



WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC

NEWS

WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC, INC.

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STRAIGHT TALK FROM THE TOP

Advocating for Rural Kansas

I recently led our team to the Kansas State Capitol in Topeka to meet with state legislators and discuss the important issues facing rural electric cooperatives like ours. Our message was straightforward: We want policies that support reliable, affordable electricity while preserving the member-owned model that serves rural Kansas so well.

As a reminder, electric cooperatives work differently from other utilities. You, our members, are the owners and consumers. You democratically elect the board of directors, and every member has one equal vote — no matter how much electricity you use. We are not-for-profit, so we operate at cost. Any extra margins are returned to you as capital credits rather than paid to outside shareholders. Our only goal is to deliver the best possible service at the lowest reasonable cost to keep rural Kansas strong and economically viable.

This structure brings clear advantages: fairness (everyone has a voice); community focus (dollars stay local); consumer priority (extra funds are returned to members, not investors); trust (our interests are perfectly aligned); and long-term stability (built for sustainability, not quick profits).

AFFORDABILITY is always front and center. Providing reliable power at prices people can afford is a constant balancing act. Our cooperative model is designed to keep energy accessible in rural areas, with no incentive to price

members out. Some lobbyists claim that more competition would lower energy prices, but it would have the opposite effect. Allowing

third parties to cherry-pick the customers that they serve would shift costs to lower-volume users, such as residential members. Ironically, this is why co-ops were created: to serve the rural areas that were passed over by investor-owned utilities.

A growing challenge is the rapid increase in demand from large loads and data centers. These projects are looking at rural Kansas because of available land and infrastructure, and they can bring good jobs, property tax relief, and economic development. However, we must ensure these new loads do not raise costs for existing members. We need policies that give each cooperative the flexibility to serve these facilities in ways that protect everyone, without favoring big investor-owned utilities and making rural locations less attractive.

RELIABILITY AND LONG-TERM STABILITY REMAIN OUR TOP PRIORITIES. Kansans expect the lights to stay on at prices they can afford — energy policies must reflect this ex-

Continued on page 12C ▶



Nolan Numrich

Powering Bright Futures and Stronger Communities

At Western Cooperative Electric, our mission goes far beyond delivering reliable electricity. We are deeply committed to investing in the future of our service area — both by supporting local students as they take their next steps after high school and by strengthening the nonprofit organizations that make our communities thrive. Two important opportunities are now open, and we encourage eligible students and organizations to apply before the upcoming deadlines.

INVESTING IN TOMORROW: YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Western Cooperative Electric is proud to offer \$1,000 youth scholarships to graduating high school seniors within our service area. These scholarships are designed to support students as they pursue higher education, whether that path includes a university, community college, technical school, or other post-secondary opportunities.

We understand that the transition from high school to the next chapter of life can be both exciting and challenging. Educational expenses can add up quickly, and our youth scholarship program is one way we can help ease that burden while recognizing the hard work and dedication of local students. By investing in education, we are also investing in the future leaders, innovators and community members who will help our region continue to grow and succeed.

Eligible seniors are encouraged to apply online, where the application process is simple and straightforward. Don't wait! The deadline to apply is **APRIL 1, 2026**. This scholarship opportunity is a meaningful way for Western Cooperative Electric to give back to the families and communities we proudly serve.

To learn more and submit an application, visit <https://westerncoop.com/scholarships>.

STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITIES: SHARING SUCCESS COMMUNITY GRANTS

In addition to supporting students, Western Cooperative Electric is excited to once again offer Sharing Success Community Grants, made possible through our partnership with CoBank. This year, a total of \$30,000 will be awarded to nonprofit organizations within our service area that are making a positive impact in their communities.

These grants are designed to support projects, programs and initiatives that improve quality of life, address local needs, and help communities grow stronger. Eligible nonprofits may include organizations focused on education, health and wellness, community development, emergency services, youth programs, and more. If your organization is working to make a difference locally, this funding opportunity could help bring important ideas and projects to life.

