

WIEC NEWS

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

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

WANTED

High School Sophomore, Junior or Senior to Enter
Youth to Washington Contest
Student must be willing to:

Travel



Make New Friends



Have FUN!



Reward: All expense paid trip to Washington DC

If you or someone you know fits this description, you are encouraged to enter the Youth to Washington Contest.

This contest is a great way for a high school sophomore, junior or senior to win an all-expense paid trip to Washington DC. Western Illinois Electrical Coop. will award one son or daughter of a WIEC member an all-expense paid eight-day trip to our nation's capital. To enter the contest, students must complete a Web quiz that consists of multiple-choice, short answer and short essay questions.

The WIEC winner will join about 50 other Illinois high school students in Washington during the week of June 14-21, 2013. During the time in D.C., students will learn about American and rural electric history, as well as state and federal government. In past years, students met with representatives in the House and Senate, visited Arlington National Cemetery, the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, Mt. Vernon, World War II Memorial, the U.S. Memorial Holocaust Museum, and even danced the night away on a river

boat cruise on the Potomac River.

As part of the contest, WIEC will award the top six entrants an all-expense paid trip to Springfield, IL as part of the Youth Day in Springfield to visit the Illinois State Capitol on April 17, 2013 and see state government in action. One of those six students will be awarded the trip to Washington, D.C.

For entry information: visit our website at wiec.net, contact Becky Dickinson at Western Illinois Electrical Coop., or see your high school guidance counselor.



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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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.

Generator Use

These tips will keep your family and linemen safe

Many rely on backup electric generators for emergency power when the electricity goes out. If you are considering purchasing a backup generator, Safe Electricity and Western Illinois Electrical Coop. want you to know how to take proper safety steps before operating an electric generator in your home or business.

Properly connecting the generator into the system is a critical step for safe and effective use. A qualified electrician should install a permanent, standby electric generator to be sure of electrical grounding requirements, circuit overload protections and local codes are met.

An electric generator wired directly into a building's electrical system must have a transfer safety switch to prevent electricity from traveling back through the power lines, or what's known as "back feed."

"Our linemen work around the clock in bad weather to restore your power during an outage. Improper use of generators can make that work unsafe and the electricity flowing through lines that we think are safe can seriously injure or kill those linemen," warns Paul Dion, WIEC manager.

Follow these tips for safe use of portable generators (3814-22) used to power essential electrical equipment during outages. Keep this list posted by your generator.

- Read and follow all manufacturer operating instructions.
- Make sure the generator is properly grounded.
- Never plug a portable electric generator into a wall outlet or connect directly to a home's wiring. This can energize utility power lines and injure you or others working nearby. Electrical back feed also can damage the generator and home electrical equipment.

- Don't overload the generator and plug in more appliances than the generator is rated to handle.
- Use only safety-tested, shop-type electrical cords designed and rated for heavier, outdoor use to connect appliances. Many generators are equipped with twist-lock connects to reduce the chance of accidental disconnections due to vibrations.
- Always keep the generator outside in a dry, protected area, away from windows or air intakes where deadly exhaust fumes can enter living spaces. Equip homes with Carbon Monoxide (CO) alarms with battery backup.
- Turn off generator and allow to cool before refueling.
- Before shutting down a generator, turn off and unplug all appliances and equipment being powered by the generator.

For additional electrical generator and safety information, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

How to Operate A Portable Generator Safely

Safely

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

Generator sizes vary. Common sizes can be from 8 to 18 horsepower and capable of handling from 4,000 to 8,000 watts (including starting surge requirement). Prices may range from \$800 to \$3,000.

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

Before connecting the generator to your household circuit, notify your electrician.

Western Illinois Electrical Coop. has available brochures on how to operate a portable generator safely. Be sure to pick one up at our office.

Prairie State Energy Campus completed

Now providing low cost clean-coal based energy that will benefit us for decades to come

Prairie Power Inc. and its member cooperatives, including WIEC, made an investment in the Prairie State Energy Campus (PSEC), a new state-of-the-art coal fired generating plant, southeast of St. Louis, MO. PSEC utilizes the latest technologies to insure it is amongst the cleanest clean-coal plants in the United States. Not only does it generate electricity in an environmentally responsible way, it does so utilizing plentiful Illinois coal from the adjacent mine. The coal is transported directly to the plant via a conveyor belt, without any additional transportation or shipping charges. This mine, which is owned and operated by PSEC, has a 30 year supply of coal that was bought and paid for by the investors in Prairie State.

Recently, the final unit of this 1600-megawatt power plant facility went on line producing commercial power for its owners, including WIEC. This was a significant milestone for the largest coal-fueled power plant built in the US in the last 30 years.

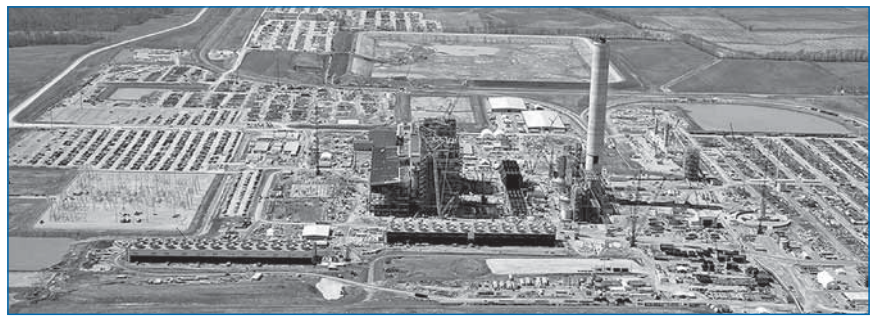
This plant has exceeded expectations with respect to output, efficiency and



emission. Recent tuning and performance testing of both units indicate that both units are operating more efficiently than expected and therefore at a lower cost to operate. The actual operating performance to date of Prairie State's air quality control system puts PSEC in the top 2 percent of coal fired plants in the nation for nitrogen dioxide removal and in the

top 10 percent in sulfur oxide removal.

