



## WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC

# NEWS

### WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC, INC.

#### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Nick Zerr**  
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**Terry Hobbs**  
Vice President

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**Frank Joy**  
Trustee

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**Tim Stanton**  
Trustee

**Dale Weinhold**  
Trustee

#### GENERAL MANAGER

**Nolan Numrich**  
CEO/General Manager

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### FROM THE MANAGER

## What Affects Your Electricity Costs?

As we move into a new year, Western Cooperative Electric remains committed to providing our members with safe, reliable and affordable electricity. Understanding the factors that impact your energy bills is essential, especially as we prepare to conduct a **COST-OF-SERVICE STUDY (COSS) IN 2025** to evaluate our rates and ensure fair and equitable pricing for all members.

You may be surprised to learn how many factors influence electricity prices, including fuel costs, materials, extreme weather, inflation, infrastructure maintenance, and government regulations. While many of these factors are outside our control, we do our best to balance external and internal factors to ensure rates remain affordable for our members.

#### FUEL PRICES AND POWER GENERATION

Western Cooperative Electric purchases power from Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, our generation and transmission (G&T) provider, before distributing it to homes and businesses. The cost of generating electricity fluctuates based on fuel prices, such as natural gas and coal. Our team works closely with our power supplier to stabilize these costs as much as possible through a diverse energy portfolio and hedging.

#### EXTREME WEATHER AND ENERGY DEMAND

Kansas experiences both frigid winters and scorching summers, leading to spikes in electricity demand. When temperatures drop or soar, heating and cooling systems work harder, increasing energy consumption. As the demand for electricity rises, wholesale power costs can also fluctuate based on energy market prices.



Nolan Numrich

#### INFRASTRUCTURE AND RELIABILITY

Maintaining a reliable electric system requires continuous investment in substations, power lines, and other essential equipment. A portion of your monthly bill helps cover these operational costs, ensuring we can provide reliable service.

#### ENERGY POLICY AND REGULATIONS

Federal and state energy policies impact electricity prices. As the energy industry transitions toward renewable sources and updates emissions regulations, new infrastructure and compliance costs can affect rates. Western Cooperative Electric advocates for policies

*Continued on page 12D ►*



# Honoring a Lifetime of Service

## Remembering Richard Schaus

Western Cooperative Electric recently lost a dedicated leader and a pillar of our cooperative family. **RICHARD SCHAUS**, who served on the Western Cooperative Electric Board of Trustees for over 50 years, passed away leaving a remarkable legacy of service, commitment and advocacy for rural electric cooperatives.

Richard's tenure on the board was defined by his unwavering dedication to the cooperative's mission. Over the decades, he played a crucial role in guiding Western Cooperative Electric through times of change and growth, always keeping the best interests of the cooperative's members at heart. His leadership helped ensure reliable, affordable electricity for rural Kansans, reinforcing the values of cooperation, integrity and service at our organization's core.

Beyond his service to the cooperative, Richard was a devoted community member known for his steadfast commitment to improving the lives of those around him. His presence at board meetings, cooperative events, and community gatherings will be deeply missed.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Richard's family, friends and all who had the privilege of knowing him. His decades of service to Western Cooperative Electric will be remembered with gratitude and respect.

As we reflect on Richard's legacy, we are reminded of the impact that dedicated individuals can have in guiding and shaping the future of their communities. Thank you, Richard, for your unwavering dedication and service. You will be greatly missed.



**TOP:** Richard Schaus (right) began his service as a Western trustee in 1974.

**BOTTOM:** In 2024, Richard Schaus (left) received an award from Board President Nick Zerr honoring his 50 years of service.

## Snowmageddon, Snowpocalypse, SnOMG!

Whether it's a big snow storm or an everyday snowfall — there's a risk of death by shoveling. Sudden exertion after being sedentary for several months can put a big strain on the heart. Pushing a heavy snow blower can also cause injury.

**Shoveling heavy, wet snow can cause back injuries and heart attacks. So don't push yourself!**

- \* Dress warmly, covering your head, fingers and toes.
- \* Take it slow and stretch before you begin.
- \* Stay hydrated and don't shovel after eating or while smoking.
- \* Shovel only fresh, powdery snow; it's lighter.
- \* Push small amounts of snow rather than lifting.
- \* Take frequent breaks and do not work to the point of exhaustion.

Know the signs of a heart attack, including chest discomfort, an uncomfortable feeling of fullness and shortness of breath. Stop immediately and call 911 if you're experiencing symptoms; every minute counts.

SOURCE: [WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG](http://WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG)

## EFFICIENCY TIP

About 30% of your home's heating energy escapes through windows. Use window coverings to minimize energy loss in cold weather and consider smart blinds that automatically adjust based on sunlight and temperature. This helps regulate indoor climate and keeps your heater from kicking on, saving energy.



SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

## Nominations for Trustee Elections Due March 1

Any interested Western Cooperative Electric members who meet the qualifications may consider running for a seat on the board of trustees. The cooperative thrives when its membership actively participates in governance, ensuring that decisions reflect the interests of those it serves.

Governed by a board of nine trustees, the Western Cooperative Electric board operates with strategic oversight designed to uphold the cooperative's values and provide safe, affordable and reliable service to its members. If you meet the qualifications and are passionate about leadership, consider running for a trustee position in the upcoming election.

