



## Five reasons we L♥VE serving our members

February may be the shortest month, but it's packed with special observances like Presidents Day, Black History Month and Valentine's Day, in addition to a host of unofficial "national" days you've probably never heard of like "National Tater Tot Day." But they all have something in common. They were created to draw attention to a particular issue or theme.

Valentine's Day may seem like an observance originally created by a greeting card company, but over time, it's become a widely celebrated day generating millions of dollars spent on flowers, candy and of course, greeting cards professing our love. But Valentine's Day isn't just for the lovebirds. It's also the perfect time to let friends, family, co-workers and other special people in our lives know we care about them – with or without a store-bought greeting card.

So, in that vein, we've created our list of top five reasons why we love serving you, the members of Western Illinois Electrical Coop.

- 1. We love serving our members because without you, the co-op wouldn't exist.** Our purpose is to provide reliable, responsible and safe electricity. Simply put, Western Illinois Electrical Coop. exists to serve you. That's why we were formed in 1938 – to bring power to our local area when for-profit utilities would not.
- 2. You enable us to complete our mission by supporting our efforts to give back.** Part of our

mission is to serve our community and look after the greater good. We are always searching for practical ways to give back to the communities we serve. Please contact our office with suggestions. We have been very fortunate to have member support for those efforts throughout the co-op's history.

- 3. Members of our co-op also serve on the board of directors.** They provide guidance for setting co-op priorities and helping make big decisions. (7710-17) Because our board members live in the area, they're able to serve as the pulse of the larger community and identify immediate and long-term needs. The broader co-op membership provides helpful input through their vote on director elections and by weighing in on co-op and community issues.
- 4. You help us get it right.** Western Illinois Electrical Coop. members are great about keeping us in the know. We do our best to avoid power outages, but Mother Nature can occasionally throw us a curveball; our members are quick to report any power disruptions and are patient as our crews work to safely restore power. We know outages are frustrating, and your support as we work through storms means so much to our employees. We also appreciate your feedback on safety-related issues throughout

our electrical distribution system. Your information and opinions are critical for the co-op's success, and we thank you for them.

- 5. You and other WIEC members make up the community we serve – and for us, it's all about community.** Our employees live and work here too and care about our community the same way you do. We're invested and work to help it thrive. That's why Western Illinois Electrical Coop. donates to local charities, schools, fire departments and scholarship funds. It's also why we invest in economic development, and why you'll sometimes see our employees volunteering at local schools and other charitable and community endeavors.

As a co-op, our mission is to enhance the quality of life in our community and look after its long-term interests. We love serving our members and our local community, and just like you, want to see it continue to thrive.



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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
- **Kim Gullberg** —  
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer,  
Stronghurst
- **Rob Gronewold** —  
Director, Carthage
- **Jay Morrison** —  
Director, Niota
- **Dustin Walker** —  
Director, Burnside

**STAFF**

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

**MAP LOCATION CONTEST**

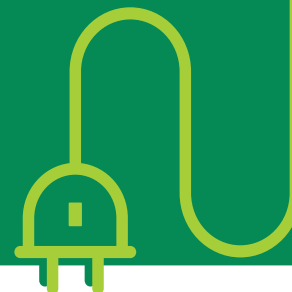
Every month we are printing four members' map location numbers in the newsletter. If you find your map location number call the WIEC office by the 25th of the following month, tell us where it is and we will give you a \$10.00 bill credit. Keep on reading the WIEC News.

# Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

About 30% of a home's heating energy is lost through inefficient windows. Caulk and weatherstrip all windows to seal air leaks.

When running your home heating system, lock all operable windows to ensure the tightest seal possible.

*Source: Dept. of Energy*



## Welcome New Members

Shayla Blackburn  
Colin & Jamie Burk  
Janice David  
Andrew Doyle & Andrea Fullerton  
Kristen Doyle  
Garrett Miller & Haley Horton  
Seth & Kris Peterson  
Sandra Smith  
Rebecca Sowers  
Lance Stevenson  
The L.E. Myers Co.

**November  
2021**



**Edwin Hillers**  
Map Location Winner  
December 2021 issue

*Congratulations!*

# Five ways to save energy when working from home



Today, more Americans are working from home than ever before. More time spent at home means more energy used throughout the day.

If you're punching the clock from home, there are small steps you can take to reduce your energy use and save on electric bills. Here are easy ways to save energy when working from home.

## 1. Use a smart power strip.

Plugging in your most-used devices, like computers, monitors and routers, to a smart power strip ensures these devices aren't drawing power when they're not in use. Smart power strips also give the option to select which devices should stay in "always on" mode.

