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A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

P.O. Box 278, WaKeeney, KS 67672  
800-456-6720

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## WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC **NEWS**

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#### 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)

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co-op news, energy tips, photos from co-op events and more!

## Western Cooperative Electric Awards Sharing Success Grants

Through the Sharing Success matching grant program with CoBank, Western Cooperative Electric awarded grants totaling \$15,000 to the Ellsworth VFW Post 6485, Grainfield Community Development Committee, and Tender Hearts Child Care Center in Quinter.

CoBank's Sharing Success program matches up to \$7,500 for one to three projects in Western Cooperative Electric's service territory. Western Cooperative Electric's board of trustees selected the following projects for the 2019 grants.

#### THE ELLSWORTH VFW POST 6485

#### WREATHS ACROSS ELLSWORTH

**COUNTY PROJECT** received \$3,000 to help purchase wreaths to place on military veteran gravestones within the city of Ellsworth. The wreaths will be placed during the holidays, and any extra wreaths will be placed on gravestones throughout the rest of Ellsworth County, starting with the Kanopolis cemetery. Last year the VFW placed 370 wreaths on veteran graves and hope to continue to expand the program each year to eventually be

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The Ellsworth VFW presents a plaque of recognition to Western and CoBank. From left to right: Western Cooperative Electric Trustee Dale Weinhold, Cobank representative John Donner, two VFW representatives, Western Manager Tom Ruth and Member Services Manager Dennis Deines.

## Notice of Board Meeting to Discuss Proposed Rate Change

The Board of Trustees of Western Cooperative Electric Association (WECA) will meet at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, Dec. 19, 2020, at the cooperative's headquarters located at 635 S. 13th Street in WaKeeney.

The trustees will discuss and vote upon proposed rate changes that will affect all meters. If approved, the rate changes will be effective for usage on or after Jan. 1, 2020.

This meeting is open to any member who wishes to attend. Members have the right under the provisions of K.S.A. 66-104d(g) to request, by petition, Kansas Corporation Commission review of a rate change. If any member wishes to attend via conference call that day, please contact the WECA office during business hours at 785-743-5561 or 800-456-6720.



## Western Cooperative Electric Awards Grants *Continued from page 16A* ▶

able to place wreaths on all the veteran graves throughout Ellsworth County.

Wreaths Across Ellsworth County is an idea born out of Wreaths Across America, a non-profit that began wreath-laying ceremonies more than 20 years ago at Arlington National Cemetery with the mission to remember, honor and teach.

**GRAINFIELD COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE** received \$6,000 toward phase three of the reconstruction and renovation of the Health and Business Complex. In 2017, GCDC purchased a former Farm Bureau building with a mission to bring in businesses interested in serving the community of Grainfield. The first two of the three phases of the project had gained the interest of an esthetician, counselor and massage therapist. Currently, the buildings are occupied by Red Dog Outfitters and BlueStem Medical satellite clinic. Phase three will welcome Heier Level Salon & Spa before the end of the year.

**TENDER HEARTS CHILD CARE CENTER** received \$6,000 to replace aged and storm-damaged outdoor play equipment. The new equipment will be replacing the original equipment from when Tender Hearts began operation nearly 20 years ago. This update will allow for a safer outdoor playtime and foster better outdoor learning opportunities. Tender Hearts, operated by Gove County Medical Center, provides care to children from birth through 12 years of age, and has a current enrollment of 55 children.

Western Cooperative Electric is proud each year to support the local community with the help of CoBank. CoBank is a national cooperative bank serving vital industries across rural America. The bank provides loans, leases, export financing and other financial services to agribusinesses and rural power, water and communications providers in all 50 states. **APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2020 GRANT CYCLE OPENS APRIL 1.**



The former Farm Bureau building in Grainfield, which was renovated into the Health and Business Complex, is divided into three sections. The burgundy section will soon be home to Heier Level Salon & Spa.

## Don't Let Old Wiring Pose a Problem

People who love older homes usually get drawn in by their character. They see a Victorian home in the historic district and fall in love with its stately staircase and intricate architectural features.

Once they sign on the dotted line, they painstakingly restore woodwork, make sure windows are in working order and tend to other repairs. One of the top priorities on their "to do" list should be to get the electrical system inspected by a qualified electrician.

Just because the wiring in a home is old doesn't automatically mean there's a problem, but there could be. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), many older homes that still have outdated wiring can't handle the electrical load of today's modern appliances. Old, outdated wiring could pose a fire hazard.

As electrical components age or become overloaded, the system can overheat and wear out insulation. This can lead to arcs (electrical discharge) and short circuits — the two main causes of home electrical wiring fires, according to the CPSC. In addition, old rubber wire insulation can become brittle and easily flake, leaving wires exposed.

Older wiring called knob and tube can be found in homes built around 1950 or earlier. If your electrical system was not thoroughly inspected when

you bought it, or if it was inspected but it has been several years, have it inspected by an electrician to make sure it is safe and it adequately meets the electrical needs of your home.

If your house was built between 1965 and 1973, it could be dangerous for another reason. Aluminum is great for cans, but not for wiring since it can overheat. Unfortunately, it was used in 2 million homes built during that time period.

