



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

P.O. Box 278, WaKeeney, KS 67672  
800-456-6720

[www.westerncoop.com](http://www.westerncoop.com)  
[www.facebook.com/WesternCoopElectric](https://www.facebook.com/WesternCoopElectric)

## WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC **NEWS**

### WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC, INC.

#### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Nick Zerr**

President

**Terry Hobbs**

Vice President

**Landon Heier**

Secretary-Treasurer

**Steve Hausler**

Trustee

**Marvin Keller**

Trustee

**Cody Howland**

Trustee

**Tim Stanton**

Trustee

**Dale Weinhold**

Trustee

**Open Seat**

Trustee

#### GENERAL MANAGER

**Nolan Numrich**

CEO/General Manager

#### CONTACT US

635 S. 13th Street  
P.O. Box 278  
WaKeeney, KS 67672  
785-743-5561  
FAX: 785-743-2717  
[www.westerncoop.com](http://www.westerncoop.com)

#### LIKE US ON FACEBOOK

Be sure to LIKE us on Facebook! Just go to [www.facebook.com/WesternCoopElectric](https://www.facebook.com/WesternCoopElectric) to find co-op news, energy tips, photos from co-op events and more!

### FROM THE MANAGER

## Cost-of-Service Study Underway

We recognize that the last few years have brought rising costs to nearly every aspect of daily life. From groceries to natural gas to the materials needed to keep our electric system running, these price increases have affected all of us. Although recently inflation has slowed, many of the price increases have remained baked into the costs we pay today. We understand the financial strain this puts on your family, and we are committed to operating as efficiently as possible to keep your electric service affordable and reliable.

As a not-for-profit, member-owned cooperative, Western is guided by a straightforward mission: to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity to our members. We do not exist to generate profits for investors — every dollar we collect is reinvested directly into operating and maintaining the system that serves you and your neighbors.

To ensure we continue to meet these commitments, Western has begun a new cost-of-service study (COSS) with Power Systems Engineering, Inc. (PSE), an independent consulting firm specializing in utility rate analysis. This study is a crucial tool for maintaining fair, up-to-date rates that are aligned with actual costs.

Our last COSS was completed using data compiled from 2021. At that time, we worked to combine the rates of

our eastern and western service territories into a single, unified structure. Those rates were based on cost and revenue projections set during a much different economic environment. Since then, we have seen significant increases in the cost of equipment, materials and power supply — as well as ongoing inflation that impacts nearly every part of our operations.

The purpose of this new study is to closely examine the current costs of providing service and ensure that our rates accurately reflect these costs. This helps ensure that no group of members is unfairly subsidizing another and that Western remains financially sound to continue serving you for years to come.



**Nolan Numrich**

### THERE ARE 3 MAIN STEPS TO A COSS:

- **DETERMINE THE AMOUNT OF REVENUE REQUIRED** to operate safely and reliably in the coming years.
- **ANALYZE THE COSTS TO SERVE EACH MEMBER CLASS**, such as residential, irrigation, and commercial, and determine how much each should fairly contribute.
- **DESIGN RATES THAT FAIRLY ALLOCATE COSTS**, minimize cross-subsidization, and maintain stability.

*Continued on page 12D ►*

# WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

## CORBIN SCHOENTHALER



Corbin Schoenthaler

Welcome to the team, **CORBIN SCHOENTHALER!** Corbin joins Western Cooperative Electric as our new work order & materials clerk. “I’m ready to learn, grow and contribute wherever I can,” said Corbin.

## BLAKE WERNER



Blake Werner

Welcome to the team, **BLAKE WERNER!** Blake joins Western Cooperative Electric as our new intern lineman. “I’m excited to gain hands-on experience and learn from such a skilled crew,” said Blake.

## DANI SHUBERT



Dani Shubert

Welcome **DANI SHUBERT!** She joins Western Cooperative Electric as our new office intern. “This is a great place to gain real-world experience and help out the staff,” said Dani.

## Western Cooperative Electric’s Tom Bayuk Hangs Up His Belt & Hooks

After a remarkable 25-year career with Western Cooperative Electric, **TOM BAYUK** officially retired on June 30, 2025. As a lineman and staking engineer, Bayuk spent decades braving storms, climbing poles and restoring power across Kansas — with pride, precision and a deep commitment to getting the job done right.



