

WIEC NEWS

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

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

WIEC now offers online payments for utility bills

In response to our members inquiring about an online bill payment option, WIEC will begin offering bill payment and presentment online through our website at www.wiec.net. We hope to have this service available by July 1, 2011.

This secure site is operated by our billing software contractor, Southeastern Data Cooperative (SEDC) and maintained by WIEC. It meets all security regulations to ensure that your financial information is protected by the highest industry standards.

Here's how to utilize the on-line payment option.

1. On the July, 2011 WIEC bill, there is information members need to log on, such as account number and password.
2. Go to www.wiec.net and click Online Bill Payment
3. Enter the account number and password, then click Enter
4. Members will be able to view their bill, pay their bill or just change their account information. We strongly suggest that members change their password at this time to insure protection of their information when they build their profile.
5. Members, who have created their online profile, will receive a confirmation back verifying the bill payment to keep (3817-24) with their records.



What could you do with \$10?

If you saw a \$10 bill lying on the ground, would you pick it up? Of course you would. If you saw your map location number in the WIEC News, would you call it in? Kyle Swanson, Lanny Cook, Mark Pettit, Virginia Huls and Bridgette Northern

did and they each received a \$10 bill credit. Your map location number appears on your bill each month, so jot it down and compare it to the ones in the newsletter.

Every month, there are four map location numbers hidden in the

WIEC News. Members who see their map location number are encouraged to call in and receive their bill credit too. You can't win if you don't play.

Find your map location number and win!



Western Illinois
ELECTRICAL COOP.
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

524 North Madison | P.O. Box 338
Carthage, IL 62321
www.wiec.net | 800/576-3125

OFFICE HOURS
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Monday - Friday
DURING OFFICE HOURS,
OR AFTER HOURS
TO REPORT OUTAGE
217-357-3125
800-576-3125

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- **Becky Dickinson** — Office Manager

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.

Keeping Cool:

Tips for beating high summer electric bills

Don't let warmer weather turn into "summertime blues" when your monthly electric bill arrives. Here are some energy-saving tips to help keep bills from skyrocketing.

Adjust the thermostat. As TogetherWeSave.com demonstrates, lowering a thermostat in winter can save as much as \$85 per year. During warmer months, raising the thermostat a few degrees can save money, too. Set the temperature



between 78-80 degrees Fahrenheit, and you could save up to 8 percent on monthly cooling bills. For more reasons to install a programmable thermometer, see below.

Programmable thermostats make it easy to save by offering four pre-programmed settings to regulate a home's temperature throughout the year.

Be a "fan-atic." While they don't replace air conditioners or heat pumps, fans move air and help you feel more comfortable. On milder

days, fans can save as much as 60 percent on electric bills. Fans cool people, not rooms, so turn them off when you leave.

Regular maintenance is essential. Members should have their HVAC systems serviced annually by a NATE (North American Technician Excellence)-certified technician. This HVAC professional will check your entire system to make sure it runs efficiently. This will help to extend life of the system and save money.

Look for ENERGY STAR equipment. When it's time to replace your cooling system, TogetherWeSave.com recommends replacing it with an ENERGY STAR-qualified model. Doing so could reduce your energy costs by as much as 30 percent. Tax credits and rebates on qualifying ENERGY STAR appliances may be available.

Bigger isn't always better. Too often, cooling equipment isn't sized properly and leads to higher electric bills. A unit that's too large for your home will not cool evenly and might produce higher humidity indoors.

Instead of getting burned this summer by high energy bills, visit www.energysavers.gov OR Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives energy-saving website, www.TogetherWeSave.com, for more money-saving ideas.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Electronics account for 8.1 percent of your home's energy use. Cut costs by plugging items into a power strip and turning the strip off when not in use. "Smart" power strips are another good option — when one master device like a TV is turned off, it cuts power to other selected items (DVD players, gaming consoles, stereos, etc.).

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Budget billing sign-up draws near

Deadline is July 20

Have you noticed that the price of everything changes almost daily? At the beginning of the month, it's hard to figure out how to budget your money for that month. Sign up for WIEC's Budget Billing and you can take away the seasonal highs and lows of your electric bill and you'll know how to budget for your electric bill each month.

WIEC can average your payments for the upcoming 12 months, based on your last 12 months usage. Your electric bills can be the same amount for 11 months, providing your usage remains consistent to the last 12 months. The 12th payment is catch-up month, where the amount due is the actual balance remaining, or there is no payment due (8522-10) if there is a credit balance. This credit can be rolled over and applied to next year.

