

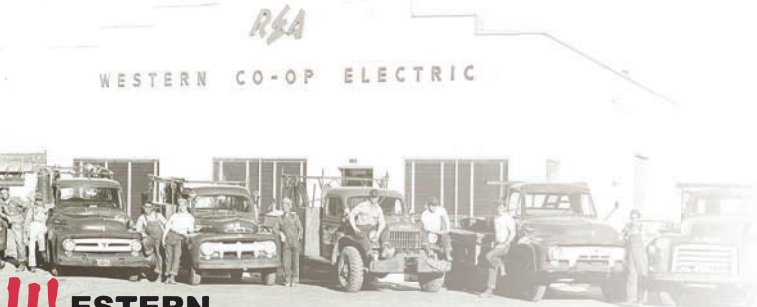
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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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**WESTERN  
COOPERATIVE  
ELECTRIC**

# WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC NEWS

**Western Cooperative  
Electric, Inc.**

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**Tom Ruth**  
General Manager

## Contact Us

635 S. 13th Street  
P.O. Box 278, WaKeeney, KS 67672  
785-743-5561  
FAX: 785-743-2717  
[www.westerncoop.com](http://www.westerncoop.com)

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Be sure to LIKE us on Facebook! Just go to [www.facebook.com/WesternCoopElectric](http://www.facebook.com/WesternCoopElectric) to find co-op news, energy tips, photos from co-op events and more!



## Western Retires Nearly \$1 Million in Capital Credits

If you were a member of Western Cooperative Electric in 2005, you recently received your share of the retired operating margins from 2005 in the form of a capital credit check.

In December, Western Co-op distributed \$914,508.50 to our 2005 consumer-members. Based on electric usage and the dollar amount paid to Western Co-op, each member received their share of the retired year's excess capital.

Due to the financial strains caused by the economic downturn, Western's board of trustees elected to retire half the allocated amount. The board plans to retire the other half over the next two years, depending on the co-op's financial stability.

"We still have a strong financial position, but this was a necessary step to protect the co-op during uncertain times. Western's goal is to strive to maintain a 15-year retirement cycle, and we will be working hard to reach that

goal again within the next two years," said CFO Stacey Malsam.

Unlike investor-owned utilities, which only pay dividends to a small group of shareholders, electric cooperatives return excess revenue to all the consumer-members we serve. Capital credits are one of the biggest perks of being a consumer-member of a co-op and a large part of the cooperative difference.

In the past, when compared to other electric cooperatives, Western Cooperative has consistently retired capital credits faster than the state and national averages. Dependably retiring capital credits is a point of pride for the Western board of trustees.

"The annual retirement of capital credits is one of Western Cooperative's top goals," said General Manager Tom Ruth, "Members' Economic Participation is a cooperative principal and one of the many benefits of being a consumer-

*Continued on page 16D ▶*



## VISIT

[westerncoop.com/capital-credits/unclaimed](http://westerncoop.com/capital-credits/unclaimed)  
to see if you have unclaimed capital credits!

