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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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**WESTERN
COOPERATIVE
ELECTRIC**

WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC NEWS

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Another Round of Restoration



Members were essential in the storm restoration using tractors to pull along digger trucks stuck in the deep mud.

“Winter Storm URSA” pelted Western Cooperative Electric members with more than a foot of snow, causing extensive damage in Sheridan and Gove counties the last weekend in April. In the initial aftermath, more than 2,000 services were without power, caused by damage to more than 600 poles and nearly 160 miles of line.

Power restoration required a true community effort. The snow and impassable drifts on Sunday turned into a muddy mess on Monday when tem-

peratures hit 60 degrees. Co-op members volunteered with farm equipment to help pull line crews out of ruts as they worked to restore power.

“These were extreme conditions these guys worked in, in regards to the mud,” Western’s Line Superintendent Darryl Steckline said. “Our main focus was not only to get the line back on in an expeditious manner, but more importantly to make sure the crews returned home safe.”

A special thanks also goes to the

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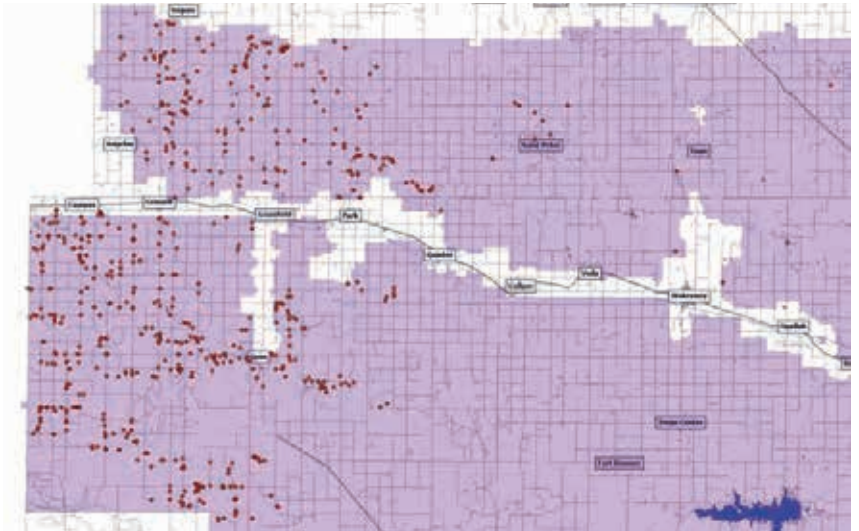
Annual Meeting Rescheduled for June 7

Due to power restoration efforts following Winter Storm Ursa, the Annual Meeting originally scheduled for Wednesday, May 10, 2017, has been postponed until Wednesday, June 7, 2017, with lunch being served at noon and the meeting set to start at 1 p.m. Western would like to apologize for any inconvenience this change may cause and encourages its members to attend the Annual Meeting on June 7.

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near round-the-clock efforts of linemen from Western and sister cooperatives Bluestem Electric, Wamego, and Rolling Hills Electric, Beloit, as well as a helping hand from MidCon Energy.

Just two weeks after repairing the worst of the damage, Western was dealt another storm as a tornado raked across central Kansas on May 16. A storm cell producing heavy winds and a tornado damaged lines northwest of Great Bend. Western and Sunflower Electric Power Corporation crews again faced muddy conditions as they worked to repair approximately 900 meters. Due to the commitment of linemen to quickly repair the lines and large structures, members regained power within one day of the storm.



More than 2,000 services, shown on this map by red dots, were without power following Winter Storm Ursa.



Just two weeks after the winter storm, a tornado caused outages to 900 meters.



Nearly 600 poles were damaged by the storm in rural Gove and Sheridan counties.



Mutual aid crews lined Main Street in WaKeeney ready to help restore power to Western's members.

How Your Co-op Protects Your Personal Information

It seems they are always in the news—reports of identity theft or fraud as a result of personal data breaches, often attributed to un-safe internet use. According to CNN Money, in 2016 identity fraud or theft occurred every two seconds in the United States.

Western takes the well-being of our members very seriously, which is why we are committed to keeping your personal information secure when you use the eBusiness online service.

“We value the trust that our members put in Western’s business practices. Because your security is so important, Western remains committed to providing the best security technology and practices available as we serve you,” said Darrin Lynch, general manager.

With peace of mind, you can use eBusiness to pay online or view data about your electricity use because we use multiple layers of protection

Because your security is so important, Western remains committed to providing the best security technology and practices available as we serve you.

DARRIN LYNCH, GENERAL MANGER

to keep your personal information private:

- ▶ Our meters have a system ID unique to Western and unique from other coops. The ID is part of the private key used for encrypted communication.
- ▶ Identifiable personal information, such as social security and credit cards numbers, are encrypted while stored in the data base and while being used on the system. Only users with access to maintenance screens will see full numbers; other Western staff will only see abbreviated or masked information.
- ▶ Traffic is encrypted from meters and other system endpoints to a secure host site via an encrypted

VPN (virtual private network).

