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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC

NEWS

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It is Better to Give Than Receive

2020 has been a challenging year for many of our members. With so many uncertainties in the world, one thing is still true. People love to help others when they can.

Concern for the Community is one of the seven cooperative principles and a primary goal of Western Co-op. The Western Cares fund was established in 2016 to assist members who are having difficulty paying their electric bills. Western Cares is funded entirely through the kindness of our employees, members, and those who choose to participate in Operation Round-up.

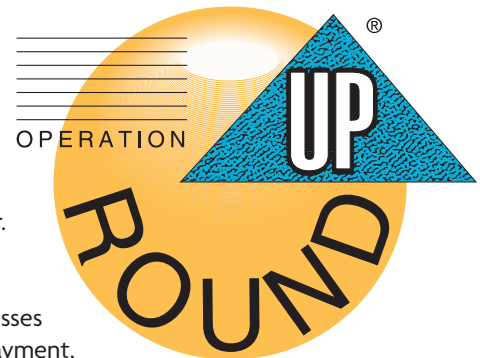
Operation Round-up allows members the opportunity to round their electric bill up to the nearest dollar, add in a monetary donation to their monthly electric bill, or make a one-time donation to the program. One hundred percent of the funds collected go toward Western Cares and helping out members to pay their electric bills.

"To be able to assist our members who may be facing hardships has been

incredibly helpful," said Vivian Russ, program coordinator.

"It seems like once a member misses that first payment, they get into a hole that can be difficult to get out of."

Currently, 338 members are funding Western Cares through Operation Round-up. All Western Cares applications are reviewed weekly and sent to the three-person panel consisting of a Western employee, board member, and independent community member. If approved, the applicant can receive up to \$200 in assistance.* To ensure funds are distributed fairly, anyone who receives Western Cares assistance is not eligible again for 12 months.



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Western Cooperative Crews Deploy to Assist with Oklahoma Power Restoration Efforts



Six Western Linemen traveled to Oklahoma to provide mutual aid following a devastating ice storm on Oct. 27. From left: Jake Arnold, Tyler Lang, Kurt Brock, Alan Austin, Kaleb Stefek and Dustin Wacker.

Freezing rain combined with high winds led to large power outages for parts of southwest Oklahoma on Oct. 27. Following the extensive damage to power lines and poles, Kansas electric cooperative line crews deployed to assist five Oklahoma cooperatives who requested mutual aid assistance. Organized by Kansas Electric Cooperatives,



Damage from the ice storm in Oklahoma caused outages for thousands of members.

Inc. (KEC), crews from 13 Kansas co-ops and one subsidiary responded to thousands of power outages caused by the storm.

In the case of a natural disaster or other extreme circumstances, electric utilities can request additional help from the surrounding cooperatives. By answering the call, Western Co-op lives up to our sixth Cooperative Principle Cooperation Among Cooperatives.

Six lineworkers and three bucket trucks left for Oklahoma the afternoon of Oct. 30 and returned Nov. 5. The linemen included Crew Foremen **KURT BROCK** and **TYLER LANG**, WaKeeney; **KALEB STEFEK** and **DUSTIN WACKER**, Ellsworth; and **ALAN AUSTIN** and **JAKE ARNOLD**, Plainville. In total, 93 lineworkers from 13 electric co-ops traveled to Oklahoma to help in the power restoration efforts.

“Whenever we can spare a few linemen to help other cooperatives around the state or nation, we do it because it may be us who need the

help the next time,” General Manager Tom Ruth, said. “Knowing there are organizations out there who will come to your aid gives our members the reassurance that if a disaster were to take place, they would be taken care of in a reasonable time frame.”

The Kansas crews who deployed worked seven days, with extended-hour shifts until power was restored to all residential meters. At one time, Oklahoma was reporting more than 4,000 downed poles. However, the state’s largest problems were downed power lines due to ice-covered tree limbs and leaves and extensive mud, which slowed access to some of the downed poles and lines.

