

# The WIEC Annual Meeting

**Thursday, June 24**

**Doors open at 5:30 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 4 for more details.*

## Can't make it to WIEC's Annual Meeting?

**You can still make your vote count! We NEED as many members as possible to vote.**

If you can't come to the annual meeting on June 24, you can still make your vote count! **10526-47** You'll also help WIEC meet the requirements set by its bylaws for participation. Please consider giving another co-op member your signed proxy card or sending or bringing your signed proxy card to the office directly. We can then give it to an attendee the night of the meeting to cast your vote. Either way, your vote will count!

All members who sign and return their proxy to be used at Annual Meeting will be entered into drawings for one of five bill credits.



**Proxy voters  
are eligible to  
win bill credits!**



**Western Illinois**  
ELECTRICAL COOP.  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

524 North Madison | P.O. Box 338  
Carthage, IL 62321  
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

- **Kent Flesner** —  
President, West Point
- **Mark Burling** —  
Vice President, Carthage
- **Janet Spory** —  
Secretary/Treasurer, Sutter
- **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.

# Take cover when a storm is brewing

Sometimes a storm pops up or changes direction without any warning, while other times it is forecast days in advance and follows its predicted course. In either case, knowing what to do right before, during and after a storm can help to keep you safe.

### When a storm hits

When stormy winds blow, follow these weather-related reminders from FEMA and the Red Cross:

- Never seek shelter under an isolated tree, tower or utility pole, since lightning tends to strike tall objects.
- Immediately vacate elevated areas such as hills, mountain ridges and peaks.
- Get away from ponds, lakes and other bodies of water.
- Stay away from objects that conduct electricity, including wires and fences.
- Never lie flat on the ground.
- Pick a safe place in your home, away from windows and doors, for family members to gather during a thunderstorm.
- Know the difference between a watch and a warning for extreme weather such as a tornado or severe thunderstorm. A watch means that the weather is possible in and near the area. A warning means that severe weather has been reported by spotters or indicated by radar. A warning is more serious than a watch and means there is imminent danger to life and property.

### After the storm

Once the storm is over, follow these safety tips from Safe Electricity:

- Never step into a flooded basement or other standing water. The water could be covering electrical outlets, appliances

or cords. Never touch (or use) electrical appliances, cords, wires or switches while you are wet or standing in water.

- After a storm, a downed power line could be covered by standing water or debris. Never go near a downed line and warn others to stay away. If you see a downed line, call 9-1-1, and a crew will be dispatched to de-energize the power and address the problem safely.
- The same safety know-how applies to a downed power line you might encounter while driving or after an auto accident. In either case, do not get out. Instead, call 9-1-1 to report the downed line (pull over first if you are driving). If you must exit your vehicle after an accident because of a fire or smoke, make a solid, clean jump out, landing with both feet together. **3922-48** Then make solid hops with your feet together, hopping as far away as you can.
- If your home has been damaged by a flood, turn off the power to your house if it is safe to do so. Do not turn power off at the breaker box while standing in water or in damp conditions.
- If the wiring, electrical system or appliances have been damaged by water, have your home inspected by an electrician; also, have appliances serviced by a qualified technician before using them.

For more information  
about electrical safety,  
visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



## Allocation of WIEC's 2020 margins

Notices were mailed for May receipt. If you were a WIEC member who purchased power during 2020, you should have received one. If you did not, please contact us.

One of the main differences between a cooperative and an investor-owned utility is that any margins (sometimes called "profits") accumulated during the year are eventually returned to members in the form of capital credits. Each year, WIEC sends allocation notifications to members detailing their share of the previous year's margins. This year, members should have received their allocation notices in the mail around mid-May. The notices informed members of the dollar amounts related to 2020's margins that were added to their individual capital credit balances.

Companies like WIEC, who eventually return all margins to

member-owners, still need actual cash to operate from day-to-day. Cash is used for many things including building or expansion of any sort within WIEC's territory ... think wages, expensive materials and components plus large vehicles and other heavy equipment with all the related expenses. The electric industry is one of the most capital-intensive in the world. None of these construction activity costs are covered directly by the electric rates WIEC charges.

