



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

**Hale Sloan**

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](http://www.facebook.com/WesternCoopElectric) to find co-op news, energy tips, photos from co-op events and more!

### STRAIGHT TALK FROM THE TOP

## Kansas Traditions: Bowls, Rolls and Power Poles



**Nolan Numrich**

As winter winds whip across Kansas, members of Western Cooperative Electric know the value of warmth — both from reliable power and a hot meal. In our state, few pairings embody comfort like a spicy bowl of chili paired with a sweet, warm cinnamon roll. This tradition, beloved by school cafeterias and homes, was born out of necessity, much like your electric cooperative, and both aim to make these cold, dark winter days a little warmer and a little brighter.

Outside of Kansas, people may think it's an odd pairing, but the origins of

chili and cinnamon rolls can be traced back to World War II and continued to gain popularity in Kansas public schools during the 1950s and 1960s. At that time, budget-conscious lunch programs needed affordable, filling meals. Chili was cheap, packed with protein, and easy to make in big batches. Cinnamon rolls, baked by the tray, brought a little sweetness to balance the spice. What started



*Continued on page 12D ►*



## Western Awards First-Ever W.O.R.K. Scholarship

Western Cooperative Electric is proud to announce the first recipient of our W.O.R.K. (Western Opportunity for Rural Kansas) Scholarship — a program created to support individuals who choose to live, work, and give back to our rural communities after graduation. Recognizing the importance of investing in local talent, our board of trustees contributed an additional \$1,000 in addition to the five youth scholarships we give out in May to high school seniors.

The 2025 recipient is **KARA QUILTER**, a 2019 graduate of Ellsworth Jr./Sr. High School and Kansas State University alumna, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in agricultural education. After graduation, Quilter returned home to Ellsworth and took on the role of lead agricultural educator and FFA advisor at her alma mater.

Since returning, she has made a remarkable impact on students and the broader community. Under her leadership, the Ellsworth FFA Chapter earned the prestigious Bob Garlow Memorial Trophy, the highest honor a Kansas FFA Chapter can receive. She has hosted statewide horse evaluation contests, volunteered with local 4-H clubs, supported summer harvests, and contributed to countless school and community events — from managing concessions to serving as a fair superintendent.

For Quilter, the scholarship means more than financial relief. “I’m so grateful and honored to be the first to receive this scholarship,” she shared. “This scholarship will help me give me a little freedom to focus on teaching, volunteering, and building my life in the community that raised me.”

Her long-term goal is to continue her education with a master’s degree in animal or equine science, but first, she wants to fully pay off her undergraduate loans while continuing to serve her students and community.

The W.O.R.K. Scholarship reflects Western Cooperative Electric’s mission to support the people who strengthen rural Kansas. By investing in those who return home to work and lead, we ensure that our communities remain vibrant, sustainable and full of opportunity for future generations.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO KARA QUILTER, OUR FIRST W.O.R.K. SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT, FOR YOUR DEDICATION TO EDUCATION, AGRICULTURE AND THE COMMUNITY YOU CALL HOME.**



Kara Quilter

### SMART TIPS FOR USING SPACE HEATERS

In 2022, space heaters accounted for 88% of deaths caused by home heating equipment.

To avoid a fire, space heaters should be kept at least 3 feet away from blankets, curtains, paper and other flammable materials.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG



## Sloan and Day Join Western

### WELCOME HALE SLOAN

Western Cooperative Electric is pleased to welcome **HALE SLOAN** as the newest member of its board of trustees, representing District 2.

A native of western Kansas, Sloan grew up in Sharon Springs and now resides in Hays, where he owns and operates a civil engineering firm. He holds both bachelor’s and master’s degrees in biological systems engineering from Kansas State University and is a licensed professional engineer.

An active community leader, Sloan has served on several boards and committees and is proudly involved with his community and church. He and



Hale Sloan

his wife, Jenna, have three children. In his free time, Sloan enjoys farming and ranching with his family.

