



An Equal Opportunity Provider & Employer

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC

NEWS

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FROM THE MANAGER

It's a Matter of Principles



Tom Ruth

All cooperatives adhere to the same set of seven principles that reflect our core values of honesty, transparency, and service to the community. Oc-

tober is National Co-op Month, so this is the perfect time to reflect on these principles that have stood the test of time but also provide a framework for the future. Let's take a look at the first three cooperative principles.

Voluntary and Open Membership

Just like all co-ops, Western was created out of necessity — to meet a need that would have been otherwise gone unmet in our community.

So in 1945, a group of neighbors banded together and organized our electric co-op so everyone in our community could benefit. For a modest membership fee to the co-op, any farmer could get electricity brought to his farm.

Neighbors came together to tackle a problem that they all had but couldn't solve alone. They worked together for the benefit of the whole community, and the newly established electric lines

helped power economic opportunity in our communities.

While this history may be forgotten, key parts of that heritage remain — the focus on our mission and serving the greater good. We call on everyone to improve the quality of life and economic opportunity for the entire community. Membership is open to everyone in our service territory, regardless of race, religion, age, disability, language, political perspective or socioeconomic status.

Democratic Member Control

Our co-op is well suited to meet the needs of our members because we are locally governed. Each member gets a voice and a vote in how the co-op is run, and each voice and vote are equal. Western's leadership team and employees live right here in the community. Our board of directors, who helps set long-term priorities for the co-op, also live locally on co-op lines. These board members have been elected by neighbors just like you. We know our members have a valuable perspective, and that's why we encourage you to participate in co-op elections.

Members' Economic Participation

As a utility, our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to our members. But as a co-op, we are also

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Help is on the Way: Safety is a Top Priority

At Western Cooperative, safety is one of our top priorities. When our crews are doing line work, it is not uncommon for them to be miles away from first responders. If an emergency were to arise, it is vital crew members have the training to safely lower the injured person down to the ground, begin first aid care, and wait for emergency crews to arrive.

As part of their annual safety training, linemen go through pole-top and bucket rescue drills. To maintain safety certification, every lineman in the company must don climbing and safety gear, climb the pole, secure a rope around the “injured man,” and lower him to the ground.

Should an accident occur, the first step is to call 911 or radio in a “mayday” to the office in the case of no cell service. Member Service Representatives (MSRs) monitor radio traffic and keep tabs on linemen performing “hotwork” with live power lines. If a lineman ever radios a mayday call for help, the MSRs are responsible for directing emergency services to the location of the injured lineman.

“In addition to the linemen perform-

ing a pole-top rescue, this year we tried to incorporate all the employees into our emergency drills,” said Safety Manager Jay Scott. “By involving the MSRs and having them go through their steps of calling for EMS, we know in a real-life emergency help will be on the way as quickly as possible.”

When starting a rescue operation from an electrical pole, there are additional factors linemen must consider. Before starting the rescue recovery, they must ensure neither the victim nor the pole is energized. After lowering the injured person to the ground, crew members will perform first aid until first responders arrive on location.

“In an emergency, the most important thing is to remain calm and take the proper steps. Following safety procedures ensures no one else gets harmed during a rescue operation,” said Scott.

Being prepared for the worst-case scenarios is something all Western Co-



Member Service Representative Shelli Nowlin receives a mayday call for help during Western’s annual pole-top rescue training.

op employees take seriously. Working with high voltage makes linework inherently dangerous. Relying on the quick thinking of your co-workers could mean the difference between life and death.

Although annual pole-top and bucket rescue are only a small part of the safety program, they are vital. Through annual training, crew linemen give themselves the best opportunity to act as first responders and possibly save their co-workers’ lives.



Lineman Apprentice Dalton Hensley begins first aid while he waits for emergency medical services to arrive.



Journeyman Lineman Tyler Renard performs pole-top rescue as Kaleb Stefek observes.

Discuss Electrical Safety With Kids

Often, when the topic of electronics and children comes up, the conversation gravitates toward the pros and cons of screen time. However, an often-overlooked topic is how to talk to your children about the potential safety hazards associated with electronics, sources of electricity, and their environment in general. As soon as children can walk, parents and caregivers should discuss how to be safe around electricity, both inside the home and when playing outdoors.

