

Western Illinois Threshers celebrates 50 years

In the spring of 1968, a group of neighbors north of Hamilton gathered in Fred Buckert's machine shop to discuss planting oats that could be cut for a local threshing bee.

These farmers had been collecting antique tractors for many years and displaying them at the Midwest Old Threshers show in Mount Pleasant, Iowa. They decided to hold their own event to show the younger generation how grain was harvested in the early days.

This was the beginning of the Western Illinois Threshers Show, a growing Hancock County community event that has expanded to show far more than grain threshing over the past 50 years. Now the show is held on the first full weekend in August, which will be Aug. 4, 5 and 6 in 2017.

That first group of planners included Fred and his brother Larry Buckert, Raymond McVeigh, Lester Starr and Leon Hartweg. Among them, they owned about a dozen antique tractors. The Buckerts' brother, Bob, and dad, A.C. Buckert, were a big part of that first show.

The plan was made, oats were planted, and the first threshing show was hosted on the farm of Fred and Ruth Buckert. More than 1,000 people attended that first threshing bee on Aug. 3, 1968.

While the men worked with the grain, tractors and the threshing machine, the women prepared an old-time threshers fried chicken dinner, complete with homemade bread and pies.



Over the next several years, the show was held at the Buckerts' farm, and at the farms of Ray McVeigh and Lester Starr. It expanded to two days and featured more and more kinds of antiques and demonstrations.

After seven successful shows, members knew the Western Illinois Threshers needed a permanent grounds to allow for expansion of visitors and displays.

Continued on 18b ►

2017 show information

Western Illinois Threshers Show in 2017 will be held two miles north of Hamilton on Aug. 4, 5 and 6. Orion Samuelson of WGN Radio is the speaker Saturday night, Aug. 5. J.I. Case is the featured tractor this year.

A history book is planned as well as several other special events to mark the 50th show.

For more information, visit www.westernillinoisthreshers.org or visit its Facebook page at Western II Threshers.



524 North Madison | P.O. Box 338
Carthage, IL 62321
www.wiec.net | 800/576-3125

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

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.

Continued from 18a ►

A 40-acre tract was found two miles north of Hamilton and purchased in January 1975. By the time of the show that August, the first large building was built. The north side of the new building housed demonstrations and displays. On the south side was a food stand.

The first quilt, made in red, white and blue, was prepared for the 1976 bicentennial year show. A new campground was established along the shaded creek, inviting overnight guests. The show offered two evening dinners with (3812-57) entertainment.

By 1978, a second building was added to the grounds. As time and money permitted, more permanent shelters were built and fewer tents used.

In the 1980s, the group began adding historic buildings. A one-room school from Sutter and a depot from near Bushnell were moved onto the grounds in 1981. The first log cabin rebuild began. Later another depot was moved from Burnside, the little Edgewood general store cabin was added, and a second log cabin was reassembled on the grounds. The church was moved in 2009.

New buildings were added for the print shop, black smith, gas station car headquarters and post office.

The number of tractors exhibited grew over the years. In 1986 the national J.I. Case Collectors Association met at the Western Illinois Threshers show. A special Case button was offered that year.

The next year, 1987, was the 150th anniversary of the John Deere Company, with a large display of John Deere tractors. From then on, a brand of tractors was featured each year.

In 1992, the threshers began giving away a restored antique tractor in a raffle. Tractor and car/truck buttons were first used as a fundraising effort. Now the \$5 button is admission for all three days.

When bleachers were brought in for viewing the antique car and tractor parade, other special events began. The first grandstand event was local invitational pony pull in 1981. In 1992, the event changed to feature draft horses. Now events include antique tractor

pulls, a kid's pedal pull, tractor games and more became grandstand events. Demonstrations and museum buildings expanded.

Evening meals were served first in 1976. The pancake breakfast started in 1987 and later biscuits and sausage gravy were served. Food vendors offered more and more food options.