Past margins or financed loans are the two options WIEC has to fund construction activities. If we choose to use past margins, that delays the return of those dollars to members. If we choose to take out loans, then there are ongoing interest charges to be paid that can force rate increases. WIEC's Board of Directors takes both factors into consideration to determine when

it is financially responsible to return funds to members in the form of capital credit retirement checks.

Many co-ops aim for something close to a 30-year retirement cycle for their capital credits. This is partially because the average, anticipated useful life for many of the construction materials purchased using those dollars is close to 30 years. **3823-31** This also means that margins *earned in and allocated for 2020* would be *retired* (paid back to members in the form of capital credit checks) around 2050.

To recap ... you should have received your margin allocation notices for 2020. An *allocation* is simply your allotted portion of any margins earned during the previous year. When the Board determines it is financially-responsible for the co-op to do so, actual dollars are returned to members in the form of *retirement* checks.

### Office closed

The WIEC office will close at noon on Friday, June 25th.

### Welcome New Members

Bowman, Kaley  
Brooks, James  
Flynn, Chad & Jennifer  
Garfield, Diane & Jared  
Jackson, Evan & R. Mikilana  
Klees, Kyle  
Roskamp, Logan  
Selkirk, Robbie & Angie  
Shaner, Roger  
Stanbary, Maria  
Wilson, Jeffery

March  
2021



Smart light bulbs offer convenient control through voice commands or a smart phone app, and you can save additional energy (and money!) with LED options.

Photo Credit: Philips



## No game is worth getting struck by lightning

If you've been a parent, coach or player at an outdoor sporting event, you may have found yourself in this predicament. The clouds roll in and the sky gets dark, but you have "finish-game-itis." After all, it will only take a few more minutes.

This is one situation when finishing the game, match or inning is not worth the risk. Each year, thunderstorms produce an estimated 20 to 25 million cloud-to-ground lightning flashes in the U.S., each of which is a potential killer, according to the National Weather Service (NWS).

Some flashes strike directly under the storm where it is raining. Other times, the flashes reach away from the storm in places where people perceive the lightning threat to be low or non-existent and catch people off guard.

About 30 people are killed by lightning each year and hundreds more are injured, some suffering permanent neurological injuries. About two-thirds of the deaths are associated with outdoor recreational activities.

The NWS recommends that outdoor recreation organizers have an established **lightning safety plan** and follow it every time inclement weather conditions are present. **362-46**

As part of the plan, coaches or organizers should establish who will listen to the latest accurate weather forecasts prior to a sporting event. It should also

be clear who will make the decision to postpone or cancel if necessary.

The lightning safety guidelines should also address the following, according to the NWS:

- ⚡ **Once in play, when should the activities be stopped?** The short answer: When you see lightning, hear thunder or the skies look threatening, all activities should be stopped.
- ⚡ **Where should participants, officials and spectators go for safety?** No place outside is safe. Substantial buildings with wiring and plumbing are ideal. Small outdoor buildings, including dugouts, rain shelters, sheds and pavilions are NOT safe places to seek shelter.
- ⚡ **When should activities be resumed?** A minimum of 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder. Electrical charges can linger in clouds after a storm has seemingly passed.
- ⚡ **Who should monitor the weather and make decisions about play?** A level-headed and objective person should be the designated weather and lightning monitor. This should NOT be the coach, umpire or referee. The lightning monitor should know the

weather safety guidelines and be empowered by teams, parents, coaches and spectators to make decisions.

- ⚡ **What should be done if someone is struck by lightning?** Call 9-1-1 for immediate medical attention. Victims do not carry an electrical charge. CPR or AED may be needed if the individual's breathing or heart has stopped.

Don't make decisions on when to call the game or match based on personal experience or pressure from others. For more information on electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

A dirty filter causes your air conditioner to work harder than necessary. Remember to change your air filter every month (or every two months) to prevent dust buildup, which can lead to even bigger problems.

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