Share these outdoor safety tips with children of all ages:

- ▶ Do not touch or go near a sagging or downed power line. Instead, tell an adult to call the electric utility to report it.
- ▶ Never climb trees near power lines.
- ▶ Fly kites, model airplanes, remote-control flying toys and drones in large, open areas, such as parks or fields, far away from power lines. If any of these items (or any item or object) gets caught in a power line, never try to retrieve it. Tell an adult to call the electric utility for help.
- ▶ Never fly kites or other toys when a thunderstorm may be approaching.
- ▶ Never climb a utility pole or tower. The electricity carried through this equipment could kill you.
- ▶ Never go into an electric substation for any reason. Electric substations contain high-voltage equipment, which can kill you. Never rescue a pet or retrieve a ball or toy that goes inside the fenced area surrounding a substation. Tell an adult to call the electric utility instead.
- ▶ Always stay away from outdoor electrical equipment marked “keep out,” “high voltage” or “danger.”
- ▶ Do not play, sit or climb on a padmount transformer, a.k.a. green box. Note to adults: While green boxes are typically safe to be around, it is better to leave this equipment

alone just in case a box has become unlocked or vandalized, or the contents or box have become damaged in some way — by a roadside accident or unwelcomed varmints or ants. Please call us to report an unlocked cabinet or any signs of damage.

Additionally, share the following indoor safety tips with children:

- ▶ Do not play with electrical cords or plugs.
- ▶ Younger children should ask an adult before plugging in or unplugging something. In addition, never pull or tug on cords. Instead, gently pull the plug out of the wall by grasping the plug, not the cord.
- ▶ Do not touch or use cords that appear damaged.
- ▶ Keep cords away from heat and water.
- ▶ Never stick fingers, tongues, toys or other body parts or objects into electrical outlets or light sockets.
- ▶ Never sleep with phones, tablets or other electronics in the bed or under a pillow. The electronic device can overheat or experience a short in the charging cable, causing bedding to catch on fire, burns to the skin or electric shock.
- ▶ Never play with electronic toys or gadgets in the bathtub or other water.
- ▶ Never touch appliances, switches, outlets, sockets, cords or plugs with wet hands or standing in water. Parents should keep towels near bathroom and kitchen sinks, so little hands can be dried right after they are washed.

Many electrical injuries and fires can be prevented. It is never too early or too late to start talking about electrical safety with your children and loved ones. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

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Visit www.westerncoop.com/SmartHub for details

Matter of Principles

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motivated by service to the community, rather than profits. Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of Western. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for co-op programs, initiatives, capital investments and supporting other activities approved by the membership. Because we are guided by Seven Cooperative Principles, it's not just about dollars — it's about opportunity for all and being fair when engaging with our members. The cooperative way is a values-based business model. Western Cooperative is a reflection of our local community and its evolving needs. We view our role as a catalyst for good and making our corner of the world a better place. This sums up the Seventh Co-op Principle, Concern for Community, which our cooperative routinely celebrates.



Have a Safe and Happy Halloween!

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Old, uninsulated and improperly installed exterior doors can waste energy and money. Shut the door on wasted energy by weather stripping and sealing all exterior doors. If you have an old exterior door, consider replacing it with a newer, energy-efficient model. **SOURCE: ENERGY.GOV**



UNDERSTANDING THE SEVEN COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

Cooperatives around the world operate according to the same set of core principles and values, adopted by the International Co-operative Alliance. These principles are a key reason why America's electric cooperatives operate differently from other electric utilities, putting the needs of our members first.



1 VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP

Co-ops are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.



2 DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

Co-ops are organizations owned and controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In co-ops, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote).



3 MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-op. They usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the co-op, setting up reserves, benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-op, and supporting other activities approved by the membership.



4 AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

Co-ops are self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-op autonomy.



5 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Co-ops provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-ops.



6 COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

Co-ops serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-op movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.



7 CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

While focusing on member needs, co-ops work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.