



# NEWS

## Western Cooperative Electric, Inc.

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### General Manager

**Tom Ruth**

General Manager

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## 2019 Annual Meeting Highlights

Approximately 150 consumer-members, guests and employees attended this year's annual meeting on May 8 at Western Cooperative Electric's WaKeeney facility. A catered lunch was served prior to the meeting.

Following lunch, **DAVID SCHNEIDER**, former general manager and Vietnam veteran, recognized the veterans in attendance and led the group with the Pledge of Allegiance. A call to order was made by **CRAIG CROSSLAND**, Western's chairman of the board of trustees. Introductions included Western's trustees and special guests. With a determination of a quorum present, the 2018 annual meeting minutes were approved along with the presentation of the financial report.

**STUART LOWRY**, president and CEO of Sunflower Electric Power Corpora-

tion, reviewed facts about Sunflower including power supply and costs.

**TOM RUTH**, general manager, reviewed Western's financials, community involvement, power supply, and previous year's accomplishments. Manager Ruth also mentioned the rate study in progress.

Results of the mail-in ballots for trustees were announced as follows:

- ▶ **SUSAN ROHLEDER**, District 1 (Graham, Osborne, Rooks and Sheridan counties)
- ▶ **FRANK JOY**, District 2 (Ellis, Lincoln, Russell and Trego counties)
- ▶ **CHARLES LUETTERS**, District 3 (Barton, Ellsworth, Gove, Ness and Rush counties)

Prize drawings were held. The day concluded with ice cream for everyone.

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Nearly 150 consumer-members and guests attended the annual meeting on May 8.

## Annual Meeting Highlights

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Western's board president Craig Crossland addresses the consumer-members.



Tom Ruth, Western's general manager, discusses the future of the cooperative with consumer-members.



Special guest, Kansas Senator Rick Billinger had the opportunity to speak during the meeting.



Stuart Lowry, CEO of Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, spoke about power generation.

# Tips for Maintaining an Efficient HVAC System

With the first day of summer approaching, that also means air conditioning season is near. Since heating and cooling are a large component of our electrical usage, maintenance can be a large part of the efficiency of your heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) system.

Your HVAC system is essential to keeping your home comfortable during summer months, and if it breaks down, it's also the most expensive equipment to repair or replace. Below are some simple steps to possibly lengthen the life of your system and maintain efficient performance:

- ▶ **CHANGE OR CLEAN FILTERS.** Dirty filters block airflow, which can greatly decrease the efficiency of your system. Recommendations are changing or cleaning filters every month or two during the cooling season. If your unit is in constant use or is subjected to dusty conditions or pet hair, consider checking filters more frequently.
- ▶ **CLEAN THE HVAC UNIT.** Outdoor condenser coils can become clogged with pollen, dirt and small debris. Use a hose to spray the HVAC unit once each season to ensure maximum airflow. (Warning: Do not use a pressure washer to do this, as it can damage the equipment.)
- ▶ **CLEAR SPACE AROUND THE HVAC UNIT.** Dryer vents, falling leaves and grass left behind from the lawnmower can create buildup. Remove any debris around the HVAC unit. If you have foliage near the unit, trim it back at least 3 feet around the condenser to increase airflow.

You should also have your HVAC system periodically inspected by a licensed professional. The frequency of inspections depends on the age of your unit, but the Department of Energy recommends scheduling tune-ups during the spring and fall, when contractors aren't as busy.

When HVAC equipment fails, it's inconvenient and uncomfortable—especially during the dog days of summer. Remember, your HVAC system runs best when it's regularly cleaned and serviced. With a little maintenance along the way, you can add years to your system's lifespan.

If you want to evaluate the efficiency of your HVAC system, see the 3-Step HVAC Test below.

## 3-Step HVAC Test

1. Using a digital probe thermometer (about \$12), measure the temperature of the air being pulled into your HVAC filter.
2. Measure the temperature of the air blowing out of your A/C vent.
3. Subtract the A/C vent temperature from the HVAC filter temperature. You should see a difference of about 17 to 20 degrees. If the difference is less than 17 degrees, you may need a licensed technician to check the coolant. If the difference is greater than 20 degrees, your ductwork may need to be inspected for airflow restrictions.



# What are Power Surges and What Can I Do About Them?

As its name suggests, a power surge is a surge or increase of power. The brief jolts of electrical voltage range from minor to severe and can leave their mark. Major surges can damage or fry your computer or TV, while minor surges may cause no apparent damage but can take their toll on devices over time.



GETTY IMAGES/SASIMOTO

Electronics and appliances are especially susceptible to a power surge, but spikes in power can also damage outlets or start electrical fires. Although many people associate lightning with power surges, Mother Nature's strike is not the most common culprit.

