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NEWS

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New General Manager Announced



Tom Ruth

Board President Craig Crossland announced **TOM RUTH** has been selected to serve as the next General Manager. Ruth began his duties April 30, 2018.

Stacey Malsam

and Dennis Deines have been serving as co-interim managers since Darrin Lynch, former manager, accepted a position with National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation in September 2017.

Ruth is an engineer and a graduate of the University of Missouri-Rolla. He is a native of rural Princeton, Missouri, and served with the United States Coast Guard in communications work on the mainland and overseas. He is married to Christine and has four step-children.

Ruth joins Western after working for South Central Indiana Rural Electric Member Cooperative in Martinsville, Indiana, most recently as vice president distribution services. While at South Central, Ruth was responsible for field operations, engineering, field communications, metering, relay testing and maintenance, system operations center, operations technology and vegetation management. Prior to joining South Central, Ruth had extensive experience ranging from journeyman lineman duties to operations and engineering responsibilities.

“My priorities are straight forward and easy to remember: safety, quality, and production,” Ruth said. “Safety is a core value that cannot and will not be undermined by priorities less important.”

“The Western Cooperative board selected Tom from over 30 well-qualified candidates following a national search utilizing the National Rural Electric Association (NRECA) search team,” Crossland said. “The board and the NRECA search team spent a great amount of time analyzing excellent résumés of all who applied, but several factors made Tom the right person to lead Western. In addition to having extensive experience in operations, engineering, and safety, he has a genuine interest in rural culture from growing up in rural Missouri. Along with a rural connection, Tom has invaluable experience of working in many facets of the electric utility world.”

“I am honored to have the opportunity to serve Western and evolve the strengths of Western while embracing co-op principles,” said Ruth. “Since growing up in rural Missouri, I enjoy the culture of the Midwest, including the people, and look forward to be a consensus builder and mentor for the Western Cooperative Electric family.”

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Landmark Solar Project to Benefit Members

Mid-Kansas Electric Company, Inc. along with its sister company, Sunflower Electric Power Corporation, announced its plan to purchase renewable energy from a 20-megawatt solar project scheduled for construction in southwest Kansas. The cooperatively-operated wholesale generation and transmission utility has signed a 25-year power purchase agreement with Lightsource BP, an independent power producer that will build, own and operate the solar facility.

Kansas Lt. Gov. Tracey Mann and dignitaries from Mid-Kansas, Lightsource BP and National Renewables Cooperative Organization (NRCO) attended the event held at Mid-Kansas' headquarters.

"Kansans have a long history of capitalizing on opportunities that make the most of our abundant resources," said Lt. Gov. Mann. "Gov. Colyer and I congratulate Mid-Kansas, Lightsource BP, and NRCO on their successful collaboration to construct what will be the largest solar project in Kansas. The Johnson Corner Solar Project illustrates a commitment to renewable energy resources that complement dispatchable energy resources."

Construction of the project is scheduled to begin in early 2019.

"Harnessing the power of the sun is not a new concept. The economics are what have changed," said Steve Epperson, Mid-Kansas chairman of the board. "The decreasing cost of photovoltaic technology, along with other industry dynamics, makes it the right time to bring solar energy into our generation mix."

The Mid-Kansas Board of Directors has championed a diverse energy generation portfolio to meet the needs of its six member owners and the thousands of Kansans they serve.

"Each generation fuel type has advantages, and



Mid-Kansas' and Sunflower's Corey Linville (left), vice president, power supply and delivery, and Stuart Lowry, president and CEO, sign a 25-year power purchase agreement with Lightsource.

Each generation fuel type has advantages, and the benefits of solar will add diversity to our existing energy generation portfolio.

the benefits of solar will add diversity to our existing energy generation portfolio," said Stuart Lowry, president and CEO of Mid-Kansas and Sunflower. "Along with other benefits, this solar facility will generate energy during our summer peak demand, providing protection against high market prices during times of increased energy demand."

