

Annual Meeting

Over 275 Members of Western Illinois Electrical Coop. (WIEC) heard about the cooperative's financial condition, changes to member bills, outages, and results of the director elections during its annual meeting of members held at Hancock County Extension Center on Thursday, June 25.

Chairman Rob Gronewold addressed some strong windstorms that caused widespread outages in WIEC's service territory. When distribution lines are affected, the co-op's crew can repair the damage. When outages are caused by damage to transmission lines, which are owned and maintained by Ameren, WIEC crews either have to wait for Ameren crews to repair the damage or route to an alternative power station feed, which can sometimes cause longer outages. Unfortunately, this has been a major factor in some lengthy outages of late. He said, "We appreciate our members' ongoing support and patience during tough times like these."

The co-op gave members the opportunity to submit questions and concerns about the co-op prior to the annual meeting. Those questions involved the topics of electric rates and member bills, renewable energy and the cooperative's after-hours call center. As part of a three-man panel discussion, Co-op Manager Tommie Long said the co-op board of directors has been addressing rates to ensure



Each of these five lucky WIEC members won 1,000 kWh on their July Bill. Pictured (l-r) are: Evelyn Briley, Carthage; Minor Garrelts, Hamilton; Judy A Johnson, La Harpe; Belinda Price, Nauvoo; and Francis Allen, West Point. Congratulations!

they are fair and equitable and that they cover the co-op's costs to provide power to the membership.

Two line items have recently been added to the bill—the formulary rate plan (FRP) and the power cost adjustment (PCA). The FRP was introduced to ensure adequate revenues to maintain the operations and to meet loan obligations to the co-op's banker, CFC. This amount, based on the billing rate, **(3511-40)** will be consistent through the end of the year. The PCA charge will be calculated each month based on the actual cost of wholesale costs compared to the budgeted wholesale power costs each month, and will fluctuate up and down.

This summer the co-op will be conducting a cost of service study to determine necessary rate adjustments. Once it's completed, rates will be modified accordingly and any changes will be reflected in April 2016 bills. At that time, the FRP will be removed from the bills. Rates will then be analyzed on an annual basis to minimize the impact on the membership. Long said, "The trend in rate structuring is to recover the majority of your fixed costs in the facilities charge and be less dependent on the sale of kilowatt hours."

The second question involved news stories a member had seen about

Continued on 16c ►



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OFFICE HOURS

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
 Monday - Friday

BUSINESS OFFICE

217-357-3125

TO REPORT AN OUTAGE

800-576-3125

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **Rob Gronewold** —
President, Carthage
- **Janet Spory** —
Secretary/Treasurer, Sutter
- **Jay Morrison** —
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer,
Burnside
- **Mark Burling** —
Director, Carthage
- **Kent Flesner** —
Director, West Point
- **Kim Gullberg** —
Director, Stronghurst
- **William Newton** —
Director, Burnside

STAFF

- **Tommie Long** — Manager
- **Todd Grotts** — Manager
of Operations
- **Becky Dickinson** — Office
Manager

MAP LOCATION CONTEST

Every month we are printing four members' map location numbers in the newsletter. If you find your map location number call the WIEC office by the 25th of the following month, tell us where it is and we will give you a \$10.00 bill credit. Keep on reading the WIEC News.

