in Edson, KS. There isn't an active school there anymore.

WHAT SPORT OR TEAM IS YOUR FAVORITE?

Denver Broncos

IF YOU COULD BE ANY ANIMAL, WHAT WOULD YOU BE AND WHY?

A horse, because they are loved, admired and cared for.

WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR LIFE AND WHY?

My mom. She has had a lot of difficulties to overcome in her life, and she still can smile and laugh.



Christina Lowry

A Cyber Security Plan from the Experts

Could a computer hacker shut down the nation's electric grid? It's a question asked in popular books, congressional hearings, and it's even the plot point in the 2007 Bruce Willis movie "Live Free or Die Hard."

Most experts answer that question with, "probably not." Part of the reason for that answer is there are a lot of people in government and the utility industry like Barry Lawson of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

As NRECA's Associate Director of Power Delivery and Reliability, Lawson spends his time working with electric co-op utilities to try to protect utilities from digital hackers.

Lawson and several others at NRECA run cyber security training sessions, publish security safety materials and develop techniques and software not only to keep the nation's electric supply reliable and secure, but to also protect sensitive member, employee and co-op data and information from identity theft.

Lawson says co-ops make a high priority of protecting themselves from the constant variety of cyber computer attacks by everyone from organized crime to hobbyist hackers, who are constantly launching attacks on every computer in the world.

"We're all being hacked," Lawson said. "As soon as you connect a new computer to the Internet, it's being hacked by software that looks for Internet connections by the millions."

Lawson says we can all use advice that's the basis for how utilities protect themselves from cyberattacks: "Try to make it as difficult as possible, and put in as many layers of protection as possible."

Here are Lawson's top four tips for protecting your computer:

- 1 Make sure you have antivirus software installed** on your computer, and remember to keep it updated.
- 2 Don't send emails containing personal information**, like your date of birth or Social Security number, because that increases opportunities

for identity theft. Be careful of typing a credit card number into a website—if you do, make sure that it's a secure website. You can tell whether it's secure by looking for the "s" at the beginning of the website address. Most begin with "http://." A secure site will begin with "https://."






3 Attachments or links in an email can contain malware—viruses, spyware and other unwanted software that gets installed on your computer or mobile device without your consent—that can infect your computer. Don't open an email attachment or click a link unless you know the person sending it, and you were expecting them to send it to you (hackers can take over an account and make it look like it's from a friend.)

4 Monitor children's online activity, and make sure they know good cyber security. Visit the U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team's (UC-CERT) website at www.us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/ST05-002 for security tips on how to keep children safe online.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT BULB FOR THE RIGHT JOB

There are three primary types of lighting: ambient (general lighting), task lighting and accent lighting. As lighting technologies continue to advance, consumers should be open to trying new shapes and types of bulbs. The check marks below indicate appropriate locations for different types of bulbs on the market. Happy shopping!

BEST BETS FOR HOME LIGHTING

Common Bulb Types	Ambient Lighting			Accent Lighting			Task Lighting
	Pendant Fixture	Ceiling Fixture	Recessed Cans	Ceiling Fan	Wall Sconce	Spot Light	Table or Floor Lamp
 Spiral	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
 Globe	✓				✓		
 A-Shape	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
 Candle	✓	✓		✓	✓		
 Reflector	✓		✓			✓	

Source: energy.gov