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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC NEWS

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Tom Ruth
General Manager

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co-op news, energy tips, photos from co-op events and more!

FROM THE MANAGER

Thank You for Attending Western's Annual Meeting



Tom Ruth

I want to personally thank all of the members and guests who attended Western Co-op's 76th Annual Meeting. After canceling our annual meeting last year due

to the pandemic, Western's board of trustees were eager to hold this year's meeting in person. Having the opportunity to share a meal and interact with our members was a blessing.

A special thank you to all of our guest speakers, Sunflower Electric President and CEO Stuart Lowry

and Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. CEO Lee Tafanelli, and Kansas Representatives Steven Johnson, Barbara Wasinger, Ken Rahjes and Jim Minnix. The Kansas legislature recently adjourned from session and Representatives had an opportunity to address our membership with insight into some of the issues facing Kansans.

During the meeting, we showed videos detailing the 2020 financial report and the manager's report. These videos can be found on our website and address the challenges faced by Western Co-op during 2020 and how we overcame those

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Many members were in attendance for the 2021 Western Cooperative Electric Annual Meeting. Thank you to those who attended and took part in the business of your cooperative! It was great to be able to gather together after a year apart.

Welcome to SmartHub!

Life is fast, and it can be hectic, but paying your bill doesn't have to be complicated. With our SmartHub web and mobile app, it won't be. We wanted to take the opportunity to give you some valuable information that will help you prepare for the launch of SmartHub.

What Is Smarthub and What's in it for You?

You may have heard about SmartHub, our innovative tool for account management, but what can it do for you? SmartHub can help you take control of your account like never before.

SmartHub has several features that make managing your account as easy as possible. Whether through the web, or your smartphone or tablet (Android or iOS), you'll be able to pay your bill, contact customer service and get the latest news.

As soon as you log in, you'll be able to view your billing history and make a payment with just a couple of clicks. You'll be able to see your current

bill, along with bills from the previous months.

Making payments through SmartHub is fast and easy. The first time you make a payment either through the web or your mobile device, you'll be able to securely store your payment information for future transactions. The next time you need to pay your bill, it will only take a few clicks.

You'll also be able to see important notices with SmartHub. You'll be able to select how you want to be notified about your bill, including email and text messaging.

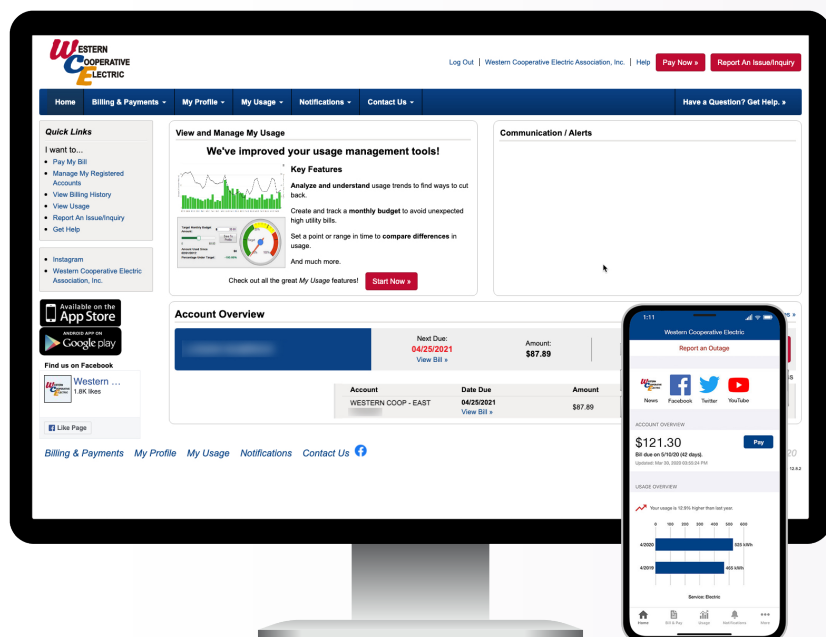
Reporting a service issue is a snap with the SmartHub mobile app. There's no need to call the office, just let us know about the issue with a few clicks. You can also contact us for customer service requests or with any questions you may have. You can now contact us at any time from anywhere.

Locating Your Account Number

Because this is a new billing system for us that integrates with many new features it will mean a slight change to your account number. There will no longer be dashes. For example, account #12345-001 will now be account #12345001. You can find your account number on your monthly bill.

How Will You Register for Smarthub?

After we launch on **JUNE 14**, we will be operating through a new billing and payment system called SmartHub. In order for you to continue to receive an electronic bill, as well as pay your bill online, you are required to re-register as a new user through SmartHub.



