

Message from the Manager

We're here to serve you



Todd Grotts
General Manager
WIEC

"We're here to serve you." We've all heard this phrase countless times. These words may sound generic, but to us — your local electric cooperative — they mean everything.

Western Illinois Electrical Cooperative was created to serve our community. Back in the day, neighbors banded together and formed our co-op for the common good. In our case, it was the only way a community could bring electricity to an area where there was none. In doing so, WIEC helped the community thrive. That mission-focused heritage is the golden thread woven throughout our history.

Today, we are continuing to power the community. While our focus has remained steady on providing reliable energy to our members, today's energy landscape and consumer expectations are far different than they were decades ago. That's why we're adapting to keep pace with changing technology, evolving needs and new expectations.

Serving as your trusted energy advisor means we want to help you save energy (and money) and provide advice and information on a broad range of energy topics. For example, if you're looking for ways to save energy, check out the articles and monthly tips provided in this magazine center section or contact our office to speak directly with me or someone in operations for ideas to increase the energy efficiency of your home. Understanding how your home uses energy can help determine the best ways to modify energy use and thereby keep more money in your wallet. **662-59**

If you're considering a rooftop solar installation, knowing that there are pros and cons to every system is key. Investing in a solar system is a major decision, and it's important to fully understand the costs, responsibilities and potential energy savings. Unlike a solar company that has one objective — to sell their products and services — we can look at the total energy picture to help you better consider all options for your home. We understand that homeowners must do their due diligence, and we're here to help you through that process.

In a similar vein, we recognize that some members are considering electric vehicle options. We're here to answer questions about residential and business charging requirements.

No matter what our members drive, we want to help you achieve energy savings.

So, the next time you hear Western Illinois Electrical Coop. use the phrase "We're here to serve you," we hope you know that we mean it. Service is deeply ingrained in who we are. We continue to evolve with the times, and in return, we've found additional ways to serve you and provide more options for you to power your life.

We're here whenever you need us. Connect with us online, in person, or via phone. However you choose to connect, please let us know how we can serve you better.





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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

- **Mark Burling** —
President, Carthage
- **Janet Spory** —
Secretary/Treasurer, Sutter
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Assistant Secretary/Treasurer,
Stronghurst
- **Landon Guymon** —
Director, Carthage
- **Jay Morrison** —
Director, Niota
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Director, Carthage
- **Dustin Walker** —
Director, Burnside

MANAGEMENT TEAM

- **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.

Budget Billing enrollment begins July 17

WIEC's Budget Billing program gives members a sure-fire way to anticipate the amount of their next payment for electrical service and plan ahead for it. It's the perfect way to avoid large monthly fluctuations in cash paid out. The program is designed to keep your electric payments consistent every month of the year, as long as you remain on the plan. It's the ideal way to accurately predict your monthly expense, which makes managing your money simpler than ever.

When you sign up for Budget Billing, our billing coordinator takes a look at your electric usage for the past 12 months. She determines your average monthly kilowatt hour usage, then calculates what the bill for that amount of electricity would be at current rates to determine your monthly payment amount. Agreeing to pay for your average usage each month with this program allows you to plan ahead for a consistent expense, even in very cold or hot months when actual usage may be significantly higher. **5614-24-1**

Enrollment in WIEC's Budget Billing program is free. It is offered to members who have accounts in good standing with at least 12 months of service history to review. After enrolling, a member may opt back out of the Budget Billing program at any time by contacting WIEC's billing coordinator. If a member using Budget Billing becomes delinquent, they are typically removed from the Budget Billing program, and any actual balance owed the co-op becomes due immediately.

For members who remain on the program, there is an annual "true-up" in July. The billing coordinator compares the total of the Budget Billing payments received from each member, which were based on an estimated average monthly usage amount, to the actual total kWh usage and charges for the 12-month period. The difference in these dollar amounts is refunded via a bill credit for any member who has overpaid, and is owed, along with the

usual June usage charges payable in July, by any member who has underpaid over the course of the year.

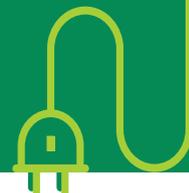
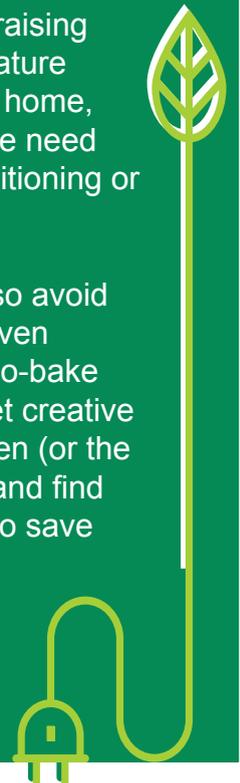
Enrollment for Budget Billing this year begins on July 17. For more information on the program, or other billing-related questions, please contact our office at 217-357-3125 or 800-576-3125.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Summer is a prime opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors. To reduce home energy use, avoid using your oven and use a grill instead. Not only will cooking outdoors eliminate the electricity used to power the stove, but it will also avoid raising the temperature inside your home, reducing the need for air conditioning or cooling.

You can also avoid using the oven with tasty no-bake recipes. Get creative in the kitchen (or the backyard) and find new ways to save energy!

Source:
energy.gov



Get smart about home lighting

Gone are the days when a simple flip of the switch was the only choice for illuminating our homes. While we still have this tried-and-true option, we've entered a new era of innovative and intelligent technologies, which includes smart lighting.

Smart lighting connects to Wi-Fi and offers an array of cutting-edge functionality and convenience. Let's look at the main benefits of smart lighting options.

Smart lighting is energy efficient.

