

**WESTERN
COOPERATIVE
ELECTRIC**

WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC
NEWS

Membership Approves Self-Regulation

83% of voters said "yes"

Congratulations to you, the members! Your voice has been heard and your votes counted.

In May, votes were tallied and you, the Western Cooperative Electric member-owners, voted overwhelmingly in favor of self-regulation, giving yourselves greater control of your cooperative.

The vote relieved the Kansas Corporation Commission of some of its decision-making authority, which added additional costs and time delays to your cooperative's rates and operations.

A total of 1,761 votes were cast. Of those ballots cast, 83 percent of members voted "yes", to self-regulate. The vote demonstrates the cooperative principles of "Democratic Member Control", or "one member, one vote", and "Autonomy and Independence", two of the seven cooperative principles on which Western is founded and by which we operate.

Western Sends Werth & Fabrizious to Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp

ISAIAH FABRIZIUS and **BAYLEE WERTH** joined more than 100 youth from across Kansas, Colorado, Oklahoma, and Wyoming for the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, July 12-18, near Steamboat Springs, CO. Electric cooperatives from all four states sponsor the trip for high school students.

"Western is proud to support the Youth Tour program," said Darrin Lynch, Western's General Manager. "On behalf of the Western member-owners and the employees, we appreciate the talented youth that represent Western and rural Kansas, in general. We are proud sponsors of opportunities for our youth to develop essential lead-



Baylee Werth and Isaiah Fabrizious enjoy the view of Elk River during Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.

I have learned to appreciate my electric cooperative. They are a large part of the communities they serve.

ISAIAH FABRIZIUS

ership and teamwork skills. I honestly cannot think of any more important investment than that which focuses on future generations of leaders."

During their week-long stay in Colorado, the students created their own "snack" cooperative, complete with a board of trustees and general manager selected by the students.

"This leadership camp taught me how a cooperative effort can be a success," Werth said.

The campers also took part in legislative presentations, a high voltage display, a competition to build a

Continued on page 20-B ▶

Cold Weather Rule Effective Nov. 1 - March 31

Western Cooperative Electric members who are unable to pay their electric service bills during the period from November 1 through March 31 can avoid being disconnected by fulfilling certain good faith requirements. Those requirements are summarized below:

- ▶ Member must notify the cooperative and state their inability to pay their bill in full.
- ▶ Members must apply to federal, state, local or other financial assistance programs for which they may be eligible to receive aid in paying utility bills.
- ▶ Members and the cooperative will reach a mutually agreeable payment arrangement.

It will be the responsibility of the cooperative during the cold weather period to send one written notice to the member and attempt to phone at least two days prior to the collection disconnection trip.

If no response is made to the notice, or if we are unable to make telephone contact, the trip for collection and/or disconnect will be made.

The cold weather rule is to ensure that human health and safety are not unreasonably endangered during the cold weather months.

For more information concerning assistance with your bill, please contact Western Cooperative Electric at 785-743-5561 or 800-456-6720.

Kansas Corp. Commission Complaint Procedure

Western Cooperative Electric strives to provide our members with quality service and support, but if you have a complaint about your electric utility bill or service that you cannot resolve by contacting Western Cooperative Electric, Kansas law allows you to file a complaint with the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC).

To file an informal complaint, please contact the KCC office of Public Affairs at 800-662-0027 or by e-mail at public.affairs@kcc.ks.gov. Most complaints can be resolved through the informal complaint procedure.

Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp *Continued from page 20-A* ▶



Students from four states met at this year's Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp.

transmission line from craft supplies, and a special presentation on avian (bird) protection. They explored Steamboat Springs, toured the Craig Power Plant and Trapper Mine, and took a white water rafting trip down the Colorado River.

At the end of the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, the youth elected Fabrizio as one of three ambassadors. He will return to the camp next year as a junior counselor.

"I have learned to appreciate my electric cooperative," Fabrizio said. "Electric cooperatives are a large part of the communities they serve."

Fabrizius and Werth were selected from a group of high school applicants during their junior year. To win this trip, students were asked to

write a one-page essay, take a quiz, and appear before a group of judges for an interview.

"Our local students gained awareness of how electric cooperatives function and how important it is for them to be involved in their communities," Lynch said. "Our challenge, going forward, is to encourage these future leaders to imagine a bright, promising future for themselves in rural Kansas to ensure the future vitality of Kansas as an agricultural leader and provider for the country, and for the world, going forward."

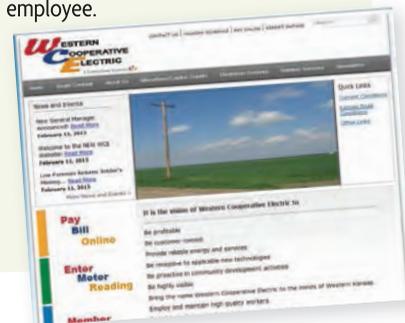
For more information, contact Western Cooperative Electric at 785-743-5561 or 800-456-6720 or visit our website at www.westerncoop.com.

Western's Payment Options

Western's members can now make payments through our website or by phone using a credit card or electronic funds transfer. To pay by phone, call our automated service at 800-330-1025, or call our main office to speak with a Western employee.

Through our website, you can also view your account, or enter your meter reading. You will have to set up a login and password the first time you do the online services. You will be prompted to enter your base account number and meter number.

All of these services are available at www.westerncoop.com.



