



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC

NEWS

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STRAIGHT TALK FROM THE TOP

Record Heat Leads to Record Electric Sales

I'm sure many of you opened your August and September bills and noticed an uptick in electricity usage, most likely due to running your air conditioners to cope with the brutally hot weather. In the month of August, Western Cooperative Electric set a record by providing 41 million kilowatt-hours of electricity to our members and communities — the most we have ever delivered in a single month. While it's hard not to feel like you are the one setting usage records in your house, there has also been significant growth in industrial and commercial electricity sales over the past two years (+16%), which benefits all our members.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

You might wonder how Western Cooperative's success matters to your day-to-day life. The simple answer is you have an ownership stake in the cooperative.

Our poles, wires, substations and equipment cost roughly the same to build and maintain whether we sell a little power or a lot. When we sell more electricity, those fixed costs get spread across more kilowatt-hours, which helps keep rates more stable for everyone. It also gives us more resources to invest in reliability — better materials, stronger lines, and the tools our linemen need to keep your power on.



Nolan Numrich

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OUTAGE NOTIFICATIONS IN SMARTHUB

Did you know that you can receive important Outage Notifications with your Smarthub portal? Want to know when your power is interrupted? Want to know when it is restored?

Inside your Smarthub portal, you will want to go to Settings>Contact Methods. Enroll in text, voice and email options.

Next, go to Manage Notifications>Service. Scroll down and set your preferences on Planned Power Outage, Power Outage and Power Outage Restored.

IT'S THAT EASY! IF YOU NEED ANY ASSISTANCE, OUR MEMBER SERVICES TEAM IS HERE FOR YOU.



Sharing Success

Investing in the Communities We Call Home

Four 2026 grants. Four very different needs.

One shared commitment to strengthening the communities we serve.

Western Cooperative Electric is more than the lines, poles and meters that connect our members to the electric grid. We are part of the communities we serve — and when those communities are stronger, safer and healthier, so is our cooperative board. Projects chosen this year were **TREGO COUNTY FAIR BOARD, RUSH COUNTY EMS, PLAINVILLE FOOD PANTRY** and **STEM HARVEST - COMMUNITY RADAR**.

The projects are different. One will help make a community gathering space more comfortable. Another will provide essential equipment for emergency responders. One will help families during the holidays. And another will improve access to localized weather information across a large portion of western Kansas. What connects them is simple: people helping people.

CREATING A PLACE FOR COMMUNITIES TO GATHER.

The **TREGO COUNTY FAIR BOARD** received a Sharing Success Grant to help fund HVAC improvements in the Commercial Building at the Trego County Fairgrounds.

The project helped replace the building's outdated heating system, add air conditioning, and provide ductwork throughout the facility.

For a building that hosts everything from weddings, funeral dinners and

family reunions to trainings, fundraisers, school activities and county fair events, reliable heating and cooling makes a meaningful difference. The improvement will allow the facility to be used more comfortably throughout the year and continue serving as an important gathering place for Trego County and surrounding communities. It's an investment not just in a building, but in the people and experiences that happen inside it.

SUPPORTING THOSE WHO ANSWER THE CALL

When an emergency happens, Rush County residents don't have to wonder who will respond.

RUSH COUNTY EMS is there.

WCE provided a Sharing Success Grant and partnered with Golden Belt Community Foundation for a little extra funding to help the organization purchase essential ambulance and emergency medical supplies. The funding will help EMS maintain and improve the equipment its responders depend on while providing emergency medical services throughout Rush County. Emergency responders show up when others need help most. Supporting the tools and equipment they rely on is one small way we can support the people who dedicate themselves to caring for their neighbors.

MAKING THE HOLIDAYS A LITTLE BRIGHTER

For families facing difficult circumstances, having enough food on the table can be a challenge — and the holidays can make that challenge even greater.

The **PLAINVILLE FOOD PANTRY** received a Sharing Success Grant to support its Holiday Project, which provides additional food assistance to families during Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. The pantry serves families throughout Damar, Palco, Zurich, Plainville, Codell, Natoma and the surrounding area of Paradise. Each month, it assists approximately 76 to 85 families, representing an estimated 170 to 215 individuals. The need has increased compared with last year. The grant will help the pantry provide additional food to families during the holidays, offering not only practical assistance, but a reminder that their neighbors care.

Sometimes, community impact isn't about building something big or making a headline. Sometimes, it's simply helping make sure a family has enough food for a holiday meal.

BRINGING BETTER WEATHER INFORMATION TO WESTERN KANSAS

Some projects protect communities by responding to an immediate need. Others help communities prepare before that need ever arrives.

STEM Harvest's Hays Community Radar Project is one of those projects. WCE provided a Sharing Success Grant to help support the development of a community-based Doppler weather radar system in Hays. The project is designed to improve severe weather detec-

Each project is different, but together they tell the same story. When we invest in our communities, we invest in one another. That is what being a cooperative is all about.

tion across Ellis, Trego, Rooks, Russell and Rush counties by addressing a significant gap in existing radar coverage. Localized, real-time weather information can benefit emergency responders, schools, local governments, utilities, airports, businesses, farmers and families.

For Western Cooperative Electric, improved radar information also has a direct connection to safety. Severe weather can create dangerous conditions for line crews working to restore power, making timely and accurate weather information an important part of keeping employees and communities safe. This project represents something particularly important about rural communities: we don't have to wait for someone else to solve a problem. We can come together and find a way to solve it ourselves.

COOPERATION IN ACTION

These four projects demonstrate why the cooperative model remains so meaningful decades after Western Cooperative Electric was formed.