Annual Meeting Prizes 2015

GIFT	DONOR	RECIPIENT
DIE CAST MODEL DIGGER DERRICK	ALTEC	John Radel
\$50.00 WALMART GIFT CARD	BENNETT & MIDDENDORF, LTD.	Sharon Morrison
\$50.00 WALMART GIFT CARD	BENNETT & MIDDENDORF, LTD	Terry Tinsley
\$75.00 Amazon Gift Card	C R C (Cooperative Response Center, Inc.)	Providence Baptist Church
Rolling Cooler	CAPE ELECTRICAL	Paul Dion
4 Gallon Knapsack Sprayer	Terry Allen, Crop Production, Svc	Ed Owen
POCKETKNIFE	HD SUPPLY POWER SOLUTIONS	Julie Weber
5 QUART OIL CHANGE	J & R TIRE SERVICE	Diana Allen
Shooting Shirt, Koozie, Robotic Flip Top Calculator & Letter Opener	MCFARLAND CASCADE	Roberta Bruenger
Shooting Shirt, Koozie, Robotic Flip Top Calculator & Letter Opener	MCFARLAND CASCADE	Jim Bolton
Lined Microfiber Windshirt, Koozie, Robotic Flip Top Calculator & Letter Opener	MCFARLAND CASCADE	Wayne Bolton
Callaway Gold Balls, Koozie, Robotic Flip Calculator, Letter Opener	MCFARLAND CASCADE	Nancy K Huls
Koozie, Robotic Flip Calculator, Letter Opener donated by McFarland Cascade & Cap donated by Altec	MCFARLAND CASCADE & ALTEC	Ralph Taylor
Koozie, Robotic Flip Calculator, Letter Opener donated by McFarland Cascade & Cap donated by Altec	MCFARLAND CASCADE & ALTEC	Gene Stardy
Koozie, Robotic Flip Calculator, Letter Opener donated by McFarland Cascade & Cap donated by Altec	MCFARLAND CASCADE & ALTEC	St Marys Church
Koozie, Robotic Flip Calculator, Letter Opener donated by McFarland Cascade & Cap donated by Altec	MCFARLAND CASCADE & ALTEC	John Tobias
Koozie, Robotic Flip Calculator, Letter Opener donated by McFarland Cascade & Cap donated by Altec	MCFARLAND CASCADE & ALTEC	Charles Kost
Koozie, Robotic Flip Calculator, Letter Opener donated by McFarland Cascade & Cap donated by Altec	MCFARLAND CASCADE & ALTEC	Don Rosenboom
Koozie, Robotic Flip Calculator, Letter Opener donated by McFarland Cascade & Cap donated by Altec	MCFARLAND CASCADE & ALTEC	Mark Buss
Koozie, Robotic Flip Calculator, Letter Opener donated by McFarland Cascade & Cap donated by Altec	MCFARLAND CASCADE & ALTEC	Mardelle Reed
Koozie, Robotic Flip Calculator, Letter Opener donated by McFarland Cascade & Cap donated by Altec	MCFARLAND CASCADE & ALTEC	Dale Bell
Koozie, Robotic Flip Calculator, Letter Opener donated by McFarland Cascade & Cap donated by Altec	MCFARLAND CASCADE & ALTEC	Gary Butler
Koozie, Robotic Flip Calculator, Letter Opener donated by McFarland Cascade & Cap donated by Altec	MCFARLAND CASCADE & ALTEC	Mary Garrelts
Hat	ALTEC	William Fecht
MULTI -TOOL	MARINE BANK & TRUST	Elizabeth Smith
MULTI -TOOL	MARINE BANK & TRUST	Jean Nelson
LED SECURITY LIGHT	WIEC	Darrell Bruns
\$25.00 SEARS GIFT CARD	UNITED UTILITY SUPPLY	Mary Scheetz
CAP & (XL) LONG SLEEVE T-SHIRT	VAN METER	Reece Schmitz
CAP & (L) LONG SLEEVE T-SHIRT	VAN METER	Ben Nelson
GOLF BALLS & CAP	VAN METER	Neill Cattle Farm
GOLF BALLS & CAP	VAN METER	White Acres Farms
(XL) T-SHIRT & CAP	VAN METER	Donald David
(L) T-SHIRT & CAP	VERMEER MIDWEST	Harold Herdrich
(L) T-SHIRT & CAP	VERMEER MIDWEST	Suzanne Buckert
(L) LONG SLEEVE T-SHIRT	VERMEER MIDWEST	Mike Pollock
(2XL) LONG SLEEVE T-SHIRT	VERMEER MIDWEST	Jerry Schmitz
\$25.00 GIFT CERTIFICATE	WEBER MEATS, INC.	Jerry Grauf
Hat	ALTEC	Russell Lawson
GRAND PRIZE #1 Bill Credit for 1000 kWh of Electricity	WIEC	Judy A Johnson
GRAND PRIZE #2 Bill Credit for 1000 kWh of Electricity	WIEC	Francis Allen
GRAND PRIZE #3 Bill Credit for 1000 kWh of Electricity	WIEC	Belinda Price
GRAND PRIZE #4 Bill Credit for 1000 kWh of Electricity	WIEC	Minor Garrelts
GRAND PRIZE #5 Bill Credit for 1000 kWh of Electricity	WIEC	Evelyn Briley

WIEC would like to thank our vendors for graciously providing door prizes for our annual meeting.

Annual Meeting continued from 16a

nuclear power plants and renewable energy and how that could impact co-op members. Association of Illinois Electric Cooperative President/CEO Duane Noland explained that the association has two full-time staff that monitors bills on a local and federal basis that regulate the electric industry to ensure co-op members aren't adversely impacted. He said three big issues have been in the news this year. One bill involves Exelon, which has six nuclear plants in Illinois, a few of which the company was threatening to close without an economic incentive to keep them open. Another involves Commonwealth Edison, which serves the Chicago and northern Illinois area, and the third is the Illinois Clean Jobs bill, which is being pushed by environmental groups and renewable providers like wind and solar. Noland said that as the three issues developed it became clear that co-op members would not be adversely affected by any of the bills. He added that co-ops fully support nuclear and renewable energy. He said, "We believe as cooperatives we should have an all-of-the-above strategy. We believe energy should be energy produced by coal, by nuclear, by natural gas, by wind and by solar."

