

**WESTERN
COOPERATIVE
ELECTRIC**

WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC NEWS

Western Cooperative Electric, Inc.

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Lynch Resigns as General Manager

After more than four years of service to the co-op, **DARRIN LYNCH** will resign his position as general manager, effective Sept. 8, 2017, to accept a position with National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation, an affiliated cooperative that provides financial and business management services to fellow electric co-ops nationwide.

In a joint statement, Lynch and the Board of Trustees expressed their full confidence in the future direction of Western Cooperative Electric.

"The pleasure is mine to have served Western's member-owners and employees these past four years," said Lynch. "An opportunity has presented itself that I simply cannot pass up, so I resign with both hesitation and excitement."

What Causes an Increase in ECA on My Bill?

You are a business owner. That's right. And as a member-owner of Western Cooperative Electric, you have the right to analyze the financial affairs of your business.

Western strives to be transparent with our member; one way we do this is by breaking out the charges on your electric bill:

▶ **Electric customer charge** – the charge based on what it costs Western to make service available for all members in a particular class;

The Board is currently considering candidates to fill Lynch's position once he has departed.

"On behalf of the member-owners and employees of Western, we appreciate Darrin's service to Western," said Board of Trustees President Craig Crossland. "We are confident that a suitable replacement will be found to continue to lead Western in safely providing its member-owners with reliable electric service at an affordable price."

Thank you for your leadership as general manager at Western Cooperative Electric, Darrin. The co-op wishes you the best in your upcoming opportunities.



Darrin Lynch

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Local Youth Attend Leadership Camp in Colorado

EMILY ROY and **HALEY THORNTON** were selected to attend the 41st annual Cooperative Leadership Camp near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, from July 14-20. Joining their peers from Colorado, Oklahoma and Wyoming, approximately 100 youth learned about the cooperative principles at the week-long educational retreat.

Roy and Thornton were selected from a group of high school applicants during their junior year. To win this trip, students were asked to write a one-page essay, take a quiz, and appear before a group of judges for an interview.

“Western Cooperative Electric is proud to be a participating sponsor of the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp and send our local youth to develop essential leadership and teamwork skills,” said Darrin Lynch, general manager. “Through this trip, we hope local students will learn how our electric cooperatives work and how cooperatives and their employees support the communities they serve.”

Prior to arriving at Glen Eden Resort, the bus stopped in Denver for



Kansas students join campers from Colorado, Oklahoma and Wyoming at the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

an overnight stay, and the group was treated to a snorkeling experience at the Denver Aquarium.

After arriving at camp in the Rocky Mountains, the campers immediately began daily membership meetings where a general manager, board of directors and committees were selected. The week-long experience also gave participants an authentic camp feel with river rafting, volleyball tournament, swimming, a dance and a talent show.

Several demonstrations and presentations enhanced students’ knowledge on the cooperative model and on operations at their electric cooperative. Campers competed to

build a model transmission line out of craft supplies, toured Trapper Mine, Craig Power Plant and experienced a high-voltage safety demonstration. “Learning about high voltage and the dangers involved, made a big impression,” said Thornton. The campers also raised money to donate to the NRECA International Foundation.

By camp’s end, students demonstrated the leadership skills they attained by running for an ambassador position at next year’s camp. As ambassadors, the students will facilitate camp leadership activities and serve as role models for the incoming campers. After camp Emily Roy stated, “I’ve learned that leadership isn’t about

what I do, but the way I work and interact with the people I’m leading.”

Each year, Western Cooperative Electric sponsors two students to attend the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, as a strong commitment to our community and our mission to inspire future generations to become leaders. For more information about the Youth Tour program call 785-743-5561 or 800-456-6720 or visit www.westerncoop.com.



Emily Roy (right) and friends tour Trapper Mine.



Haley Thornton (far right) and her team won first place in the volleyball tournament.

Storm Causes Damage Across Service Area

On Aug. 10, northwest Kansas suffered damage from a strong thunderstorm that brought high winds, hail and rain. Western Cooperative Electric quickly began receiving outage calls from Sheridan, Graham, and Trego counties; however, that was only the beginning. Shortly before the tornado sirens sounded in WaKeeney, employees entered the basement and soon after, “all hail broke loose.”