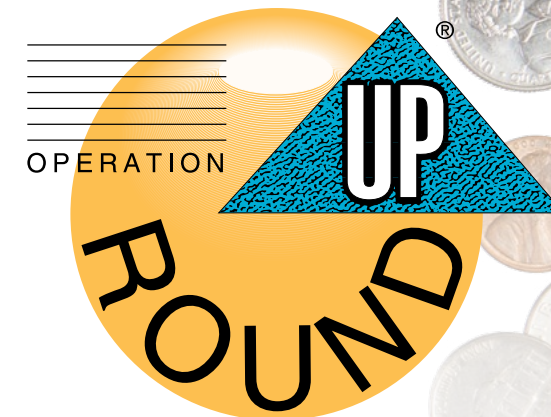
### WELCOME DUSTIN DAY

Western Cooperative Electric is proud to welcome **DUSTIN DAY** of WaKeeney to our team as a first-year apprentice lineman. Day enjoys spending time with his wife and three children, raising dogs, hunting, and attending local races. His love for family and community shines through in everything he does, and that commitment is a perfect fit for the cooperative spirit we value. We’re excited to have Day’s energy, dedication and Kansas work ethic helping us power the places we call home.



Dustin Day

## Operation Round Up — Small Change, BIG IMPACT



At Western Cooperative Electric, we believe that community is built through small acts of generosity — and together, those small acts can create powerful change. That’s the spirit behind Operation Round-Up, a voluntary program that allows members to make a big difference with just a few cents each month.

Through Operation Round-Up, participating members have their electric bill “rounded up” to the nearest dollar. The extra change — an average of just 50 cents per month — is pooled into a fund that supports our Western Cares community assistance program.

Western Cares provides financial help to individuals and families right here in our service area. These funds touch lives and strengthen the towns we proudly serve.

Since its creation, Western Cares has funded projects and needs that reflect the cooperative spirit: neighbors helping neighbors. Every penny

collected through Operation Round-Up goes directly back into our communities, overseen by a volunteer board of members who ensure funds are distributed fairly and responsibly.

It’s proof that when we come together, even spare change can spark meaningful change.

If you’d like to join the effort, visit [www.westerncoop.com](http://www.westerncoop.com) to learn more about Operation Round-Up and how your small contribution can make a big difference through Western Cares.

Together, we’re lighting the way for stronger, more caring communities — one rounded-up bill at a time.



Scan to sign up or learn more

## CHRISTMAS TREE FIRE SAFETY

Keep the Christmas merry and bright this holiday season by safely maintaining your tree with the following tips.

- ▶ **PICK FRESH:** Choose a tree with green needles that don’t fall off easily.
- ▶ **TRIM BASE:** Cut 2 inches before placing in the stand.
- ▶ **WATER DAILY:** Keep the stand full and the tree fresh.
- ▶ **PLACEMENT MATTERS:** Keep at least 3 feet from heat sources; don’t block exits.
- ▶ **LIGHT IT RIGHT:** Only use UL-listed lights; replace damaged strands.
- ▶ **NO CANDLES:** Never decorate with a flame.
- ▶ **TURN OFF LIGHTS:** Unplug when sleeping or away.
- ▶ **DITCH WHEN DRY:** Remove promptly; don’t store near the home or garage.
- ▶ **USE SMOKE ALARMS:** Test monthly.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

## KANSAS TRADITIONS: BOWLS, ROLLS AND POWER POLES

*Continued from page 12A ►*

as a practical combo evolved into a cultural staple.

Around the same time Kansans were creating our signature culinary pairing, electric cooperatives were beginning to bring light and warmth to farms and small towns of rural communities. Although widespread electrification began in the 1920s, some areas were overlooked by investor-owned utilities because they didn't believe they would generate a profit for their stakeholders. That's when the cooperative came into the picture. Born out of necessity, the people took matters into their own hands, pooling resources and doing it themselves.

In 1945, Western Cooperative Electric was formed, and the member-owners started setting poles and stringing wire from one house to the next. They no longer had to rely on dim lanterns to light their homes or wood or coal to heat them. While a great deal has changed over the past 80 years, Western's dedication to serving its members remains a proud tradition to this day.

As the weather turns nasty this winter, that's when our linemen bundle up and head out — restoring lights, heat and normalcy to your homes, farms and businesses. But service goes beyond the poles and wires. It's about people. We are your neighbors, and our mission is to keep the power on, the community running, and life moving forward through every storm.

This winter, as you enjoy chili and a cinnamon roll — whether at home, a community fundraiser, or a church potluck — remember the cooperative spirit and tradition that brings us all closer together. Stay warm, stay safe, and if the weather turns bad, know Western Cooperative Electric is ready to serve.

**HERE TO SERVE,  
NOLAN NUMRICH, CEO/GM**



# WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC 2026 Youth Opportunities



*4 Juniors Will Get to  
Experience a Trip of a Lifetime!*

*Apply Before  
Jan. 7, 2026*

[WESTERNCOOP.COM](http://WESTERNCOOP.COM)

