



WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC NEWS

Western Cooperative Electric, Inc.

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Tom Ruth

General Manager

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co-op news, energy tips, photos from co-op events and more!

FROM THE MANAGER

Democracy is the Co-op Way

Every May, Western Cooperative Electric has our annual meeting. One of the most important activities we conduct during our annual meeting is the election of the board of directors. We entrust these nine people to give strategic direction and ensure the co-op has good governance.

At Western, we try to make it as convenient as possible for members to participate in the election by educating members about our election process and mailing every member a ballot.

As the utility industry is experiencing some of the most significant changes since its founding, electric co-ops need your active participation. As a co-op member, you have the right to help set the direction for the co-op. This is a critical difference between co-ops and other electricity providers, such as investor-owned utilities (IOUs) or municipally owned systems.

With IOUs, you are a customer, and there is no required ownership. IOU stockholders live far away and have no direct attachment to the organization other than seeking a return on their investment. Communities served by municipally-owned systems may vote for the mayor or city council, but the connection to the electric service is indirect.

The board of directors of a co-op makes important strategic decisions for the organization. Examples of decisions boards make that impact all the members are:

- ▶ Approving the budget for the co-op.
- ▶ Governing policies.
- ▶ Setting rates.
- ▶ Determining when and how much patronage to retire back to the members.



Tom Ruth

As locally-owned businesses in the communities we serve, electric co-ops have the opportunity to introduce neighbors to neighbors and rekindle that spirit of democracy at the grassroots level, and we can encourage respectful debate about our co-op's role in our communities.

Participation is the key to a thriving democracy, and I encourage all members to participate in our upcoming election. Democracy is the best way to connect the people to their representation. By voting, sitting on the nominating committee, or running for a board seat, you are fulfilling your duty to your local democratically governed electric cooperative. If you have any questions regarding the upcoming elections, visit www.westerncoop.com or call our office at 785-743-5561.

2023 Nominating Committee Members

District 1

SHERIDAN, GRAHAM, ROOKS AND OSBORNE COUNTIES

- ▶ **TOM BROWN**, Morland
- ▶ **PAT WENDLING**, Plainville
- ▶ **PAT HAFFNER**, Hoxie

District 2

TREGO, ELLIS, RUSSELL AND LINCOLN COUNTIES

- ▶ **ERIC MODEN**, WaKeeney
- ▶ **NATHAN STAAB**, Hays
- ▶ **JOHN KUPPETZ JR.**, Ellis

District 3

GOVE, NESS, RUSH, BARTON AND ELLSWORTH COUNTIES

- ▶ **DOUG MANHART**, Grainfield
- ▶ **TERRY OSTMEYER**, Grinnell
- ▶ **DOUG STEFEK**, Ellsworth

Nominations for Trustee Elections Due March 1

Members who meet the qualifications have the right to seek election to the board of trustees. While serving on a board is certainly not for everyone, it is healthy for any co-op to have an engaged membership with members interested in serving in a leadership role.



Terry Hobbs
District 1
Incumbent



Richard Schaus
District 2
Incumbent



Dale Weinhold
District 3
Incumbent

At Western Co-op, we are governed by a board of nine trustees elected by the membership to provide strategic guidance and ensure we continue to serve the member's interests.

To run for a trustee position, candidates:

- ▶ Must be a member of Western Cooperative Electric.
- ▶ Cannot be employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or a business selling electric energy or supplies to the cooperative.
- ▶ Cannot be a current employee or have been employed by the cooperative within the last five years.
- ▶ Must be a bona fide resident within Western's service territory.

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

If you are interested in running for a board of trustee seat, you must contact a Nominating Committee member in your corresponding district before the March 1 deadline or stop by Western's office to pick up the member petition form.

