

# WIEC NEWS

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

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## June storm interrupts power

In the early morning hours of June 27, a storm with 70 mph miles winds blew through west central Illinois. It toppled trees, downed electrical lines and left about 2,000 WIEC members without power. WIEC linemen and staff immediately went to work to restore power as quickly as possible.

Many of the outages were due to an interruption in electricity being delivered into the Carthage and Denver substation area. Those transmission lines are owned and maintained by AmerenCIPS and deliver the power to our eastern Hancock Co. substation. When there are problems with these transmission lines to our substations, this extends outage time for WIEC members. Ameren restored power to our substations 12 hours after power was interrupted. About half of WIEC

members were affected by this problem.

WIEC also had outages that were unrelated to the electric feeds with over 500 locations that were out of power after the storm. Hamilton, Sutter and Elvaston areas (4611-62) had several lines that had service interrupted. Eighteen poles were broken due to the storm.

By 1:15 p.m. Monday, all of our members had power restored. Manager Paul Dion said, "Our crew did an outstanding job in restoring power as quickly and as safely as possible to our members. They work hard to build and maintain the lines in our service territory to keep all outages at a minimum. I'd like to think that our tree trimming (4711-58) and cutting along with brush spraying kept our individual outages from being a lot higher in numbers."



## Generator safety brochure available

*These tips will keep your family and linemen safe*

### How to Operate A Portable Generator

## Safely



You can use a portable generator to supply electricity to your appliances if an emergency exists during a power outage. But if used improperly, they can kill you and the people who are restoring power to your building. They also can damage the appliances you connect.

Generator sizes vary. Common units can be from 8 to 14 horsepower and capable of handling from 4,000 to 8,400 watts (including starting surge requirements). Prices may range from \$800 to \$3,000.

Connecting a generator to the main electrical supply for your house requires the services of a qualified, qualified electrician. Installing the connection and switch (as explained inside) can cost \$600 to \$1,000.

Before connecting the generator to your household circuit, notify your electric cooperative.

Western Illinois Electrical Coop. has brochures available on how to operate a portable generator safely. Be sure to pick one up at our office or call us at 217-357-3125 and we will mail one to you.

For additional electrical generator and safety information, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).



**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

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- **Rob Gronewold** —  
President, Carthage
  - **Jay Morrison** —  
Vice President, Niota
  - **Janet Spory** —  
Secretary/Treasurer, Sutter
  - **William R. Newton** —  
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer,  
Burnside
  - **Dave Biery** — Director,  
Carthage
  - **Calvin Baumann** —  
Director, Basco
  - **Mike Ford** — Director, Lomax
- STAFF**
- **Paul Dion** — Manager
  - **Tommie Long** —  
Manager of Operations
  - **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.

# Recap of 2011 Annual Meeting

Members of Western Illinois Electrical Coop. re-elected two board directors and heard about the organization's financial condition, progress on renewable energy and other cost saving measures during its 72nd Annual Meeting of Members held Thursday, June 23, at the Hancock County Extension Center.

Manager Paul Dion spoke of the rising costs of wholesale power and WIEC's attempt to reduce expenses. He said that one expense represents almost 70 percent of all the cooperative's expenses.

"We have tried our best to protect our members from rising costs," Dion said. Since 2007 the wholesale cost per kWh has increased 88 percent. Although the cooperative has raised rates and the facility charge, these increases have not kept up with the increases in wholesale power. It is Dion's hope that wholesale power costs will level off once Prairie State Energy Campus, the newest and cleanest coal plant, goes on line.

Since the co-op has little influence over wholesale power costs, it attempts to keep other costs at a minimum and reduce expenditures when possible.

"We work hard to continue to provide reliable electricity and superior customer service that our members have come to expect while still keeping our costs of providing that service in check. That includes labor, transportation, interest, equipment and all other expenses besides our power costs. In 1975, WIEC employed 25 people. Today, we have 15 employees, a reduction of 40 percent."

Another cost saving measure has been the (363-48) AMR system.

AMR is the technology that allows WIEC to read a member's meter from its office. It also can detect stopped meters, any meter tampering, and connect or disconnect a meter.

It has improved customer service as well. By looking at a computer screen, it can help a member pinpoint when his or her usage is up and tell if a meter is dead or running properly without a serviceman driving a bucket truck out to the member's location.

In response to members inquiring about paying bills online, WIEC will soon be offering online bill payment directly through the WIEC website.

Treasurer Janet Spory explained that energy audits are a great way to save on heating and cooling costs. An energy-professional will come into the home and show specifically how and where air leaks are happening. WIEC offers energy audits to members at a reduced rate.

