


WIEC NEWS

P.O. Box 338 ■ Carthage, Illinois 62321 ■ www.wiec.net ■ 800/576-3125

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Point and click your way to Washington DC

Win an all-expense paid trip to nation's capital

Western Illinois Electrical Coop. will award one son or daughter of a WIEC member an all-expense paid 8-day trip to Washington D.C. High school sophomores, juniors or seniors are encouraged to enter this contest by completing a web quiz that consists of multiple-choice, short answer and short essay questions. It has never been easier to win a trip to Washington D.C.

The WIEC winner will join about 50 other Illinois high school students who descend on Washington during the week of June 15-22, 2012. During the time in D.C., students will learn about American and rural electric history, as well as state and federal government. Last year, they visited representatives in the House and Senate, and took in an impressive list of historic sites, such as Arlington National Cemetery, the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, Mt. Vernon, World War II Memorial, the U.S. Memorial Holocaust Museum, and saw the musical "Wicked" at Kennedy Center.

As part of the contest, WIEC will award the top six entrants an all-expense trip to Springfield, Ill. as part of the Youth Day in Springfield to visit the Illinois State Capitol on March 28, 2012 (5810-9) and see state government in action. One of those six students will be awarded the trip to Washington, D.C..

Application packets are available at the WIEC office and your high



school's guidance counselor's office. Applications are due back to the WIEC office by Feb. 15, 2012.

For more information contact the WIEC office or visit the WIEC website at www.wiec.net.



Western Illinois
ELECTRICAL COOP.
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

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OFFICE HOURS
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Monday - Friday
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OR AFTER HOURS
TO REPORT OUTAGE
217-357-3125
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MAP LOCATION CONTEST

Every month we are printing four member's 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.

Don't miss out on a trip of a lifetime

2011 winners share their experience



Last year, there was a tie in the WebQuiz scoring, so WIEC sent two students on the Youth to Washington trip, Jacey Hartweg of Hamilton and Sabina Berry of Nauvoo. Both girls thought it was an amazing experience and were glad they had the opportunity to meet other students from around Illinois as well as around our nation. "We went to many different memorials and monuments. The best thing about visiting all of these places was that we had the chance to learn our nation's history without reading about it in our textbooks," said Jacey. "Thank you for sponsoring this trip. I had a blast!"



Welcome New Members

Delores Bruce, Stronghurst
Alex Bundy, LaHarpe
Steve & Rebecca Delach, Fiatt
Karen McIlwain, Sutter

Mid-America Advertisers, Springfield
Jim K & Irene A Tweedy, Keokuk, IA
Dave Weller, Niota
Dennis Wolf, Woodstock

A new year for efficiency

Many people turn over a new leaf at the beginning of a new year by making a resolution. This year why not make a resolution to stop wasting money? Some efficiency improvements are easy to accomplish, while others are more complex. Tackling it all at once can be overwhelming, but spaced out over a year, they are more manageable.

Efficiency actions that can be taken in the next few weeks:

- Buy and install low-flow showerheads, faucet aerators, and compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) bulbs from a hardware or home improvement store.
- Put a water heater blanket (6622.27) on your older water heater to help water in the tank stay hot.
- Apply rope caulk to very leaky window frames.

- Assess your heating and cooling systems, and determine if replacements are justified or whether you should retrofit them to make them work more efficiently and provide the same comfort (or better) for less energy.

Efficiency actions that can be taken in the next few months:

- Separate your electricity and heating oil/natural gas bills. Target the biggest bill for energy conservation remedies.
- Find out what level of insulation is recommended for your area at EnergySavers.Gov. Then crawl into your attic and/or crawlspace, and inspect the insulation in order to determine if there is enough. If not, add the appropriate amount.
- Insulate hot water pipes and ducts wherever they run through unheated areas.

- Seal up the largest air leaks in your house. The worst culprits are usually not windows and doors, but plumbing penetrations, gaps around chimneys, and recessed lights in insulated ceilings and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.
- Have an energy auditor with a blower door determine where the worst cracks are.
- Set your thermostat lower in the winter (higher in the summer) when you can accept cooler (warmer) conditions. This generally includes nighttime and whenever you leave your home for several hours. Many people find it easier to use an Energy Star programmable thermostat that you can set to automatically adjust.