Most smart bulbs utilize LED technology, which is much more efficient than traditional incandescent lighting. Additionally, smart lighting gives you more control over how and when you light your home, ultimately resulting in less energy used for lighting.

Smart lighting provides convenience and control.

Most smart bulbs can be controlled from an app on your smartphone or can be paired with your voice assistant, like Amazon Alexa. You can conveniently control lighting settings from anywhere in your home or when you're away. Whether you want to set a

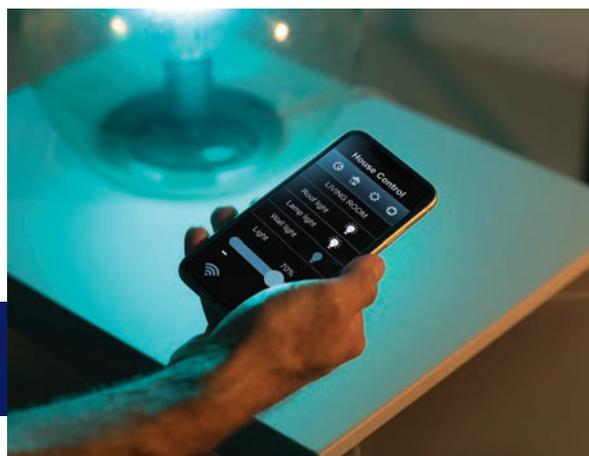
schedule for lighting or adjust brightness levels, these smart options offer effortless control from the comfort of, well, anywhere!

Smart options empower you to personalize home lighting.

Bright, warm, purple, green — whatever mood you want to create, smart lighting can help. For a more traditional look, try dimmable white bulbs. If you want to create the perfect ambiance for movie night, look for bulbs that can be adjusted for a variety of vibrant colors. The possibilities are endless. **7510-3**

While smart lighting offers convenience and control, keep in mind your wall light switch will need to stay on for you to control the smart bulb from your phone or via voice command. To use a smart bulb, the wall switch it's connected to must be on so the bulb receives power, which enables it to connect to a Wi-Fi network.

If you need additional options to



Most smart bulbs can be controlled from an app on your smartphone or can be paired with your voice assistant, like Amazon Alexa. Photo Credit: Freepik.com

operate the lights, consider a smart light switch. Today's smart switches tend to play nicely with smart bulbs. If you want to control your smart bulbs with a physical switch (in addition to using your phone and voice commands), look for smart switches that include a built-in feature that allows both. Many smart light switches include motion detectors as well.

If you're looking to take the plunge and integrate multiple smart bulbs into your home lighting system, your best bet may be a kit, like the Philips Hue Starter Kit. Most kits include several bulbs and any additional tools you'll need to get started.

If you're new to smart home tech and looking to start small, try a smart bulb in a high-traffic area of your home. It's also worth noting that smart plugs are a great starter option and allow convenient control of lamps or other lighting fixtures that are plugged into a wall outlet. Smart plugs are inexpensive and simply plug into your existing outlet. Electrical items that are connected to the smart plug can be controlled from a smart phone app, just like smart bulbs.

Whether you're looking for more convenience, colorful options or better ways to manage energy use, smart lighting can provide multiple benefits. Determine which smart lighting features are most important for your needs, then start shopping!



If you're looking to take the plunge and integrate multiple smart bulbs into your home lighting system, your best bet may be a kit, like the Philips Hue Starter Kit. Photo Credit: Philips

When the weather is extreme, use energy wisely

We hear a lot about peak energy demand, but what is it and how does it impact electricity use? As the name implies, peak energy demand occurs when energy consumption is at its highest. In much of the U.S., energy use spikes in summer and winter due to the need to heat and cool indoor spaces.

Although it depends on where you live, summertime energy demand increases between mid-to-late afternoon (when outdoor temperatures soar) and evening. In the winter, there are two high-use times of day: early morning and late afternoon/evening. Weekends and holidays are typically considered off peak.

Changing the time of day you use energy can help lower your energy bills and avoid interruptions or service glitches that can occur during peak demand times. To do this, consider running major appliances during off-peak times; smart devices or appliances that have delayed starts can help achieve this goal.

Do your part to use energy wisely when temperatures are high. In

the summer months, help decrease demand by doing the following:

- Turn your thermostat up by two degrees or more.
- Program your thermostat to a higher temperature when no one is home.
- If you do not have one, consider purchasing a smart thermostat.
- Make sure your HVAC system is in good working order.
- Use bathroom and kitchen fans temporarily to remove heat and humidity.
- Use your countertop toaster/convection oven instead of your oven. **7712-4**
- Use major appliances in the early

morning or late evening.

- Program smart devices to run appliances at off-peak times.
- Close window coverings during the hottest part of the day.
- Use minimal lighting.
- Turn off and disconnect electronics that are not in use.
- Turn off stand-alone dehumidifiers.

Making small changes to conserve energy can help even out energy use, save money on your utility bill and avoid service interruptions caused by high demand.

To learn more about energy efficiency and electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Welcome New Members

Shari Albee

Carson Deckard

Richard Drew

Rebecca Johnson

Lydia Long

Trenton Mayberry

Nicholas Pullins

Nadine Schaefer and Tyler Harl

George E. Smith

Nick Troutman

April
2023

What's the fuss about PEAK ENERGY USAGE?

Peak energy demand is when energy consumption is at its highest.

In much of the U.S., energy use spikes in summer and winter due to increased energy demands for heating and cooling spaces.

In the summer: Energy use spikes from mid- to late afternoon until evening.

In the winter: Energy use is higher in the early morning and then again in late afternoon/evening.

Adjusting when you use electricity can help even out energy use and avoid service interruptions caused by high demand.

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

Learn more at SafeElectricity.org