# TOP 10 Social Media

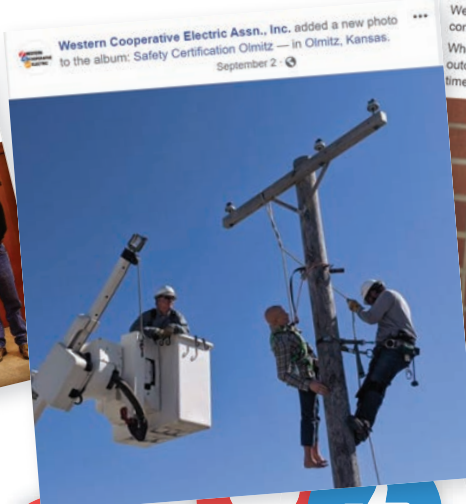
## Posts of the Year

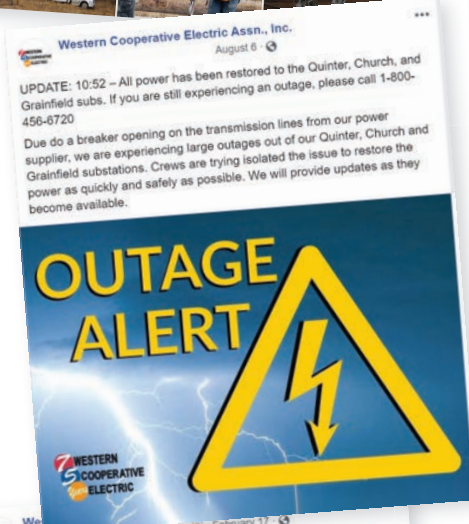
Typically, New Year's Day is used for two things, weight loss resolutions and Top 10 lists. While we cannot help you lose that 10 pounds, we can look back at our Top 10 social media posts of the year.

We all might celebrate a little more than usual this New Year's Day. The last year has been plagued with uncertainty and turmoil. However, looking back at the top social media posts of the year, it is clear Western's consumer-members appreciate our employees and the work they do to keep the lights on.

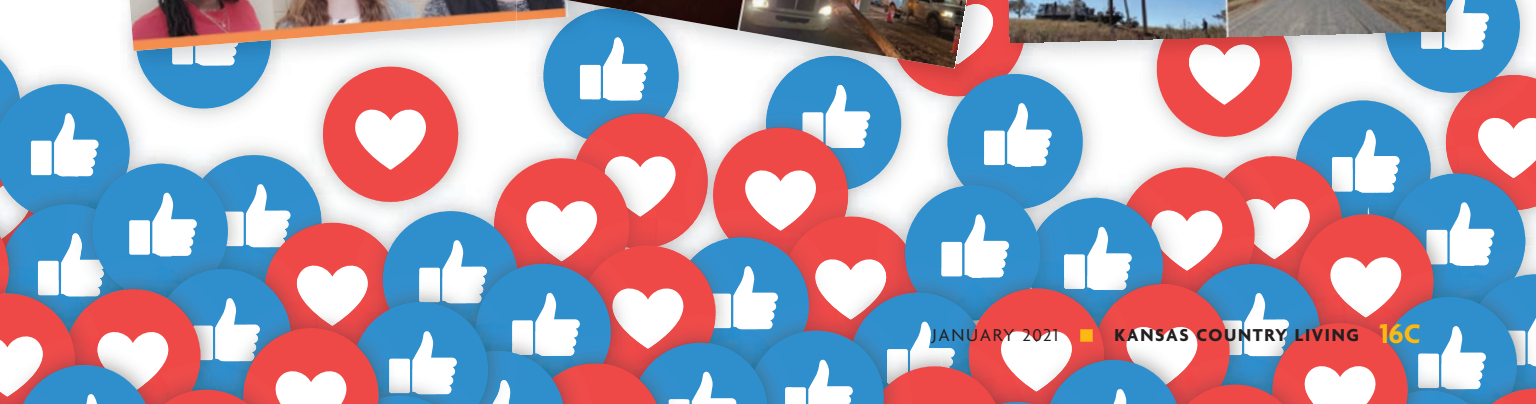
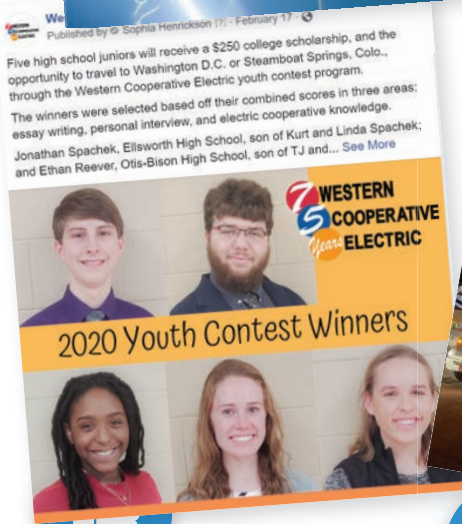
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No matter what is happening across the country, locally, we are here to serve our members. Our dedication to those we serve is something we will eagerly carry over into 2021. Happy New Year from Western!