In total, the Kansas crews were equipped with 23 bucket trucks, 14 digger trucks, pole trailers, foreman pickup trucks, and additional equipment. With a favorable weather forecast, crews were able to make quick work restoring all those households without power.

Fall ElectroRally Season Wraps-up

The Fall ElectroRally season concluded following the race in Hoisington on Oct. 14. Although additional safety precautions were taken to ensure the participants' and volunteers' safety, students still brought their highly competitive spirit to the track.

The Fall ElectroRally season consisted of two races in Hays and Hoisington. Some schools opted out of the competitions due to concerns about COVID-19, while those teams who did participate practiced social distancing and wore masks.

Western Cooperative is proud to sponsor the local area high school programs at Wheatland High School, Hays High

School, and Hoisington High School.

"With the spring races canceled, many of the students were ready to get back on the track," said Member Services Manager Nolan Numrich. "The teams are always working hard to improve their cars and racing set-ups, so allowing them the opportunity to compete safely was essential to the Kansas ElectroRally Board of Directors."

Following the vehicle inspections and safety checks, teams compete in a one-hour timed race. The longest distance traveled in the hour determines the winners. For more information, visit www.kansaselectrorally.org.



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1. Kansas ElectroRally participants received pre-race instructions prior to the race at Frontier Park in Hays on Sept. 24. 2. Hays High School receives sponsorship check from Western Cooperative Electric. 3. Hoisington High School receives sponsorship check from Western. 4. Cars compete to see who can travel the farthest distance in one hour. 5. Wheatland High School receives sponsorship check. 6. Western Cooperative's Bob McCoy (right) registers participants.

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR
WASHINGTON, D.C.
JUNE 14-21, 2021

COOPERATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP
COLORADO
JULY 16-22, 2021

FREE TRIP & \$250 SCHOLARSHIP
APPLY BY **DEC. 18**
CONTACT **CHRISTINA LOWRY**

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THE SAFETY OF OUR STUDENTS AND CHAPERONES IS OUR TOP PRIORITY. IF THE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR OR COOPERATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP ORGANIZERS BELIEVE THAT TRAVEL IS UNSAFE DUE TO CONCERNS WITH THE CORONAVIRUS (OR ANY OTHER ACTS OF TERRORISM, DISASTER, CIVIL DISORDER, OR CURTAILMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES), THE TRIP WILL BE CANCELED.

It is Better to Give Than Receive *Continued from page 16A* ▶

“Western has always focused on taking care of our members and having a concern for the communities we serve,” said Nolan Numrich, manager of member services. “Being able to facilitate generosity through Western Cares is incredibly heartening. Knowing our members are so generous makes serving them a pleasure.”

With Christmas just around the corner and “Giving Tuesday” on Dec. 1, our goal is to have 500 members participating in Operation Round-up by the end of the year. If a member opts-in to the traditional bill round-up program, the maximum amount given in a year will be less than \$12. Those little donations can make a big difference in the lives of our members.

Please call for more information or visit Westerncoop.com to sign-up for Operation Round-up, and donate to a worthy cause.

***Western Cares funds are not intended for organizations; individuals only. Applications for assistance will only be accepted from members. Funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis. WCE employees and board members are ineligible for this assistance. Funds awarded will first be applied to your WCE account. If after bringing the account to a \$0 balance, there is money left over, it will be returned to the Western Cares fund. If the awarded amount**

DOES NOT fully cover the WCE bill, the balance of the bill will remain outstanding.

Set the water heater temperature to 120 degrees.	Get a water heater blanket.	Turn off the lights when you leave a room.	Seal air leaks around windows, doors, plumbing, etc.
<h1>20 NEW YEAR'S 21 Energy Saving</h1> <p>RESOLUTIONS YOU CAN AFFORD TO KEEP</p>			Unplug electronics and chargers not in use.
			Run only full loads in the washer or dishwasher
Replace regular bulbs with CFL or LED lightbulbs.	Adjust your thermostat when going to bed or leaving the home.	Use a programmable thermostat.	