



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC

NEWS

WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC, INC.

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Nolan Numrich

CEO/General Manager

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STRAIGHT TALK FROM THE TOP

Reliability Requires Investment

As your local power provider, Western Cooperative's mission has always been simple: keep the lights on and support the communities we serve. But behind every switch, every warm home, and every business that opens its doors is a complex system that requires constant care. Reliable electricity doesn't happen by accident. It requires ongoing investment in our local grid — through system repairs, maintenance, upgrades, and the integration of new technologies that help us operate smarter and more efficiently.

Much of the energy system we rely on today was built decades ago. While it continues to serve us well, age alone means that components must be repaired or replaced to maintain

performance and safety. From poles and wires to transformers and substations, every part of the grid has a lifespan. Routine maintenance helps extend that lifespan, but eventually, equipment must be updated to meet modern standards. These proactive investments reduce the likelihood of outages, shorten restoration times when disruptions do occur, and create a stronger backbone for our growing community.

The demands on the electric grid are also evolving. As new and



Nolan Numrich

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81ST ANNUAL MEETING

WAKEENEY VFW -
400 N RAILROAD AVE.



DATE
MAY 13, 2026



TIME
11AM - 1PM

SAVE THE DATE!

785-743-5561
[@westerncoop.com](https://www.facebook.com/WesternCoopElectric)



WINTER EMERGENCY KIT

Top Must-Haves For Your Emergency Kit

Be ready with at least three days of supplies and don't forget to stock your vehicles with a similar kit.

- ▶ Battery-powered radio
- ▶ Blankets, clothing and sturdy shoes
- ▶ Cash
- ▶ Cellphone and charger, power bank
- ▶ Flashlight and batteries
- ▶ First-aid kit
- ▶ Medications, medical equipment
- ▶ Non-perishable food and manual can opener
- ▶ Water: 1 gallon per person, per day

ADD TO YOUR VEHICLE KIT

- ▶ Canned and compressed air with sealant for emergency tire repair
- ▶ Extra coat, gloves and hat
- ▶ Emergency flares
- ▶ Jumper cables
- ▶ Sand bags or road salt
- ▶ Windshield scraper



Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) Application Period Ends March 31

Western Cooperative Electric receives requests for help with electric bills throughout the year, and we want our members to know that assistance is available. The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded program designed to help eligible households cover a portion of their home energy costs through a one-time annual benefit.

▶ The LIEAP application period ends on March 31, 2026, at 5 p.m.

To qualify, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- ▶ An adult living at the residence must be personally responsible for paying the heating costs, either to a landlord or directly to a fuel vendor.
- ▶ Applicants must show a recent history of payments toward their primary heating energy source.
- ▶ The combined gross income (before deductions) of all household members may not exceed 150% of the federal poverty level.

BENEFIT AMOUNTS

VARY BASED ON:

- ▶ Household income
- ▶ Number of people living in the home
- ▶ Type of dwelling
- ▶ Type of heating fuel used

To apply online or learn more, visit www.dcf.ks.gov, select the **SERVICES** tab at the top of the page, then scroll down and click on **ENERGY ASSISTANCE**

2026 INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES	
Persons Living at Address	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	\$1,956
2	\$2,644
3	\$3,331
4	\$4,019
5	\$4,706
6	\$5,394
7	\$6,081
8	\$6,769
+1	\$688 for each additional person

(LIEAP). Applications must be received by the DCF office no later than **5 P.M. ON MARCH 31, 2026**. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

As part of the process, the State will contact Western Cooperative Electric to verify that the account is active and in the applicant's name. Approved LIEAP payments are sent directly to Western Cooperative Electric and applied directly to the members' account.

If you need help completing your application or have questions, please contact the LIEAP office at 800-432-0043. Additional FAQs are available at www.dcf.ks.gov/services/ees/Pages/EnergyAssistance.aspx

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Ensure you're making the most of your home heating system. Replace or clean filters to keep your furnace or heat pump running efficiently. Listen for strange noises and check for uneven heating — these signs indicate that the system may need servicing. Ensure vents and radiators aren't blocked by furniture or rugs as proper airflow helps your system work less and saves energy. A little maintenance along the way can prevent costly repairs and keep your home cozy through winter. SOURCE: NRECA



Reliability Requires Investment Continued from page 12A ▶

emerging technologies take hold, the grid must be able to support increased demand while maintaining the reliability our members expect. Strategic upgrades are essential to ensuring we can meet these needs both today and in the decades ahead.