President Rob Gronewold spoke about the Touchstone Energy website, togetherwesave.com. It was designed to help cooperative members take charge of their energy cost. It includes interactive applications, "how to" video clips demonstrating energy saving improvements for creating a more energy efficient home and energy saving tips.

During the meeting Robert M. Gronewold of Carthage and Janet Spory of Sutter were re-elected to three-year terms to the co-op's board of directors. It is Gronewold's seventh term and Spory's fourth.

In addition to the election of the members, two guests spoke.

Jay Bartlett, President and CEO of Prairie Power, Inc., the generation and transmission facility serving WIEC, said a number of renewables are in the works to enhance members' services and save them money, too. He spoke of Prairie State Energy Campus, scheduled to go on line soon, as well as Pioneer Trail Wind Farm – a commitment by 21 electric cooperatives in Illinois (3510-34)

to purchase wind power for the grid.

Entertainment was provided by journalist/humorist Brent Olson who spoke about Midwesterners, their values and their sense of humor.



*Brent Olson entertained the audience with his insight about life in the Midwest.*



*Duane Noland of Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives gets his blood pressure checked by the Hancock County Health Dept.*





These lucky folks were the grand prize winners of \$100 each. They are (l-r) Julie Weber, Add-A-Space by Don and Dyna Scanlan, Robert Johnson, Ralph Painter and Ross Wear.

## Grand prize winners

GIFT	DONOR	RECIPIENT
GRAND PRIZE #1 \$100 CASH	WIEC	Add-A-Space by Don Scanlan
GRAND PRIZE #2 \$100 CASH	WIEC	Robert Johnson
GRAND PRIZE #3 \$100 CASH	WIEC	Julie Weber
GRAND PRIZE #4 \$100 CASH	WIEC	Ross Wear
GRAND PRIZE #5 \$100 CASH	WIEC	Ralph Painter



Prairie Power Inc. brought their energy efficiency display, called The Wall. It showed different building practices that improve energy savings.

## Proxy contest winners

If a member cannot attend the WIEC Annual Meeting, we encourage them to sign their proxy over to another member who will attend or bring it to the WIEC office. As an incentive to have WIEC members sign their proxies, all signed proxies received were entered into a drawing for a \$10 bill credit. The five winners were: Richard Belshaw, Michael Menke, Mary Rea, Doris Steinhour and Lucille Belshaw. These lucky winners will see the credit on the June bills they receive around July 11.

## Annual Meeting Prizes - 2011

NO.	GIFT	DONOR	RECIPIENT
1	Remote Control Helicopter	AIR EVAC %RANDY SPRUNGER	Carol Knoche
2	\$25.00 Walmart Gift Card	BENNETT & MIDDENDORF, LTD.	Donna Metternich
3	\$25.00 Walmart Gift Card	BENNETT & MIDDENDORF, LTD	Diana Allen
4	\$25.00 Walmart Gift Card	BENNETT & MIDDENDORF, LTD	Reece Schmitz
5	\$25.00 Walmart Gift Card	BENNETT & MIDDENDORF, LTD	Nancy Spraggins
6	Gift Pack of Spices	BROWNSTOWN ELECTRIC SUPPLY CO., INC	Lawrence Cokel
7	Gift Certificate for 1 oil change	CARSON FORD, INC	Keith Neill
8	\$25.00 Walmart Gift Card	C & S TESTING, WILLARD WIGGERS	Terry White
9	Oscillating Fan	FLETCHER-REINHARDT COMPANY	Helen Vass
10	1 Smoke Alarm	HEINTZ ELECTRIC	Cecil Shipman
11	1 Smoke Alarm	HEINTZ ELECTRIC	Raymond Siegrist
12	\$25.00 Gift Card to Hawkeye	HEINTZ ELECTRIC	Midwest Extreme % Sally Neill
13	1 Coffee Cup & 1 Leather Binder	MARINE BANK & TRUST	Daniel Adams
14	1 Coffee Cup & 1 Leather Binder	MARINE BANK & TRUST	Frederick Hartweg
15	\$25 Cash	PETERS HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING	Laura Iutzi Mosena
16	\$25 Gift Certificate	WEBER MEATS, INC	Carol Bollin
17	\$50.00 BILL CREDIT	GREEN-UP TECHNOLOGY	Arthur Hartweg
18	\$50.00 BILL CREDIT	GREEN-UP TECHNOLOGY	Mark Buss

# Change air filter to save money and energy

It's hot this summer. That means your air conditioning system is working hard to keep you comfortable. Here's a tip that can help your cooling system operate more efficiently — and save you money.

