



## WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC NEWS

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#### Tip of the Month

An average household dedicates about 5 percent of its energy budget to lighting. Switching to energy-efficient lighting is one of the fastest ways to cut your energy bills.

## Don't Let Your Winter Efficiency Fall Behind

Take time this fall to make home improvements that will boost energy efficiency. Here are tips on how to prepare your home now to help cut back on winter energy costs.

Start the season off with a fresh filter and a thorough cleaning of your furnace. The filter should be checked every month. If you find it dirty during this check, it is recommended that you change it. At a minimum, it should be changed every three months.

**Check for air leaks around windows, doors, fireplaces, electrical boxes, outlets and light switches.** Use caulk and weather stripping to fill in gaps and leaks. Also check your attic insulation level. Research has proven if it is just level with or below the floor joists, more insulation should be added.

**Insulate your water heater so that it stays warm longer without wasting energy.** If your water heater is warm to the touch, it should be covered by a water heater blanket. You can lower the temperature of the water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit and still enjoy comfortable hot water—with lowered heating costs. For every 10 degrees that you reduce the temperature, a person can save between 3 and 5 percent on water heating costs.

**Check that vents are not blocked by furniture or curtains.** Also

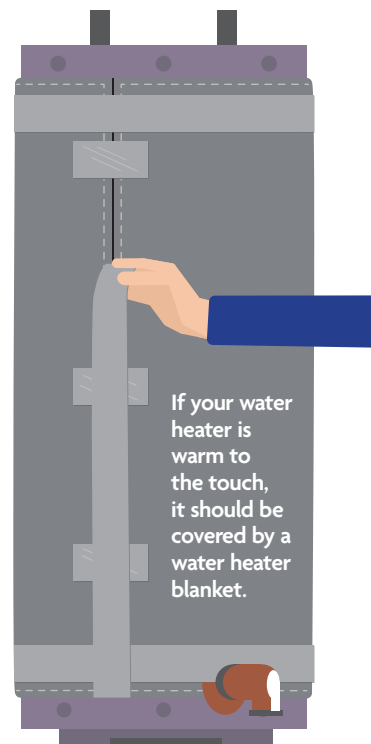
make sure that radiators or baseboards are clean and unobstructed. If you have a fireplace, keep the damper closed when it is not being used. If you do not foresee use of the fireplace, plug and seal the flue.

**Think about adding or upgrading window coverings.** It is estimated that draperies can reduce up to 10 percent of heat loss. On sunny winter days, keep drapes open on southern and eastern windows. Close window coverings on cloudy days and at night to reduce heat loss. Adding area rugs can help insulate the floor of your room, using less heat when temperatures drop.

**If you have a schedule where you are regularly away from home for part of the day, consider installing a programmable thermostat, which can help you save money.**

Also, if you are looking to replace an older appliance, consider Energy Star-labeled products, which can save you money over the life of the appliance.

For more information on energy efficiency visit [www.westerncoop.com](http://www.westerncoop.com) and click on member services and energy calculators.



# Western Celebrates Cooperative Month

## Electric Co-ops by the Numbers

- ▶ Established to provide at-cost electric service; and
- ▶ Governed by a board of directors elected from the membership, which sets policies and procedures that are implemented by Western's staff.

## Western at a Glance

- ▶ Western is **ONE OF 864** distribution cooperatives nationwide
- ▶ Western provides electrical service in **13 KANSAS COUNTIES** compared to the 3,141 counties served by electric cooperatives nationwide.
- ▶ Western owns and maintains **3,973 MILES OF LINE** compared to the 2.5 million miles electric cooperatives own nationwide.
- ▶ Western **EMPLOYS 54** of the total 70,000 electric cooperative employees in the U.S.
- ▶ Western **PAID \$1,007,434** of the 1.4 billion property taxes paid nationally.

