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NEWS

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BEHIND THE COST OF POWER | PART 3

Managing Generation Resources for a Stronger Energy Future

BY STEVE EPPERSON, CEO, SUNFLOWER ELECTRIC POWER CORPORATION
CO-AUTHORED BY NOLAN NUMRICH, CEO/GENERAL MANAGER, WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC

In the first two articles in our Behind the Cost of Power series, we explored the cooperative partnership between Western and our wholesale power supplier, Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, and the work required to maintain and expand the transmission system. In Part 3, we're taking a closer look at electric generation and its role in the cost of wholesale electricity. Making the most of proven generation resources today can help avoid unnecessary replacement costs while continuing to provide Western members with dependable power as electricity needs grow.

MAKING THE MOST OF EXISTING RESOURCES

One of the best ways to manage generation costs is to make the most of our current generation facilities, many of which have served electric consumers in central and western Kansas for decades. The average age of Sunflower's coal and natural gas generation fleet is 49 years, with some units approaching 60 years old. As equipment ages, maintenance becomes increasingly important and, in some cases, more complex. But that

doesn't automatically mean an older generation unit is a candidate for replacement. Continuing to maintain an existing unit can be far less expensive than building an entirely new generating resource. That's why Sunflower uses technology, inspections, and detailed maintenance planning to identify problems early, improve performance, and extend the useful life of our generating assets.

For example, Sunflower updated the analog control systems at several older natural gas generation facilities to modern digital systems. Online performance monitoring helps identify early signs of equipment problems or efficiency losses, while a computerized maintenance management system helps staff track repairs, plan preventive maintenance, and identify future replacements.

At Sunflower's Holcomb Station coal-fired generation plant, a 2006 furnace modification significantly reduced slag buildup on boiler tubes and helped



Steve Epperson



Nolan Numrich

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Managing Generation Resources for a Stronger Energy Future

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extend the life of the boiler. More recently, sections of the boiler were replaced during planned outages to better align equipment life with the plant's operating life.

Maintenance planning also means looking for ways to spread costs over time. A great example is Holcomb Station's fabric filter baghouse used for control of particulate emissions, which has 28 compartments containing hundreds of filter bags requiring periodic replacement. Sunflower staggers the filter bag replacement rather than replacing them all at once, helping levelize costs while keeping the equipment operating as intended.

These decisions may seem like small details, but they add up. Maintaining equipment, identifying problems early, and making strategic upgrades can help extend asset life and delay the need for more costly replacements. When replacement makes sense, Sunflower carefully evaluates the costs, reliability, and needs of our local communities to determine the best path forward. The goal is not simply to add new infrastructure, but to make investments that provide dependable service and long-term value for Western members.

PLANNING FOR A CHANGING ELECTRIC GRID

While we're making the most of today's generation resources, we're also adapting to rising electricity demand in Kansas and across the country. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation, which develops and enforces electric reliability standards for the bulk power system, projects peak demand on the U.S. energy grid to increase by 24% by 2035.

Regionally, Southwest Power Pool (SPP), which operates the power market serving Kansas and 16 surrounding states, has

a current system peak of 56 gigawatts. A system peak is the highest amount of electricity being used across the SPP region at one time. Under SPP's higher-growth scenario, the regional peak demand could double within 10 years. This potential growth reinforces why long-term planning matters. New generation resources can take years to plan, permit, finance, engineer, and construct.

As not-for-profit cooperatives, Sunflower and our member utilities have a responsibility to make thoughtful decisions on behalf of consumers. That means balancing today's needs with tomorrow's, focusing on the costs we can control and carefully weighing the long-term value of every investment.

INVESTING WITH THE LONG TERM IN MIND

The electric system we rely on today was built through decades of investment. Maintaining that system and preparing it for tomorrow requires the same long-term thinking. We also recognize rising costs concern families and businesses, and Western and Sunflower take that responsibility seriously. Some investments are necessary to keep the system reliable and ready for future needs, but every investment should have a clear purpose. Our responsibility is to plan carefully, prioritize wisely, and invest in the resources that provide the greatest long-term value to Western members like you.

As this series continues, we'll explore more of the forces shaping wholesale power costs, including regional energy markets, changing electricity demand, supply chain pressures, and the ways Western and Sunflower are working together to maintain a reliable power supply while managing costs responsibly.