- ▶ The host website that administers Western’s system is SSL encrypted (HTTPS).
- ▶ eBusiness is also an SSL encrypted site (HTTPS).
- ▶ Credit card transactions use software that prevents actual credit card information from being transmitted.
- ▶ The eBusiness vendor is payment-card industry compliant for credit card transactions.

Protection of your personal information does not just involve your online interactions with Western’s eBusiness program. See the list below for things you can do to keep your personal information secure.

Security Steps to Keep to Protect Your Personal Information

- ▶ **SHRED UNWANTED PRINTED DOCUMENTS** containing personal information that could end up in the hands of others.
- ▶ **KEEP YOUR PASSWORDS** in a secure place.
- ▶ **USE A UNIQUE PASSWORD** for each account, so if one is compromised, the others are not.
- ▶ **UPDATE PASSWORDS PERIODICALLY** and avoid standard passwords, such as an email address, birthdate, name of pet, name of spouse, etc. Instead, use a combination of letters, numbers and symbols.
- ▶ **BE WARY OF CLICKING ANY LINK** in an email calling your attention to something that needs to be addressed on a financial or business app/site. Instead, call the institution directly to report the email or take the time to log in via the app’s portal. Two-factor authentication, such as answering security questions to gain access to your account, is good practice, too.
- ▶ **SET UP EMAIL OR PHONE ALERTS FOR ONLINE PURCHASES** so that you know when a purchase has been made. If you did not make the purchase, contact your credit card company immediately to report the fraudulent transaction.
- ▶ **AVOID USING A PUBLIC WI-FI** when accessing business or financial accounts. It is better to use a secured, private home network.
- ▶ **MAKE SURE THAT THE ADDRESS HAS “HTTPS” IN THE URL**, the “s” indicates a secure site, when making online payments.
- ▶ **BE CAUTIOUS WHEN YOU RECEIVE AN EMAIL WITH A LINK** that directs you to a website. Hover over the link or copy and paste it into the URL bar to see if it indicates a pathway to a legitimate site.
- ▶ **MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ANTIVIRUS SOFTWARE** installed on your computer and remember to keep it updated.
- ▶ **DON’T SEND EMAILS CONTAINING PERSONAL INFORMATION**, such as your date of birth or social security number because that increases the opportunities for identity theft.



Get to Know Your Western Cooperative Electric Staff

Tom Bayuk

Journeyman Lineman / Staking



Tom Bayuk

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY, SPOUSE, CHILDREN, PETS. Wife, Reba, two step-children, nine step-grandchildren, one dog, Jake; one cat, Princess

HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED AT WESTERN? 16-plus years

WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY? Willard, Wisconsin

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME? Gardening, hunting, fishing

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF? Married for 21-plus years

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION? Going to see my grandma and grandpa back in the days of my youth in Minnesota.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE BOOK OR MOVIE AND WHY? My Dog Skip. There's a lot to learn from your pet dog.

WHAT SPORT OR TEAM IS YOUR FAVORITE? Green Bay Packers, Wisconsin Badgers.

WHAT IS SOMETHING PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU? I'm 100 percent Slovenian heritage.

IF YOU COULD BE ANY ANIMAL, WHAT WOULD YOU BE AND WHY? Our dog "Jake." There's no other animal on earth that is treated better than him.

WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR LIFE AND WHY? My mom and dad. They taught me the value of a hard day's work and live life to the fullest on the straight and narrow path.

Know What's Below before You Dig

Are you planning to build a new deck to enjoy those cool autumn evenings? If any of your projects require digging—such as planting trees or shrubs, or setting posts—remember to dial 811 first.

Underground utilities, such as buried gas, water and electric lines, can be a shovel thrust away from turning a project into a disaster.

Play it safe by dialing 811 to find out where utility lines run. Your call will be routed to a local "one call" center. Tell the operator where you're planning to dig and what type of work you will be doing, and the affected local utilities will be notified.

In a few days, a locator will arrive to designate the approximate location of any underground lines, pipes and cables. These areas will be marked with flags or paint so you'll know what's below. Then the safe digging can begin.

Although many homeowners tackling do-it-yourself digging projects are aware of "Call Before You Dig" services, the majority don't take advantage of the service. A national survey showed that only 50 percent of homeowners called to have their lines marked before starting digging projects, according to



If any of your projects require digging—such as planting trees or setting posts—remember to dial 811 first!

the Common Ground Alliance (CGA), a federally mandated group of underground utility and damage prevention industry professionals. CGA data also shows that an underground utility line is damaged every six minutes in the U.S. because someone decided to dig without first dialing 811.

Even simple tasks like installing a new mailbox post can damage utility lines, which can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm diggers and result in fines and repair costs.

Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. There's no need: the 811 service is free, prevents the inconvenience of having

utilities interrupted and can help you avoid serious injury. For more information about local services, visit www.call811.com.



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.