The facility, to be located on 241 acres near Johnson, will have a registered capacity of 20 megawatts and will produce approximately 55,500 megawatt-hours annually, comprising 1 percent of the Mid-Kansas and Sunflower combined-system's energy. The project's location was selected not only for its strong generating potential, but also because placing a generating facility at the location will reduce load on an existing transmission line that is operating near its full capacity, thus deferring or eliminating a costly transmission upgrade that would otherwise be needed.

"We are delighted to team up with Mid-Kansas and Sunflower to deliver this landmark project," said Katherine Ryzhaya, Lightsource BP's North America Chief Commercial Officer. "It is energizing to see solar be both a cost-effective power resource and a viable alternative to costly infrastructure upgrades. This project is a win-win for the ratepayers of western Kansas."

NRCO, with its member-owner Mid-Kansas, jointly developed the project and sourced Lightsource BP as Mid-Kansas' long-term partner.

"NRCO is pleased to have helped another of its electric cooperative owners develop and contract solar capacity for its portfolio," said Eric Spigelman, director of renewables development. "Johnson Corner solar is a shining example of how a partnership approach can create significant value. NRCO applauds Mid-Kansas and Lightsource BP on their transaction."

"Electric cooperatives were formed by the people and for the people; focusing on their energy needs remains our primary mission," said Corey Linville, vice president, power supply and delivery for Mid-Kansas and Sunflower. "The Mid-Kansas and Sunflower boards of directors are both visionary and pragmatic when making decisions to provide our members with reliable energy at the lowest possible cost. The Johnson Corner Solar Project is one more innovative way to accomplish that."

Mark Your Calendar! Annual Meeting May 9

Mark your calendar for Western Cooperative Electric's Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 9, 2018. The meeting will be held at the cooperative office in WaKeeney, I-70 Exit 128 and Highway 283, 635 S. 13th St. Registration will begin at 11 a.m., lunch will be served at noon and the meeting will begin at 1 p.m.

We hope to see you there!

May 2018						
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6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

Set Your Thermostat to Beat the Peak

As warmer weather sets in, our thoughts on keeping the house comfortable switch from heating to cooling. But as temperatures rise and air conditioners are switched on, looking for ways to improve energy efficiency at home can help you and Western Cooperative Electric reduce demand, saving energy and money.

Making small adjustments in when, where and how you use electricity will help lower energy costs, and it can also help keep temperatures in your home more pleasant on sultry days. Your heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system or heat pump can play a huge part in controlling your energy use year-round, even if family comfort is a top priority.

At 78 degrees, most people are comfortable outside, so why not indoors? Most people aren't sensitive enough to notice much of a difference in air temperature whether the thermostat is set at 73 or raised to 78. But the closer your air conditioner or heat pump setting is to the outdoor temperature, the less your unit will run. Each degree difference represents a percentage of the total cooling load. That means that when temperatures are in the high 80s, you could reduce your cooling demand by 10 to 15 percent for each degree above 75 degrees.

Fans offer an economical alternative to air condition-

ing on mild days, and they can improve comfort as temperatures climb. The air movement from the ceiling fan lowers the temperature by creating a wind chill effect. Set them to spin counterclockwise during warmer months so that they push air down and make you feel cooler.

Central air conditioning can use as much as 1 kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity for each 12-minute cycle. A ceiling fan can operate for about 13 hours on the same amount of electricity, and a floor or table fan, depending on size, might run for 10 hours per kWh of power. But don't forget to turn off fans when you leave a room, because they cool people, not space.



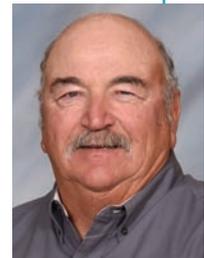
Adjust your thermostat from 3-6 p.m., Monday through Friday from July to August to lower our total kilowatt usage.

