

## Holiday Closing



In observance of Memorial Day  
Western's office will be closed on  
Monday, May 25

**Have a Safe Holiday!**

## Happy Mother's Day



Western would like to wish all  
mothers a happy  
Mother's Day on May 10.

Join Us at Western's  
**2009 Annual Meeting**  
Wednesday, May 13

Western Cooperative Electric's Office  
(I-70 exit 128 and Hwy 283, 635 South 13<sup>th</sup> St, WaKeeney)  
Registration begins at 5:30 p.m.  
Catered meal served at 6 p.m.  
Meeting begins at 7 p.m.

Door Prizes      Trustee Elections  
Prize Drawings      Ice Cream

**We hope to see you there!**

# Tips to Stay Safe Around Electricity

*May is Electric Safety Month*

After a chilling winter, summertime is around the corner! The school year is ending, the weather is warm, the grill is hot, and the pools are cool.

It's time to make sure family members remember to have fun and be safe at the same time.

Be careful using electrical appliances outdoors. Whether it is a bug zapper, an electric charcoal lighter, or a radio or CD player, caution must be exercised. Be sure you use outlets that have weatherproof covers and ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) to prevent serious shock injuries. Use portable GFCIs for outdoor outlets that don't have them.

Children, as well as adults, often do not understand the dangers of electricity.

Be especially careful with

the use of extension cords outside, check them carefully for exposed wires; make sure they are in good shape, and not frayed or cracked. Use only extension cords that are rated and marked for outdoor use, and are large enough to handle the current needed for the device you are using.

Check that the prongs on the extension cord plugs are clean, not broken or bent. Make sure the ground prong is intact in a three-prong plug, and avoid use of adapters.

Summer can signal an increase in accidents and injuries. For more information on electric safety, Western offers safety demonstrations to schools, organizations and civic groups.

Contact Western Cooperative Electric; 785-743-5561 or 800-456-6720.



Dennis Deines, Western's Director of Member Services speaks with an elementary school class about electric safety.



## Safety Rules

- Stay away from electrical equipment on the ground and overhead. Never climb a utility pole or tower. Electrical power poles and utility equipment should never be used as a playground.
- Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines aren't touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch.
- Fly kites and model airplanes safely away from trees and overhead power lines. If a kite gets tangled in a tree that's near power lines, don't climb up to get it. Contact Western for assistance.
- Never go into an electric substation. Electric substations contain high-voltage equipment, which can kill you. Don't retrieve a toy or rescue a pet that goes inside. Call Western instead.
- Look up and around you. Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long metal tools like ladders and pool skimmers.
- Water and electricity never mix! Keep electronics like radios away from pools and hot tubs, and watch for overhead power lines when cleaning pools, sailing or fishing. Never install pools underneath or near power lines.
- Never touch an electrical appliance if you are wet; always dry off completely.

# Ladies & Gentlemen, Start Your Engines



Nine high schools line up for the first race at the Scott City Airport.

The Scott City Airport was the site for the annual Touchstone Electrally Race held on April 8, in Scott City.

Nine high schools were represented with 19 cars competing. This race was the first of three scheduled Kansas Electrally state races this spring, with the second in Great Bend, April 29, and the finale in Clearwater, May 9.

Area high school teams design and build a one person electric vehicle to compete for total number of laps within a one hour period. A car is usually constructed with aluminum frames and light weight wheels, powered by two 12-volt batteries. Construction specifications are within the rules of the Electrathon America handbook.

Designed for endurance, efficiency, and safety, speeds often exceed 30 miles per hour. Courses vary in distance, which usually include

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*Dave Schneider, Manager*

curves and corners. Along with constructing a car for competition, a notebook of minimum required information, is completed by the team and presented to judges for grading.

Points are acquired by positions won by racing and also grad-

ing of the notebook for the end of year placing.

“We are proud to be a sponsor of this program,” said Dave Schneider, General Manager of Western Cooperative Electric. “Even though winning a race is the goal, the knowledge and experience gained from building and competing with these cars is also valuable.”

Teams are usually funded by outside sources other than their local schools covering the expenses. Team members do the fund-raising and seek donations to build their cars, which involves after hour projects.

So before the green flag is raised at an electric car race, the announcer can be heard saying, “ladies and gentlemen, remove the chargers from your batteries and prepare to raise your amperage!”

For more information about the electric car program in Kansas visit [www.kansasselectrally.org](http://www.kansasselectrally.org).



Students prepare their electrally car for the race.

# The Realities of a Renewable Energy Future

Ask anyone to describe renewable energy, and nine times out of 10 they will include either wind or solar power in their answer. The two have become iconic symbols of “green electricity,” and rightfully so.

Wind energy has been harnessed and used to improve the quality of life for thousands of years. Solar power is unique in that it taps the most basic yet fundamental generation source available: the sun.

A recent survey conducted by Bisconti Research, Inc., asked Americans where they think most of our nation’s electricity will come from in 15 years. The vast majority - 72 percent - answered solar as number one, followed by wind energy. In actuality, solar is expected to generate a mere 0.2 percent of our nation’s electricity by 2030; wind will generate just 2.4 percent. We will continue to rely on fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas, as well as nuclear power and hydropower, to produce most of our electricity needs.

But this doesn’t mean we’ll be hearing less about renewable energy in coming years. In fact, the opposite is true. Twenty-eight states and the District of Columbia have already passed laws creating renewable portfolio standards, often called RPS for short, which require electric utilities and other retail suppliers of electricity to add a specific percentage of renewable energy to their power supply mix by a certain date. More states are expected to follow this trend, and a federal mandate could be passed by Congress this year.

In meeting these requirements as well as adding renewables as part of a diversified, cost-effective generation portfolio, electric cooperatives will draw on the innovation they’ve been known for since their humble beginnings 75 years ago. Electric co-ops span our nation from coast to coast, serving in 80 percent of all counties. In some locations, the wind may not always blow and the sun may not always shine. In

other locations, where wind and solar power can be generated, transmission lines to move the electricity from the source to where power is needed may not currently exist.

Potential power resources can be found in other renewable resources, such as wood chips and slash from timber operations, switchgrass, and even peanut shells. These items can all be burned to boil water, create steam, and turn an electric turbine. Methane rising from decomposing landfills and mounds of chicken, cattle, or hog waste can be captured and burned as well. Pipes can be sunk in the ground to capture the natural heat and steam created under the earth’s surface. A

river’s steady current can be diverted and used to manufacture power without the aid of a dam. Even the constant bobbing of offshore buoys from ocean waves or the movement of tides can be harnessed to generate an electric current.

Electric cooperatives lead the utility industry in the amount of renewable power supplied to our consumers, and we’re ready to share our experience with policymakers as they consider ways to make more green power available. As a member of Western you have the power to actively engage members of Congress and focus their attention

on the many ways electric co-ops are working to provide a safe, reliable, and affordable supply of power in a environmentally responsible manner.

If you haven’t already done so, please get involved in the “Our Energy, Our Future”™ grassroots awareness campaign and ask your representatives on Capitol Hill this important question: Are you willing to work with electric cooperatives to ensure our nation has reliable power at a price consumers can afford?

Electric co-ops support national energy and climate change legislation that can be sustained politically and economically over the decades necessary to make a difference. To help make this happen, we need your help. Please visit [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop) today.

