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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC NEWS

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An Introduction

Numrich Named New Member Services Manager

My name is Nolan Numrich and I am the new manager of member services at Western Cooperative Electric. I would like to take a few moments to introduce myself and provide a little insight into our member services team at the co-op.

For the past few years, I have worked in member relations for the electric cooperative industry. During this time, I have grown to really understand and ultimately respect the cooperative business model and the difference it makes within the communities we serve. I always refer to the seven cooperative principles that guide our decisions and put the needs of our members as our top priority as that “cooperative difference.”

The daily duties of our member services team include fielding most of the interactions between the members and co-op. Between running the billing cycle and fielding phone calls, the customer service representatives do a great job of helping our members with any questions they may have.

The member services department is also responsible for the communication between the cooperative and members, so anytime there is news at Western we do our best to make sure every member is informed. Traditionally, we have used notes attached to our bills or communicated through *Kansas Country*

Living magazine, but we will continue to expand the use of digital communications through our website and social media.

If you are not already following Western Cooperative Electric on Facebook, I encourage you to start.

Western uses social media to relay more timely information to the membership including possible phone scams actively taking place and large power outages with restoration updates.

Many of our members are already aware of Western’s various programs: Western Cares, Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, youth scholarships, Sharing Success grants, Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp and efficiency rebates to name a few. The member services team is eager to find different ways to add to the benefits of being a member of our cooperative.

Over the past month, I have had the opportunity to familiarize myself with Western’s service territory and many of the members. I am impressed with all the positive messages I have received and the praise the members have for the cooperative.

Over the past 75 years, all the dedicated linemen, customer service representatives, board of directors and



Nolan Numrich

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Western Welcomes New Employee

Western Cooperative Electric is happy to welcome **GINA DEAVER** to our electric cooperative family. Deaver began her role as housekeeper/custodian on July 1. Deaver, originally from WaKeeney, had spent some time living in Kansas City until she and her husband returned to WaKeeney 15 years ago to raise their two children. In her free time, Deaver enjoys cooking and reading. Western is lucky to have her as part of our team.



Gina Deaver

ENERGY STAR Appliances: Do They Really Save You Money?

If you are in the market for a new appliance, you might wonder if buying an ENERGY STAR®-certified version will make a difference in your energy bills.

The short answer is yes, when you compare its estimated energy costs to its less efficient counterpart.

In fact, there are really two costs to consider before buying an appliance: the purchase price and the projected monthly energy costs.

The energy-conscious appliances displaying the ENERGY STAR logo use 10-15% less energy and water than standard models, according to Energy.gov. For example, ENERGY STAR clothes washers use about 40% less energy than conventional clothes washers while also reducing water bills.

And the longer answer is yes, if you consider the appliance's lifespan. ENERGY STAR appliances and other products used throughout your home can save you a collective \$750 over their lifespan, according to Energy.gov. Besides appliances, there are other ENERGY STAR-certified products, such as lighting and electronics.

While selecting energy-saving designated appliances could have a slightly higher price tag, they don't always. Compare prices and don't assume they cost substantially more than

less efficient models.

The biggest bang for your energy-savings buck might be your refrigerator, especially if it is 15 years old or older. By replacing your old fridge with a new ENERGY STAR-certified model, you can save more than \$200 over a 12-year lifespan.

TIP: EnergyStar.gov offers a "Flip Your Fridge" calculator to estimate savings depending on the size and age of your largest kitchen appliance.

According to EnergyStar.gov, if every appliance purchased in the United States this year earned the ENERGY STAR designation, Americans would:

- ▶ Prevent greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to the emissions from 225,000 cars.
- ▶ Save more than 1.3 billion kWh/year of electricity.
- ▶ Save \$425 million in annual energy costs.
- ▶ Save more than 28 billion gallons of water per year. Includes ENERGY STAR-certified clothes washer, dishwasher, and refrigerator. Dollars savings reflect savings generated from the reduction of energy and water usage.

Bottom line? The typical U.S. family spends around \$2,200 a year on home utility bills. Switching to ENERGY STAR products can help lower these costs over time.

What's Your Appliance Safety IQ?

Clothes Dryer

Children have been electrocuted when hiding behind dryers; some pets also like to nap there.

Install a childproof lock on the laundry room door, as well as on your washer and dryer—especially front-loading models.

Clean lint screen between loads, and thoroughly clean the vents and duct system at least twice a year.

Make sure hoses, seals and connections do not leak and are secure.