The Seven Cooperative Principles provide the foundation for how cooperatives operate:

1 VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP. Our cooperative belongs to the members we serve. Their communities are our communities.

2 DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL. WCE is guided by a board of trustees elected to represent our membership and make decisions in the best interest of the cooperative and the communities it serves.

3 MEMBER ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION. The value created by the cooperative doesn't stop at providing electricity. It can also be returned to the communities that make up our cooperative family.

4 AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE. As a cooperative, we have the ability to make decisions based on the needs of our members and the communities we serve.

5 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION. From STEM education to emergency preparedness and community resources, strong communities are built when people have the information and tools they need to succeed.

6 COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES. The work doesn't happen alone. Strong communities are built through partnerships, collaboration, and organizations working together toward common goals.

7 CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY. The most visible principle because of projects like this, but it reminds us that a cooperative has a responsibility that extends beyond providing reliable electricity.

It means caring about the people who live here. It means recognizing a community need and asking, How can we help? It means supporting the organizations that are already doing the hard work. And it means understanding that sometimes a relatively small investment can have a lasting impact.

OUR COMMUNITIES. OUR COOPERATIVE. OUR SHARED SUCCESS.

The four 2026 Sharing Success grants represent four different ways Western Cooperative Electric can invest in the communities we call home. A better place to gather. Better resources for emergency responders. Food for families during the holidays. Better tools to help communities prepare for severe weather. Each project is different, but together they tell the same story. When we invest in our communities, we invest in one another. That is what being a cooperative is all about. And that is why Western Cooperative Electric is proud to share our success with the communities that have supported us for more than 80 years.

Because the power of a cooperative has never been just about electricity. It's about people.



Hays Community Radar



Plainville Food Pantry



Rush County EMS



Trego County Fair Board

STANTON EARNS BOARD LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATE



Board President Nick Zerr (left) presents Tim Stanton with his Board Leadership Certificate.

Western Cooperative Electric is proud to recognize Trustee **TIM STANTON** for earning the Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

The BLC recognizes electric cooperative directors who demonstrate a commitment to developing their skills as effective board leaders. The program provides directors with continuing education focused on cooperative governance, leadership, strategic thinking, and the responsibilities of serving on a cooperative board.

As a member-owned cooperative, Western Cooperative Electric relies on an engaged and informed board of trustees to help guide the organization and make decisions that serve the cooperative's membership. Continuing education gives trustees an opportunity to strengthen their understanding of the cooperative industry and the responsibilities that come with board service.

Stanton's achievement reflects his dedication to professional development and his commitment to being an effective leader for Western Cooperative Electric. The knowledge gained through NRECA's educational programs provides valuable perspective that trustees can bring back to the boardroom as they help guide the cooperative into the future.

Western Cooperative Electric appreciates Stanton's investment of time and effort in continuing his education and strengthening his leadership skills. His commitment to learning demonstrates the importance of informed, engaged leadership in ensuring the cooperative continues to serve its members well.

Western congratulates him on earning his BLC and thanks him for his continued service, leadership, and dedication to the cooperative and its members.

Record Heat Leads to Record Electric Sales *Continued from page 12A ▶*

In other words: growth, when we manage it carefully, is good for the cooperative and good for you.

GROWTH BEYOND THE NUMBERS

These record-setting months also reflect something bigger happening across our part of Kansas. Healthy communities need good jobs, growing businesses, and reasons for young families to stay and build their futures here. When local industries expand, farms and ranches modernize, and new businesses choose Kansas, our whole cooperative benefits. That's why Western has always worked closely with our communities and economic development partners to support the kind of growth that strengthens the places we all call home.

A WORD ON DATA CENTERS

It seems like everywhere I go, people want to know my thoughts on data centers. Data centers are an incredibly divisive issue, no doubt about it. While we don't currently have interest in large data centers locating in our service territory, this is precisely the time to evaluate and prepare. These projects have pros and cons, but I believe local leaders should evaluate each project on its own merits.

Before preemptively passing moratoria or outright rejecting these facilities, I think it is important to note that not all data centers are created equal. These facilities can range in size from massive 1000-megawatt hyperscale projects to a five-megawatt site with a local developer. It is important that developers take the time and effort to conduct extensive studies to reduce water use and environmental impacts, and to be a good fit and partner for the community they are trying to locate in.

I always tell folks I AM NOT an advocate for any one project or company; I AM an advocate for Western Cooperative Electric, our members, and the economic growth and sustainability of our region.

Through the lens of economic prosperity, these facilities represent one of the biggest potential sources of new growth in our region and across the country. They could bring significant new electricity sales, added tax revenue, and economic activity to our area.

But they also raise real questions I take seriously: How much will it cost us to connect a facility like this? Who pays for the new infrastructure it needs? Will rates go up for members who are already here? Will our system stay just as reliable?

Before we would start negotiating with a large new customer like this, we ask one simple question: Will this make the cooperative better for all our members, or will it shift costs and risk onto the people who are already here? If it doesn't pass that test, we won't move forward with it.

MY COMMITMENT TO YOU

Here's what I can promise:

- ▶ We will pursue the kind of growth that makes power more affordable, more reliable, and our communities stronger.
- ▶ We will manage our system so the benefits of increased sales return as a benefit to all members — not just a select few stockholders.
- ▶ We will keep you informed as these larger economic development conversations continue.

LOOKING AHEAD

More electricity sales can be a good sign. It means more people and businesses are relying on the power we deliver. If we keep planning carefully and stay true to the principle this cooperative was built on — serving our members first — this growth can help build an even stronger Western Cooperative Electric for years to come.

Thank you for being part of our cooperative family.

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