Joy and Schaus Achieve Director Gold Credential

FRANK JOY, vice president and **RICHARD SCHAUS**, secretary-treasurer of Western Cooperative Electric's board of trustees, received the Director Gold credential from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Joy and Schaus attended training classes conducted by NRECA in January.

The Director Gold Credential recognizes directors who have earned their Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) and Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) credentials and are committed to continuing their education throughout their service on the board.

Today's electric utility environment imposes new demands on electric cooperative directors, particularly increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and a working knowledge of the cooperative principles. Western Cooperative Electric has a commitment to work through NRECA and our statewide association, Kansas Electric Cooperatives, to sharpen this body of knowledge for the benefit of their electric cooperative member-owners.



Frank Joy



Richard Schaus

Proper Tree Pruning Around Power Lines

Trees provide curb appeal, shade and a space for kids to play in the yard. However, when trees grow and interfere with power lines, they become safety hazards and are among the most common causes for utility outages.

With millions of miles of electric lines that give power to homes and businesses throughout the U.S., there are numerous trees growing near or into lines that require trimming and management. Usually, it's because a tall-growing tree was planted directly under or too close to the line. It might have grown taller than the person who planted it expected. Whatever the reason, it is crucial trees stay a safe distance from the lines and are properly pruned to preserve tree health.

Remember that only trained professionals should trim trees near power lines. Trees growing in utility right of ways are maintained by the electric utility, while trees growing into power lines on private property are usually the responsibility of the owner. If you need to hire someone to prune trees on your property, be aware that most tree care workers are not qualified to work around energized power lines. According to the Utility Arborist Association (UAA), utility line clearance professionals who meet Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) qualifications are the only ones legally permitted to work within 10 feet of lines or work on a tree that has branches that are within 10 feet of a power line.

Trees are cut at the growth points for tree health, and in many cases it's impossible to maintain the tree's original shape. Some trees require directional pruning to keep them from growing back into lines. Trees directly underneath power lines may be pruned in a "V" or "U" shape with lines passing through the opening in the middle, or trees growing alongside a power line may be pruned in an "L" shape or one side may



Have trees near power lines trimmed professionally. This helps prevent limbs from falling on power lines.

need to be completely removed. While the shape of a tree may change, trees can be pruned to maintain the health and safety of the tree while also increasing the safety and reliability related to the power lines.

Often pruning a tree solves the safety and reliability concern, but in some cases the tree must be removed. Those include tall or fast growing species that are directly under power lines, large previously topped trees under the power lines, saplings with potential to grow in or around the lines, and hazardous trees that may be leaning, in decline or split.

Property owners may choose to replace a problem tree with a new one. There are many varieties of shorter-growing trees that provide beauty, shade and screening, and will never grow to interfere with power lines. Your local tree nursery can help with selection of trees and shrubs appropriate for landscaping around power lines and electrical equipment.

May is National Electrical Safety Month

Be mindful when it comes to electrical safety. Pause and take the extra time to plug into safety.

May is National Electrical Safety Month

In May, electric co-ops across the country promote safety awareness to coincide with National Electrical Safety Month. Every year, thousands of accidents occur due to shock hazards, and Western Cooperative Electric, a not-for-profit electric utility, is committed to educating the public about potential electrical dangers in the home.

In 2016, 475,500 structure fires (including residential fires) were reported in the U.S., causing 2,950 deaths, 12,775 injuries and \$7.9 billion in property damage. According to the National Fire Protection Association, a residential fire was reported every 90 seconds. Many home fires occur

when electrical equipment is outdated or improperly used.

"It is critical that the public understands their home's electrical system and the safety concerns associated with the latest residential technologies before bringing them into their homes," explains Western's Safety Director Nate Budig. "With newer technologies, such as solar panels, electric vehicles and more electrical gadgets in the home, people need to ensure they have an electrical system that's compatible with the increased load."

Through electrical safety awareness and education, we can all play a part in preventing hazards and injuries in the future.