The third question involved distributed generation such as residential solar, wind and other forms of generation, and how they will affect WIEC in the future. Prairie Power, Inc. President/CEO Jay Bartlett addressed the question saying that on behalf of its 10 member cooperatives, Prairie Power, Inc. has developed a diversified portfolio of all forms of generation except nuclear. Two solar farms are currently under construction, and WIEC members are part owners of one of the largest wind farms in Illinois. Renewable energy is twice as expensive to produce as coal-fired generation, but according to Bartlett, including renewables as part of power portfolios has been mandated, and it's the right thing to do. Bartlett explained, "Eighteen power generators buy and sell electricity through Prairie Power (5627-56) every day of the year.

We do this to keep your bills as low as we possibly can. You want affordability and reliability, and that's what we're working towards."

The final question related to why the co-op is now using a call center for after-hours calls. Manager Long explained that co-op personnel had been covering calls 24/7, but that retirements had left just two personnel to handle calls after hours and on the weekends. This new system has been met with some member dissatisfaction.

However, from an operations standpoint, the call center can field calls enabling personnel to be out assessing damage in affected areas, thus improving outage response times. The call center also allows the co-op to make automated calls to the membership to alert them of a planned outage.

During the meeting, Kim Gullberg of Stronghurst, Jay Morrison of Niota and William Newton of Burnside were re-elected to the co-op's board of directors.



Question and Answer panel consisted of; (l-r) Tommie Long, Jay Bartlett and Duane Noland.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Periodically inspect your dryer vent to ensure it is not blocked. This will save energy and may prevent a fire. Manufacturers recommend using rigid venting material – not plastic vents that may collapse and cause blockages.

Source: energystar.gov

Metternich's winning essay

In the July WIEC News, we informed our members about Sydney Metternich, Hamilton, winning a \$1,500 scholarship as part of the IEC Memorial Scholarship fund. We thought our members might enjoy reading her winning essay.

Question: Explain the difference between an electric cooperative and an investor-owned utility, and share what would be some advantages to the cooperative business model.

There are many important characteristics that set cooperatives apart from companies or businesses; these characteristics are what make cooperatives work so proficiently. When cooperatives state that they are "member-owned" they are not insinuating a secret position in a club; becoming a member will put one in a pool of other members, and provide each member with a reliable electricity provider. Since cooperatives are member-owned, members are important to the decisions and positions in the (4634-57) cooperative.

A cooperative consists of members, board members, and employees. There are many key roles within these divisions; there are a set amount of board members, each from a different division. On the board there is a president, vice president, secretary-treasurer, and assistant secretary-treasurer. Of the employees carefully chosen is the manager, manager of operations, and office manager. These are all very important jobs to the coops as members are the

ones who elect the directors they think would best determine management.

Cooperatives were originally created to supply electricity to people living in the country or places that were unreached by major utility companies. One of the major differences between cooperatives and investor-owned utilities is that cooperatives are not for profit utilities; of the money they make, they only take enough to pay their employees and to cover expenses or any emergencies that may occur. Extra money beyond those costs will be returned to the member.

Cooperatives do many things to help the community as well; they support the 4-H in my area, while also holding an annual safety fair for students in 5th grade. Often cooperatives sponsor a Youth Day in Springfield and a Youth Trip to Washington, DC. This is an opportunity to learn how government and cooperatives function.

Cooperatives care about their customers and employees because we are a family. I was fortunate enough to be chosen to travel to Washington DC to learn about our cooperatives and

our Nation's capital. To learn more about cooperatives on the trip we did an activity called, "Pop and Chips." The Pop and Chips program taught us how cooperatives really work, on of course a smaller scale. On the first day, people who wanted to be representatives gathered to interview candidates for the Board of Directors. I was interviewed and joined other board members to select a manager. The manager played an important role in the success of our cooperative; in fact, we were able to give three dollars back to each member at the end of the trip.

My cooperative cares about my education, wellbeing, along with my electricity of course. I would not have the ability to take care of my animals in the dark if my electrical coop wouldn't be there for me. From visiting an embassy, to touring Congress, to gazing out at the beautiful blue sky from the top of the Washington Monument, visiting Washington was one of the most amazing experiences of my life; cooperatives truly do care about their members.

Proxy contest winners

If a member cannot attend the WIEC Annual Meeting, we encourage them to sign their proxy over to another member who will attend or bring it to the WIEC office. As an incentive to have WIEC members to sign their proxies, all signed proxies received were entered into (475-6) a drawing for a \$10 bill credit. The five winners were: Judith Bollin, Danny Buckert, Stephen Meyer, William Siverly and W. Lee Thompson. These lucky winners will see the credit on their June bill they will receive around July 10.

Welcome New Members

Donnie & Kayla Boley, Hamilton
James Cookson, Niota
Jeremy Corrigan, Basco
Peggy Lankford, Mobile, AL

Susan Leonard, Niota
Duane Massie, Carthage
Calvin & Elizabeth Minter,
Woodhull

Rick Gail & Amanda Jean
Pilkington, Dallas City
Sean Rael, Nauvoo
Belinda Whitson, Niota