The deadline for enrolling in WIEC's Budget Billing is July 20. If you are interested in receiving more information, please check out our website at www.wiec.net under the program tab. Members can also call or e-mail (billing@wiec.net) our office to give you more information.



What are the benefits of programmable thermostats?

Programmable thermostats provide several benefits to homeowners. Easy to install and fairly inexpensive, programmable thermostats are helpful in regulating temperatures during the day, saving money and increasing comfort. A programmable thermostat allows you to control the temperature without sweating the details.

Use less energy

- The most significant benefit of using a programmable thermostat is the ability to preset the temperature during the day or night. By using the heat or air conditioning less when away from home, less energy is used which in turn leads to savings on the energy bill.

Temperature control

- For example, it is possible to set the air conditioning at a higher temperature during the day while away from home but program the thermostat to lower the temperature shortly before returning home. This allows for energy savings during the day, but also the comfort of a cooler home upon arrival.

Savings

- According to DTE Energy, by setting the thermostat above 78-80 degrees Fahrenheit could save up to 8 percent on monthly cooling bills. By programming the thermostat at a higher temperature while away from home, it is possible to save significantly (3931-27) with no inconvenience.

Source: Sallie Schaaf Borrink, eHow Contributor at ehow.com



WIEC's office will be closed on Monday, July 4th in observance of Independence Day. Our office will reopen on July 5. Happy Birthday America!

Welcome New Members

Ryan & Yvette Bliss, Carthage
William E Burt, LaHarpe
C F Wilson, LLC, Nauvoo
Rodney L. Crum, Lomax
Keith Fuller, Nauvoo
Shasta Heidbreder, Niota
Honey Creek Farms, LLLP, Stronghurst

LEW LLC, Nauvoo
Julie Ann Markey, Dallas City
Sarah J. Root, Niota
William J. Shanks, Niota
Becky Sowers, Warsaw
David M. Welcher, Gladstone

Bulbs die differently

Don't be fooled; a popping sound or smoke means a CFL's end-of-life mechanism WORKS

Worried when you hear a compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL) pop or sizzle? Despite confusion caused by an e-mail hoax circulating since April 2010, these sounds signal the bulb is working safely in its final hours. Smoke, a popping noise, and even a slight odor are typical and do not pose a fire risk as claimed in the misleading e-mail.

According to Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. (UL), an independent not-for-profit firm that tests and sets minimum standards for electric-consuming items, about 130-150 million CFLs are sold every year in the U.S. While the bulbs produce 75 percent less heat than their incandescent cousins, differences between the bulbs go deeper than the amount of heat released. As the first wave of



CFLs begins reaching the end of their lifespan, consumers are learning the bulbs die differently, too.

"As with any new product, it's important that consumers understand how it works," notes John Drengenberg, UL consumer affairs manager.

Most folks know traditional incandescent light bulbs tend to burn out the same way: a pop, a flash, and, when shaken, the familiar rattle confirming the bulb needs to be changed. With CFLs, light dims over time and the lamp may produce a

more dramatic pop, emit a distinct odor, and even release some smoke. Sometimes the plastic at the base of a CFL (**10527-22**) will turn black, which is normal in most cases as safety standards require application of special flame-retardant plastics.

"CFLs are one of the products we regularly test to specific requirements for electrical safety, fire, and shock hazards," Drengenberg notes. "Any popping sounds or smoke that a consumer might see when a CFLs burns out means that the bulb's end-of-life mechanism worked as it should have."

Consumers should look for the UL mark on packaging when purchasing CFLs. "If a CFL carries the UL mark, consumers know we have investigated it to specific safety requirements," reports Drengenberg.

Sometimes the plastic at the base of a CFL will turn black as the bulb dims. This is normal in most cases because safety standards require use of special flame-retardant plastics in the base.

Source: Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.

For more information, visit www.SafetyAtHome.com.

Sources: Underwriters Laboratories



Hancock County 4-H BBQ



Wednesday, July 13th, 2011
5:00—7:00 pm
U of I Extension - 550 N Madison, Carthage
\$5.00 (Advanced) - \$6.00 (at Door)
Drive-Thru pick up available in front of WIEC

Advance Tickets available from your local 4-H'er,
at Menn's Firestone, or at the Hancock Co. Extension Office
or call 217.357.2150

4-H Fair exhibits
will be on display
during the BBQ

Menu:
Pork Chop Sandwich
Or 2 Hot Dogs
Baked Beans
Applesauce
Chips
Drink (Dine-in only)