## Compared with Electric Utilities

- ▶ Western serves an average of **3.09 MEMBERS PER MILE** of line and collects an annual revenue of approximately **\$9,367 PER MILE OF LINE**, compared to the national average of 7.4 consumers per mile of line with an annual revenue of approximately \$15,000 per mile of line.
- ▶ Investor-owned utilities average 34 customers per mile of line and collect \$75,500 per mile of line.
- ▶ Publicly owned utilities, or municipals, average 48 consumers and collect \$113,000 per mile of line.

October is National Cooperative Month, and Western Cooperative Electric along with thousands of cooperatives across the nation is recognizing this special event. Cooperatives are owned by their members and driven by services, rather than profit, making them a unique way of doing business.

The first U.S. cooperative was a town mutual insurance company organized in 1752 by Benjamin Franklin. Like Franklin's company, many town mutuals got their start when neighbors joined together to insure their farms and homes—primarily because big insurers ignored them or charged exorbitant prices. Today town mutuals primarily serve farmers, rural homeowners and some small main-street businesses.

In 1936, Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Rural Electrification Act, establishing the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) as a lending agency to finance the extension of electrical systems to rural areas. Rural electric, telephone and cable cooperatives were formed when the cost of expanding service to rural areas discouraged for-profit utilities from serving these areas. Today, the REA has been renamed



the Rural Utilities Service, with broad responsibilities for rural infrastructure and services. With an emphasis on providing service rather than reaping large profits, cooperatives have brought electric, telephone and cable services to the countryside, thus vastly improving the quality of life in rural area.

Cooperatives around the world generally operate according to the same core principles and values, adopted from the roots of these seven principles of a cooperative founded in Rochdale, England in 1844:

1. *Voluntary and Open Membership*
2. *Democratic Member Control*
3. *Members' Economic Participation*
4. *Autonomy and Independence*
5. *Education, Training and Information*
6. *Cooperation Among Cooperatives*
7. *Concern for Community*

Operating under these seven cooperative principles, Western Cooperative Electric is committed to you, the member-owner.

## Did You Know?

**WESTERN COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC** is one of more than 800 distribution electric cooperatives in the United States and one of 29 distribution electric cooperatives in Kansas. A large portion of these cooperatives have the words "Electric Cooperative" as part of their name. Western is the only cooperative in Kansas and one of six in the nation with the word cooperative before electric.

Since May 10, 1945, the name on the corporation papers has read, "The Western Cooperative Electric Association Incorporated." The founding fathers of this organization deemed it important enough to place the word cooperative in front of electric because of the true principles this cooperative was built on. As we observe National Cooperative Month in October, may we acquire a new appreciation for the dedication and tenacity this founding group had in the placement of the word "cooperative" within Western Cooperative Electric Association, Inc.

# Make Time for Safety this Harvest



Despite increased technology in farm machinery, it is important to maintain awareness of your surroundings when you are in the field. Keep an eye out for electrical equipment and possible hazards.

Harvest season often means putting in long hours, which can make it difficult to stay alert and on the lookout for potential hazards. The agricultural industry ranks as one of the most dangerous job sectors in the country accounting for more than 500 deaths in 2014, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Western Cooperative Electric suggests safety tips to help farmers make this harvest season a safe one.

Be prepared for potential emergencies before the rush of harvest season begins. Be sure that you can see well in work areas. Consider adding extra lighting around grain bins and augers.

Take the time to look up and look out for electrical lines. Always be aware of where they are in relation to your equipment. Keep a minimum of 10 feet away from all electrical equipment, and lower extensions before moving equipment. If you see a power line that is sagging or low, contact your electric utility. Also keep an eye out for guy wires. While these wires are not energized, they can bring down live lines.

In equipment with auto-guidance systems, less focus is needed on steering, which may lead some drivers to think that they do not need to be as aware of navigation issues. Yet, even while using a GPS with auto-steering, farm workers need to keep safety in mind and stay focused on their surroundings. Recognize when you need to take breaks so that you can be active and

## Keep a minimum of 10 feet away from all electrical equipment, and lower extensions before moving equipment.

engaged in the farm work.