Since 1979, two quilts have been made each year, one raffled and one auctioned on Saturday night. In the 1980s many craft demonstrations were set up in a large tent between the two main buildings. A flea market was added to the show in 1989 after more land was purchased north of the original 40 acres.

As the show became known in the region, numerous farm broadcasters and other speakers were invited to the show. Among them were Max Armstrong, Mike Adams, Al Jarand, Derry Brownfield, Orion Samuelson, Trent Loos (3611-59) and Mark McDonald.

The first school days were held May 4 and 5, 1984, and have continue to the present. Threshers host area students, with many educational displays and hands-on activities, a small taste of the show.

Western Illinois Threshers continues to be coordinated by a core of members from the Tri-State area. The show has grown and continues with the volunteer help of many individuals, businesses and organizations from throughout Hancock County.

*Written and submitted
by Joy Swearingen*

Pole top rescue training

Recently, our linemen received training from the Association of Illinois Electrical Cooperatives (AIEC) about rescuing a fellow lineman in the event they are injured and cannot get down the pole by themselves. This

could result from electrical contact, heart attack, allergic reaction to a bee sting or many other possible scenarios.

This training helps them determine how to protect themselves as well as helping their injured coworker by

releasing their safety harness, then safely lowering them to the ground. They train for this possibility, but pray and hope that they never have to use these (10526-47) skills.



1.

The guys "gear up" before climbing the pole.



2.

The Training Dummy is hung from the pole to simulate an injured co-worker.



3.

Climbing the pole.



4.

Unhooking the safety harness and attaching it to the rope that will lower the dummy to the ground so first aid can begin.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Let the sun work for you! Consider solar lights for outdoor lighting. Solar cells convert sunlight into electricity that can be stored in a battery and tapped at night to make light. Check manufacturers' instructions to make sure your solar lights are situated to receive sufficient sunlight to recharge during the day.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

Budget billing enrollment begins

Budget Billing gives you a way to guard against large fluctuations in your monthly electric bill without ever having to play catch-up at the end of the year. The program is designed to keep your electric bills consistent every month of the year, as long as you remain on the plan. It's the ideal way to accurately anticipate your monthly electric bill, which makes managing your expenses even easier.

With Budget Billing, your monthly electric bill becomes a rolling average of your electric usage for the most recent 12 months. By averaging your changes in usage over a 12-month period, your bill will remain fairly consistent every month, even in very

cold or hot months when usage may be significantly higher.

Our Budget Billing program is completely free for members with accounts in good standing and with at least 12 months of service history. Members can deactivate the Budget Billing program at any time by contacting our billing department. If a member on Budget Billing becomes delinquent or enters into a delayed payment agreement, they will be removed from the program.

The new Budget Billing (3914-53) program begins on July 21. For more information on Budget Billing or other billing related questions, please contact our office.

Welcome New Members

Aaron Baker, Nauvoo
 Deana Fisher, Overland Park, KS
 Johnathan & Aaron Gerhard, Mendon
 John S. Hawley, Hamilton
 Ashley Haynes, Dallas City
 Philip J. & Lori B. Hildebrand, Mendon
 Scott & Bethany Harrison, Bowen
 Timothy Hutson, Maquon
 Michael Kellett, LaHarpe
 Terry McConnell, Carthage
 Donald Merritt, Carthage
 Heather Mitchell, Niota
 Joshua & Jennifer Tipton, Hamilton
 Dustin Vancil, Gladstone



Hancock County 4-H BBQ

4-H Fair exhibits
will be on
display during
the BBQ

Wednesday, July 12th, 2017

5:00–7:00 pm

Live Auction of Baked
Goods and Themed
Baskets at 6:30.
Fashion Revue and
General Exhibit
Awards Show at 7:00



U of I Extension - 550 N Madison, Carthage

\$7.00 (Advanced) - \$8.00 (at Door)

Drive-Thru pick up available in front of WIEC

Menu:

Pork Chop Sandwich Or 2 Hot Dogs ~ Green Beans ~
Applesauce ~ Chips ~ Drink (Dine-in only)