



WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC NEWS

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Tip of the Month

On Earth Day, April 22, give back to the environment by planting a deciduous tree near your home. Deciduous trees lose their leaves during the fall, warming your home. The extra shade during summer months will keep your home cooler.

2016 Youth Winners Announced

Western Cooperative Electric's annual youth contest was held Sunday, February 28. The contest winners were selected based on a combination of an interview, quiz and essay. Each contestant was interviewed by a judging panel consisting of Anna Foley, Norton; Steve Hausler, Ellis; and Darrin Lynch, WaKeeney.

In addition to their interviews, each contestant took a quiz about electric cooperatives on the local, state and national level. Contestants also wrote a one-page essay on the topic "Something I am Passionate About."

The top five youth in this year's contest, in order are:

► **TAYLOR KELLER**, Palco High School, son of Myron and Rachel Keller

► **TERRAN HOMBURG**, Natoma High School, daughter of Aaron and Nichol Homburg

► **DALTON HENSLEY**, Ellis High School, son of Kent and Michelle Hensley

► **EMMA KLEIN**, Ellsworth High School, daughter of Mark and Kerry Klein

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Lindsay Augustine
Scholarship Winner



Dalton Hensley
Camp Winner



Terran Homburg
D.C. Winner



Taylor Keller
D.C. Winner



Emma Klein
Camp Winner



2016 Youth Winners Announced Continued from page 16-A

► **LINDSAY AUGUSTINE**, Ellis High School, daughter of Tim and Lori Augustine

Scholarships were awarded along with trips to Washington, D.C., and Steamboat Springs, CO. The contestants chose from the available prizes according to placing.

Keller and Homburg will join 35 Kansas youth and travel to Washington, D.C., June 9-16. They will join about 1,700 other youth experiencing our country's government in action. They will visit their legislators and sites of historical significance.

Hensley and Klein will join approximately 100 youth from a four-state area participating in the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp near Steamboat Springs, CO, July

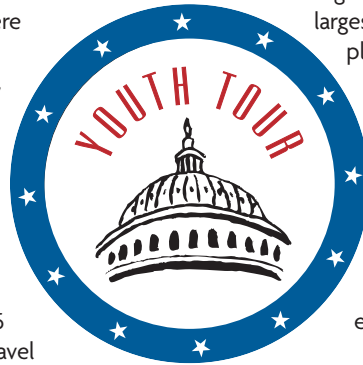
16-22. During their stay, the youth will become acquainted with energy challenges and tour one of the largest electrical generating plants in the Rockies.

Along with the trips, each winner will receive a \$250 scholarship. These scholarships will be sent directly to the college of their choice upon enrollment.

Augustine will receive the \$250 Darrell Brown Memorial scholarship. The alternates in this year's competition are

ALAYNA ARNHOLD, Hays High School, daughter of Bruce and Darlene Arnhold; and **BROOKE BIXENMAN**, Wheatland High School, daughter of Daryl and Judy Bixenman.

Western extends congratulations to the winners and thanks all contestants for participating.



Join us for Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 11!

We hope to see you at the Western Cooperative Electric Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 11, 2016, 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 served at noon.; meeting at 1 p.m. Enjoy ice cream and a chance to win prizes.

New this year:

- Voting for Trustees will take place by mail-in ballot. Look for your ballot in the mail.
- For your convenience, we will provide a webcast of the Annual Meeting at our outpost locations where light refreshments will be served.

We hope you will participate !

May 2016						
S	M	T	W	R	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	15	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Take Control of a Controlled Burn

Properly controlled burns can have many benefits for agricultural land. However, if these burns are not managed safely, they can result in property damage, power outages, injury, and even death. Western Co-operative Electric urges you to make safety a priority and share important information on the special considerations that need to be taken around electric utility lines.

First, make yourself aware of laws and regulations. Burns should only be conducted by those who are experienced with fire and burn paths. Avoid burning near public roads or airports, as this can create a potentially dangerous visibility hazard. Alert all those who may be potentially affected by the burn—including neighbors, the local fire department, and law enforcement.

Take special note of electric utility poles and lines. Burning a pole could result in a widespread power outage and be costly for those responsible for the fire.

Cut down grass and weeds and water down the area near the poles as to not encourage fires to encroach. While controlling the fire keep water away from electric lines.

