




**Western Illinois**  
**ELECTRICAL COOP.**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

**NEWS**

P.O. Box 338 ■ Carthage, Illinois 62321 ■ [www.wiec.net](http://www.wiec.net) ■ 800-576-3125

## Message from the Manager

# Are you ready to serve?



*Todd Grotts*  
*General Manager*  
*WIEC*

In one of the most notable inaugural speeches given, John F. Kennedy spoke his famous words, “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” His inspiring words urged Americans to take actions that benefited the greater good. In essence, Kennedy was saying our country thrives when we all contribute our talents to the common good.

On a smaller scale, I think the same can be said about our co-op, specifically regarding our board members. Western Illinois Electrical Coop.’s board members are community-minded individuals with a variety of skill sets. Our board is made up of business owners and leaders, farmers, and public servants. We rely on their many talents to help us make informed decisions on long-term priorities and investments. Our directors live right here in the co-op’s service area, and we consider them the eyes and ears of the communities we serve because they provide their perspective on important community issues. **10528-56**

We recognize it takes various people with different skills to create a

well-rounded board that can represent the full spectrum of our communities. That’s why when we’re seeking new directors, we want folks with diverse perspectives, experience, expertise, and views. We’re seeking local community members who can apply their unique talents to benefit all our friends and neighbors. But more than anything else, we’re looking for folks who love our overall community and want to see it thrive now and in the future.

### What does it mean to serve on the board?

Serving on Western Illinois Electrical Coop.’s board means you are making a difference locally, using your individual talents and perspective to guide big decisions about the co-op that in turn benefit the larger community. While day-to-day decisions are made by co-op staff, major decisions are made by the board, whose mission is to look out for the vitality of the co-op and the communities it serves. On a granular level, WIEC board members typically provide input and guidance on:

- budgets
- co-op goals and direction
- co-op’s community/charitable contributions
- capital investments and upgrades in equipment and technology
- renewable investments and energy mix
- co-op’s role and involvement in economic development

The energy industry is undergoing a major transition. Technology advancements and increased consumer preference for more renewable energy is driving change. Western Illinois Electrical Coop. is always facing big decisions, and board members have an opportunity to help chart a course for our future. To serve our territory communities best, we need input from a wide range of people that represent the broad spectrum of views within our communities.

### Opportunity to serve

WIEC’s board elections are held in June during the co-op’s annual meeting of members. Current board members appoint Nominating Committee members annually at the February board meeting. Then, the Nominating Committee typically meets in late March and again in early April to discuss nominees. The Nominating Committee members will nominate at least one member for a three-year term to represent District 4 and another to represent District 5. Currently Kent Flesner represents District 4 and Mark Burling is the representative from District 5.

While you don’t need to be an expert in electricity or business to run, you do need to have a passion for the community and a willingness to actively serve and learn. We are looking for individuals who can represent the

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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**

- **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**

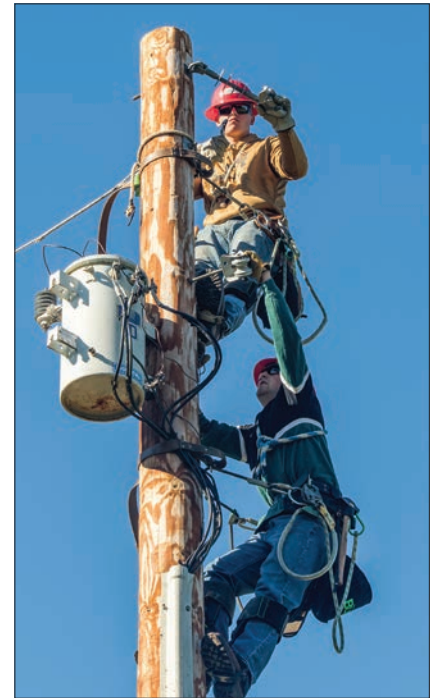
Every month we are printing four members' map location numbers in the newsletter. If you find your map location number call the WIEC office by the 25th of the following month, tell us where it is and we will give you a \$10.00 bill credit. Keep on reading the WIEC News.

# Lineman scholarship - Deadline to apply is April 30

Illinois electric cooperatives award several scholarships annually to financially assist students in the electric cooperative family. The scholarships, \$2,000 each, are awarded through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program. The LaVern and Nola McEntire Memorial Lineworker's Scholarship will help pay for costs to attend lineworker school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, IL. Children of co-op members, relatives of co-op employees or directors, and individuals who have served or are serving in the armed forces or National Guard are all eligible for this scholarship.

The deadline to apply for the lineworker scholarship is April 30, 2022. For more information regarding the scholarship, contact Western Illinois Electrical Coop. at 217-357-3125. Information has

also been given to area high school guidance counselors and is available online at [wiec.net](http://wiec.net) or at [aiec.coop/aiec-scholarship](http://aiec.coop/aiec-scholarship). 3927-64



## SURGE PROTECTION

Keep your electronic equipment safe.

A power surge is typically caused by lightning, changes in electrical loads, faulty wiring or damaged power lines.

Install power strips with surge protection to protect sensitive equipment.

- Easy to use (just plug them in)
- Protect electronics plugged into the device
- Must be replaced over time or after a major surge event



**REMEMBER:**

Not all power strips offer surge protection. Carefully read the packaging labels when purchasing.

# Youth to Washington Tour is June 17–24 this year

## About the Youth to Washington Tour

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has brought high school students to Washington, D.C. for a week in June every year since the late 1950s. Students apply (usually in February) and are selected for this program by their local electric cooperative. Western Illinois Electrical Cooperative shares in the belief that students should see their nation's capital up close, learn about the political process and interact with their elected officials.