The skies opened bringing ping pong- to baseball-sized hail along with intense winds and torrential rain. “It sounded like a train was passing through the building,” said Ron Aschenbrenner, assistant line superintendent.

Following the calm of the storm, Western Cooperative Electric employees began fielding outage calls, crews assessed the damage to the system, and the restoration process began. “Sixty poles along with conductor were brought down”, said Ron Aschenbrenner, assistant line superintendent. “We should have all the line rebuilt within a week.”



Left: The storm left a pile of hail in front of the co-op office. Right above and below: Ping pong- to baseball-sized hail caused significant damage to the vehicles in the area, as seen in the photos of a Western employee's vehicle.



“Even though the damage was extensive throughout the WaKeeney community, including Western’s WaKeeney facility, we are all thankful that everyone was spared of injury,” said Darrin Lynch, general manager. “Once again, Western’s line crews met the challenge of tough working conditions in keeping outage time to a minimum for our member owners.”

Get to Know Your Western Cooperative Electric Staff

Tonya Keller

Administrative Assistant



Tonya Keller

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

I have been married to Ernie for 35 years. We have three sons: Nicholas, Kevin and Brian.

HOW LONG

HAVE YOU WORKED AT WESTERN?

19 years

WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?

I grew up on a farm south of Ogallah.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

I enjoy driving a tractor and tilling the field. There is nothing like the smell of fresh-turned soil.

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

Being able to take outage calls for Western after hours before Cooperative Response Center (CRC) answering service.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION?

Going river rafting in Colorado.

WHAT IS SOMETHING PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

Back in the day, I pitched a softball game with 20 strike-outs.

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

Any on Sarah Fabrizius' Funny Farm, so I could go with her to visit with all my friends at Trego County Long-Term Care.

WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR LIFE AND WHY?

My mother; she's a true gem.

What Causes an Increase in ECA on My Bill?

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You, no doubt, noticed that the ECA on your electric bill was substantially higher in the month of June. Because you are a business owner, we expect you to ask the questions "Why? What's going on?"

Many factors can affect the price of wholesale purchases, including market fluctuations, transmission congestion, weather, changes in the price of fuel, and unforeseen changes in the operations of our wholesale suppliers' generating fleet. The June increase in the ECA was mainly a result of higher energy demand, lower generation and transmission congestion in the Sunflower system.

In June, an abnormal transmission congestion pattern increased the total price Sunflower had to pay for energy to serve its members' demand. As energy loads on these lines approach maximum capacity, the Southwest Power Pool, the regional transmission organization that oversees the bulk electric grid and wholesale power market in our area, sends price signals via its Integrated Marketplace (IM).

Sunflower saw higher congestion costs added to its market price of energy for the first time since the market started in March 2014. In every month since the IM started, Sunflower experienced low congestion costs, which reduced its overall market price and provided its Members, including Western Cooperative Electric, with a lower cost to purchase the energy required to meet the energy demand of those they serve, including you.

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Several things occurred in June that contributed to the transmission congestion shift. Sunflower's Holcomb Station was offline due to an extended maintenance outage (which reduced generation in the area), wind energy output dropped off on hot summer days as it usually does (which also reduced generation in the area), and energy demand increased in the area due to high temperatures (which increased load in the area). The combination of these factors resulted in periods during which Sunflower had to import energy to serve its members' energy load, which caused higher than usual transmission congestion costs. There were also transmission outages during the month that blocked some of the normal export/import paths, further intensifying the congestion.

As with any commodity, prices vary depending on supply and demand. Due to costs mainly associated with transmission congestion, Western's wholesale cost of energy increased by \$14.55 per megawatt hour (MWh) in June. This resulted in an ECA of \$33.73 per MWh, compared to an average ECA for the first five months of the year of 17.80 per MWh. Neither Western nor Sunflower profits from an increase in the ECA. By law, the ECA must only cover actual wholesale generation and transmission costs.

As your electric provider, our mission is to supply you with reliable energy and service at the lowest possible cost. Despite the cost drivers caused by external conditions beyond our control, Western's staff will continue to do everything in their power to keep costs as low as possible.

Western is also committed to helping you manage your energy use. For energy-saving tips, please give us a call at 800-456-6720 or visit at www.westerncoop.com. With all of us working together, we can best operate your business, Western Cooperative Electric.