The energy produced by the Prairie State plant will provide WIEC members about 60% of the electricity needed for WIEC's members. In a world of volatile markets, the Prairie State plant will be a great way to hedge against purchasing power in (5816-41) the open market. PPI President and CEO, Jay Bartlett said "I want to congratulate the members of Prairie Power for having the foresight to invest in this highly efficient plant and coal mine. The plant's extremely low cost of production, clean environmental attributes, and non-market based fuel supply will go a long way toward ensuring stable, competitively priced electrical energy for WIEC's members for decades to come."



Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

Sleek new flat-panel TVs can consume almost as much electricity as a refrigerator. In general, the bigger the screen, the more power it draws, and HD pulls more, too. Plasma screens use the most energy, while LCD

TVs use much less. And remember to change your new TV's default settings to a power saver mode, (5714-3) and turn down the LCD backlight to save energy without sacrificing picture quality.



Source: Cooperative Research Network

Welcome New Members

NOVEMBER, 2012

Benjamin F & Jacqueline Cooper, Jr., Warsaw
Terry Fecht, West Point
Derick & Brenda Hoelscher, Plymouth
Jay Lutz & Redina Herman, Plymouth
Rosa Martin, Plymouth
Todd Schafer, Marietta IL
Tammy Townsend, Niota
Robert L Vallee, Lomax
Laura S VonBurg, West Point

Surviving Power Surges

Why your hair dryer may be out to get your microwave

By Angela Perez

High-tech gadgets, appliances, and computers all have one weakness in common: deadly power surges. Too much electricity coursing through connecting wires can fry circuitry inside sensitive electronics, reducing them to expensive trash.

Unfortunately, electric current coming from your wall outlet doesn't always remain at a steady, optimal 120 volts. Electricity can spike for a number of reasons, including lighting strikes on power lines, which can send millions of volts searing through your wiring. Motor-driven appliances that use large amounts of power—like washers and dryers—will cause surges, too, when they kick on and off. But power spikes aren't always dramatic or obvious.

Smaller electrical products, like your hair dryer, have more subtle power cycles than large items like a central air-conditioning unit. When you use your hair dryer every morning, it could be gradually damaging the circuitry

of, say, your microwave, as each small surge hits its circuit board.

All is not lost

Homeowners can protect digital electronics with surge suppressors. As the term implies, these devices suppress a fluctuating power supply by diverting excess voltage to a ground wire. There are several types of whole-house surge suppressors available, although none of them are able to fully stand up to the enormous power spike caused by lightning.

Some protectors mount on your circuit breaker panel indoors or are built into a specific circuit breaker. Others are designed to mount at the base of your electric meter.

Suppressors are available for a multitude of applications, from single-plug wall units to rack-mounted setups that cover an entertainment system

For those who don't like continually stooping to flip the switch on

a power strip, some models even include remote controls. You can also find pivoting protectors that adjust to accommodate a variety of adapters, letting you plug all of your gadgets into one strip.

Finally, keep a few things in mind before you buy.

It's important to remember that many of your devices may be connected to other outlets, like satellite, cable, phone, and Internet lines. Surge protectors are available with options for to protect these conduits as well. And make sure the manufacturer guarantees to cover the cost of replacing any damaged equipment that was attached.

Angela Perez writes on technology issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

HomE Lite Co-op energy efficiency rebates return

In 2011 the electric cooperatives of Illinois received \$2.5 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act program through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's State Energy Plan. Those funds were, in turn, distributed as rebates to co-op member-owners for energy efficiency projects. This investment paid real dividends and helped prime the pump for nearly ten times that in energy efficiency investments. Better yet, the energy efficiency improvements will multiply the savings for many, many years.

The HomE energy efficiency rebate program was so successful in creating new jobs for heating and air conditioning contractors, plumbers and insulation installers plus saving energy for co-op member-owners that it is being repeated

for a second but very limited time.

If you didn't get a chance to participate in the first round of HomE rebates now you have a second chance. HomE Lite rebates are available until funding runs out, or until June of this year.

HomE Lite Incentive Rebates Include:

- **Geothermal system** - \$1,500
- **Air-Source Heat Pump** (16 SEER or higher) - \$1,000
- **Insulation and Weatherization** - 50 percent of total project cost, up to \$1,000
- **Heat Pump Water Heater** - \$250
- **Commercial installations** - \$500 per ton of capacity, up to a maximum of \$10,000 for geothermal and air source heat pumps.
- **Energy Audit by BPI certified auditor** - \$300 (5511-10)

With the help of the first round of HomE funding Western Illinois Electrical Coop. members installed 18 of geothermal heat pumps, 1 air-source heat pumps, and 13 made insulation and weatherization improvements.

WIEC Manager Paul M. Dion says, "We know a lot of members were unable to participate in the first HomE program for a variety of reasons. All cooperative members are eligible for HomE Lite. These rebates, plus the federal income tax credits that are available for some of the projects, make this a great time to make your home more energy efficient."

For more information call the WIEC office or go to www.wiec.net.