Students gain a personal understanding of American history and their role as a citizen by meeting their Representative and Senators. While student groups are organized at the state level, they all come together in D.C. to meet each other and hear featured speakers who provide insight to the important roles electric cooperatives play in their communities. **3823-29**

Nearly 50,000 students from rural areas and small towns across America have participated in this program. Youth to Washington alumni have gone on to design airplanes, to lead companies and to serve in the highest ranks of our government, including the U.S. Senate. Do not be surprised if you run into a former Youth to Washington participant who is a congressional aide on Capitol Hill or working in some other civic capacity in Washington.

The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC), a Springfield, Illinois based service organization for the electric and telephone cooperatives in the state, coordinates the daily planning of all events and sites of interest for the Illinois participants of the event. The group travels via chartered buses.

## Why we do this

The tour is designed to provide an opportunity for outstanding rural

young people to better understand the value of rural electrification. It familiarizes students with the historic and political environment of our nation's Capital through first-hand looks at monuments, government buildings, and cooperative organizations.

Visits with elected officials give participants a better understanding of federal government, the political process, and democracy in general. The tour also gives us an opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of outstanding young people from our rural communities. Bottom line:

Western Illinois Electrical Coop. believes that educated citizens are better citizens and better citizens are better co-op members. This program is an investment in future leadership.

## Youth to Washington Tour origin

Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson inspired the Youth Tour when he addressed the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)



Annual Meeting in Chicago in 1957. The Senator and future president declared, "If one thing goes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents."

Consequently, some Texas electric cooperatives sent groups of young people to Washington to work in Senator Johnson's office during the summer. In 1958, a rural electric cooperative in Iowa sponsored the first group of thirty-four young people on a week-long study tour of the nation's capital. Later that same year, another busload came to Washington from Illinois. The idea grew and other states sent busloads of young people throughout the summer. By 1959, the "Youth Tour" had grown to 130 youths.

In 1964, NRECA began to coordinate joint activities among the state delegations and suggested that co-op representatives from each state arrange to be in Washington, D.C. during Youth Tour week. The first year of the coordinated tour included approximately four hundred young people from twelve states. Word of the program has continued to spread and today, more than 1,800 young people and their chaperones participate in the Youth to Washington Tour every year.

**Are you ready to serve?** (Continued from page 18A)

full gamut of the members we serve. Our board meets on a regular basis, and we offer specialized training opportunities to help board members make informed decisions. Board members gain a deeper understanding of the electric utility industry, the cooperative business model and local economic development efforts.

Ultimately, our board is the community pulse for the co-op and helps keep us on the right track. We love the communities we serve and want to help them thrive. If you share the same commitment and want to contribute to the greater good in a tangible way, I hope you will consider running for a board position. **3619-26**

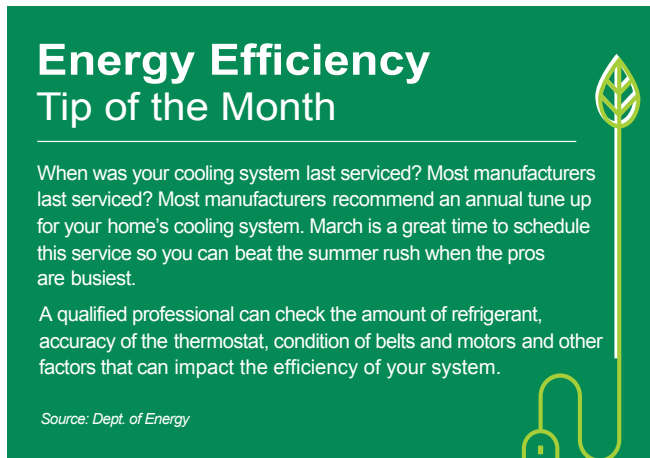
To learn more about Western Illinois Electrical Coop.'s director election process and 2022 details, please contact the office at 217-357-3125.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When was your cooling system last serviced? Most manufacturers recommend an annual tune up for your home's cooling system. March is a great time to schedule this service so you can beat the summer rush when the pros are busiest.

A qualified professional can check the amount of refrigerant, accuracy of the thermostat, condition of belts and motors and other factors that can impact the efficiency of your system.

*Source: Dept. of Energy*



## Welcome New Members

**December  
2021**

Lucinda Doyle Robert Feagain J. Phil & Heidi Harrop Kevin D. & Antoinette L. Hickey Huls Cattle Dana Keever	Kyle & Andrea Kreps Lukens Farm LLC Phillip Pence Dale L. Russell Joseph Stewart Tweedie Farms Inc. William E. White
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## Spring forward

**Daylight Saving Time will begin on March 13 this year.  
Remember to move your clocks ahead by one hour.**

# SPRING INTO SAFETY

Spring is in the air and that means more than just a change of season for farmers. During the busy planting season, follow these eight safety tips:



**TRANSPORT SAFELY**

Ensure equipment is compliant with agriculture road and travel safety rules



**SHARE SAFETY TIPS**

Teach anyone working or doing business on your farm about electrical hazards



**ENCOURAGE YOUNG WORKERS**

Be sure to match age and ability level with each chore



**BE CLEAR**

Explain where the "back 80" or Smith field is; not everyone may know how to get there



**WRITE IT DOWN**

Keep directions (with proper road and farm ground names) at home, in the shop and in cabs



**LOOK AROUND**

Inspect your space and look for hazards before you start planting



**EVALUATE PROCEDURES**

Consider new safety precautions you can implement, such as lockout/tagout



**MEET AND DISCUSS**

Conduct morning safety meetings to brief everyone on the day and talk about potential hazards

Sources: Rural Mutual Insurance Co., farmprogress.com

**Safe Electricity.org**