



WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC NEWS

Nominating Committees to be Announced

The 2014 Western Cooperative Electric Association Annual Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 14.

Prior to the meeting, the Western Trustees will appoint nominating committees. The committees' responsibility is to prepare a list of nominations for Trustees in the districts which have terms expiring, and to present these nominations for election by members at the Annual Meeting. Article IV, Section 4.06 of Western's By-laws states the following concerning nominations:

"At least 60 days prior to the annual meeting, the President shall with the approval of the Board of Trustees, appoint a nominating committee of three Members from each of said three Trustee districts, and each of said nominating committees shall nominate one or more Members from its respective district for each trustee to be elected from the district, and within 30 days from the date of

The Trustee Positions for Election are Currently Served by



Terry Hobbs
District 1 Graham,
Osborne, Rooks, and
Sheridan counties



Richard Schaus
District 2
Ellis, Lincoln, Russell,
and Trego counties



Bob Abell
District 3
Barton, Ellsworth,
Gove, Ness, and
Rush counties

their appointment said nominating committees shall report their nominations to the Secretary of the Cooperative who shall cause the list of nominees to be mailed to the Members of the Cooperative at the time the notice of annual meeting is mailed.

Any 15 or more Members of the Cooperative, acting together, may make additional nominations in writing over their signatures, in like manner showing clearly which Committee-nominated candidate(s) are being opposed, not less than 20 days prior to the meeting, and the Secretary shall post such nominations at the same place where the list of nominations made by the Committees

is posted.

The Secretary shall mail to the Members with the notice of the meeting, or separately, but no less than 10 days prior to the date of the meeting, a statement of the Trustees to be elected from specific Trustee Districts, and the names and addresses of all nominees, showing separately those nominated by the Committees and those nominated by petition, if any.

The chairman, or the chairman's appointee, at such meeting, after all nominations so made have been duly announced, shall call for additional nominations from the floor, and shall ascertain and announce, after any nominations

made from the floor, the particular Trustee District from or with respect to which any additional candidates have been nominated. The Member making a nomination or nominations shall designate the nominee(s) of the Committees and/or the nominee(s) by petition, if any, and/or other nominee(s) nominated from the floor, if any, against whom his nominee(s) shall run.

Notwithstanding the provision contained in this Section, failure to comply with any of such provisions shall not affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken by the Board of Trustees after the election of Trustees."

Benefits of Self-Regulation for Members

In 1933, the Kansas legislature made electric cooperatives subject to the jurisdiction of the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC), giving the Commission authority over rates, rate setting, terms and conditions of service and many other aspects of the utility. Complying with KCC regulations added cost and complexity to cooperatives. In 1992, Kansas law changed, allowing cooperatives to be released from the regulatory jurisdiction of the Kansas Corporation Commission (KCC). Since that time, members in 28 of 29 Kansas cooperatives have voted to self-regulate. One of those 28 cooperatives was Western Cooperative Electric in 1994.

In 2007, Western, along with five other member cooperatives, formed Mid-Kansas Electric Company, LLC (MKEC) to acquire the electric assets of Aquila-West Plains Kansas. Since that time, the MKEC territory served by Western has been under the jurisdiction of the KCC, while the native territory remained exempt from KCC regulation.

The final step of the acquisition to transfer the Certificates of Convenience from MKEC to Western has been approved. Pursuant to the terms agreed to in the proceeding before the KCC, the cooperative must hold a system-wide member vote to decide if the cooperative should remain exempt from KCC regulation, that is, self-regulated by member-elected trustees.

What is the proposal?

In the very near future, Western's board will set the date for a system-wide member election to vote on whether the cooperative should remain exempt from KCC regulation. This vote will be by mail ballot. To be adopted, the vote will require approval by a majority of the members voting.

Self-Regulation Enables Local Control.

A "Yes" vote for self-regulation removes most decision-making authority from the KCC and returns it to the member-elected Board of Directors. All of Western Cooperative Electric Board members are also customer-owners who like you, receive electric service from Western and have ownership interest in Western's safe and efficient operation.

Self-Regulation Improves Efficiency

Rate changes, terms of service and other actions within the MKEC electric service territory are currently made through KCC "dockets," a complex, expensive administrative process that can take a minimum of nine months to complete. A "Yes" vote allows your member-elected Board to make decisions to respond quickly to customer needs and market changes.

Self-Regulation Increases Transparency.

Individual customers are rarely allowed to intervene directly in rate cases at the KCC, which is a cumbersome and potentially expensive measure. Parties to a docket are generally not allowed to address the KCC at the meeting at which the topic is considered for a decision. Under self-regulation, any action Western's Board of Directors takes with respect to changing rates would occur in an open meeting. Western must mail notice of any meeting, where the Board is discussing and voting on rates, to all members at least 10 days before the meeting.

How can I learn more?

More information is published on Western's website at www.westerncoop.com, Facebook page at www.facebook.com/WesternCoopElectric, and publicized in local newspaper ads. If you have additional questions or comments regarding self-regulation, contact Western's office at 785-743-5561 or 800-456-6720.

