

The cost of keeping our linemen safe

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires that electrical lineworkers wear fire resistant (FR) clothing that protects them from electric arcs when working around live electric lines. Electric arcs, similar to lightning, is electrical current jumping between two points. It happens unexpectedly, particularly when working on energized electric lines. They can result in high temperatures, hot gasses or even flying shrapnel from metal particles. When a lineman is exposed to an arc, the clothing they wear may play a large role in the severity of the potential injury.

FR clothing is intended to keep the material of the clothing from igniting

and burning the skin if an arc occurs. It is made of natural materials such as cotton or wool. It cannot have any synthetic materials such as acetate, nylon, polyester or rayon as it would cause the fabric to melt when subjected to high temperatures. A coating is applied to the fabric before it is made into garments.

A rating is assigned to the clothing to indicate how much arc exposure the lineman could be subjected to. WIEC had Prairie Power Inc. do an arc flash assessment on our lines to determine the rating of FR clothing our linemen would need to keep them safe. Once that was determined, our crew was given a set of clothing to wear when

doing line work. Each lineman received a set of FR clothing made up of seven pairs of jeans, seven long sleeved shirts, seven short sleeved shirts, (7813-58) Carhart winter FR bibs and jacket, a FR stocking hat, and a pair of gaiters. The FR clothing is expensive. A pair of jeans costs more than \$72 and the Winter jacket costs more than \$200. To outfit our crew, it costs more than \$20,000 with routine replacement due to normal wear and tear to add about another \$5,000 per year.

WIEC furnishes our linemen with FR clothing as required by OSHA, but also to keep our crew safe.

WIEC welcomes new apprentice

On April 17, Garrett Kestner joined the WIEC line crew as an apprentice lineman. Garrett grew up in Camp Point, graduated from Camp Point High School and John Wood Community College in Quincy. He earned his lineman's certificate from Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield.

When asked why he became a lineman, Garrett said he spent a summer working with Ralls County Electric Coop. and found he enjoyed line work, so the rest is history. He enjoys playing sports, hunting and fishing in his free time, and he has a dog named Bentley.

Welcome to the WIEC family, Garrett.





Western Illinois
ELECTRICAL COOP.
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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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** —
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- **Jay Morrison** —
Vice President, Burnside
- **Janet Spory** —
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- **William Newton** —
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer,
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- **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.

The importance of your vote

The more you put in, the more you get out.

For the last 77 years, Western Illinois Electrical Coop. has an annual meeting as required by our by-laws. One of the most important activities we conduct is the election for the board of directors. These are the seven people we entrust to give strategic direction and ensure the co-op has proper governance.

At WIEC, we try to encourage our members to participate in the election. As the utility industry is experiencing some of the biggest changes since its founding, electric co-ops need your active participation. As a member of a co-op, you have the right, and some may even say the obligation, to help set the direction for the co-op. This is a critical difference between co-ops and other electricity providers, such as investor-owned utilities (IOUs) or municipally-owned systems.



The board of directors of a co-op makes important strategic decisions for the organization, while the operations, day-to-day running of the business (7710-3), is entrusted to the employees. Examples of the types of decisions your board makes that impact all members are:

- the level of involvement in community economic development
- what rates will be in the future
- offering other services
- approving the budget for the co-op

June 22 at the WIEC Annual Meeting, you may want to attend and ask the candidates where they stand on these or other issues. We urge you to use your vote so your voice will be heard in the future of your cooperative.

Can't make it to the Annual Meeting?

Enter the proxy contest for a chance to earn a \$10 bill credit!

If you can't come to the WIEC Annual Meeting on June 22, you can still make your vote count. You can give someone that is attending your signed proxy card or bring in your signed proxy card to the office, and (8520-18-1) we can give it to an

attendee the night of the meeting. Either way your vote will count!

All members who sign their proxy to be used at the Annual Meeting will be entered into a drawing for a chance at a \$10 bill credit. Five \$10 bill credits will be given away.





Interested in learning more about electricity and wiring?

Every June, there is an Electricity School held in Camp Point, Ill. to teach kids the basics of electricity in a fun and entertaining way. Children ages 8 to 18 who live in Hancock or Henderson County and are interested in participating in the 4-H Electricity School should contact their local extension office. Students do not have to be a member of 4-H to attend. WIEC is a proud supporter of the 4-H program and has sponsored the Best Electricity Project award at the 4-H fair for many years.



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To help with increasing reliability and reducing outages, WIEC periodically does routine maintenance on our equipment. Here, one of our linemen is replacing the breakers at the Carthage substation. Although Prairie Power Inc. owns the substation, the distribution breakers located in the substation belong to WIEC, and we maintain them.



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<http://www.facebook.com/westernillinoiselectricalcoop>

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 **(8610-19)** that may collapse and cause blockages.

Source: U.S Department of Energy

Annual meeting notices are being mailed *Watch your mailbox*

The WIEC Annual Meeting will be Thursday, June 22. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. with meeting to begin at 7:00.

Watch your mailbox for the Annual Meeting booklet. It will contain the registration card, proxy card and other important information. To save time, please bring the registration card with you to the meeting.

See page 11 for more details.



WIEC office will close at noon on June 23.



Youth to Washington WebQuiz winner announced

Allison Morgan was named the winner of the Youth to Washington WebQuiz contest. She won an all-expense paid trip to our nation's capital during the week of June 9. Watch the WIEC News for highlights of her trip.

Welcome New Members

Trisha Eaves-Fedler,
Ft. Madison, IA

Sally J. & Darryl W. Hemmie,
Burnside

Nathaniel Kerr, *Warsaw*

Kyle & Jessica Klees,
Stronghurst

Daniel W. Klossing, *Carthage*
Cade McDowell, *LaHarpe*

Breanne Masse, *Hamilton*

Bob Roskamp, Inc., By Debra Powers, *Sutter*

Ruhl & Ruhl Realtors, By Malisa Kothe, *West Burlington IA*

Tom Weinberg, *Augusta*