Western Illinois ELECTRICAL COOP.
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
NEWS
P.O. Box 338 ■ Carthage, Illinois 62321 ■ www.wiec.net ■ 800/576-3125

Newton completes requirements for BLC

William Newton, WIEC director, completed requirements to receive his Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) from the NRECA. This is the second part of the director education program, consisting of a series of courses focusing in greater depth on specific industry and governance issues. These include issues such as risk management, power supply, parliamentary procedure, technology and policy development.

Newton was elected to the WIEC Board of Directors in 1994 and represents Appanoose, Sonora and Montebello Townships. **(5810-9)** He currently serves as Assistant Secretary/Treasurer on the WIEC Board and represents WIEC on the Prairie Power, Inc. board.

Attention High School Seniors…

The deadline for submitting an online application for the Illinois Electric Cooperatives Memorial Scholarships is December 31, 2016.

- Five $2,000 Scholarships to sons/daughters of WIEC members currently receiving service.
- One $2,000 Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship for sons/daughters of WIEC employees or directors.
- Three $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, 2017.)

Ask your guidance counselor, call our office or go to www.wiec.net for more information.

Western Illinois Electrical Coop.
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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.

Capturing energy from the Sun

Prairie Power Inc. introduces Bright Options Solar

Who doesn't like to soak up some rays on a nice sunny day? Typically you think of swimming, boating, baseball, cookouts and other outdoor activities on a nice sunny day; however, the sun's rays can also be used to generate electricity.

Prairie Power, Inc. (PPI), an electric generation and transmission cooperative headquartered in Springfield, Ill., recently announced plans to offer its 10-member distribution cooperatives, which includes Western Illinois Electrical Coop. (WIEC), the opportunity for their members to purchase solar-generated electricity through the Bright Options Solar program. Bright Options Solar allows any member of WIEC the opportunity to buy blocks of solar energy generated from two 500-kilowatt solar farms operated by PPI subsidiaries.

The Shelby Solar Farm is located in Shelbyville, Ill., and the Spoon River Solar Farm is located near Astoria, Ill. In the fall of 2015, both solar farms became operational. These two solar farms are harvesting energy from the sun to provide an opportunity for homeowners to receive some of their electricity from the sun.

"We have found a way to provide our members a means of participating in solar renewable energy without the risks, hassles and costs **(353-16)** of having solar panels on their roofs," said WIEC Manager, Tommie Long.

Under Bright Options Solar, a member agrees to purchase blocks of solar-generated energy, at an added cost, through the member's participating electric cooperative. There are three purchasing options available, namely blocks of 200, 400 and 600 kilowatt-hours (kWh).

The added cost for a 200 kWh solar block is $12 per month; the added cost for a 400 kWh solar block is $24 per month; and the added cost for a 600 kWh solar block is $36 per month.

Bright Options Solar participants may begin purchases at any time with an automatic renewal at the beginning of each calendar year. The cost associated with each block of solar energy purchased will appear as a separate line item on the member's electric bill and is in addition to all other normally billed charges.

Any member of WIEC is eligible to participate in the Bright Options Solar program. To learn more about Bright Options Solar visit wiec.net or call 800-576-3125.

PPI is the supplier of wholesale electricity and electric transmission services to 10 member-owned distribution cooperatives in Illinois, which includes WIEC. PPI also obtains wind-generated electricity from Pioneer Trail wind farm located just east of Paxton, Ill.; electricity from natural gas turbines located in Alsey, Ill.; and electricity generated by Prairie State Energy Campus, a state-of-the-art coal-fired plant, located near Marissa, Ill.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Mary Lee Johnson, Carthage and Ronald Read of LaHarpe, who both won $10 bill credits as part of the WIEC Map Location Contest. Both of these members found their map locations in the September WIEC News.

Keep on reading the WIEC News!

Weather terms to remember

Before a storm ever begins, tune into your local weather service for the weather forecast. It is important to know the differences among various watches and warnings.

- **Winter Storm Watches** signify that stormy conditions, including heavy snow, freezing rain, or sleet, are likely within the next few days. You should be alert, as this means adverse conditions could begin within the next 12 to 48 hours.
- **Winter Storm Warnings** call for stormy conditions to begin within the next 24 hours. Those in the range of the warning should be mindful of the impending conditions and consider canceling plans to travel outside of the home.
- **Blizzard Warnings** advise those in the affected areas to seek refuge immediately due to high **(481-5)** levels of snow, strong winds, and resulting near-zero visibility to those traveling on the road.

Quick Tip:

First thing to do if power should go out

When a member's power goes out, one of the first thing's we ask them to do is to check their breakers or fuses to make sure they are okay. By doing this, it can be determined if the problem is on the member's side of the meter (and their responsibility to take care of) or on WIEC's side (and our responsibility). If the problem is on WIEC's side, call our office to report the outage, and we will come out and take care of it.