Additional electrical safety tips include:

- ▶ Use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- ▶ Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- ▶ Look up and use care when moving any equipment such as extending augers or raising the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- ▶ Always set extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads to prevent contact with overhead lines. Grain augers should always be positioned horizontally before being moved.
- ▶ Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.

If the machinery you are operating does make contact with a power line, stay on the equipment. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away, and wait for linemen to de-energize the line.

Only on the rare occasion that the machinery catches fire should you leave the vehicle after contact is made. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and machinery at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area. Never touch anything that is in contact with a power line.

For more information on electrical safety, or safety demonstrations visit [www.westerncoop.com](http://www.westerncoop.com) or call 800-456-6720.

Learn more about electrical safety. Schedule a demonstration for your group by calling 800-456-6720.

Get to Know Your Western Cooperative Electric Staff  
**Andy Schultz**  
Meter Reader, AMI & GIS Tech



Andy Schultz

**TELL US ABOUT YOUR FAMILY.**

My wife, Lynsey, and I have two children, Jazlynn, 11, and Owen, 5. We also have a dog, Blueberry, who is a Pug.

**HOW LONG HAVE YOU WORKED AT WESTERN?**

Nine years

**WHERE ARE YOU FROM ORIGINALLY?**

Ellsworth

**WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO IN YOUR SPARE TIME?**

Hunt

**WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENT ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?**

My wife and children

**WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VACATION?**

Going to Disney World

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MOVIE OR BOOK AND WHY?**

Hot Tub Time Machine! I love it. It is one of those movies you can't pass up every time you see it is on. It's hilarious!

**WHAT IS SOMETHING PEOPLE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU?**

I'm going bald.

**WHAT SPORT OR TEAM IS YOUR FAVORITE?**

Kansas City Royals

**IF YOU COULD BE AN ANIMAL, WHAT WOULD YOU BE AND WHY?**

A mountain lion because I would like to be awesome!

**WHO HAS INSPIRED YOU IN YOUR LIFE AND WHY?**

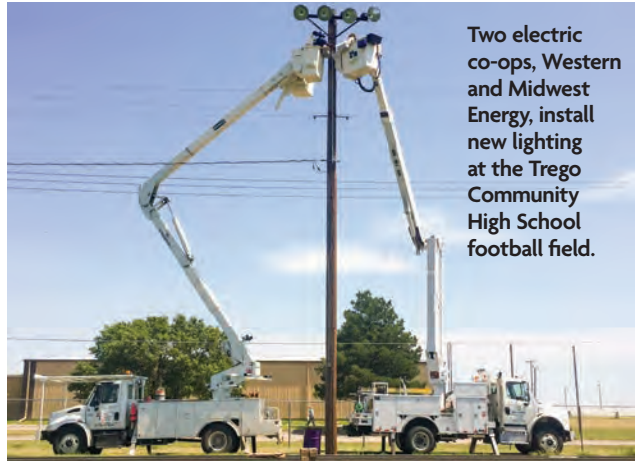
My parents. They have always been good parents and supported me in whatever I have chosen to do.

## Shining a Light on a Cooperative Effort

After a recent storm brought down two light poles at the Trego Community High School football field, a decision was made to not only replace the two poles but also change the existing lights.

Western Cooperative Electric and Midwest Energy decided to assist with the project.

This illustrates two cooperative principles, our commitment to community and cooperation among cooperatives. Co-ops work together to truly put our members first, practicing the cooperative values and principles year-round.



Two electric co-ops, Western and Midwest Energy, install new lighting at the Trego Community High School football field.

## Cold Weather Rule Effective Nov. 15-March 15

Western Cooperative Electric members who are unable to pay their electric service bills during the period from Nov. 15 through March 15 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 take place.

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.

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