## 2. Unplug your least-used equipment.

If your home office includes equipment like printers and scanners, you're probably not using these electronics every day. In this case, go ahead and unplug your least-used electronics and devices since many of them draw energy even when not in use.

## 3. Choose ENERGY STAR-certified office equipment.

If you're looking to purchase

new equipment for your workspace, look for the ENERGY STAR label to ensure you're getting the most energy efficient features. (7814-58)

Computers, monitors, imaging equipment and other office electronics that receive the ENERGY STAR rating include power management features to make saving energy easy, and most are designed to run cooler and last longer.

## 4. Flip the switch and use natural light instead.

It's still

chilly out there, so take advantage of natural light and additional warmth from the sun.

When you're working during the day, open blinds, curtains and other window coverings to let natural light in – and don't forget to turn off the lights to reduce energy use!

## 5. Lower the thermostat.

Home heating makes up a significant portion of your energy bills. Turn the thermostat down a couple degrees during the day to reduce energy use and save money. The Department of Energy recommends setting the thermostat to 68 degrees or cooler during winter months. You're more likely to stay focused and alert when it's cooler in your home, so more reason to mind the thermostat.

Working from home doesn't have to take a toll on your energy bills, and whether you're working remotely or not, these practical tips can help everyone reduce their energy use. Contact Western Illinois Electrical Coop. if you have questions about your bills or want additional information about saving energy at home.



# Five safety tips for your home workshop

Without taking proper precautions, the enjoyment of a do-it-yourself project can quickly turn into disaster. You may have all the latest power tools, hand tools, hardware and materials, but if you do not put safety first, you may end up with a trip to the hospital instead of a new set of shelves, upgraded lighting in the kitchen or a trendy shiplap accent wall in the bedroom. (861-22-1) Here are some fundamental workshop and electrical safety tips to help keep things running smoothly.

## Wear safety gear, glasses and gloves

The first rule of workshop safety is to dress appropriately. Avoid loose clothing that can get caught in power tools. Never wear dangling jewelry or scarves. Roll up your sleeves or choose ones that are tight against your skin. Closed-toe shoes are a must, and steel-toed boots are recommended.

Safety glasses are necessary 100 percent of the time. Gloves are fine for handling materials. Before you reach for a belt sander or scroll saw, however, take the gloves off to minimize the risk of them getting caught and so you get tactile feedback in case anything goes wrong.

## Observe electrical safety

Before you start any DIY project, inspect all your power tools and their cords for loose plugs, exposed wires or worn insulation. Fires are one of the top dangers when working with electric gear, especially if you have combustible materials around, such as sawdust.

(8614-3-1)

If you must use an extension cord, choose one long, heavy-duty (appropriately rated) cord and keep it untangled and out of the way to prevent tripping and yanking your tools off the workbench. When you are done working, unplug everything from the extension cord and put it away.

## Keep your workshop clean

Anything left on the floor is a tripping hazard, and you do not want to

imagine what could happen if you trip while using a power tool. Anything cluttering up your worktable introduces obstacles that can get caught in a saw or drill mechanism or block your ability to move your project safely as you work on it. The byproducts of do-it-yourself work, such as sawdust, cast-off nails and screws, and rags or brushes with potentially combustible or hazardous fluids on them, increase the risk of fires and projectiles.

## Keep tools in good condition

Besides inspecting the cords and plugs for electrical safety, everything works better in the workshop if you have clean, sharp and well-lubricated tools. A dull saw blade brings a much higher chance of injury than a sharp one. It is less likely to cut smoothly through the wood or other material and more likely to kick back and cut you. Dull saws, routers or drill bits also run the risk of breaking during use. Use appropriate lubrication, such as WD-40 or others specifically created for power tools.

## Know your limits











If you have a lot of experience as a do-it-yourselfer, there are projects you can tackle from memory. However, approach anything new as if you are a beginner for maximum workshop safety. Read instructions. Look up reputable guide videos to refresh

your skills or learn something new. Most importantly, recognize when you are in over your head and leave those non-DIY projects to the professionals.

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

**DIYers:**  
**HOW SAFE IS YOUR WORKSHOP?**

Make these tips standard practice in your workshop:

-  **Inspect tools for damage before using them**
-  **Inspect cords and plugs for signs of wear**
-  **Use electrical outlets equipped with GFCIs (ground fault circuit interrupters)**
-  **Keep floors and areas as clean and dry as possible**
-  **Ensure cords are not a tripping hazard**
-  **Use a clamp or vise to secure whatever you are working on**
-  **Use the right tool for the job**
-  **Wear proper clothing for the task; avoid loose clothing or jewelry**
-  **Make sure your work area is well-lit**
-  **Use heavy-duty, properly rated extension cords**

**SafeElectricity.org®**