SMART MANAGEMENT. SMART

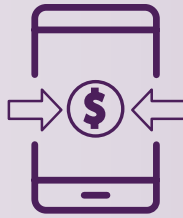
On the go and in control ... Manage your account like never before

- ▶ When you get to the SmartHub login screen, click the **NEW USER**.
- ▶ **SIGNUP TO ACCESS OUR SELF SERVICE SITE** link at the bottom of the screen.
- ▶ Use your account number to register for SmartHub.
- ▶ After you have successfully registered with SmartHub, you'll be emailed a temporary password to login for the first time.
- ▶ The first time you log in, you'll be asked to create your new password.
- ▶ Once you register for your online account, you will need to update your payment options.
- ▶ **PLEASE NOTE** — Recurring Card Auto Pay members will need to enter their debit/credit card information into the new SmartHub system.
- ▶ At the end of the registration process, we encourage you to select our paperless billing option so you can receive your new bill immediately, no matter where you are at.

After we launch, we will be providing detailed information on how to download our free, secure SmartHub app from the Apple or Google Play stores.

Where You Can Get Your Questions Answered?

If you have any questions or issues with the registration process, you may contact us by sending an email to western@westerncoop.com or calling 1-800-456-6720. We will also have answers to frequently asked questions at westerncoop.com/smarthub.



Smart
PAYMENTS



Smart
COMMUNICATION



Smart
ENVIRONMENT



Smart
USAGE

Annual Meeting

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challenges to provide our members with safe, reliable and affordable electric service.

In addition to the manager's report, Lowry provided a video update on Winter Storm Uri. Also, and Western employees created a video explaining how Western was able to overcome challenges faced by COVID-19. If you could not attend the meeting in person, I encourage you to view the annual meeting videos at westerncoop.com/annual-meeting or on our social media pages.

After the guest speakers and cooperative updates, Board Attorney E. Jay Denies presented the results of the trustee election. Incumbents Marvin Keller, Craig Crossland, and Landon Heier were elected to three-year terms, and Board President Craig Crossland adjourned the meeting.

Looking to the future, you will notice several changes to Western's customer care and billing starting in June. Western employees have been working for months in preparation for this software conversion.

In addition to a new detailed bill design, consumers will have access to the SmartHub app for their phones and computers. These improvements will allow Western's consumer-members to have more functionality, features and information on their electric accounts and usage. Be on the lookout for communications via our website and social media accounts regarding the new bill design and how to sign up for SmartHub.

Western has overcome many challenges over the past year, and we look forward to the future of finding new ways to better serve our members. Regardless of the challenges we face, Western's focus remains on our consumer-members and serving you with safe, reliable, and affordable electricity.

T LIFE. SMARTHUB.

Otis-Bison KAY Donates to Western Cares

Since 1946, the Kansas Association for Youth (KAY) has sought to empower Kansas students with lifetime leadership skills and a service attitude toward others. All students grades 6-12 can join KAY through their school to build the skills necessary to become community leaders.

Currently, the Otis-Bison High School-Middle School KAY has 45 participants. When asked why he joined KAY, Otis-Bison junior, Peyton Butler said, "I like doing things for the community, helping people, and having fun doing it."

Over the past school year, KAY members have been raising money through their KAY Cares for Our Community fundraising project. To help community members who have faced recent hardships, students sold trash bags, dip mixes, dry rubs, and pasta salad mixes. Their efforts raised \$2,000 to support community members and organizations.

"KAY is somewhere everyone can belong," said Annalee Crotinger, club co-sponsor. "We have a diverse group of students who participate with many different backgrounds. What these students all have in common is a desire to make a difference in our communities."

KAY members were responsible for generating ideas for where to direct funds. Sixth-grader Travis Ross nominated the Western Cares Program. After club approval, Western Cares received a \$400 donation on behalf of the Otis-Bison KAY.

"The Western Cares program was established as a way for



From left: Kendal Dalton, Nevaeh McVey, Kaylee Ficken, Peyton Butler, WCE Member Services Manager Nolan Numrich, Travis Ross, Chase Mitchell, and Alleyneah McVey

our members to help others who may be struggling to pay their electric bills," said Nolan Numrich, member services manager. "With all of the hardships of the past year, we have seen an increase in Western Cares requests, so I was thrilled to hear the students had selected Western Cares as a recipient."

One-hundred percent of donations to Western Cares and funds collected through Operation Round-Up are used to assist members in paying their electric bills.

Crotinger added, "KAY is a tradition at Otis-Bison. Siblings, parents, families, generationally continue to find ways to make positive changes in their communities and to become leaders in the process."

To apply for Western Cares assistance visit westerncoop.com/western-cares and complete the online form, or call the office at 785-743-5561 or 1-800-456-6720.



Otis-Bison Kansas Association for Youth (KAY) raised \$2,000 for community members who have experienced recent hardships.