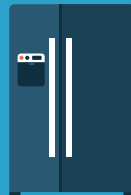
Refrigerator

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for maintenance.

Clean the coils every six months to a year.

Keep an eye out for dust or lint under or behind your fridge and remove it to let your refrigerator breathe.

If you have young children in your home, make sure your refrigerator is not a tipping hazard. Consider using an appliance anchor that secures your tall appliance to the wall.



Water Heater

Make sure your hot water heater is well-maintained.

Make sure it does not have excessive pressure buildup by testing the relief valve (or have it tested) at least once a year.

Ensure vents are connected securely and that the correct parts are used to avoid carbon monoxide production.

Have all components of the appliance inspected regularly (at least once a year) by a technician.





Be Aware of Electrical Hazards Around the Farm

- ▶ **DO NOT STACK OR STORE** items under power lines.
- ▶ **NON-METALLIC MATERIALS** (such as tree limbs, ropes and hay) can conduct electricity, depending on dampness and dust/dirt accumulation.
- ▶ **MAP OUT WHERE EQUIPMENT** will be moved to ensure it will clear power lines.
- ▶ **IF YOUR MACHINERY OR VEHICLE COMES IN CONTACT WITH A POWER LINE**, do not get out. Once contact has been made with a live line (even when your tractor or truck makes

contact), you are now a “pathway to ground” and you could get electrocuted if you step out. Instead, stay where you are and call 911 to dispatch the appropriate utility to de-energize the power.

- ▶ **IF YOU COME ACROSS AN ACCIDENT OR INCIDENT NEAR A DOWNED POWER LINE**, alert individuals (from a distance, at least 50 feet away) to stay in the tractor or vehicle as long as there is no imminent danger. Do not approach the scene.
- ▶ **ALWAYS LOOK UP** to avoid contact with overhead power lines.
- ▶ **ELECTRICAL CURRENT CAN JUMP** or arc so have 20 feet of clearance surrounding power lines at all times.
- ▶ **VISUALLY INSPECT FROM A SAFE DISTANCE OVERHEAD LINES.** If a wire is hanging low or is on the ground, consider it energized and stay away; call 911 to have the operator dispatch the utility.
- ▶ **ALWAYS USE A SPOTTER** who has a broad vantage point when working near power lines.
- ▶ **TRAIN WORKERS** to be aware of power line locations and teach them proper clearance distance.



An Introduction

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staff have built an incredibly strong relationship with the members we serve. I am honored to be part of this team and excited to continue providing our members with safe, affordable and reliable power.

If you have any questions about the various programs or anything regarding Western Cooperative Electric, please feel free to reach out to me anytime. I am here to serve you!

For more information on Western Cooperative Electric’s member programs visit westerncoop.com, follow us on Facebook or email me at nolann@westerncoop.com.

Help Keep Our Crews Safe

Orange road signs are not just for highway construction zones; they also apply to utility work zones. Slowing down before entering work zones helps save lives, including the lives of our crew members, who must often work roadside to maintain or restore power.

Cars or trucks that go too fast not only endanger workers on the ground, they can also put a lineworker who is working high up in a bucket in serious danger. The force created by fast-moving vehicles can cause work truck buckets to move or sway into high-voltage lines. Please, take extra care in work zones. Our crews and their families thank you.



POWER RESTORATION FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

When the power goes out, line crews work hard to restore service as quickly and safely as possible. Complete the fill-in-the-blank activity below to learn about the steps of power restoration. Use the word bank if you need help, and check your work in the answer key.



WORD BANK:

distribution
pads

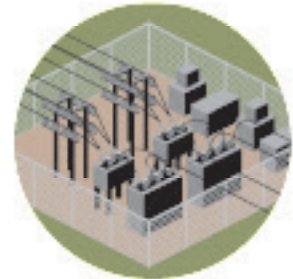
transformer
substations

transmission



1. High-voltage _____ lines are the large towers and cables that supply power to the greatest number of consumer-members. They rarely fail, but if they do, they have to be repaired first.

2. Next, crews inspect distribution _____ for damage. They determine if the problem stems from the lines feeding into the equipment itself, or if the problem is further down the line.



3. If the problem still can't be pinpointed, _____ power lines are inspected. These are the lines you typically see on the side of the road that deliver power to communities.

4. If the power outage persists, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers that are either mounted on poles or placed on _____ for underground electric service.



5. If your home remains without power, the service line between the _____ and your home may need repairs.

Answer Key: 1. transmission 2. substations 3. distribution 4. pads 5. transformer