If a pole catches on fire, call the fire department and alert your electric utility to handle the possible

electrical dangers. Even if you think you have been able to put out the fire yourself, alert your electric utility to the fact that it caught fire. The preservative on the inside could still be burning the pole from the inside out. In addition, if the pole catches on fire, it could create shock or electrocution hazards to those who may be nearby or spark fires in unintended directions from downed lines.

Carbon particles in smoke can conduct electricity, and it is also possible for smoke produced during the burnings to conduct electricity and cause an electrical discharge from the line. To reduce this risk, the fire should not cross under electric lines.

Also keep environmental factors, such as temperature, humidity, and wind direction and speed in mind. The wind speed in the area should be low and in a steady direction as to not let the fire get out of control. As environmental factors are subject to change, check forecasts as well as actual conditions before you begin the burn.

Ensure that you have the proper clothing, equipment, and tools. For personal safety, all those near the flames should wear clothing made of natural fibers or approved for firefighting.

Local resources through conservation offices are available to develop a plan and assist in training for a controlled burn. Depending on local regulations, you may also need to obtain a burn permit. Preparation and timely planning will ensure a safe controlled burn for you and all involved.



Take special note of electric utility poles and lines. Burning a pole could result in a widespread power outage and be costly for those responsible for the fire.

Get to Know Your
Western Co-op Electric Staff

Gene Hedding

Journeyman Lineman

TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.

My wife, Sabrina and I have a son, Theoden, and a daughter, Eowyn.



Gene Hedding

HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED AT WESTERN?

Eight and a half years.

WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?

Beloit, Kansas.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?

Ride Harley-Davidson motorcycles.

WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

I built my own first custom Harley Bobber.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION?

Sturgis Motorcycle Rally in 2015.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MOVIE OR BOOK AND WHY?

M.A.S.H the television series. It shows the real struggles that some faced in war.

WHAT IS SOMETHING PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?

I play the bagpipes.

IF YOU COULD BE ANY ANIMAL, WHAT WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

An eagle because it represents freedom.

WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR LIFE AND WHY?

My grandfather because he taught me how to fix anything.

Prepping Your Home to Handle Heat this Summer

The change of the seasons from winter to spring means warmer temperatures and more time outdoors for many. It is also a good time to prepare your home for the even warmer summer months ahead. Stay cool and comfortable with a few tips on how to prepare your home to handle the heat.

To improve your home's efficiency, it is best to start by reducing air leakage as much as possible. Check for cracks and gaps around such areas as windows, doors, attic hatches, dryer vents, outdoor water faucets, and locations where utilities enter your home. Use caulk or weather stripping to create tight seals.

Also check the insulation in your home. Many older homes

have less insulation than homes built today, so adding insulation can help reduce energy bills. The attic is an easy place to start. In general, if you can see the ceiling joists in your attic, you do not have enough insulation. You can lay new insulation directly on top of existing insulation. Be sure to follow all the safety precautions accompanying the insulation.

You can also make small changes to your decision-making that can help you save money, decrease your energy use, and stay comfortable in your home. Here are a few simple actions you can take to make your home more efficient:

- ▶ Use ceiling fans to make use of the wind chill effect while you are home. Set them to spin counter-

clockwise during warmer months so that they push air down and make you feel cooler.

- ▶ Keep windows and doors closed to keep cool air in and hot air out.
- ▶ Use curtains and blinds to keep sunlight out on hot days.
- ▶ Use a programmable thermostat to adjust your home's temperature based on your schedule. It can automatically keep your home cooler while you are there and warmer when you are away without you having to worry about it.
- ▶ Clean or replace your air conditioner filter regularly throughout the warmer months. A clogged filter reduces the efficiency of your unit and makes it work harder to cool your home.

Maintaining Your Air Conditioner

Annual maintenance can help improve your comfort and the efficiency of your air conditioner while prolonging the life of your unit. Hire a certified professional when your unit needs more than basic maintenance.

1

Routinely replace or clean your air filters. This can lower your air conditioner's energy consumption by 5-15 percent.



2

Check your air conditioner's evaporator coil every year and clean it as necessary.

3

If your coil fins are bent, use a "fin comb" to straighten them.

4

If you have a split system, be sure to clean debris and leaves from the fan, compressor, and condenser.



5

Occasionally pass a stiff wire through your unit's drain channels to prevent clogs.

6

For window air conditioners, inspect the window seals to keep cool air from escaping.



Source: Department of Energy