Tom Bayuk

Tom joined Western in 2000 after spending years in construction. From day one, he earned the respect of his team for his strong work ethic, high standards and unwavering focus on safety. “Getting the lights back on — no matter the time or weather — was the biggest reward,” Bayuk often said. “But making sure everyone got home safe ... that was the most important part.”

He played a key role in modernizing the cooperative, leading the shift from paper staking to digital systems — something he admitted was one of the biggest challenges of his career. With support from IT, he embraced the change and helped lead others through it.

Tom was known for his discipline

— his legendary ab roller routine, his “picky” attention to detail and his deep knowledge of the field. He had seen it all, from hand-climbing poles before bucket trucks were standard to navigating evolving technologies.

One moment that stuck with him: the devastating 2007 Ice Storm. “I didn’t know it could be that bad,” he recalled, remembering the destruction of 6,000 poles and over 400 miles of line.

In retirement, he looks forward to time with his wife, Reba, a trip to Alaska and checking off his “honey-do” list. His legacy at Western was one of craftsman-like leadership — built with grit, innovation, and care.

Thank you, Tom, for 25 incredible years.

## TIPS TO AVOID UTILITY SCAMS

Delete deceptive emails. If you receive an email that appears to be from your electric utility but you are unsure about it, delete it. Never click on a link, open an attachment or send a reply to an untrusted source. When in doubt, contact your utility directly to report suspected email scams.

SOURCE: UTILITIES UNITED AGAINST SCAMS



## Passing the Torch: A Legacy of Service in the Warehouse

When **DAVE CONNESS** officially retired on March 31, 2025, after an incredible 32-year career with Western Cooperative Electric, it marked the end of an era — but also the beginning of a new chapter in the WCE warehouse story.

Dave began his journey in 1993 as a material and work order clerk and worked his way up to become manager of purchasing and warehouse.

Along the way, he guided the warehouse through storms — literal and logistical — bringing in smarter systems, dependable planning, and a deep sense of responsibility to the crews and communities WCE serves.

“Dave always treated this place like it was his own,” said **BYRON SCHONTHALER**, now the purchasing and warehouse manager. “Whether it was moving from paper logs to digital systems or building out storm inventory before we even knew how badly we’d need it, he was always 10 steps ahead. He didn’t just manage things — he made sure we were ready for anything.”

Byron, who worked closely under Dave’s leadership for years, stepped into his new role earlier this spring. While no one can truly replace Dave, Byron’s promotion reflects a smooth transition built on shared values: precision, pride and a passion for service.

“Dave taught me that it’s not just about tracking supplies — it’s about taking care of people,” Byron added. “That’s the legacy we want to carry forward.”



LEFT: Dave Conness retired at the end of March. RIGHT: Byron Schonthaler (left), Corbin Schoenthaler (center) and Terry Kuhn (right) stand at the ready in the Western warehouse.



As the team adjusts to its new rhythm, **CORBIN SCHOENTHALER** joins the warehouse crew as the new work order clerk. Corbin brings a fresh perspective, strong attention to detail and an eagerness to learn. Though new, he’s already earning trust and making an impact.

“Corbin asks good questions, pays attention and fits in like he’s been here for years,” Byron said. “I think Dave would be glad to see how the next generation is stepping in.”

Meanwhile, **TERRY KUHN** continues to be the steady, reliable presence that anchors the team. His deep experience and calm demeanor help guide both Byron and Corbin as they take on new roles.

Though Dave has traded warehouse operations for grandkids, travel and farm projects, his influence remains firmly rooted in the aisles and systems he built. His legacy is reflected not just in the tools and tech he introduced, but in the culture of care and commitment he fostered.

Thank you, Dave, for your decades of service and leadership. You’ve passed the torch — and the flame burns bright.



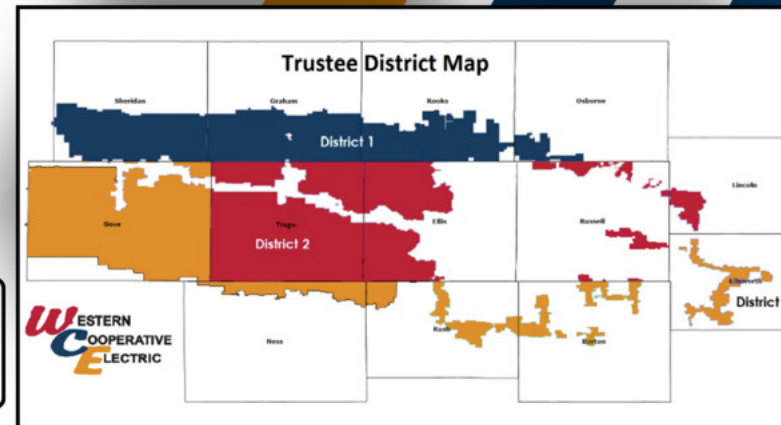
## OPEN TRUSTEE SEAT FOR DISTRICT #2

MUST BE A PERMANENT RESIDENT & WCE MEMBER IN TREGO, ELLIS, RUSSELL OR LINCOLN COUNTIES



APPLY TODAY!!!

