

# NEWS



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Sept. 21, 2018

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Incumbent directors re-elected at sweltering Crawford Electric annual meeting**

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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BOURBON – Despite sweltering temperatures, nearly 800 Crawford Electric consumer-members participated in the 78<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the cooperative on Wednesday, Sept. 19. During the business session, the members accepted the audited 2017 financial statements and re-elected three incumbent directors. Board President Jim Cottrell received a special honor for his political advocacy on behalf of the co-op membership.

The day's temperatures rose into the 90s, with a heat index pushing 100. "This was surely one of the hottest days I've ever worked at an annual meeting," said Laura Hengstenberg, who has organized the co-op event since 1995. The annual meeting is held in the vehicle storage garage connected to the co-op's headquarters on the North Service Road between Bourbon and Sullivan.

In anticipation of the heat, Crawford Electric employees had placed four huge fans and made multiple cases of bottled water freely available to the members. "We did the best we could to keep members hydrated and get air flow through the garage," Hengstenberg said. "A lot of members were well-prepared, too. They brought their own fans," she said.

In the annual director election, only the incumbent directors had filed nominating petitions to seek election to the co-op's board of directors. Since they were unopposed, all three were re-elected by the membership in a floor vote. District 1 Director Justin "Bink" Blankenship, District 2 Director Doug Murphy and District 3 Director Jim Cottrell will serve three-year terms. Votes were cast using voting cards handed out to the 501 members who registered at the meeting.

Lunch included sliced brisket cooked by the Crawford County Cattlemen before an afternoon of entertainment and prizes. Brought back by popular demand, the Sons of Britches band from Branson battled the heat to provide music that had some members dancing. Members Darlene and Rudolph Ahmann of Washington were randomly chosen as the grand prize winners and came away from the meeting with a \$300 electric credit. Before the business session was called to order at 10 a.m., local singing sensation Blake Beckett performed a number of Southern Gospel songs. He also led the crowd in the singing of the National Anthem. Blake is a college student from Bourbon.

During the business session, a special guest speaker honored Crawford Electric board President Jim Cottrell with the Franklin R. Stork Democracy Award. This award is given annually to a Missouri co-op director or employee who demonstrates vigilance in the political arena on behalf of rural people and the electric cooperatives they own. Barry Hart, the CEO of the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives, presented the award.

Crawford Electric's general manager, CEO Anthony J. "Tony" Mallory, discussed the challenges facing a rural electric cooperative then provided several pieces of good news. Crawford Electric consumer-members pay some of the lowest electric rates in the state when compared with members of other co-ops. Rates should remain stable throughout the coming year. And he announced that the co-op board had just approved the largest patronage retirement in the history of Crawford Electric. That will mean cash back to thousands of consumer-members in December.

Members at the business session also heard from Joe Wilkinson, an executive with the co-op's power supplier Associated Electric Cooperative. He discussed the diverse generation assets that Associated uses to create the electricity that Crawford Electric members use.

Crawford Electric Cooperative is a member of Touchstone Energy, a national alliance of locally owned, community-minded electric co-ops with high standards of service. Crawford Electric serves almost 20,000 meters along almost 3,000 miles of distribution lines in Crawford, Franklin, Gasconade, Washington and Dent counties.