



**WESTERN
COOPERATIVE
ELECTRIC**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC NEWS

Western's Payment Options



Western's members can now make payments through our Web site or by phone using a credit card or electronic funds transfer.

To pay by phone, call our automated service at 800-330-1025, or call our main office to speak with a Western employee.

Through our Web site, you can also view your account, or enter your meter reading. You will have to set up a login and password the first time you do the online services. You will be prompted to enter your base account number and meter number.

All of these services are available at our Web site www.westerncoop.com.

Western Cooperative Electric Announces Youth Winners

Western Cooperative Electric's annual youth contest was held February 28, 2010.

The contest winners were selected based on a combination of interview, quiz, and essay scores. Each contestant was interviewed by a panel of three judges consisting of Dale Weinhold, Ellsworth; Anna Foley, Norton; and Cindy Hertel, Hays.

In addition to their interview, each contestant took a quiz over information about cooperatives on the local, state, and national level. Each contestant also wrote a one page essay entitled "Together We Save".

The top five youth in this year's contest are listed in order: **EMILY RUDER**, Plainville High School, daughter of John and Karla Ruder; **ALEX LANTIS**, Hays High School, son of Dawn Lantis; **TAYLOR HIXON**, Plainville High School, daughter of Troy and Michele Hixon; **JOEY AUGUSTINE**, Ellis High School, son of Randy and Elaine Augustine; **MACKENZIE CHOITZ**, Ellsworth High School, daughter of Cindy Kasey and Darrell Choitz.

Scholarships were

awarded along with trips to Washington, D.C., and Steamboat Springs, Colorado. The contestants chose from the available prizes according to placing.

Emily and Alex will join 29 Kansas youth and travel to Washington, D.C., June 10-17. They will join about 1,500 other youth seeing the U.S. "Government in Action." They will visit their congressmen, various government agencies and sites of historical significance.

Taylor and Joey will be joining approximately 100 youth from a four-state area participating in the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp near Steamboat Springs, Colorado, the week of July 17-23. During their stay, the youth will become acquainted with energy challenges, and tour one of the largest electrical generating plants in the Rockies.

Mackenzie Choitz will receive the \$250 Darrell Brown Memorial scholarship.

Along with the trips, Emily, Alex, Taylor, and Joey will also receive a \$250 scholarship. These scholarships will be sent directly



Emily Ruder



Alex Lantis



Taylor Hixon



Joey Augustine

to the college of their choice upon enrollment.

The alternates in this year's competition are Alesha Brenner, Ellis High School, daughter of Lance and Michelle Brenner; and Andra Mick, Plainville High School, daughter of Dennis and Susan Mick. These individuals are given the opportunity to receive any forfeited prizes.

Western extends congratulations to the winners and thanks all contestants for participating.



Mackenzie Choitz

Value of Comfort for a Cost

Spring officially arrived on March 20 and even more official was our anxious welcome for the season to begin.

This past winter seemed to be especially long because of low temperatures for extended days without a break. Even though the first official day of winter didn't arrive until December 21, 2009, 14 of the 31 days in December had a high temperature of freezing or below. The high temperatures for the first nine days of January were below freezing. Yes, it was winter, but how did that affect our way of life, more specifically our energy bills? And during that period, were we comfortable and what was the value for that comfort?

A definition of "value" is to rate according to relative estimate of worth or desirability. The definition of "comfortable" is being in a state of ease.

For a large percentage of energy users during these cold periods our energy bills were considerably higher; higher than our average monthly charge. When investigations were made for high bills, in almost all cases the high electric bill was because of the desirability of being in a state of ease. That state of ease not only added to the total bill but became more valuable during those extremely

cold days.

Example: The thermostat setting in your residence remains constant during extremely cold periods, so the heating system not only runs longer to maintain the desired thermostat setting, but one (or two) small electric heater(s) have been added. The answer is energy improvements

"It is time for us to start thinking of energy improvements as investments not just costs," said Doug Rye, licensed architect and the popular host of the "Home Remedies" radio show.

Long term improvements could include insulation, caulking, siding, doors, windows, and roof radiant barrier.

"The improvements usually increase the value of your home, save you money each month, and make your house more comfortable," Rye said.

Now that spring has arrived, make a plan for energy improvements to your home so that when winter arrives in December 2010, we can appreciate the value of being comfortable with an affordable energy bill. The relative estimate of worth for these improvements will increase the value of the state of ease for years to come.

The Value of Electricity A dollar's worth can get you:

36 
(intense) hours of gaming

48 
hours of watching TV

72 
freshly-ironed shirts

72 
hours of laptop Internet access

100 
hot pots of coffee

375 
pieces of toast (nicely browned)

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy;
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

Western Welcomes New Employees

Western Cooperative Electric would like to introduce our two new employees Brad Barta and Kaleb Stefek.

BRAD BARTA is employed at the Olmitz warehouse as a journeyman lineman.

After high school Barta attended the Pratt Vocational Technical School (PVTs) within the Electrical Power Technology Department. After completing his first year of study, Barta was a summer intern with Butler Rural Electric Cooperative. He then became a full time lineman for Kayton Electric in Holdrege, NE, for three years. During that time, Barta completed his second year of studies at PVTs and acquired his applied science degree.

He resides in the rural Hoisington area and

enjoys hunting, fishing, and is an avid basketball enthusiast.

KALEB STEFEK is employed at the Ellsworth warehouse as an apprentice lineman.

He is a rural Ellsworth native and says the "country boy" is still a big part of his after-hour and weekend activities.

After attending one year at Manhattan Area Technical College studying the lineman program, Stefek became a summer intern for Western. Stefek is now a full-time employee and continues his education through the Merchant Job Training and Safety Program.

Western Cooperative Electric welcomes these two linemen to the cooperative family!



Brad Barta



Kaleb Stefek