You Have a Voice at YOUR CO-OP

Make plans to attend the
78th Annual
Western Cooperative Electric Meeting

WESTERN COOPERATIVE OFFICE
635 S. 13TH ST., WAKEENEY



JOIN US MAY 10, 2023
SHARE A MEAL | ELECT TRUSTEES | LEARN ABOUT OPERATIONS

NOW ACCEPTING

Sharing Success

Community Grant Applications

In partnership with CoBank, Western Cooperative Electric provides grant opportunities for local nonprofit organizations through the Sharing Success Grant Program. Since 2013, the Sharing Success program has donated more than \$100,000 to local organizations to better the communities Western serves.

Applications for the 2023 cycle will be accepted from Jan. 1, 2023, through July 1, 2023. The Western Board of Trustees will review the applications and select the winners at the July board meeting, and grants will be distributed in August and September.

“Our Sharing Success Program exists to make a positive difference in the communities Western serves,” said Assistant General Manager/Member Services Manager Nolan Numrich. “Concern for the Community is one of the Seven Cooperative Principles and a benefit of being a cooperative member.”

In 2022, Western Cooperative awarded four \$5,000 grants. Each recipient described in their application how the grant would benefit or improve their community. Those recipients were:

- ▶ **SACRED HEART SCHOOL**
Kitchen improvements
- ▶ **SYLVAN SENIOR CENTER**
Building renovations
- ▶ **ELLSWORTH CHILDCARE AND LEARNING CENTER**
Outdoor play space improvements
- ▶ **THE WELL — CENTER FOR HOPE**
Kitchen Equipment

Contribution Request Amount

In 2023, Western plans to award up to four grants totaling \$20,000. The minimum request is \$2,000.

Eligibility

Generally, contributions to any 501(c)(3) charity are eligible. Select organizations not designated a 501(c)(3) may also be eligible. These organizations include schools and government organizations such as counties or municipalities and their agencies or departments, as long as the donation serves a public purpose. Organizations that are political in nature, limit their activities based on religious affiliation, or discriminate do not qualify.

Priority will be given to organizations in Western Cooperative Electric's service territory.

There is little restriction on the type of projects that can apply. However, projects must be community-oriented and serve a public need.

To apply, visit www.westerncoop.com/sharing-success-community-grants.

Apply by July 1, 2023, at www.westerncoop.com/sharing-success-community-grants.





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

Western Cooperative Electric receives requests for assistance with member electricity bills throughout the year. The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally funded program that helps eligible households pay a portion of their home energy costs by providing a one-time per year benefit.

The 2023 LIEAP application period is from **JAN. 3, 2023, THROUGH MARCH 31, 2023, AT 5 P.M.**

To qualify, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- ▶ An adult living at the address must be personally responsible for paying the heating costs incurred at the current residence, payable either to the landlord or the fuel vendor.
- ▶ Applicants must demonstrate a recent history of payments toward purchases of the primary heating energy.
- ▶ The combined gross income (before deductions) of all persons living at the address may not exceed 150% of the federal poverty level.

The benefit levels vary according to the following factors:

- ▶ Household income
- ▶ Number of persons living at the address

For more information or assistance in completing the application, please contact the LIEAP office by calling 800-432-0043. For FAQs, visit www.westerncoop.com.

2023 Income Eligibility Guidelines

Persons Living at Address	Maximum Gross Monthly Income	Persons Living at Address	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	\$1,699	7	\$5,239
2	\$2,289	8	\$5,829
3	\$2,879	9	\$6,419
4	\$3,469	10	\$7,009
5	\$4,059	11	\$7,599
6	\$4,649	12	\$8,189
+1	\$590 for each additional person		

- ▶ Type of dwelling
- ▶ Type of heating fuel

For more information and/or to apply online, visit www.dcf.ks.gov, select the **SERVICES** tab at the top, then scroll down and click on **ENERGY ASSISTANCE (LIEAP)**. Applications must be received at the DCF office **PRIOR TO 5 P.M., MARCH 31, 2023**. Late arrivals will not be considered for assistance. The state will contact Western Cooperative Electric to verify payments are being made on the account and the account is active in the applicant's name. LIEAP payments will come directly to Rolling Hills Electric and be applied directly to the account.

For more information or assistance in completing the application, please contact the LIEAP office by calling 800-432-0043. For FAQs, visit www.westerncoop.com.