



May your holiday season be merry and bright

The holidays are a time of year that many of us eagerly anticipate. The season is marked by special foods, seasonal decorations and lots of celebration. Right here in Carthage, we look forward to the Christmas Open House festivities on and around the square each year.

We cherish carrying on old family traditions and enjoy creating new ones, and we look forward to more time spent with family and friends.

However, given the hustle and bustle of the season, the holidays can also offer an opportunity to slow down and reflect. For all of us at WIEC, we are grateful for you, the members of the co-op.

You see, one of our founding principles as a co-op is “Concern for Community.” While our main focus is providing safe, reliable and affordable energy, we want to give back. We want to help our community thrive.

Reflection

In looking back at this past year, I’m grateful that we were able to make a positive impact in the community. Through assistance such as the USDA’s Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program, WIEC has been able to aid multiple businesses in our local community with low-cost funding for new projects or technology.

We were also grateful for the opportunity to partner with local schools to raise awareness of the importance of electrical safety, as well as provide ways to be safe in the world around us. This year, we had

close to 190 fifth-grade students from seven area schools participate in our 26th annual Safety Fair.

In addition, we continue to offer local high school students an assortment of college scholarship opportunities. In 2019, \$2,000 was awarded to a local scholar. We would like the opportunity to do more, so please encourage any high school seniors you may know to apply before the end of the year at aiec.coop/iec-scholarship?coop=WST

There are other ways we can help the community too. Whether we’re providing contact information for solar projects, answering questions about our water heater program, or helping you find other ways to save energy at home, we want you to know we’re here to help.

Looking ahead

Looking ahead to 2020, we hope you will share your opinions with us. We recognize that our members have a valuable perspective, and that’s why we continually seek your input. (5528-26) Whether through a call to our office, our social media channels or the annual meeting, we want to hear from you. We are led by you – the members of the co-op – and we depend on your feedback.

As we prepare for next year, we look forward to the opportunity to serve you and the greater community. On behalf of the WIEC family, we hope your holidays are indeed merry and bright!

Todd Grotts
General Manager



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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

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

STAFF

- **Todd Grotts** — General Manager
- **Ryan Biery** — Manager
of Operations
- **Wendi Whitaker** — Finance and
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.

AND THE WINNER IS...

Congratulations!

Harold and Lana Jo Herdrich
of rural Dallas City,
and
Paul and Gloria Kershner
of rural Lomax

Map Location Winners – October issue



Please answer your phone!

When you are out of power or if there is bad or rapidly changing weather, please answer your phone even if you don't recognize the number. (481-7) WIEC line crew members or other operations employees may be attempting to contact you (from a cell phone rather than the office phone) in an effort to gain knowledge that will help to resolve the current issue. Thank you for helping us help you!

Outdoor Holiday Lighting

Safety Tip
Don't hang lights using tacks, nails or screws; instead use insulated or plastic hooks.

Safe Electricity.org

2020 Operating Budget

Upon request, copies of the Western Illinois Electrical Coop. operating budget for 2020 will be available at the office during regular business hours starting in January.

Welcome New Members

September 2019

Collier, Brian
Lowman Electric

Progress Point
Sealock, Skyler

Spiker, Dave
WM. Investments

Attention high school seniors:

The Illinois Electric Cooperative Memorial Scholarship Program awards twelve \$2,000 scholarships annually:

- **Six** scholarships to sons/daughters of co-op members currently receiving service (deadline to apply is December 31, 2019).
- **One** Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship for the son/daughter of a co-op employee or director (deadline to apply is December 31, 2019).
- **Four** scholarships for sons/daughters of co-op employees/directors or members who plan on attending a two-year Illinois community college full-time (deadline to apply is December 31, 2019).

You may apply online for the above scholarships at aiec.coop/aiec-scholarship?coop=WST

- **One** LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship to attend the lineworker's school conducted by the AIEC in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, IL. This applicant does not need to be the son or daughter of a director, member or employee. (4612-64) They simply need to have an interest in pursuing a career in line work. (deadline to apply is April 30, 2020.)



This scholarship application is available online at aiec.coop/lavern-and-nola-lineworkers-scholarship.
If interested, please contact our office directly at (217) 357-3125 or (800) 576-3125 for additional information.



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, 2020.

Electronic gift guide

By Abby Berry, NRECA

This holiday season, give the gift of tech! If you're searching for the latest gadgets and electronics to gift but don't know where to start, we've got you covered.

Here's a list of ideas for your tech-savvy friends and family members, and with a range of prices and interests, there's sure to be something for everyone.

Gifts for those on the go: We all have that one friend who never stays in one place, so they'll appreciate gifts that keep them charged and entertained while on the go.

A portable charger (or power bank) can keep their smart phones and tablets juiced, and the good news is this gift won't drain your wallet. You can purchase portable chargers online or at local retailers for as low as \$20. Typically, these compact devices can fully charge an iPhone three times before running out of steam.

A Bluetooth speaker is another great gift to keep those on the go entertained. Whether they're listening to their favorite tunes or watching the latest

flick, Bluetooth speakers can clarify and amplify volume to satisfy any media enthusiast. **(5817-33)** Prices range depending on features, but you can purchase a quality Bluetooth speaker online or at local retailers for as low as \$30.

Gifts for the chef: Every foodie knows that temperature matters when mastering the perfect cut of meat. A Bluetooth-connected thermometer can help your chef ensure a delicious (and safe-to-eat) meal. Just download the associated app and keep an eye on the grill right from your smart phone or tablet. Prices vary from \$30 to \$200, but you can purchase these handy gadgets online or at any big box store, like Walmart or Target.

A digital kitchen scale is a must for any culinary pro. No more guessing—the easy-to-read digital screen ensures the exact weight or amount required for that perfect dish. Prices vary depending on the weight the scale can handle, but you can find a 13-pound max weight scale for about \$20 on Amazon.com.

Gifts for the pet owner: Let's face it—pet owners would be lost without their

fur babies. Luckily, pet tracking products continue to advance, so pet owners can always keep a watchful eye on their furry friends. Most trackers simply attach to your pet's collar. Prices vary depending on the tracker's capabilities, but some features include water resistance, health monitoring and exceptional battery life. You can purchase pet trackers online or at your local pet store.

Speaking of keeping an eye on pets, you can also purchase surveillance cameras for real-time monitoring—some cameras even allow you to toss treats to your furry friend while you're away. Additional features include a microphone (so you can talk to your pets), a built-in laser toy (for our feline friends) and the ability to snap a photo or take video from your smart phone. Prices vary depending on the bells and whistles, but you can purchase a pet camera for as low as \$40 on Amazon.com.


With so many electronics available today, you're sure to find the perfect gift for your tech-savvy loved ones. Happy shopping!



Deck the Halls SAFELY

- Use only lights, cords, animated displays, and decorations **rated for outdoor use**.
- When decorating outside, **look up and around** for power lines. **Never throw lights** or other decorations into trees near power lines.
- Keep ladders, equipment, and yourself **at least ten feet away** from power lines.
- Cords should be plugged into outlets equipped with **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)**.

For more **holiday safety tips** visit:

 **Safe
Electricity.org**