

WIEC NEWS

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



As we celebrate our 75th Anniversary, we invite our members to join us as we take a look at our journey. This month we look back at the line crew who builds and maintains our lines.

The early WIEC years were filled with planning, organizing and construction. The directors did much of the work in the first few months. Each one became a notary public and they were all named as deputy county clerks in order to speed up the organizing. The group met each Monday night during the summer of 1938, coordinating the sign-up and system planning.



1963 Line Crew

In August, the cooperative was officially organized, electing the initial officers and approving co-op bylaws. In the months ahead the cooperative applied for an REA loan and hired an engineer and attorney.

The big day came on Dec. 30, 1938, when co-op leaders received word that their REA loan would be approved. REA officials had approved a loan of \$403,000 to build 366 miles of line to serve 1,200 members in Hancock County. The telegram from REA was the first real evidence that all the hard work and planning was going to pay off.

The first project consisted of \$387,000 for 366 miles of line, which is a little over \$1,050 per mile of line. (Today, WIEC has invested over \$17,300 per mile of line.)

For hundreds of others, though, the big day came in 1940 when the first WIEC lines were energized. After the first lines were heated up, there was a flurry of new construction and

line extensions. An excitement went through the countryside as co-op members – both signed and unsigned members – readied themselves for electricity. But all that progress ground to a halt within a few years as America entered World War II. At WIEC, and hundreds of cooperatives like it across the country, construction materials were non-existent. For the most part, the line-building program would have to wait out the war. During the war years the cooperative built just 43 miles of lines. By 1946, WIEC was serving 1,392 members with a system consisting of 564 miles of lines.

But over the next four years, the rural economy would explode with growth as servicemen returned home victorious after World War II ended. In four years the cooperative's system would double, with 2,595 members being served on 1,107 miles of lines.

To accomplish this, WIEC hired a host of local workers in the late 1940s. The work was hard and labor intensive,

however it was considered a “good” job. The pole holes were dug by hand. One employee at the time boasted the all-time record was set in the Warsaw bottoms where 40 holes were dug and set in one day. Men were hired in 1949 at 75 cents

an hour and worked nine hour days, six days a week. After WWII, WIEC had about 20 line workers – most of them military veterans who returned home from the war.

Even though the work was hard, the men kept their sense of humor. “We used to name all of our trucks,” recalled long-time employee Bill Knight. “The digger was Bertha. The (862.-32) bucket was Molly.” Manager Paul Dion remembers a humorous story about the line trucks and how the crews cared for them. “The guys always told me that if Bertha cooperated with the operator that day, he’d back her into the shop so that she could look out the window. But if she wasn’t good that day, he’d pull her in front ways so that she couldn’t see out.”

In recent years, WIEC’s hard work ethic and concern for the community has paid off greatly – in sales growth and community relations. For the

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decade between 2000 and 2010, the cooperative's nine-man line crew built an average of 50 new services per year. WIEC attributes its success to the strong work ethic of the employees, as well as the pride the employees have for the work they do. The line crew and member service department do all of their own construction and maintenance work and are proud outside contractors are not used.

"I am consistently amazed by the amount of work our line department and our member service department can get done," said Tommie Long, Manager of Operations. "I'd put our crews up against anyone. We work hard, but we always put safety first."

To be continued....



**Western Illinois
ELECTRICAL COOP.**

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

524 North Madison | P.O. Box 338
Carthage, IL 62321
www.wiec.net | 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.

Paul Dion to retire after 39 years of service

Tommie Long to become manager

The Board of Directors of Western Illinois Electrical Coop has chosen Tommie Long to succeed Paul Dion as Manager. This management transition will be effective December 1, 2013.

Paul began his career at WIEC in 1974 when he was hired as Work Order Clerk having graduated from Illinois State University with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. In 1978, he became the cooperative's Accountant, Office Manager in 1983 and was named Manager in 1989.

Tommie is also an Illinois State University alum with a degree in Business Administration. He was hired by WIEC in 1978 as assistant



Tommie Long (l) with Dion (r)

to the Engineer/Work Order Clerk. He became Manager of Operations in 1989.