Other causes can be found at home. Devices that require a lot of power to switch compressors or turn motors on or off—air conditioners, refrigerators and space heaters, for example—call for sudden, brief draws on power. These power demands upset the steady flow of volts in the electrical system. While the surges caused by these items are far less intense than a lightning strike, they

can still cause damage. Other causes of power surges include faulty wiring and overloaded outlets or circuits.

## Options to help protect appliances and electronics:

- ▶ Use surge protector strips or devices. Most surge protectors are no match for lightning's wallop, so during a severe storm, it is best to unplug your computer, televisions and other electronics.
- ▶ For electronics, consider investing in the surge protector's big brother: uninterruptible power supply devices. They work like a surge protector but have battery backup

to keep them running during surges, power reductions or brief outages.

- ▶ Consider having a whole-house surge protector installed by a qualified electrician. Typically installed to the electric service box, it offers greater protection for your appliances than individual surge-protecting devices. For homeowners who elect whole-house surge protection, they can still use the individual plug-in versions for their most sensitive electronics, providing two levels of protection.
- ▶ If you do not have them already, consider updating outlets with those that feature ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). Today's electrical code requires them near a water source for new or remodeled homes. They help prevent electrical shock and fire, and they are reset with the push of a button after they have been tripped.

A qualified electrician can also help you determine the quality of your electrical system and how well it is grounded. This quality of grounding will also enhance the productivity of your installed surge suppression equipment.

## 2019 Summer Resolution

Preparing for warmer weather with the first day of summer on June 21 could also include preparing to simplify your bill paying process with Western Cooperative Electric. 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 a monthly drawing for a \$25 voucher to a local business of your choice. Already signed up for these payment options? Your name will also be included in the drawings. **WESTERN'S MAY WINNER IS BERNICE BIRDSALL, PLAINVILLE.**

Get a fresh summer start by enrolling in an easy payment option. Enter today for a chance to win.

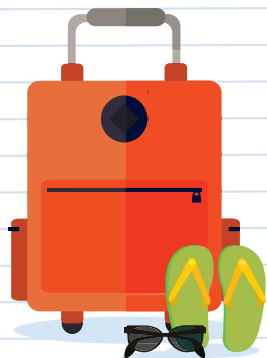


## Register for eBiz

1. Go to [www.westerncoop.com](http://www.westerncoop.com)
2. On Western's homepage, click the link to eBiz
3. Enter the information requested

## 5 easy ways to prepare your home for **VACATION**

1. Set or program your thermostat to 85 degrees while you are away.
2. Unplug small appliances and electronic devices, including gaming systems, so they don't draw power.
3. Adjust your water heater. For a natural gas water heater, turn it to low. For an electric version, turn it off at the circuit breaker.
4. Shut all your curtains and blinds.
5. Make sure your sump pump is working.



## Give Your Extension Cord Some Respect

Next time you reach into the deep abyss of your junk drawer for an extension cord, what should you be thinking? (Besides the fleeting thought that it's time to clean out that junk drawer?) You should be giving your extension cord some love by inspecting it before you use it. Make sure it doesn't have any signs of wear like cracks or fraying. And if you can't remember when you purchased it, it's probably time to replace it.

Western Cooperative Electric is offering additional tips to keep you and your family safe while using this common household item found in junk drawers everywhere.

### Do NOT:

- ▶ Plug major appliances, such as a window air conditioner or refrigerator, into an extension cord ill-equipped for the job. Commonplace household extension cords (those that appear thin and flat and are often inexpensive) and power strips cannot handle surges.
- ▶ Cut the bottom lone prong off to fit in a two-prong receptacle. This could create a shock hazard.
- ▶ Stretch an extension cord.
- ▶ Drape cords in walkways where people could trip over them.
- ▶ Use an indoor-rated extension cord outdoors.
- ▶ Use extension cords near water sources (pools, sprinklers, puddles).



- ▶ "String" or lengthen cords by plugging one extension cord into another.
- ▶ Overheat or overload an extension cord, place under rugs or carpets in high-traffic areas, or (when using one outside) drive over one.
- ▶ Take your trusty friend, the extension cord, for granted. Give it a once-over and take care when using it, and it will serve you well.

### Make sure:

- ▶ The plug prongs and the slots of the extension cord match (two pronged versus three); never try to plug a three-pronged cord into a two-slotted outlet. If you have grounded outlets, it's time to upgrade to a three-pronged cord.
- ▶ The plug is fully inserted into the extension cord; unplug when not in use.
- ▶ You use the cord temporarily; have permanent wiring installed by an electrician if use is long term.
- ▶ The extension cord is certified by an independent testing laboratory.
- ▶ Cords used outdoors are plugged into a GFCI outlet.
- ▶ You store the cords indoors when not in use.

*Happy Father's Day!*