


WIEC NEWS

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

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

October is National Cooperative Month

Each October, cooperatives all across America celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of our nation's cooperatives. Observing National Co-op Month gives electric co-ops such as Western Illinois Electrical Coop., another reason to tell our members that they are part of something special. They became owners of WIEC when they signed the membership application and paid their \$5 fee. They became owners of WIEC.

Any profits left over after the cost of providing electrical service are returned to the members. These profits are returned back later as a capital credit check. See page 16c to learn more about this year's general retirement.

As owner of the business, members actually get to choose the people who control the utility by attending and voting at Annual Meeting each June. At a time of increasing national concern about the economy, especially rising energy costs, we give our members a voice to guide the direction of their cooperative.

Co-op members receive special benefits by just belonging, through our programs like our Geothermal Heat Rate, specially priced water heaters, ERC Loan Program, Youth to



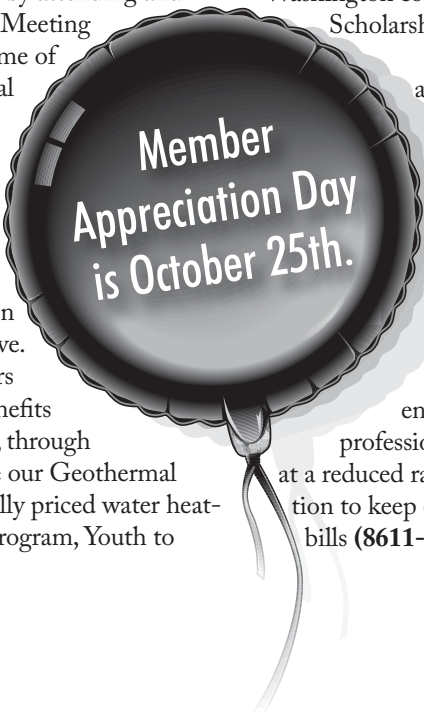
▲ Members actually get to choose the people who control the utility – our directors.

Washington contest, IEC Memorial Scholarships and a host of others.

Education remains another big focus. For the past 17 years, WIEC has sponsored our Safety Fair for the local 5th graders. We routinely publish ideas in the WIEC News on how to make your home more energy efficient. We offer professional home energy audits at a reduced rate. All with the intention to keep our member's electric bills (8611-64-1) affordable.

We are local — living and working alongside those we serve. We are the voice who answers the phone. We are the face across the counter when members pay their bills. We are the linemen who restore your electricity after a storm. The employees of WIEC are here to serve.

To celebrate October being Cooperative Month, we invite members to the Member Appreciation Day on October 25. It will be 9-3 at the WIEC office. Come by and say hello, and enjoy some coffee, cider and cookies. Employees will be on hand to answer any questions or concerns. All registered members will receive a 2012 pocket calendar.





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.



Harvest workers urged caution to yield fewer electrical accidents

Harvest season can yield higher numbers of electrocution, shock, and burn injuries. Nationwide, an average 60 agricultural workers are electrocuted and hundreds more injured in electrical accidents each year.

Farm workers need to be sure to keep equipment 10 feet from power lines at all times. That's 10 feet above, below and to the sides of the lines. Lower all equipment you can before moving it and use a spotter for large equipment.

Some equipment safety considerations:

- Always lower portable augers or elevators to their lowest possible level - under 14 feet- before moving or transporting; use care when raising them. (7513-40)
- When moving large equipment or high loads near a power line, always use a spotter, or someone to help make certain that contact is not made with a line.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting larger modern tractors with higher antennas.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path!

If equipment comes in contact with power lines, stay inside the cab and call for help. Tell others to stay away until a co-op lineman arrives at the scene to make sure power is disconnected. If there is risk of fire and you must leave the area, the proper action is to jump - not step - with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. Continue to hop or shuffle to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area.

Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch the equipment. Many electrocutions occur when the operator dismounts and, realizing nothing has happened, tries to get back on the equipment.

It is very important that all farm workers and seasonal employees are informed of electrical hazards, and trained in proper procedures to avoid injury. For more information on farm and home electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

Welcome New Members

Linda K Custer, Plymouth
Mark Marsden & Brenda Menke,
Dallas City
Troy Perry, Hamilton
Lilly Vega, Nauvoo

Melissa Willey, Plymouth
Kraig Williamson, Carthage
Van Willows, Davenport, IA
Joseph E Zumwalt, Warsaw

YOU get the credit

WIEC retires more than \$64,000 to members

It's time for you to get the credit — capital credits, that is — for helping build, sustain, and grow Western Illinois Electrical Coop. This month, WIEC retires more than \$64,000 to our members who were on our lines in 1975 and 1976.

When you signed up to receive electric service from WIEC you became a member of an electric utility. While investor-owned utilities return a portion of any profits back to their shareholders, electric co-ops operate on an

at-cost basis. So instead of returning leftover funds, known as margins, to folks who might not live in the same region or even the same state as you do, WIEC allocates and periodically retires capital credits based on how much electricity you purchased during a year.

This year, members who were on our lines from 1975 through 1976, will receive capital credits check in the mail, reflecting their contribution of capital to, and ownership of, the cooperative during those years.

