



An Equal Opportunity Provider & Employer

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

**Craig Crossland**

President

**Terry Hobbs**

Vice President

**Richard Schaus**

Secretary-Treasurer

**Landon Heier**

Trustee

**Frank Joy**

Trustee

**Marvin Keller**

Trustee

**Nick Zerr**

Trustee

**Susan Rohleder**

Trustee

**Dale Weinhold**

Trustee

### General Manager

**Tom Ruth**

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!

## FROM THE MANAGER

# Working with Local Legislators

Eventually, all politics filter down to the local level. There is very little legislation at the national level that doesn't impact our homes, businesses and farms. We live locally but our lifestyles and livelihoods are always influenced by state and national issues. This underscores the importance and value of local politics and the need to remain engaged.

At Western Cooperative Electric, we think it's critical to develop and cultivate relationships with local legislators because they craft, introduce, and vote on legislation that impacts the local business climate, the environment, and the quality of life for our communities. After all, our purpose is to provide safe, reliable, affordable energy, but our mission is to help our community thrive.

Western Cooperative is a local business that powers economic development and prosperity for our region. Our leadership, board members, and employees live and work here in our community. As a cooperative, we have deep roots here and listen closely to our members to better understand the community's needs.

We strive to advocate for our community, ensuring local legislators know, understand, and act on the issues important to our area.



Tom Ruth

### Providing Industry Guidance and Expertise

As a practical matter, we recognize most legislators are "generalists," yet they vote on a wide range of issues. Their expertise lay outside the rapidly changing energy industry, so Western provides guidance and expertise from subject matter experts who've been in the energy industry for many years.

Today's energy landscape is an increasingly complex topic covering not only the industry's traditional engineering aspects but also technology, cybersecurity, the electrification of the transportation sector and more.

Our experts provide briefings and backgrounders to legislators,

*Continued on page 12C* ▶

## Cold Weather Rule Ends March 15

Spring is just around the corner, and with it, warmer weather. Western would like to issue a friendly reminder to our consumer-members that the cold weather and collection policy ends on March 15. For more information regarding Western Cooperative Electric's policies, visit [www.westerncoop.com](http://www.westerncoop.com).

## Kansas Electric Cooperatives Day at the Capitol

Western Trustees and staff joined with other electric cooperatives representatives from around the state to visit lawmakers at the Kansas State Capitol in Topeka. This year's Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. Day at the Capitol event saw record participation where cooperatives had the opportunity to share their members' concerns with legislators.

"Having the opportunity to meet with our representatives to tell them about Western Cooperative and the challenges our members face makes this a great event," said Western's Member Services Manager and Assistant General Manager Nolan Numrich.

After meeting with their local legislators, attendees were given legislative briefings from party leaders, including Senate President Ty Masterson, Speaker of the House Dan Hawkins, Senate Minority Leader Dinah Sykes, House Minority Leader Vic Miller, Senate Utilities Chair Rob Olson, and House Energy Chair Leo Delperdang.

"We always appreciate the opportunity to meet with our local legislators, but with the population shifts, we are losing representation on the western side of the state," said Numrich. "Events like Day at



Rep. Barbara Wasinger (R-Hays) is pictured with representatives from Western Cooperative. From left: Member Services Manager and Assistant Manager Nolan Numrich; Trustees Frank Joy and Landon Heier; Rep. Wasinger; Trustees Marvin Keller and Nick Zerr.

the Capitol allow cooperatives to share our stories and challenges with lawmakers representing districts in heavily populated regions who might not always consider how legislation may affect the more rural areas."

With many newly elected lawmakers this session, the impact of 140 electric co-op representatives meeting with their legislators, attending House and Senate sessions, and engaging in briefings by legislative leadership left a positive impression.

### Legislative Issues Impacting Our Members

**GRID RELIABILITY:** Maintaining resource diversity and flexibility is critical. Cooperatives are committed to generating power as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible using an "all-of-the-above" approach. We also support the retention of existing resilient and dispatchable reserves, including disputable reserves, that protect the integrity of the electric grid.

**THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES:** Allow for effective state conservation plans to remain in place without imposing additional Endangered Species Act (ESA) requirements. Make the ESA more effective and less costly to find a

balance that accommodates essential economic activities, including electric cooperative territories and transmission routes where all citizens do not share the cost for compliance.

**WILDFIRE MITIGATION:** Working with local representatives to develop fire mitigation strategies and federal agencies to develop wildfire response plans that consider the impacts of wildfires on rural communities and electric co-op infrastructure.

**SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTIONS:** Work together with other distribution and G&T cooperatives, Congress, the administration, and federal agencies to maximize the availability of electric infrastructure materials and equipment at a reasonable cost. This includes conductors, poles, transformers, and other materials in light of supply chain disruptions caused by prevailing global and domestic economic conditions.

**DISTRIBUTED ENERGY RESOURCES (DER):** Cooperatives are leaders in integrating renewable energy into their overall fuel mix and accommodating those customers desiring renewable or distributed generation. DG customers that use the utility as a "backup" or "battery" still create costs for the utility and we will need to ensure that does not unfairly shift costs to non-DG consumer-members on our system.



Western General Manager Tom Ruth (left) asks a question during the legislative updates at the Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. Day at the Capitol event.

## Working with Local Legislators *Continued from page 12A* ▶

committees and staff, and we offer expert testimony for hearings and other legislative or regulatory meetings or gatherings. And because we're involved in economic development and we know local community leaders, we can provide insight into how issues and policies under discussion might impact our region.

### Representing Your Best Interests

We strive to be a trusted resource on energy issues. Because of our deep roots in the community, we have a firm understanding of local

issues and needs. We will continue looking after the long-term interests of our members. This means we are able to cultivate and foster positive, productive relationships with legislators who know and trust us because we're advocating on behalf of the community we serve.

We're proud to power your life and bring good things to the community. We hope you'll continue to advise Western Cooperative on matters of importance so we can continue to advocate on your behalf and improve the quality of life for all.

## Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)

*Application Deadline March 31*

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 deadline is March 31. For more information or to apply for assistance, visit [www.dcf.ks.gov/services/eas/Pages/EnergyAssistance.aspx](http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/eas/Pages/EnergyAssistance.aspx).

## 10 Employees Recognized for Combined 150 Years of Experience

Western Cooperative Electric recently acknowledged 10 employees for their dedication to their jobs and the members Western serves.

"It was my pleasure to recognize the employees who have reached milestones in their careers and to thank them personally for their commitment," said General Manager Tom Ruth.

In recognition of their five-year interval achievements, employees received a certificate and a pin from the National

Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), denoting the number of years of service.

"An organization is only as good as the people who work there," said Ruth. "We are truly blessed to have employees who embody the cooperative spirit and are so dedicated to the service of others. Without all years of hard work and commitment to our members by our employees, Western would not be the outstanding organization it is today."

## Years of Service Awards

**We're featuring our service award recipients on social media to show our appreciation for their dedication to the co-op. Make sure to follow Western Cooperative Electric on Facebook and leave a comment thanking the recipients during our #ServiceAwardSaturday campaign.**

### 5 YEARS



Chance Demel

### 10 YEARS



Aaron Frieb

### 20 YEARS



Tyler Renard

### 25 YEARS



Kurtis Brock

### 15 YEARS



Johnny Howard



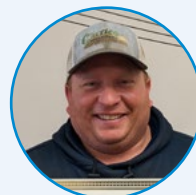
Stacey Malsam



Shelli Nowlin




Andrew Schultz



Dustin Wacker



Robert Zeman



**WESTERN  
COOPERATIVE  
ELECTRIC**

*Power & People*

# 78th Annual Meeting

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 10**

**Lunch at Noon | Meeting at 1 p.m.**

*Join us for  
Door Prizes | Cooperative Updates | Trustee Election Results*

*Can't Make it  
in Person?*  
**LIVE  
STREAMING  
OPTION IS  
AVAILABLE!**

**LOCATION WESTERN HEADQUARTERS | 635 S. 13TH STREET | WAKEENEY, KANSAS 67672**