Western Cooperative Electric believes that when communities succeed, everyone benefits. Through the Sharing Success program, we are proud to partner with CoBank to reinvest resources back into the areas we serve and support the organizations that work tirelessly to help others.

Organizations can apply online, and applications are due **MAY 1, 2026**. We encourage interested organizations to review the guidelines and submit their applications early.

To apply and learn more, visit <https://westerncoop.com/sharing-success-community-grants>.

Celebrating Safety Leadership Achievement

Western Cooperative Electric is proud to congratulate Safety Manager **JAY SCOTT** on successfully completing the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Certified Loss Control (CLCP) program. This achievement represents a significant professional milestone and reflects Jay's strong commitment to safety, education and continuous improvement.

The CLCP program is a highly respected, in-depth training designed specifically for electric cooperative safety professionals. The program focuses on identifying workplace risks, implementing proactive loss prevention strategies, and strengthening safety cultures across organizations. Completion requires dedication, advanced coursework, and a thorough understanding of safety standards and best practices within the electric utility industry.

Jay's completion of this program

brings added value to Western Cooperative Electric and the members we serve. Safety is a foundational priority at Western — whether it involves protecting employees in the field, ensuring safe operations, or maintaining reliable service for our communities. Jay's enhanced expertise helps strengthen our ability to reduce risk, improve training, and promote a culture where safety is always the top priority.

Beyond the technical knowledge gained, this certification reinforces Western's commitment to investing in its employees and maintaining the highest standards of professionalism. Jay's leadership in safety helps ensure that our team is prepared, informed and equipped to work safely every day, no matter the task.

On behalf of the entire Western Cooperative Electric team, we extend our sincere congratulations to Jay Scott on



Safety Manager Jay Scott (left) receives his Certified Loss Control program certificate from CEO Nolan Numrich.

this outstanding accomplishment. We appreciate his dedication to safety and his continued efforts to protect our employees, members and communities. Achievements like this reflect the cooperative values we proudly stand behind and help ensure a safe and reliable future for everyone we serve.

Advocating for Rural Kansas *Continued from page 12A* ▶

pectation. We need flexibility to make timely investments in critical infrastructure, embrace a diverse mix of generation resources, and adopt new technologies when they are economically practical. Grid reliability cannot be taken for granted.

Rural industries drive Kansas' economy. As our state relies more heavily on electricity, farmers, ranchers, agricultural producers, and small businesses depend on stable, reliable power to grow and thrive. Co-ops cannot meet increasing demand with fewer resources available in both power generation and transmission.

Serving the state's least populated areas on a not-for-profit basis means taking a long-term approach. As member-owners, you have a direct stake in our success and share in any challenges we face. That is why we innovate, plan for the future, and advocate for policies that ensure stability and resilience. Our cooperative structure supports sustainable decisions that prioritize people and rural Kansas communities over short-term gains.

Federally, through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), we advocate for grid reliability improvements, faster infrastructure permitting, balanced environmental regulations, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reforms, and an all-of-the-above energy strategy.

Your voice is powerful. Please take a moment to sign up



Western's leadership met with Rep. Ken Rahjes (center) to discuss legislative issues which may impact electric cooperatives.

for **VOICES FOR COOPERATIVE POWER** at www.voicesforcooperativepower.com. This free network helps you easily contact lawmakers so rural perspectives are heard in Washington.

Thank you for your trust and continued support. Together, we will protect the cooperative difference and the future of rural Kansas.

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



WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC

PARTNERS IN POWER

81ST ANNUAL MEETING

**MAY
13
2026**

11 A.M.-1 P.M.

**VFW Post 3449, 400 N. Railroad Ave.
WaKeeney, Kansas**

Doors Open at 11 a.m. | Lunch & Meeting at Noon

DOOR PRIZES | COOPERATIVE UPDATES | TRUSTEE ELECTION RESULTS

**AT WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC,
WE ARE PARTNERS IN POWER.**