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WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC **NEWS**

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2021 Youth Leadership Winners

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the 2021 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., and Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, are canceled. In response, the Western Cooperative Electric Board of Trustees approved four \$1,000 scholarships for qualifying students, along with our \$250 Darrell Brown Memorial scholarship.

Scholarships were open to high school juniors whose parent or guardian is a Western member. Three components factored into the student's scores: a written essay, an open book exam and a virtual interview with three judges.

Member Services Manager Nolan Numrich said, "Although it was unfortunate we are unable to send students on the youth trips, we had an incredible group of students competing for the scholarships." All of the students put forth their best effort, which was resulted in an extremely tight competition. Out of 425 points possible, only five points separated the top five.

The 2021 scholarship winners are **MAGGIE BRULL**, TMP-Marian High School; **BROOKE HERRMAN**, LaCrosse High School; **LAUREN PATMON**, Golden Plains High School; and **TRYA SCHULTZ**, Wheatland High School.

The fifth-place runner-up, **YOUSOPH MOSTAFA**, Ellsworth High School, will receive the \$250 Darrell Brown Memorial Scholarship.



Maggie Brull



Brooke Herrman



Lauren Patmon



Trya Schultz



Yousoph Mostafa

"Going through a formal interview as a 16 or 17-year-old can be intimidating, but all the students did an amazing job," said Numrich. "I think it speaks to the quality of youth being raised in our rural communities and provides a glimpse into the bright future that lies ahead."

In addition to the scholarships, Kansas Electric Cooperatives (KEC) plans to hold a virtual leadership conference in June for contest winners from across the state. During the Kansas Electric Youth Leadership (KEY) Conference, students will have the opportunity to speak with state legislators, motivational speakers and develop leadership skills for the future.

For more information on Western's Youth Programs, visit westerncoop.com/youth-tour.

On the Farm: Handle Irrigation Equipment with Care

A central-pivot or other type of irrigation system is equipment that many farmers rely on to water crops. The systems can run on electricity or by other means such as water pressure.

Western Cooperative Electric and Safe Electricity would like to remind anyone in the agricultural industry that moving irrigation pipes can be extremely dangerous around power lines. The watering pipes can be made of aluminum, a great conductor of electricity.

Irrigation Safety Tips

- ▶ Be extremely careful when assembling or moving long sections of irrigation pipes.
- ▶ Always consider your location and the length of the pipe you are holding.
- ▶ Make sure the pipe's long reach will not come near or into contact with power lines.
- ▶ If the pipe touches or comes too close to a power line, you could be electrocuted.
- ▶ Do not store, handle or assemble irrigation pipes under or near overhead power lines.
- ▶ In fact, do not store or park anything under power lines.

Installation and Maintenance

Although farmers are usually great at fixing anything and everything, it's a good idea to have a qualified electrician install and maintain your irrigation's electrical system, which must meet National Electrical Code. Hire an electrician who is experienced and well-versed in irrigation systems.

You might take for granted your irrigation electricals are working properly, but they need proper attention:

- ▶ If your electrically driven center-pivot system is not working correctly, it could be deadly or hazardous.
- ▶ If electrical equipment or wiring is faulty, you could get shocked or electrocuted.



Irrigation pipes are often made of aluminum, a great conductor of electricity, so be extremely careful when assembling or working with irrigation systems and equipment.

- ▶ Irrigation systems run by an electric motor must be properly grounded with copper piping.
 - ▶ A system's electricals should have a fuse or some means of disconnection.
 - ▶ If lightning strikes your irrigation equipment, it could mean that the system is no longer grounded.
 - ▶ Always shut off and lock the master control switch before servicing the machine.
 - ▶ Inspect the pump and wiring before the start of each irrigation season and consult your electrician with any concerns.
- In general, talk to everyone in your family (including kids and teens) about the dangers of moving pipes. Teach irrigation safety to all staff and seasonal workers. Family members or workers might try to rearrange pipes for coverage or move them to free an animal and not realize how close they are to an overhead power line. In addition, they may try to use an electrical system that is damaged or not properly grounded.
- We care about your safety. Please contact us with any concerns about electrical issues, power lines, irrigation equipment or any other safety concerns related to electricity.

Laramie Moyer Accepts Internship at Western



Laramie Moyer

LARAMIE MOYER recently accepted a spring semester internship with the member services department at Western. Her internship opportunity was made possible through the Dane G. Hansen internship program and Fort Hays State University (FHSU) Career Services.

Moyer is currently a junior at FHSU majoring in organizational communication and plans to work in human resources or communications after graduation.

"I chose Western because I felt we shared common values, and I thought I could learn a lot from the people there," said Moyer.

During her time at Western, Moyer will manage the social media accounts, prepare for the annual meeting, and many other tasks related to member communications.

"I haven't been here long, but I already have learned so much about the cooperative business model," said Moyer. "Throughout this internship, I hope to learn how to develop a communications plan and be an effective manager."

She is the daughter of Ronnie and Becky Moyer. As a Washington County High School student, she participated in Kansas High School Rodeo. In her spare time, Moyer enjoys traveling, kayaking and attending church.

Cold Weather Rule Ends March 15

Spring is just around the corner, and with it, warmer weather. Western would like to issue a friendly reminder to our consumer-members that the cold weather and collection policy ends on March 15. For more information regarding Western Cooperative Electric's policies, visit westerncoop.com.



Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) Application Deadline March 31

LIEAP is a federally-funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per year benefit. The 2021 LIEAP application period runs from Jan. 4 to March 31. For more information or to apply for assistance, visit www.dcf.ks.gov/services/ees/Pages/EnergyAssistance.aspx.

Western Co-op Employee Service Awards

Western Cooperative Electric recently acknowledged nine employees for their dedication to their jobs and the consumer-members Western serves.

"It was my pleasure to recognize the employees who have reached milestones in their careers, and to thank them all personally for their commitment," said General Manager Tom Ruth.

In recognition of their five-year interval achievements, employees received a certificate and a pin from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) denoting the number of years of service.

"An organization is only as good as the people who work there," said Ruth. "We are truly blessed to have employees who embody the cooperative spirit and are so dedicated to the service of others. Without all years of hard work and commitment to our members by our employees, Western would not be the outstanding organization it is today."

Years of Service Awards

5 YEARS



Chase Newell

10 YEARS



Dalton Nuttle

15 YEARS



Nathan Budig



Ashley Garrett



Melissa Sherfick



Sandy Smith

20 YEARS



Thomas Bayuk



Christina Lowry

30 YEARS



Kenny Flax

We're featuring our service awards recipients on social media to show our appreciation for their dedication to the co-op. Make sure to follow Western Electric Cooperative on Facebook and leave a comment thanking the award recipients during our #ServiceAwardSaturday campaign.

Record-breaking cold
temperatures

Voluntary energy
conservation

Service interruptions

Dear Consumer-members

Thank you for your understanding throughout the national energy emergency. During those uncertain days, our members faced unprecedented challenges. We appreciate your cooperation and understanding during such difficult circumstances. Also, thank you for all the kind words of encouragement for our lineworkers, who faced harsh weather and difficult working conditions. Many people coming together to overcome hardships is the epitome of the cooperative spirit and makes us proud to serve you.

*Sincerely,
Western Cooperative*