Thanks to the AMR digital meters, there is an easier way to determine where the problem may be. If power should go out, just go out to the meter and see if the digital display is there. If there is a display, that indicates that the problem is probably on the member's side of the meter. Then check the breakers under the meter or the breakers or fuses in the house or building.

However, if there is NO display, the problem is WIEC's so we will come out and take care of it.

For power outages, always call 1-800-576-3125.

NO DISPLAY? Call WIEC!

Check here for a display. If there is a display, Check your breakers and fuses - CALL WIEC

The Board of Directors and employees of WIEC
wish our members
a very Merry Christmas
and
the happiest of New Years.
We thank you for allowing us to serve you.

WIEC will close at Noon on December 23 and be closed December 26 for the Christmas holiday. The WIEC office will also close at Noon on December 30 and January 2 in observance of the New Year's holiday.

Remember to call 1-800-576-3125 in case of a power emergency anytime day or night.

Digital devices impact energy use

By Tom Tate

Ah, the Digital Age. We have gadgets galore, the ability to manage our homes in new and innovative ways, brilliant images and captivating sounds of modern entertainment options and of course, the internet. Clearly, digital devices reign supreme. Yet these cool new capabilities come with a couple of pitfalls; vampire loads and the issue of "technology reincarnation."

Over the course of the Digital Age, electricity use has continued to increase. Families have multiple televisions. Computer prices have plummeted, meaning many homes now have multiple computers. Everyone in the family needs a cell phone. Gaming consoles and set top cable/satellite boxes satisfy our desire for entertainment.

Major appliances aside, most digital devices do not use 120-volt power, which is the standard voltage of a home outlet. They actually use a lot less. So, trying to plug your brand new smartphone directly into an outlet is going to lead to a fried device and lots of tears from someone. This is why low-voltage devices come with a power adapter. These "wall warts" as some term them, take the 120-volt electricity supplied by Western Illinois Electric Coop. and convert it to say, five volts. Unfortunately, most folks leave their adapters plugged in to make recharging easier. The problem with this approach is that the seemingly innocuous wall wart uses power even when it isn't charging a device.

This invisible energy consumption is often called "vampire load." Studies show that 5 to 10 percent1 of the average home's energy use is from vampire loads. The only way to stop this is to unplug the power adapter when it is not in use or employ smart power strips. These look like the typical power strip but with a twist—only one socket gets power all the time. When the device or appliance connected to it turns on and starts using power, the remaining sockets receive power too. This is perfect for entertainment systems, computer set ups and a variety of other situations.

Technological advances have steadily increased energy efficiency and reduced purchase prices. On its face, this seems like a good thing. Unfortunately, when replacing a product at the end of its life, the tendency is to go bigger, or continue to use the old tech. This is the second issue I noted—technology reincarnation.

For example, flat screen television prices have plummeted as technology has evolved—and so has the amount of electricity they use. Consumers wander into the big box store and are dazzled by walls of giant, brilliant televisions. What they used to pay for the paltry 32" model now might net them a 50" giant. And who doesn't want to see their favorite show or sports event in near life size? But if you spring for the bigger TV, you won't benefit from the increased energy efficiency of the newer technology. The bigger model uses as much juice as the older, smaller TV, which likely ends up in another room (reincarnated in another setting) still using power.

Or refrigerators. These are the showpieces of the evolution of smart appliances. Many new models include touchscreens and cameras; they communicate over the internet and probably even keep food cold and make ice. Yet what often happens is the old refrigerator ends up in the basement or garage, reincarnated as a dedicated beverage unit or overflow.

I'll offer a couple words of advice to help you avoid—or at least reduce—the effects of vampire loads and technology reincarnation. Invest in smart power strips or make a point to use outlets where you can conveniently unplug power adapters when not in use. Don't oversize your replacement appliances and entertainment gear unless family needs dictate the larger capacities. And recycle the replaced appliances and equipment to stem technology reincarnation. You will enjoy the Digital Age for a lot less.

Tom Tate writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Welcome New Members

Action Ag, by Eric Boyer, Kewanee, IL

Sarah Boudreau, Nauvoo

Glenn Harrison & Sherman Johnson, Laurel, MS

KLG, LLC, By Landon Guymon, Burnside

Lawrence H. Hufendick Estate, By Deborah Slaughter, Round Lake, IL

Jordyn Tate Mullens, Hamilton

Stephen P. Roger, Jr., Warsaw

Ethon Summers, Hamilton

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Electric bills increase during the winter for a variety of reasons-–holiday gatherings, houseguests, and shorter days and longer nights. Small measures, like turning **(462-31)** down your thermostat, replacing incandescent bulbs with LEDs and washing clothes in cold water can help control energy costs.

Source: TogetherWeSave.com