

## Year in Review

2018 was a busy, productive one for WIEC with many changes occurring during the year. Here are some of the highlights:

- WIEC said goodbye to two long-time employees. Donna Cramer retired in April with 42 years of dedicated service to WIEC and our member-owners. Mandy Steinkamp was hired in March as our administrative assistance and a customer service representative. Member-owners will see Mandy when they come into the office to pay their bill or talk to her on the phone.

- WIEC also said goodbye to Manager Tommie Long in June. Tommie had 40 years of service at WIEC with the last five serving as manager. The WIEC Board named Todd Grotts to succeed Tommie. Todd had previously served as WIEC's Operations Manager.

- Two high-school students, Colten Shipman and John Steck went to Washington, D.C. as winners of the Youth to Washington WebQuiz contest. Both of these young men toured Washington, D.C. and saw many historic sights and made friends all over Illinois. (5730-17) John called it an "adventure of a lifetime."



Tommie Long



Todd Grotts

- The 25th Annual WIEC Safety Fair was held in September. Area fifth graders saw an energized electrical system, learned boating, ATV and biking safety, how to be safe on a farm, 9-1-1 protocol, and learned how to stay safe around electrical lines. Ask a fifth grader if they remember the sounds and smells of a hot dog when it comes in contact with 7,200 volts.

- WIEC is continuing to work on our 4-year work plan. Increasing reliability, working safely and improving the integrity of our system remains at the forefront of what we do. These are some of the projects our line crew worked on in the first nine months of 2018.

- Prairie Power, Inc. (PPI) completed its work at the new Carthage Substation last December. WIEC finished installing our equipment in February. This brand-new substation replaces WIEC's first substation built in the early 1940s. This should improve reliability and can handle any new loads that

may be built on the east side of Carthage.

- Work on the new Elvaston Substation is progressing. PPI has finished installing its equipment,



WIEC said goodbye to two long-time employees: Donna Cramer and Tommie Long but welcomed new General Manager Todd Grotts



Area fifth graders learn about the gloves and sleeves our linemen wear when working with energized lines

Continued on 20B ►



**Western Illinois**  
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**BUSINESS OFFICE**

217-357-3125

**TO REPORT AN OUTAGE**

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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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**STAFF**

- **Todd Grotts** — Manager
- **Ryan Biery** — Manager  
of Operations
- **Becky Dickinson** — Finance/  
Accounting 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.

**"Year in Review" continued from 20A**



*New Elvaston Substation*



*New Carthage Substation*

and WIEC hopes to have our part completed by the end of 2018. This is intended to increase reliability for WIEC member-owners in the western portion of Hancock County.

- Advance Physical Therapy built a new facility on our lines near Memorial Hospital and had their open house on Nov. 1. Including the Advance building, our line crew installed several other new services during the first nine months of 2018, including 12 new residences, one new 3-phase grain bin, two hog buildings along with six other services. These new services help (5815-58) keep our kWh sales level, despite downward pressures on sales due to conservation, renewables and mild weather.
- WIEC continues with our Line Inspection Program. Our line crew aggressively inspects poles to find the rotten or broken poles before strong winds find them for us and blow them down resulting in an outage. For the first nine months of this year, we have completed the inspection of 34 percent of our total system. This means we've inspected 8,059 of our 23,607 poles. This will be a long-term project. While inspecting our poles, our servicemen place tags on them, then enter specific information about each pole into our GIS system. When entered into the GIS system, it will give our line department an up-to-date snapshot of our system providing valuable information during

outages, large storms or just day-to-day operations.

- Our line crew also remained busy with rebuilding 2.67 miles of lines west of LaHarpe. This work is a critical component for the new substation to be built near Disco. PPI hopes to start work on this new substation in 2021 and has projected completion in 2022. This new substation will increase reliability for members served by Carthage and Lomax Substation. It will also give the Lomax Sub a loop feed.
- They removed and replaced 88 OCRS as maintenance in the Sutter and Elvaston Substation areas. Oil Circuit Reclosers are devices on the overhead power lines that sectionalize, or isolate, a line so it will take out as few members as possible when there is a fault on the line. The OCR will automatically restore power to the line if the fault is temporary, like a tree branch contacting a power line or an animal getting on to a transformer. If the fault is not temporary, like a tree falling and bringing down a line, the OCR will interrupt the power until the line is fixed and a lineman resets the OCR. An OCR operation may be annoying (the short power failure that is just long enough for our clocks to start blinking 12:00) but they help protect the system from permanent damage from faults and short circuits that could lead to a long power outage over a larger area. WIEC has a 3-year maintenance cycle for OCRs, removing them and sending

them to a facility to make sure they function properly.