For more information on home efficiency, go to EfficiencyResource.org.



Western Illinois Electrical Coop. sells water heaters at a great price**

50 gallon: \$300

plus a \$75 service fee for installation

80 gallon: \$500

plus a \$75 service fee for installation

(Price of both sizes of water heaters includes a 6 year warranty.
Prices effective as of Feb 1, 2012)

Bill Credits available:

Any WIEC member who uses an electric water heater is eligible for water heater credits on their electric bill. Just call our office to enroll. The amount of credit will depend on how many kilowatt-hours (kWh) are used. The credit is calculated by multiplying the number of kWh used between 500 and 900 by 2 cents; the credit will range from 2 cents to \$8.

*** All water heater purchased from WIEC must be installed on WIEC Lines.*

Debunking energy myths

By Todd Camnitz

Interested in saving energy to lower your electric bill, but confused about new technology and information available to help you do so? Separate fact from fiction with the following energy-saving myths.

Myth #1: It takes less energy to have my thermostat maintain a comfortable temperature while I'm away than it does to have it heat up or cool down my house when I get home.

If you're going to be gone for more than a few hours, then it is more cost-effective to turn heat or air conditioning on once you return than it is to maintain a comfortable temperature while you're out. (6726-2)

ENERGY STAR, a joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy, recommends adjusting your thermostat up in the summer and down in the winter by 8 degrees Fahrenheit while you're asleep or away from your house.

Myth #2: I can save money simply by installing a programmable thermostat.

On their own, programmable thermostats do not make your heating or cooling system more efficient. Their money-saving value lies in their ability to, once properly programmed, automatically regulate the temperature inside your house to coincide with when you're there and when you're not. If you need help programming your thermostat, directions are usually available from the manufacturer's website.

Myth #3: When I turn off electronics (like my TV, game console, or computer) they stop drawing power from the outlet.

Even when turned off, most modern electronics consume a small amount of electricity if they're still plugged in. Chargers for mobile devices also consume electricity if plugged in, even when they are not actively charging the device. This wasted energy, called "phantom load,"

accounts for as much as 10 percent of a home's total electric use, according to the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. The solution: unplug your electronics when you've finished using them. Using a power strip can help you conveniently unplug multiple devices at once, while newer, "smart" power strips can automatically cut off phantom loads on their own.

Myth #4: Compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) take forever to reach full brilliance, have inadequate light quality or unpleasant color, and make no difference on my utility bill.

As with many products, CFLs vary in quality. Color and brightness differ across manufacturers, and some bulbs simply work better than others. Looking for the ENERGY STAR symbol ensures that you're purchasing a high-quality product. Also, be sure to install CFLs in fixtures that remain on for long periods, or that you use often, to get the maximum energy savings out of your bulbs. In addition, specialty CFLs are available for applications such as spotlighting or bathroom vanity fixtures.

Myth #5: Mercury from CFLs poses a serious risk to the environment.

On the contrary, CFLs actually prevent

the release of mercury into the environment by reducing the electricity needed from power plants. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, about half of electricity in the U.S. is generated from coal. EPA estimates that coal combustion for power plants releases roughly 400 times the mercury into the environment than the cumulative mercury contribution from land-filled CFLs, assuming that no CFLs are recycled. However, it is still important to dispose of burned-out bulbs and clean up broken bulbs properly. Learn how at www.lamprecycle.org.

Myth #6: It is not worth my time or money to seal small air leaks around my windows and doors, or to make sure my home is adequately insulated.

According to ENERGY STAR, air leaks around cracks and gaps throughout your home become the equivalent of leaving a window open all year long. Typical homeowners can save up to 10 percent on their total annual energy bill by sealing and insulating their home

Todd Camnitz writes on energy efficiency issues for E Source, a Colorado-based provider of energy business intelligence. For more information, please visit www.esource.com.



Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

Switch to energy-saving halogen incandescent lightbulbs to cut lighting energy use by 25 percent. These bulbs last three times longer than traditional incandescent bulbs and can easily be dimmed. Want to save more? Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) and light-emitting diodes (LEDs) cut lighting energy use by at least **(5515-2)** 75 percent. Learn more at energysavers.gov.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy