



WIEC NEWS

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

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



*When we recall Christmas past,
we usually find
that the simplest things
- not the great occasions -
give off the greatest glow of happiness.*

~Bob Hope

*The Board of Directors and Employees of
Western Illinois Electrical Coop.
Wish our members the simple things at
Christmas and all year long.*

Attention high school seniors ...

The deadline for returning your applications for the Illinois Electric Cooperatives Memorial Scholarships is December 31, 2011. Ask your guidance counselor or call our office for an application and brochure from our Web site at www.wiec.net.



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.

Healthy holiday eating

Tips for remaking your favorite recipes

By Jennifer Nelson, M.S., R.D. and Katherine Zeratsky, R.D.

Are dreams of sugarplums dancing in your head? What about other decadent holiday favorites? You know the ones that are loaded with sugar, salt and fat — cheese platters, bacon-wrapped appetizers, creamy eggnogs, spiked punches, cookies and rich desserts.

It can be a challenging time of year to make healthy choices. But healthy holiday eating is possible. Here are some tips for making favorite recipes healthier:

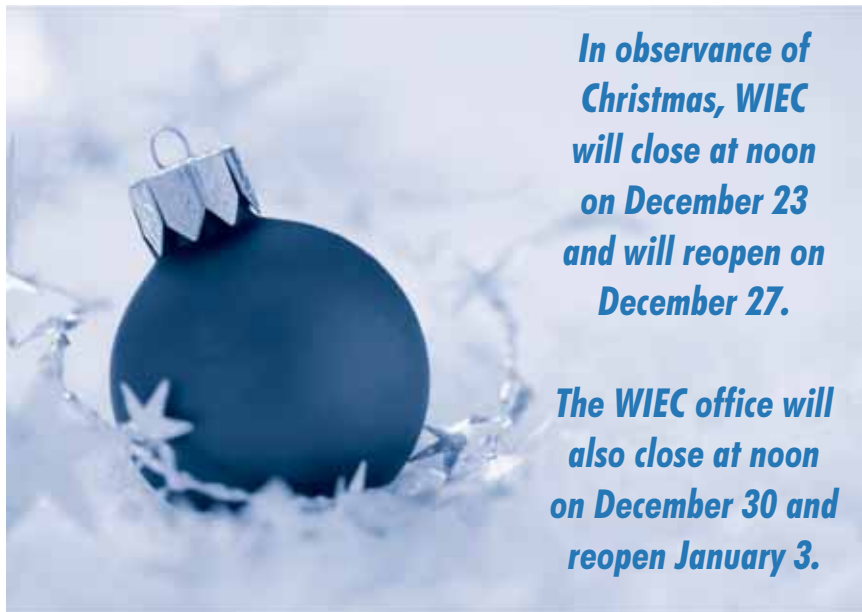
- **Cut the sweetness.** When making pumpkin pie or eggnog, reduce the amount of sugar by half and enhance "sweetness" by adding a bit more vanilla, nutmeg or cinnamon. If recipes call for sugary toppings like frosting, jams and syrup, use fresh fruit instead.
- **Shake the salt out.** You can reduce salt by half in most recipes, too. Also go easy on salty condiments, such as pickles, catsup, mustard and soy sauce. Instead offer cucumber slices

and fresh tomato or fruit salsas. Or try lower-sodium versions of mustard and soy sauce. In recipes, substitute fresh herbs and flavored vinegars for salt.

- **Trim the fat.** In baked goods you can cut the fat by about half and replace it with unsweetened applesauce, prune puree or mashed banana. Instead of full-fat condensed milk, use condensed skim in pumpkin pie and eggnog. For gravy, heat fat-free, low-sodium broth (or drippings with the fat removed); mix flour into cold (4613-48) skim milk and pour slowly into broth, stir until thickened and season to your liking.

Do you have tips for healthy holiday eating? How about suggestions for healthy hors d'oeuvres, sides and entrees? Share your ideas for transforming traditional holiday recipes into fresher, healthier ones.

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In observance of Christmas, WIEC will close at noon on December 23 and will reopen on December 27.

The WIEC office will also close at noon on December 30 and reopen January 3.

Stay safe while shopping online

By Doreen Friel

If you're like many consumers today, you probably do some shopping online. Every year, online sales seem to increase dramatically. During the 2010 Christmas shopping season, Internet-related sales grew 15.4 percent from the same time period in 2009 — reaching an astonishing \$36.4 billion. But while shopping from the convenience of your keyboard can save time, money, and gas, here are some important things to consider:

- **Know your retailer.** It's always safer to shop with merchants you know. If you want to buy from a website that's new to you, do an online search for that merchant and "complaints" to check for negative chatter about the seller.
- **Use secure websites.** When placing your order on the merchant's website, make sure that there is an "s" at the beginning of web address: For example, the URL should begin "https://" instead of just "http://." Also, be sure to look for a padlock icon in the upper or lower

right-hand portion of your computer screen. Both of these mean that the site you are visiting uses a high level of security to protect your personal information.

- **Credit cards give you greater protection than cash and debit cards.** If you are not charged the correct amount for your purchase, or do not receive the merchandise you ordered, you can dispute the transaction (3614-5) under the terms of the Fair Credit Billing Act if you've used a credit card.
- **Choose your password carefully.** Most websites require you to use a password to access your personal information and place orders. Be sure to create a password that is not easy for others to guess — and use a combination of letters, numbers, and, if possible, symbols such as "@" and "%" to make it more difficult for your information to be accessed by others.

- **Check the merchant's privacy policy.** This will tell you how they plan to use your information — including whether they will share it with others. You may wish to avoid sellers that do not have a privacy policy, as you have no way of knowing what they'll do with your data.
- **Always print and keep the receipt from your transaction.** It contains all of the information from your order, including what you bought, the price you paid, and any order or confirmation number. This is vital if you need to follow up with the merchant or dispute your transaction.

Shopping online is easy and convenient — but by taking some simple precautions, it can also be safe.

Source: *About.com*

Online bill payments accepted

In addition to paying your Western Illinois Electrical Coop. bill by mail, phone or at the office, your cooperative is now accepting (4711-58) payments online through our website at www.wiec.net. Save time and money by using this convenient service 24 hours a day, seven days a week from the convenience of your home. This service has been available since July with more and more members using this service each month.

This service provides you with many features you have come to expect. In addition to viewing and paying your current bill online, members can also look back at previous bill statements. Members can pay using VISA, MasterCard or Discover.

Visit WIEC's website and select Online Bill payment. Enter the temporary password that appears on your bill as both the account number and password. After following the steps, members will receive



an e-mail confirmation verifying their information and payment. Please read this e-mail carefully as it requires a response.

If members have any problems or questions, please call the WIEC office at 217-357-3125 or 800-576-3125 during normal business hours.

Welcome New Members

Rebecca & Eddie Becker, Basco
Joseph M. & Rhonda K. Boyles,
Niota
Meredith Breuer, Carthage
Michael Haas, Nauvoo
Joshua R Johns, Niota
Lea A. Nylin, Gladstone
Colbi & Kyle Peterson,
Gladstone
Greg & Alicia Richards,
Plymouth
Adam Schwerer, Blandinsville
Tamarak, LLLP, Carthage
Young Farms, by Brent Young,
Carthage

Giving Efficiency

By Kelly Trapnell

With the holiday rush starting earlier and earlier every year, get a jump-start on your shopping wish list with some great green gifts. Using the tips below, you can have everything wrapped up before the ho, ho, ho turns into go, go, go!

Why give efficiency?

Green giving is thoughtful on many levels. The person receiving the gift has a new gadget to use that keep long-term electric costs low year-round.

“Choosing a green gift can be easy,” says Brian Sloboda, senior program manager for the Cooperative Research Network (CRN). “Be aware of energy use. Look for any mention of energy ratings on large appliances and televisions, or select unplugged gifts. Think solar, reusable, and recyclable. Even something as small as the packaging and wrapping can make a difference.”

Look for items with lightweight packaging. And think about wrapping your gift in something like fabric bag that can be reused or even an accessory like a scarf to tie things up.

Green Gift Ideas

■ **For Decorators:** LED Christmas lights (\$15-\$35)—These energy-efficient lights are becoming easier to find. They save on high holiday electric bills and stay cool to the touch. For a festive complete package, wrap in a decorative stocking.

■ **For Gardeners:** Solar garden lights (\$15-\$50)—Available in endless colors, styles, and sizes, solar garden lights can be a lovely (4511-78) addition to your favorite green thumb's garden. To up the green quotient, wrap in a burlap bag.

■ **For Cooks:** Toaster oven (\$60 - \$140)—Especially great for the empty nester or those only cooking for one or two, toaster ovens are a good choice to save energy as an alternative to heating a large standard oven. (4511-78)

■ **For Movie Buffs or Sports Fans:** ENERGY STAR-rated TV (price based on size)—Televisions are getting bigger and better. But before you give something that uses as much electricity as a refrigerator, look for the ENERGY STAR label. It will offer

the smallest impact on your electric bills possible.

For Techies:

- Smart strip (\$20 - \$40)—This new cutting-edge technology is great for plugging in electronic gadgets. Not your average power strip, smart strips sport designated outlets that make it easy to power down certain devices to save energy while not affecting others plugged into the same strip.
- Solar cell phone charger (\$55 - \$100+)—Help unplug energy-sucking chargers from the wall; solar chargers can be placed in a window to charge a cell phone or other devices like a GPS unit or even MP3 players anywhere the sun shines, even in a car on-the-go!

There are many options when you start looking for green gifts. Get creative, and remember that what you give impacts future electric bills. So give the green light for energy-smart gifts this year!

LIHEAP heating assistance money available

Call for your appointment

If you need financial assistance to pay your electric bill, you may be eligible to participate in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Applicants must call for an appointment and bring with them proof of income for the last 30 days, their most recent electric bill and Social Security Cards for all in the household.

Assistance is based on combined household income. If it is at or below the levels shown below, you may be eligible. Good faith effort to maintain electric service may also be required.

Household size	30 Day Income
1	\$1,361
2	\$1,839

(add \$477 for each additional house member)

For more details, contact the following:

Members in Hancock, Henderson and McDonough Counties:

Western Illinois Regional Council
223 S. Randolph
Macomb IL 61455
309-837- 2997

Members in Adams County:

Two Rivers Regional Council
1891 Maine St. Suite 4
Quincy, IL 62301
217- 224-8171

In addition, members may also find help from The Salvation Army, the Veteran's Administration and area churches.