Regardless of the age of your home, be sure to get any potentially dangerous wiring issues checked by a professional, especially if:

- ▶ Your circuit breaker keeps tripping or fuses blow often
- ▶ You notice unusual power draws or dimming or flickering lights
- ▶ You see discolored (dark colored) outlets or switch plates or they are warm to the touch
- ▶ You notice unusual odors like a burning smell but can't find a source
- ▶ Your outlets only allow you to plug in a two-pronged plug (and not a three-pronged plug), which means they are not grounded
- ▶ You don't have ground-fault circuit interrupters near faucets or other sources of water in your home
- ▶ Your house was built more than 40 years ago.

## RECYCLE YOUR ELECTRONICS



**Wait! Before you recycle or donate your unwanted electronics, consider these tips from the Environmental Protection Agency:**

- 1** Delete and destroy all personal information from the device.
- 2** Remove batteries for separate recycling.
- 3** Check with the manufacturer or with local major retailers for recycling options.
- 4** Consider upgrading your current computer's hardware or software instead.



Recycling 1 million laptops saves the energy equivalent to the electricity used by more than 3,657 U.S. homes in a year!

For every million cell phones we recycle, we can recover:

- ▶ 35,000 pounds of copper
- ▶ 772 pounds of silver
- ▶ 75 pounds of gold
- ▶ 33 pounds of palladium

# Happy Holidays

Wishing our members a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! In observance of the holidays, our office will be closed on Tuesday, Dec. 24, and Wednesday, Dec. 25, for the Christmas holiday. We will be closed on Wednesday, Jan. 1, for the new year.

## Simplify Your Payments, Win \$25

Simplify your bill-paying process with Western Cooperative Electric. Payment options include bank draft with checking/savings or recurring card (debit/credit). Additional options include enrolling for e-business (ebiz) or going green by opting for paperless billing. With paperless billing, you may opt to receive text or email notifications to get your information.

Ebiz allows you to see your monthly bill, view daily electric usage and historical data, store a payment method and make payments. Using ebiz allows you to enroll in automatic payments. If you need assistance, contact us at 800-456-6720. There are no forms to complete so signing up is fast, friendly and convenient. Automatic payment guarantees on-time payments while maintaining an excellent payment history.

Selecting any one of these payment options makes you eligible for a monthly drawing for a \$25 voucher to a local business of your choice. Already signed up for these payment options? Your name will also be included in the drawings. This month's winner is **JOHN KERSCHNER**, Ellsworth.

## Guide to Electronic Gifts

This holiday season, give the gift of tech! If you're searching for the latest gadgets and electronics to gift but don't know where to start, we've got you covered.

### Gifts for Those on the Go

We all have friends who never stay in one place, so they'll appreciate gifts that keep them charged and entertained while on the go.

A portable charger (or power bank) can keep smartphones and tablets juiced, and the good news is this gift won't drain your wallet. You can purchase portable chargers online or at local retailers for as low as \$20. Typically, these compact devices can fully charge an iPhone three times before needing to be charged.

A Bluetooth speaker is another great gift for those on the go. Whether they're listening to their favorite tunes or watching the latest flick, Bluetooth speakers can clarify and amplify volume to satisfy any media enthusiast. Prices range depending on features, but you can purchase a quality Bluetooth speaker for as low as \$30.

### Gifts for the Chef

Every foodie knows temperature matters when mastering the perfect cut of meat. A Bluetooth-connected

thermometer can help your chef ensure a delicious and safe-to-eat meal. Download the associated app and keep an eye on the grill right from your smartphone or tablet. Prices vary from \$30 to \$200, but you can purchase these handy gadgets online or at any big box store.

A digital kitchen scale is a must for any culinary pro. No more guessing — the easy-to-read digital screen ensures the exact weight or amount required for that perfect dish. Prices vary depending on the weight the scale can handle, but you can find a 13-pound maximum weight scale for \$20 online.

### Gifts for the Pet Owner

Let's face it — pet owners would be lost without their fur babies. Luckily, pet tracking products continue to advance allowing pet owners to keep a watchful eye on their furry friends from a distance. Most trackers attach to your pet's collar. Prices vary depending on the tracker's capabilities, but some features include water resistance, health monitoring and exceptional battery life. You can purchase pet trackers online or at your local pet store.

With so many electronics available, you're sure to find the perfect gift for your tech-savvy loved ones. Happy shopping!

# INTRODUCING



## PREPAY POWER

PAY AS YOU GO.

Available for residential rate consumer-members

**PrePayPOWER** is a pay-as-you go billing option.

The new PrePayPOWER program (prepaid metering) gives you greater control over your budget by making smaller, more frequent payments when it is right for you, instead of a single, larger payment on a fixed due date. No deposit. No late fees. No due dates. No monthly statements.

Beginning with an initial \$50 payment credited to your electric bill, you can make daily, weekly or monthly payments to your account. Your electric charges are subtracted daily from the credit on your account. You can easily check your account and monitor your energy usage online.

PrePayPOWER could also help you lower energy consumption. Since you are paying as you go, PrePayPOWER makes you more aware of your energy consumption.

If this option seems right for you, call 800-456-6720 to find out more and make the switch.

-  You put credit on your account.
-  You make your payments when you want and how you want.
-  Your electric charges are subtracted daily from your pre-paid account.
-  No deposit, late fees, or due date!
-  This program gives you the power to monitor your electricity usage online and adjust your usage to save money.

Call us today  
**1-800-456-6720**  
to switch to  
**PrePayPOWER!**



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