THE POWER BEHIND THE POWER

Sunflower's Power Generation Portfolio



COAL

Holcomb Station supplies 349 MW of dependable, around-the-clock generation that maintains system stability and supports electric reliability and energy security.



NATURAL GAS

Nine facilities provide 726 MW of flexible, quick-start generation to support reliability when demand changes or renewable output fluctuates.



SOLAR

Sunflower owns a 20 MW solar facility and purchases another 170 MW from two others to add renewable energy, helping diversify our generation portfolio.



WIND

Power purchase agreements with two wind farms add 178 MW of renewable generation, helping to manage costs and enhance fuel diversity in our resource portfolio.



HYDROELECTRIC

The 2 MW of power allocated from the Western Area Power Administration provides hydroelectric energy from multiple hydroelectric dams.

*The nameplate capacity of Sunflower-owned generation assets totals 1,095 MW, with purchase power agreements adding 200.3 MW of power.



W.O.R.K. SCHOLARSHIP

Investing in the Next Generation of Rural Kansas

Western Cooperative Electric is proud to announce the recipients of its 2026 Western Opportunities for Rural Kansas (W.O.R.K.)

Scholarship: **CORTNEY DOHE** and **BRIANNA LEE**, both of Plainville.

Now in its second year, the W.O.R.K. Scholarship was created with a simple goal: to encourage young professionals to bring their education, skills, and experience back to rural Kansas and build their futures here.

Each recipient will receive \$1,000 toward student loans or school debt. More importantly, the scholarship represents Western's investment in the people who choose to make rural Kansas communities their home after completing their education or training.

Both recipients this year are excellent examples of the impact young professionals can have in rural communities.

Cortney Dohe is building her future in Plainville. Originally from Cheyenne, Oklahoma, Dohe earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Fort Hays State University and has worked at Rooks County Health Center for more than six years. She is currently pursuing her master's degree with plans to become a family nurse practitioner. Dohe is proud to provide accessible healthcare in a rural community and help ensure individuals don't fall through the cracks. She and her



Cortney Dohe



Brianna Lee

husband are raising two children and value the opportunity to give them a rural upbringing. Rooks County has given her a strong sense of belonging and inspires her to give back in many ways.

Brianna Lee returned home to Plainville after graduating from Washburn University in Topeka with her Doctor of Nursing Practice-Family Nurse Practitioner degree. After living in Wichita, she and her husband returned to Plainville with their son and are expecting another child this fall. She works for Kansas Mental Health Medicine and is already actively involved in her community. Lee believes in continual learning and growth and appreciates that the W.O.R.K. Scholarship offers a unique opportunity to support Western members in a meaningful way.

Western congratulates Brianna and Cortney and is proud to support two young professionals who are choosing rural Kansas — not just as a place to live, but as a place to make a difference.

Both recipients this year are excellent examples of the impact young professionals can have in rural communities.



Happy Thanksgiving

From our cooperative family to yours, we hope you enjoy the holiday. Our office will be closed Thursday, Nov. 26, and Friday, Nov. 27.



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MAKE ^{YOUR} MARK!



JUNE 17-23, 2027

VISIT WASHINGTON, D.C., ALL EXPENSES PAID!

DISCOVER HISTORIC MEMORIALS,
EXPLORE WORLD-CLASS MUSEUMS,
CONNECT WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS
AND BUILD YOUR RESUME.

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COMMUNITY

Join thousands of high school students from electric cooperative communities across the country in Washington, D.C. Experience the trip of a lifetime and build lasting connections.

LEADERSHIP

Connect with legislators, hear top speakers, and dive into issues that shape our communities. Build leadership and communication skills that strengthen college and career resumes.

MEMORIES

Tour Smithsonian museums and historic memorials, cruise the Potomac River, and create memories that will last a lifetime.



TRAVEL. LEARN. LEAD.
SCAN TO APPLY!

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VISIT COLORADO
ALL EXPENSES PAID!



COMMUNITY

Form a candy co-op, lead camp activities, and connect with students from electric cooperative communities in Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming.



LEADERSHIP

Discover how co-ops work, strengthen leadership skills and your resume, and hear from nationally recognized speakers.



MEMORIES

Raft the Colorado River, tour a power plant, and compete in fun team activities. You'll create memories that will last a lifetime.

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CYLC

COOPERATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP
MAKE YOUR OWN PATH

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MORE



JULY 9-15, 2027

Develop leadership skills and explore the cooperative business model through team building, Colorado River rafting and discovering Steamboat Springs.