Follow Western Co-op for large outage alerts and estimated restoration times, co-op updates, Youth Tour opportunities and more!



## Stahl Retires After 43 Years of Service

After 43 years of serving as a lineman in the Plainville area, **GREG STAHL** is ready to hang up his gaffs. Stahl's career began in February 1978 as a lineman apprentice for Western Light and Telephone.

"When I started, we didn't use buckets (bucket trucks) like we do now. I used to love to climb poles to do linework," Stahl recalls. "Back then, you probably would have seen us with no shirts on doing linework in the summertime. A lot has changed since then, much of it for the better."

Besides doing more work from bucket trucks, Stahl says other significant changes have been in the tools linemen use and the safety protocols. Although working with high voltage is inherently dangerous, better tools and safety procedures have made linework safer now than it has ever been. "During my time we never had a serious injury from an electrical contact," Stahl proudly stated.

Western Cooperative Electric acquired the Rooks County service territory from Aquila in 2007. However, over the last 43 years, there have been several companies and name changes to the electrical distribution

in the area. Even while experiencing several management changes, Stahl's dedication to the job has always remained constant.

"I tried to count all the guys I worked with over the years. I got up to 65. It makes things easier when you work with so many good people," Stahl said.

Field Supervisor Jerry Casey has worked with Stahl for the past 37 years. "Greg was a guiding hand for me when I started and through the years he has been a dependable, steady employee," Casey said. "I could always count on Greg, and I had total confidence in his work and his suggestions on work procedures. Not only myself, but the entire crew will miss his experience and knowledge. We all hope he enjoys his retirement."

Stahl and his wife, Susan, have two sons, Josh and Jason. During his retirement, Stahl plans to do some work on his farmhouse and spend time with his three grandchildren.

"I am not going to miss working in the cold or through storms," Stahl said with a half-smile on his face. "But it comes with the job. If someone is



After 43 years of service, Greg Stahl (left) receives a plaque from General Manager Tom Ruth to commemorate his retirement.

without power, it is our job to restore service. No matter the time or weather conditions."

"Greg has demonstrated exemplary and professional service throughout his career," said General Manager Tom Ruth. "He is a true professional and leaves big boots to fill when he retires. Greg has made a significant impact on all of us. His quiet generosity leaves no doubt he cares about others. We will certainly miss him but wish Greg and his family the very best in life and the years ahead."

## Western Retires Nearly \$1 Million in Capital Credits *Continued from page 16A*

### CAPITAL CREDITS: REAPING THE BENEFITS OF BEING A CO-OP MEMBER



When a person establishes service with us, they become a member and are eligible for capital credits.



The allocated funds are used as operating capital for system improvements and maintenance.



Capital credits represent a member's share of the co-op's margins during the time they have membership.



Every year, the board evaluates the financial condition of the co-op to determine if we can retire capital credits. When the board decides to retire capital credits, we calculate the amount owed to each member.



Capital credits are earned by every member based on the amount of their electric use.



Current members who received electricity during the retirement period will receive a percentage of capital credits retirements through a check from the co-op.



At the end of the fiscal year, any funds (margins) remaining after expenses have been paid are allocated to the member's account.



Former members who received electricity during the time period being retired will be mailed a check to the forwarding address on record.

member of Western."

For FAQs and more information about capital credits visit [westerncoop.com/capital-credits](http://westerncoop.com/capital-credits).

### Moved Recently? No Longer a Member of Western?

If your forwarding address is not updated, you may have unclaimed capital credits. To search a list of members with outstanding payments, visit [WESTERNCOOP.COM/CAPITAL-CREDITS/UNCLAIMED](http://WESTERNCOOP.COM/CAPITAL-CREDITS/UNCLAIMED).