### QUALIFICATIONS FOR TRUSTEE CANDIDATES

To be eligible to run for a trustee position, candidates must:

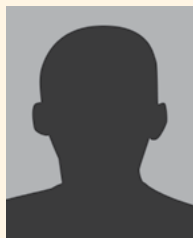
- ▶ Be a member of Western Cooperative Electric.
- ▶ Not be employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or a business selling electric energy or supplies to the cooperative.
- ▶ Not be a current employee or have been employed by the cooperative within the last five years.
- ▶ Be a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

### NOMINATING PROCESS

In November 2024, the Western board appointed a nominating committee to assist in vetting and providing information to members interested in running for a trustee position. Interested candidates must contact a nominating committee member in their corresponding district before the March 1 deadline to be placed on the election ballots. Alternatively, candidates may visit Western's office to pick up a member petition form.

### 2025 NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS DISTRICT 1 | SHERIDAN, GRAHAM, ROOKS AND OSBORNE COUNTIES

### INCUMBENT TRUSTEES SEEKING REELECTION



Open  
District 1



Frank Joy  
District 2



Nick Zerr  
District 3

- ▶ MICHELLE WINDHOLZ, Morland
- ▶ PAT WENDLING, Plainville
- ▶ EVAN LESSER, Palco

### DISTRICT 2 | TREGO, ELLIS, RUSSELL AND LINCOLN COUNTIES

- ▶ STEVE SEIBEL, Ellis
- ▶ JERRY WASINGER, Hays
- ▶ JOHN KUPPETZ JR., Ellis

### DISTRICT 3 | GOVE, NESS, RUSH, BARTON AND ELLSWORTH COUNTIES

- ▶ DOUG MANHART, Grainfield
- ▶ TERRY OSTMEYER, Grinnell
- ▶ MIKE KEITH, Ellsworth

### GET INVOLVED

Serving on the board is a meaningful way to contribute to the cooperative's success, but it is not for everyone. However, having an engaged membership ensures a strong, member-focused organization. If you are interested in serving, contact a nominating committee member or stop by Western's office before March 1 to start the process. Otherwise, please vote and attend your annual meeting in WaKeeney on May 14.

Western Cooperative Electric is committed to transparency and member involvement. Your participation shapes the future of our cooperative.

# Need Assistance Paying Your Bill?

## Apply for LIEAP by 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 2025 LIEAP APPLICATION PERIOD ENDS MARCH 31, 2025, 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 according to the guidelines listed in the table.

### THE BENEFIT LEVELS VARY ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING FACTORS:

- ▶ Household income.
  - ▶ Number of persons living at the address.
  - ▶ Type of dwelling.
  - ▶ Type of heating fuel.
- For more information and to apply, visit [WWW.DCF.KS.GOV](http://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, 2025**. Late arrivals will not be considered for assistance.

### 2025 INCOME GUIDELINES

Persons Living at Address	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	\$1,882.50
2	\$2,555
3	\$3,227.50
4	\$3,900
5	\$4,572.50
6	\$5,245
7	\$5,917.50
8	\$6,590
<b>+1 \$672.50 for each additional person</b>	

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 Western Cooperative Electric and be applied directly to the account.

For more information or assistance in completing the application, please contact the LIEAP office at 888-369-4777.

# What Affects Your Electricity Costs?

*Continued from page 12A ▶*

supporting reliable and affordable power for our rural communities.

### 2025 COST-OF-SERVICE STUDY

Western Cooperative Electric will conduct a **COSS** this year to analyze our rate structure. This study will evaluate how costs are allocated among different rate classes to ensure fair and sustainable pricing. Our goal is to maintain **TRANSPARENCY, FAIRNESS AND FINANCIAL STABILITY** while continuing to meet the energy needs of our members.

The study will help determine whether adjustments to rates are necessary to cover the costs of providing service while ensuring that each member pays their fair share based on their electricity use.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MANAGE YOUR ENERGY USE

While many cost factors are beyond our

control, members can take proactive steps to manage energy consumption:

- ▶ **ADJUST YOUR THERMOSTAT** to the lowest comfortable setting in winter and the highest comfortable setting in summer.
- ▶ **SCHEDULE HVAC MAINTENANCE** and replace dirty filters to improve efficiency.
- ▶ **USE ENERGY-INTENSIVE APPLIANCES** like washers and dishwashers during off-peak hours.
- ▶ **SEAL AIR LEAKS** around windows and doors to reduce heating and cooling losses.

### YOUR COOPERATIVE, YOUR VOICE

Western Cooperative Electric is more than just your power provider — we are a member-owned cooperative that thrives on member involvement. As we prepare for the 2025 COSS, we encourage you to stay engaged and make your voice

heard. One way to do this is by joining **VOICES FOR COOPERATIVE POWER (VCP)**, a grassroots network advocating for policies that support affordable and reliable electricity for rural communities like ours.

Additionally, we invite all members to participate and vote in the upcoming trustee elections at our annual meeting in May. These elections play a vital role in shaping the future of our cooperative, ensuring that your interests and concerns are represented. Your vote and involvement help guide the decisions that impact energy costs, infrastructure and long-term sustainability.

For more information on VCP, trustee elections and cooperative initiatives, visit [www.westerncooperative.com](http://www.westerncooperative.com) or contact our office. Together, we can build a stronger cooperative and a brighter energy future.

**HERE TO SERVE, NOLAN NUMRICH**