- We contracted Spoon River Electric, Canton to handle our brush spraying for 2017 and 2018. Unfortunately, Spoon could not complete spraying along the lines around our Carthage and Lomax Substation. Going forward, we will be actively searching someone to perform this for us.
- In April, after studying the 2018 budget, financial forecast, and the

projected wholesale power cost from PPI, the WIEC Board approved instating the Formulary Rate Adder. They felt it was necessary to ensure adequate revenues to maintain our financial stability.

As 2018 comes to a close, we say thank you to our member-owners. We appreciate your patience and understanding when the power is out. We appreciate our member-owners making us feel welcome when doing work on your property. We do appreciate our members. At WIEC, we

### Are you thinking of adding a new bin? Are you upgrading or adding motors to existing bins?

Please call WIEC so we can determine if your current service is adequate to handle the new equipment. A too-small service can cause outages, which can be expensive for WIEC and our members due to damaged equipment and lost time.

No one wants an outage, so it's best to be safe and double check to make sure the electrical service can handle the new equipment.



### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Heading out of town for the holidays? Remember to unplug electronics that draw a phantom energy load. Some gadgets, like TVs, gaming consoles, chargers and DVD players use energy when plugged into an outlet, even when they're not in use.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



### Welcome New Members

#### September 2018

- Matt Engen – Laharpe, IL
- Neil Lemaster & Stephanie Kempker – Keokuk, IA
- Brayton Seitz – Gladstone, IL
- Toni M. Voissem – Warsaw, IL
- Jerry Wachtendorf & Tammy Gipe – Basco, IL
- Shelby Woodruff – Galesburg, IL

### Attention!

### High School Seniors



The deadline for submitting an on-line application for the Illinois Electric Cooperatives Memorial Scholarships is December 31, 2018.

- Six \$2,000 Scholarships to sons/daughters of WIEC members currently receiving service.
- One \$2,000 (459-49) Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship for sons/daughters of WIEC employees or directors
- Four \$2,000 Scholarships for sons/daughters of WIEC employees/directors or members who plan on attending a two-year Illinois community college.
- One \$2,000 LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship to attend the AIEC lineworker school in Springfield IL. (deadline for this is April 30, 2019.)

For more information, call our office or go to [www.wiec.net](http://www.wiec.net).

# Give gifts that keep on giving

As you grab your hot chocolate and favorite blanket to cozy up and begin making this year's holiday gift list, consider the often overlooked but practical present: an energy efficient gift. While it may not be the usual book, shower gel or coffee mug, energy efficient gifts keep on giving.

According to Energystar.gov, the typical U.S. household spends more than \$2,000 a year on energy bills. Beyond the combined 42 percent of annual energy consumption spent on heating and cooling, the next biggest and fastest growing category is electronics, accounting for 21 percent.

To get you started, Safe Electricity compiled a list of energy-saving gift ideas. Some will appeal to your frugal Uncle Norman who refuses to tip after a good restaurant meal while others will appease your favorite gadget junkie.

## Around the house

- **LED light bulbs** – Upgrading 15 incandescent light bulbs in your home to LEDs could save about \$50 (4624-9) per year
- **Smart power strips** – This gadget decreases power to electronics when not in use
- **Surge protector or power strip with wireless remote** – Allows the user to completely shut off power, including standby power, for up to six devices
- **Smart or programmable thermostat** — most smart versions learn your habits to keep your home comfortable and save energy at the same time
- **Blankets and warm clothing** – To use and wear indoors so the thermostat can be turned down a few degrees
- **Tablet or laptop** – Takes less energy to run than a desktop computer
- **Rechargeable battery kit**
- **Room occupancy sensors** - Lights turn on when you enter a room and off when no one's there
- **Kitchen gadgets** – An electric pressure cooker (expedites cooking), a slow cooker (uses less energy to cook) or a multipurpose version, such as an Instant Pot®, that offers several cooking features in one pot, such as pressure, slow, and steam cooking
- **Power tools** – Look for the ENERGY STAR® label for the energy efficient tools

## For the energy conscious

- **Home electricity monitor** – Gives real-time feedback on energy use and tracks energy stats
- **Low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators** — These may not be at the top of someone's gift list, but they can reduce water consumption by 50 percent
- **Thermal leak detector** – a device that uses infrared sensors to detect power-draining drafts in the home. Plugging leaks can save up to 20 percent in heating and cooling costs

## For that special someone (even if that someone is you)

- **ENERGY STAR® rated TV** – These green versions are on average 27 percent more energy efficient than conventional models, saving energy in all usage modes: sleep, idle and on.

For more energy efficiency tips, go to [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



*Cherish every moment of this warm and beautiful season of joy, for it is the most wonderful time of the year.*

WIEC will close at noon on December 24 and reopen December 26. We will also close at noon on December 31 and reopen January 2, 2019.

**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the WIEC Board of Directors and Employees.**