785-743-5561  
www.westerncoop.com



# Cost of Service Study Underway

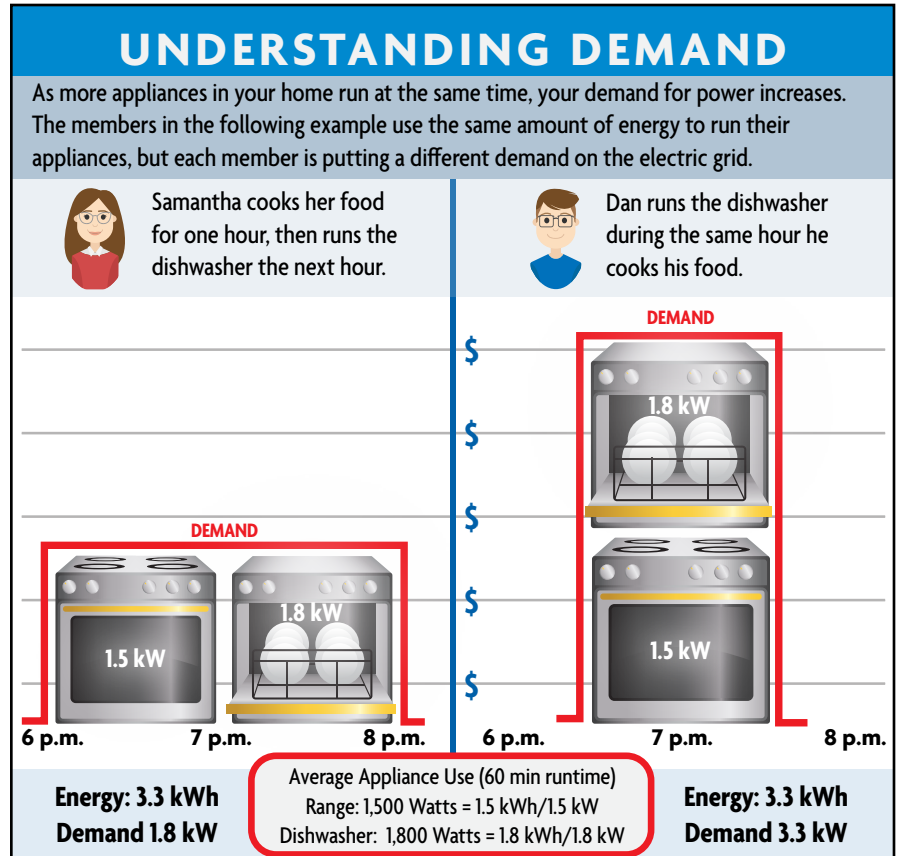
Continued from page 12A ►

It's important to note that not every rate class will necessarily see an increase as a result of this study. Even within a rate class, individual members may see different impacts depending on their usage patterns. For example, members who use electricity consistently throughout the year may experience different changes than those with highly seasonal or variable usage patterns.

Once the study is complete, the board of trustees — who are also members and pay the same rates that they are approving — will carefully review the findings. The board takes its responsibility to set fair and reasonable rates very seriously. Any proposed changes will be shared openly, and all members will be notified about the board meeting where these changes will be discussed and voted on.

Members will receive advance notice of any changes through their monthly bill, *Kansas Country Living* magazine, and our website. Although it's still too early to determine the impacts on rate classes or individuals, we plan to schedule public meetings for late fall. We encourage all members to attend, listen to the discussion, and share feedback.

While it is always our goal to avoid rate changes whenever possible, adjustments may be necessary to maintain reliable service and ensure the cooperative's financial health. We remain



committed to serving you with transparency and care, and we appreciate your understanding and support as we work together to meet these challenges.

**HERE TO SERVE,**  
**NOLAN NUMRICH, CEO/GENERAL MANAGER**

## WHEN IN DOUBT, SMOOTH IT OUT

Spread out the use of major appliances to reduce your peak demand.