At the same time, new technologies are reshaping how we operate. Tools such as smart meters and advanced monitoring systems allow us to detect problems faster and respond more effectively. These technologies can isolate problems, reroute power to minimize outages, and provide real-time data that helps us plan and maintain equipment more efficiently.

Implementing innovative technologies into the grid is not just a convenience — it is a necessity for ensuring reliability in an increasingly complex energy landscape.

While these improvements require thoughtful planning and financial investment, the return is significant. A stronger grid supports economic growth, improves service quality, and enhances safety for our crews and community. Most importantly, it ensures that the essential power you rely on is available whenever you need it.

Our commitment to reliability runs deeper than

“As new and emerging technologies take hold, the grid must be able to support increased demand while maintaining the reliability our members expect.”

infrastructure alone. It reflects our responsibility to the people and communities we serve. Every upgrade, every repair, and every technology we deploy is an investment in your daily life — from the comfort of your home to the success of local businesses and schools.

We know that powering our community means preparing for the future, not just maintaining the present. By investing in our local grid today, we are building the foundation for a brighter, more resilient tomorrow.

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

Nominees For Trustee Elections Due Feb. 27

Members who meet the qualifications have the opportunity to seek election to Western Cooperative Electric's Board of Trustees. While board service may not be for everyone, a strong cooperative depends on an engaged membership and members who are willing to step into leadership roles.

Western Cooperative Electric is governed by a nine-member board of trustees, elected by the membership to provide strategic direction and ensure the cooperative continues to serve the best interests of its members.

Members interested in running for a trustee position must meet the following qualifications:

- ▶ Be a member of Western Cooperative Electric.
- ▶ Not be employed by, or financially interested in, a competing enterprise or a business that sells electric energy or supplies to the cooperative.
- ▶ Not be a current employee of the cooperative, nor have been

employed by Western within the past five years.

- ▶ Be a permanent resident within Western's service territory.

During the December board meeting, the board appointed a nominating committee to serve as an impartial group to help vet candidates and provide information to members interested in running for a trustee position.

Members wishing to run for a board of trustee seat must contact a nominating committee member in their corresponding district by Feb. 27, or stop by Western's office to pick up a member petition form.

THE FOLLOWING TRUSTEES' SEATS ARE UP FOR 2026 ELECTION:

- ▶ **DISTRICT 1** — TERRY HOBBS
- ▶ **DISTRICT 2** — STEVE HAUSLER
- ▶ **DISTRICT 3** — OPEN SEAT

2026 NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

DISTRICT 1

Graham, Osborne, Rooks and Sheridan counties

- ▶ **PAT WENDLING**, Plainville
- ▶ **EVAN LESSER**, Palco
- ▶ **CAMERON EICKHOFF**, Plainville

DISTRICT 2

Ellis, Lincoln, Russell and Trego counties

- ▶ **JOHN KUPPETZ JR.**, Ellis
- ▶ **STEVE SEIBEL**, Ellis
- ▶ **BRANDON PFEIFER**, Ellis

DISTRICT 3

Barton, Ellsworth, Gove, Ness and Rush counties

- ▶ **DOUG MANHART**, Grainfield
- ▶ **TERRY OSTMEYER**, Grinnell
- ▶ **JOHN SHERMAN**, Ellsworth

Cooperative Food Drive Helps Four Local Food Banks

Western Cooperative Electric employees came together for a little friendly competition that made a big difference in the communities we serve. Western's 5th annual cooperative food drive once again proved that teamwork, generosity and a dash of bragging rights go a long way.

This year, employees were divided into eight teams, including the Western trustees, who jumped in to compete, raising the stakes and the fun. The incentive? The winning team earns a home-cooked breakfast by retired AMI/GIS Technician **BOB MCCOY** — plus the all-important bragging rights for the year.

Food banks in Ellis, Ellsworth, Hoisington and Plainville were selected as recipients of this year's drive, based on Sharing Success Grant applications and employee suggestions to ensure donations went where they were most needed by our members and communities.

After a close and spirited competition, the Ellsworth team took the top spot with an impressive 333 items donated, though the other teams weren't far behind. In total, the drive



Western Cooperative Electric retired AMI/GIS Technician Bob McCoy (fifth from left) incentivizes employees to donate to their local food bank with a home-cooked breakfast.

made a meaningful impact — one food bank even shared that our donation alone totaled 280 pounds of food.

More than just a competition, the food drive was a reminder of our employees' generosity and shared commitment to helping neighbors across Western's service territory. It was a great effort, a lot of fun, and a powerful way to give back.