Why Your Western Membership Matters

Why does your cousin in Kansas City pay KCPL for electricity and you pay Western? Why does our neighbor pay Rolling Hills, or Lane-Scott, and we pay Western?

In a nutshell, electrical service in Kansas is “divvied up” in what is referred to as “certificated territory,” whereby certain companies serve certain areas.

Other states have tried alternatives that have resulted in higher prices for consumers. So, now that we’ve answered the question, “Why Western?” You might wonder how is Western, as a member-owned cooperative, different than other types of electric providers?”

Western Cooperative Electric is a not-for-profit electric cooperative owned by you, our members.

Every home or business that receives electric power from Western—approximately 6,500 members (12,500 meters) in 13 counties—owns a portion of the cooperative. As a result, anyone who receives Western’s electric service is a member-owner,

not “just a customer.”

Being a member-owner of Western does matter. In this and future editions of the *Kansas Country Living* magazine, we will be focusing on the seven cooperative principles.

Economic Participation

Western Cooperative Electric does NOT exist to make profits for investors. Western exists to provide you, the member-owner, with safe, reliable, and affordable electric service—doing so in a way that enhances the quality of life in our rural communities.

Because Western operates on a not-for profit basis, Western collects only slightly more than what it takes to pay for the current year’s expenses. With that “extra”, Western retains a cushion to weather storms and rebuild aging infrastructure, as well as infrastructure that supports rural economic development. Your member-elected board makes decisions about how much equity, or accumulated “extra”, is necessary to retain and how much is available to

distribute back to you in the form of a patronage refund. Beyond that, the “extra” is returned to you, the member-owners.

This structure keeps your electric bill affordable and your member-owned electric provider financially sound and viable, ready to respond to unexpected events and to provide new service for rural expansion, for years and years to come. Since established in 1945 by rural folks who desired to have a quality of life consistent with that which those in urban areas had enjoyed years prior, Western has returned all of the “extra” that had been earned through 1999. The “extra” left on hand since 2000 as your “member-owner equity” (a.k.a. capital credits or patronage) will be up for consideration by your member-elected board to be returned to you, in whole or in part, late this year or early next year.

If you are a member-owner of Western in the former Aquila-served

Continued on page 20-D ▶

Seven Cooperative Principles

VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.

1

DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

2

MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefitting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

3

AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

4

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

5

COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional, and international structures.

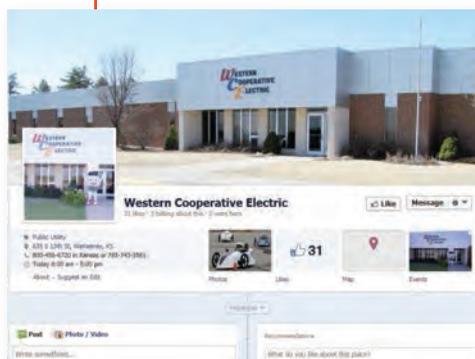
6

CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

7

Find Western on Facebook



Be sure to LIKE us on our new Facebook page! Just go to www.facebook.com/WesternCoopElectric to find cooperative news, energy tips, photos from cooperative events and much more!

Statement of Nondiscrimination

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call 866-632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax 202-690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Tip of the Month

When it's hot outside, appliances and lighting can actually heat up our homes more than we think. Minimize the activities that generate additional heat, such as burning open flames, or using hot-hair devices like curling irons. This will ultimately keep your house cooler.

Why Membership Matters Continued from page 20-C

territory, your patronage has been accumulating since 2007, and will be up for consideration to be returned to you in the year 2022, if not earlier.

Commitment to Community Membership also matters because Western cares about improving

the quality of life in the communities and neighborhoods in which we all live and serve. Coordinating efforts to help fund cities and counties to purchase fire-fighting equipment, hospital renovations, upgrade medical equipment, and low interest loans for economic development projects are just a few of the many investments made in local communities where we all live and work.

Education and Training

As a member of Western, you receive this *Kansas Country Living* magazine to stay abreast of important cooperative news and events locally, regionally, and nationally. Hopefully we touch on issues that impact you in your everyday life. Electricity permeates every aspect of our daily lives these days.

When the electricity blinks off, does anyone else jump up to adjust the thermostat only to realize that it won't do any good? As a cooperative owned by you, the employees have a duty to educate you, the member-owners, on issues that impact you. We ask that you please let us know what, and when, we can be doing to better meet your needs.

How Do Capital Credits Work?

Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues, called margins, are returned to members in the form of capital credits.



Source: National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation

Democratic Member Control

Membership matters because you have a voice and a vote in deciding exactly how Western is governed. It is through democratic control that members of Western elect a nine-member Board of Trustees. These Trustees, also members of Western, are neighbors residing within Western's electric service territory. Whenever your member-elected board takes up a vote, they are also voting on an issue that will be impacting their own homes and businesses as well as yours.

The bottom line is that membership matters! Remember, and don't hesitate to remind us, that YOU are the owners of Western Cooperative Electric. As employees, some of which are also member-owners, it is our pleasure to serve you and to give back to our communities at every possible opportunity, and we thank you.

Please keep in touch. Send us an e-mail at www.westerncoop.com, "like" us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/WesternCoopElectric, or give us a call at 800-456-6720. We appreciate hearing from our member-owners about what we can be doing to better meet your needs now and in the future!