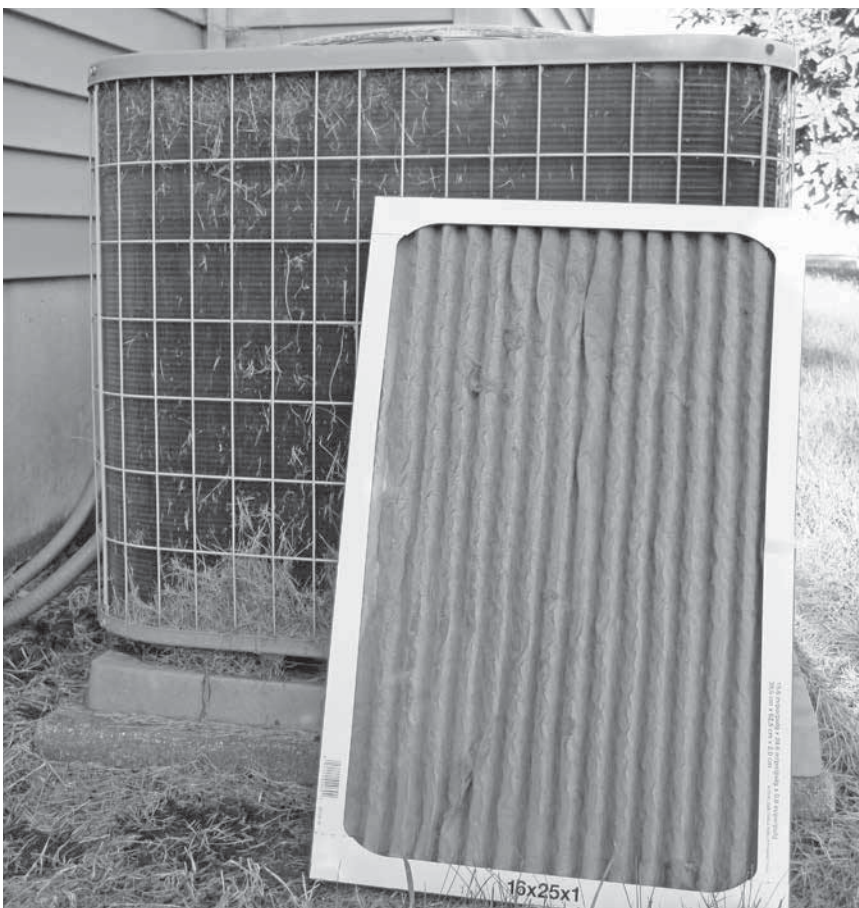
## Change your air filter regularly.

It only takes a couple of minutes to change the air filter in your heating/cooling system. It's simple and easy. As TogetherWeSave.com has shown, changing your filter every month can save you money.

But that's not all you can save. A dirty air filter makes your system work harder to keep you cool, which wastes energy. Changing your air filter regularly helps to ensure efficient operation and keep your electricity bill in check. What's more, a dirty air filter allows dust and dirt to build up in your system. Changing your air filter regularly can reduce the need for costly maintenance and prevent damage to your system.

And when winter arrives, it's just as important to change your air filter regularly. Your heating system needs to work as efficiently as possible to keep you warm, and a clean air filter helps it do that.

Experts recommend turning your system off before changing the air filter. Make sure that the arrow on the filter — which indicates the direction



of the airflow — is pointing toward the blower motor. When you've made the change, turn your system back on. To save time, it's a good idea to keep a couple of spare filters on hand.

For other tips on how to save energy — and money — visit [www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov) **OR** *Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives energy-saving website*, [www.TogetherWeSave.com](http://www.TogetherWeSave.com).

## Welcome New Members

Jamare Britton, Gladstone  
Linda Brogdon, Bowen  
CarriOppen, Ltd, By Martha Oppenheimer,  
Ft Madison IA  
Justin Daniels, Plymouth  
Michael L Eppley, Springfield, IL  
John W. & Lori A Lewis, Stronghurst  
Gary W. & Cindy S. Miller, Wood Dale IL  
Thomas R & Mary Ann North, Hamilton  
David & Melissa Wollbrink, Quincy  
Dennis H. Worden, Sprague, OR  
Andrew Zurmuehlen, Carman



Energy Efficiency

## Tip of the Month

One of the easiest ways to make your home more energy efficient is to add insulation in the attic. To see if you need insulation, look across an uncovered attic floor. If the insulation is level with or below the floor joists, you probably need to add more. Want more advise? Call WIEC and sign up for an Energy Audit.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy