

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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**WESTERN
COOPERATIVE
ELECTRIC**

WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC **NEWS**

In loving memory of **Bernard Ebbert**



Bernard Ebbert

Western's family was recently saddened with the loss of a friend and retired employee.

Bernard Ebbert was employed at Western as bookkeeper on March 29, 1962. He became Office Manager in 1969 and remained in that position until his retirement in 1994.

Western's employees, retired and current, will always remember Bernard as small in stature but firm in his commitment to his work.

He also had a special interest in the care and maintenance of the landscaping at Western. After 32 years of employment, he decided to celebrate his last day at Western on his 65th birthday.

Each time Bernard passed the office he would honk, a sound that will be missed by all of Western's employees.

FEMA update: restoration continues

Restoration from the December 2006 ice storm continues as contractors rebuild lines within Western's service territory.

Despite the large scale of the project, with 430 miles of electric distribution lines to rebuild, Western's contractor crews have completed about 35 percent of the rebuild with more progress made each day.

A large amount of manpower and equipment is necessary to complete this three-year project.

Contractors hired to help assist with the project include: Texoma Powerline, Inc., and Custom Powerline Construction. Crews are currently completing work in Trego and Graham counties before moving west.



The FEMA project will reconstruct 430 miles of line, which includes approximately 8,600 poles.

Twenty-nine linemen, five digger trucks, eight bucket trucks, four pole trailers, four material trailers, six small service trucks, one bucket unit on tracks, and one digger unit on tracks make up the contractor's workforce.

"We are pleased to have contractors available to complete a

project of this size," said Dave Schneider, General Manager. "This could only be completed through a cooperative effort."



Trucks line up to head out for a days work on the FEMA project.

Lightning: be aware of the dangers

Summer is often a peak season for one of the nation's deadliest weather phenomena – lightning. Lightning strikes year round.

According to the National Weather Service, an average 62 people are killed each year by lightning in the United States. In 2008, there were 329 people

struck in the USA, with 302 injured and 27 killed. Given these statistics, it's extremely important to take lightning seriously and to stay educated on lightning safety.

Western Cooperative Electric urges parents and other caregivers to make sure children also understand the importance of lightning awareness and how to stay safe.

Don't be fooled by blue skies. If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to pose an immediate threat. That is why the National Weather Service has adopted the saying: *When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!*

Lightning can strike up to ten miles from the area in which it is raining, even if you don't see clouds. This means that if you can hear thunder, you're within striking distance. A good idea is to use the "30-30 Rule." According to this rule, if you count less than 30 seconds between a lightning flash and the thunder following it, you should seek shelter from the storm. A smart thing to do is count your 30 seconds inside away from all threatening weather. When the storm is over, wait 30 minutes after the last lightning strike you see before going back outside.

A "common" grounded electric system within a structure is highly recommended for lightning protection. This "common" ground includes electrical, satellite systems, telephone lines, and cables within your home or shop.

For information and assistance call the electrician department at Western Cooperative Electric 785-743-5561 or 800-456-6720.

If you are caught outdoors during a thunderstorm and unable to take shelter in a building, take the following precautions:

- Try to take shelter in a vehicle with a solid metal roof. Close the windows and avoid contact with electrical conducting paths, such as the steering wheel, ignition, gear shifter, or radio.
- Avoid water, high ground, or open spaces.
- Do not seek shelter under tall, solitary trees; canopies; small picnic or rain shelters; or in any open-frame vehicles such as jeeps, convertibles, golf carts, tractors or mowers.
- Do not stand near power, light or flag poles, machinery, fences, gates, metal bleachers, or even other people. If you are in a group, spread out so that you are at least twenty feet apart.
- If your skin tingles or your hair stands on end, lightning may be about to strike. Squat down low to the ground with your head between your knees making yourself the smallest target possible.

Load management:

A way to level out peak electric use

When your household and family members are consuming electricity at any given time it is known as "load." When the cooperative adds up the load that each member has at any given time it determines the load for the system.



There comes a time, every day, when the system reaches its peak. That's when all of us, all at once, are using the most electricity. And, of course, Western must have enough power to meet these needs. It's also the time when it costs the most to provide that power. The way to help keep your electric rates stable is to reduce this peak. It's what we call "load management." There are some things you can do at home that can help.

Since the late afternoon to early evening is the peak time for us, you can help by using major appliances, such as the washer and dryer, in the morning or later on in the evening. When preparing dinner, remember that slow cookers and other small appliances consume less electricity. Using energy wisely helps to reduce the need to invest in new power sources.

You can help promote load management at home. And we can help, too. If you have any questions about load management and how we're doing, or if you need more information about how you can help, just give us a call at 800-456-6720.