Beware of Scams!

In a recent publication, a scam alert was published alerting Western Cooperative Electric members that they may fall victim to recent scams. Western's office was recently informed of an e-mail scam experienced by two Western Member-owners already this year.

These e-mails arrived in electronic inboxes in the form of an itemized electric bill for \$559.70 from "PG&E Energy." Also included on the e-mail was a bogus account number with a request to "click here" to view the bill. Luckily, both member-owners were suspicious and did not continue with the "click here" request. Western's office placed a call to the California-based PG&E customer service department. PG&E's answering service included a recorded message stating that PG&E is aware of scammers using their name to defraud electric customers, alerting callers of the situation.

Western offers the following tips to help you keep your valuable information out of the hands of scammers:

- ▶ Confirm that you are speaking to a legitimate Western representative. Tell them you will call them back but do not use a callback number they provide. Call Western back directly at 1-800-456-6720 or 785-743-5561 and speak with a Western representative.
- ▶ Be wary of anyone demanding immediate payment in the forms that are difficult to trace, such as Western Union or Money Gram.
- ▶ Never give your credit card, debit card, Social Security, ATM, checking or savings account numbers to anyone who comes to your home, calls or sends e-mail requesting information. You should always be the one to initiate such transactions.
- ▶ Never allow anyone claiming to be a utility service person into your home unless you have scheduled an appointment and the person has proper identification and/or you are certain of his or her identity. Again, call 1-800-456-6720 or 785-743-5561 to confirm that your visit is legitimate.

All Insulation is Not Equal

BY DOUG RYE



Doug Rye

“Infrared thermal imaging cameras... are revealing some types of insulation perform differently in a real-world environment than in a controlled climate within a testing facility.”

Most discussions about residential energy efficiency include the topic of insulation. Attic, wall and floor insulation normally become major points of discussion. Builders, homeowners, architects and salesmen use R-value language for comparing various types and thicknesses of insulation.

It has been that way for as long as I can remember. However, energy efficiency experts are continuing to learn more and more about the actual performance of properly installed insulation. Infrared thermal imaging cameras, used in conjunction with home diagnostic equipment, are revealing that some types of insulation perform differently in a real-world environment than in a controlled climate within a testing facility.

For instance, the actual performance of a fiberglass-insulated wall on a cold, windy, 30-degree day is far different than the exact same fiberglass insulated testing wall within a cozy, 70-degree testing laboratory.

While I was in college studying architecture, we were taught that about all you needed to know about insulation was the R-value. Back then, we only knew of one type of insulation and that was fiberglass. So, when we were challenged in the early 1970s to make homes more energy efficient, just about all of us started installing insulation with higher R-values. Many went from 2 x 4 walls with R-11 insulation to 2 x 6 walls with R-19 insulation. We perceived that adding more insulation did help some, but we learned it was not as much as expected.

The “R” in R-value stands for the resistance to heat flow. In theory, and in some cases, the larger the R-value, the better the resistance to heat flow and, therefore, the better for energy efficiency. So, for several years, that’s all we knew about insulation. Then we learned about another type of product called cellulose. We learned that it worked extremely well when used as a sound barrier and were told that it was a very good insulation for walls and ceilings. We used it and quickly learned that it performed better than fiberglass even though

cellulose insulation has nearly the same R-value as fiberglass. When installed properly, we saw a dramatic reduction in air infiltration. The similar R-value rating was perplexing to many of us.

But, about this same time, we were learning that by using a blower door diagnostic testing device, air infiltration could have a significant impact on the energy efficiency of a house and on the performance of the insulation. The more we tested homes and the more we looked at utility bills, the more that we were convinced that there was a major difference in the actual performance between fiberglass and cellulose insulation. Because of that, many of us started recommending cellulose whenever possible.

Practical experience, proven building science and much improved diagnostic processes have proven that properly installed cellulose insulation is a wise investment. Then came foam insulation and we were impressed. Now, we had two insulation products that actually performed like we desired.

But wait. Not so fast. Some of the early foam products were thought to contain chemicals that were unhealthy, and some experts said foam insulation could also shrink after installation. So, the use of foam in residential dwelling was almost non-existent until the late 1990s. Today, open-and closed cell foam insulations are safe, reliable and, when installed properly, become exceptional thermal, air and moisture barriers—all three energy efficiency bonuses in one package. Also, expanding-foam insulation is being installed in many new and remodeled homes across America.

Despite the fact that all three types have similar R-values, practical experience and modern diagnostics have revealed that properly installed foam insulation outperforms its counterparts because of its ability to stop unwanted air-infiltration and for its moisture barrier attributes.

DOUG RYE is a licensed architect and the popular host of the “Home Remedies” radio show. You can contact Doug at 501-653-7931. Source: Arkansas Electric Cooperatives Corporation.



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SOFT HEARTS FOR THE COMMUNITY.**

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