That may seem like a long time ago. However, those funds helped us reduce the amount of money we needed to borrow from outside lenders to build, maintain, and expand a reliable electric distribution system, and covered emergency expenses.

The capital credit checks should be in the mail the first week in November.

For more information on this part of the cooperative business, read the following Q & A:

Common Capital Credits Questions:

What are Capital Credits?

An electric cooperative operates on an at-cost basis by annually “allocating” to each member, based upon the member’s purchase of electricity, operating revenue remaining at the end of the year; later, as financial condition permits, these allocated amounts — capital credits — are retired. Capital credits represent the most significant source of equity for WIEC. Since a cooperative’s members are also the people the co-op serves, capital credits reflect each member’s ownership in, and contribution of capital to, the cooperative. This differs from dividends investor-owned utilities pay shareholders, who may or may not be customers of the utility.

Where does the money come from?

Member-owned, not-for-profit electric co-ops set rates to generate enough money to pay operating costs, make payments on any loans, and provide an emergency reserve. At the end of each year, we subtract operating expenses from the operating revenue collected

during the year. The balance is called an operating “margin.”

How are margins allocated?

Margins are allocated to members as capital credits based on their purchases from the cooperative — how much power the member used. Member purchases may also be called patronage.

Does Ameren retire Capital Credits?

No. Within the electric industry, capital credits only exist at not-for-profit electric cooperatives owned by their members.

Are Capital Credits retired every year?

Each year, the WIEC’s Board of Directors makes a decision on whether to retire capital credits based on the financial health of the cooperative. During some years, the co-op may experience high growth in the number of new accounts, or severe storms may result in the need to spend additional funds to repair lines. These and other events might increase costs and decrease member equity, causing the

board not to retire capital credits. For this reason, WIEC’s ability to retire capital credits reflects the cooperative’s strength and financial stability. The board alone decides whether to retire capital credits.

Do I lose my capital credits in the years the co-op decides not to make retirements?

No. All capital credits allocated for every year members have been served by WIEC are maintained until such time as the board retires them.

What years will be retired in Oct 2011?

WIEC will be retiring all of the remaining capital credits to members who purchased electricity from the cooperative in 1975 and 1976.

I did not get electric service from WIEC in 1975 or 1976. Will I get any retirement?

No. This year, capital credit retirements will only be made to members who purchased electricity from 1975 through 1976.

Electric heat rates increase

As of Oct. 1, 2011, WIEC will raise the per kWh cost for our heat rates by one-cent. For members who have rate 40 and 41 (electric heat), the cost will be 7 cents per kilowatt hour. For members who have rate 60 and 61 (geothermal heating and cooling), the cost per kilowatt hour will be 7 ½ cents. Other rates will not change.

This increase is necessary due to the increase in our wholesale power cost. Members will see the increase on their October bills they will receive around November 10, 2011.



HOME Program comes to a close

47 WIEC families participated

In May 2010, the WIEC began offering the HomeE Program as a way to help our members become more energy efficient, increase the comfort level of their homes and to reduce their energy consumption. The program ended when the funds were exhausted on August 1.

Of the 47 WIEC families that participated, over \$35,000 was given in rebates. Rebates were offered for installing new geothermal systems, central air, LP furnaces and adding insulation or sealing. Statewide, more than \$2.5 million (7819-54-15) in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds were awarded through the state energy plan.

We thank our members for making this program a huge success.

Keep Halloween safe and fun

Trick or treating is fun for kids, young and old.

Here's some interesting trivia.

- Orange and black are Halloween colors because orange is associated with the fall harvest and black is associated with darkness and death.
- Jack o' Lanterns originated in Ireland where people placed candles in hollowed-out turnips to keep away spirits and ghosts on the Samhain holiday.
- Halloween was brought to North America by immigrants from Europe who would celebrate the harvest around a bonfire, share ghost stories, sing, dance and tell fortunes.
- Tootsie Rolls were the first wrapped penny candy in America.
- Halloween candy sales average about 2 billion dollars annually in the United States.
- Chocolate candy bars top the list as the most popular candy for trick-or-treaters with Snickers, No. 1.
- Halloween is the 2nd most commercially successful holiday, with Christmas being the first.

Nothing is trivial about safety. During this time of year when yards can be filled with ghosts and goblins make sure all of your costumed critters as well as your home are kept safe.

- Avoid running cords around sidewalks and other walkways outdoors and indoors that could risk tripping or entangling trick-or-treaters. Don't hide cords under carpeting or rugs, or behind curtains or blinds. (7730-3)
- Always unplug lights before going to bed or leaving your home.
- Keep electric objects away from flammable objects, such as hay bales, cornstalks and fabric costumes. The heat from lights and other electrical decorations could potentially cause a fire.



For more information visit www.SafeElectricity.org.



Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

When buying a new appliance, check the black and yellow EnergyGuide label. This label provides an estimate of the product's energy consumption and efficiency. It also shows the highest and lowest energy efficiency estimates of similar models. Most major appliances — such as refrigerators, dishwashers, and clothes dryers — are required to have these labels.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Fall back into Standard Time

The return to Standard Time (ST) begins at 2 a.m. local time November 6.