Current Manager Paul Dion says, "Tommie's knowledge and understanding of our system and his familiarity with our membership make him well suited for this position. He and I have an excellent working relationship which will provide an easy transition."

2013 Nominating Committee results

Ten members of Western Illinois Electrical Coop. were appointed to the 2013 nominating committee. The committee met at the WIEC office on March 25 and April 2 to make nominations for directors. Two directors will be elected at the cooperative's annual meeting on Thursday, June 27.

Attending the meetings were Mark Ford, Carman; Spencer Berry, Nauvoo; Rodney Pence, Dallas City; Jason Jacquot, Jonathan Fecht and Tim Brodie, Carthage; Mike Johnson, Basco; Robert Menn, Plymouth; and Max Roskamp, Sutter.

The following were nominated for director positions:

District 4 - Kent Flesner, West Point



Caption: Some of the 2013 Nominating Committee (l-r) Spencer Berry, Tim Brodie, Robert Menn, Rodney Pence, Jason Jacquot, Jonathan Fecht, Mark Ford and Max Roskamp.

District 5- Dave Biery, Carthage
The nominations have been posted at the Carthage office, as stipulated by the cooperative's by-laws. Any nominations made by petition will be included on the official ballot if they are brought to the (7522-30) WIEC office at least 10 days before the meeting. Nominations may also be made from the floor at the annual meeting.

Alex Ourth meets with Sen. John Sullivan



Alex Ourth meets his Senator in Springfield



Reading the names at the War Memorial



Rubbing Abe's nose is supposed to bring Luck

Illini West Senior earns trip to Springfield as part of Y2W Webquiz.

More than 200 students from the downstate Illinois traveled to Springfield on Wednesday, April 17, for the Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Youth Day.

With rural areas losing population, fewer legislators are serving downstate. The need for citizens to take active roles in making sure their legislators are aware of rural issues is of critical importance.

“Elected officials enjoy the opportunity to meet with students and learn first-hand their concerns. Many issues debated in the General Assembly personally affect their lives,” said Duane Noland, President and CEO

of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC).

Sen. John Sullivan met with Illini West Senior Alex Ourth representing Western Illinois Electrical Coop. He is the son of WIEC members John and Dana Ourth, Carthage. Alex won the trip to Springfield as part of the Youth to Washington WebQuiz contest.

The students had an opportunity to visit their legislators on the Senate floor and question their legislators on key issues. Senator Sullivan asked the group from his district their opinions on the proposed raising of the highway speed limit, after discussing the pros and cons of such an increase. While in Springfield, the students also visited the Illinois Supreme Court, Lincoln’s Tomb,

the War Memorials, the Old State Capitol and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum.

The day was sponsored by the AIEC and is designed to introduce young rural leaders to state government. There were 24 co-ops from across the state represented at the event.

Welcome New Members

Timothy & Tamara Mason, Stronghurst
Robert & Brianne Skien, Carthage

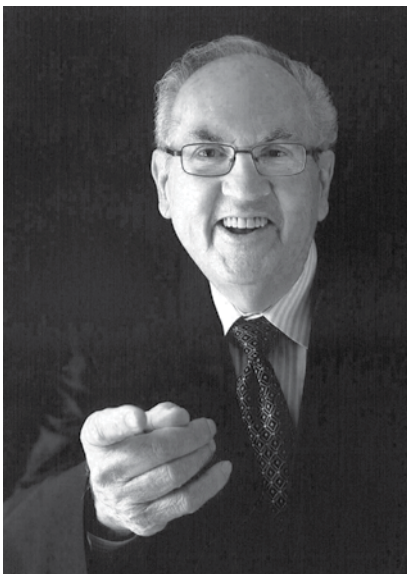
WIEC Office will close at Noon on June 28th.

Annual Meeting entertainment Jerry Parsons shares his humor

WIEC has asked entertainer Jerry Parsons to come and share his humor with WIEC members during the Annual Meeting. Jerry will share his observations of the changes that have occurred from the days before rural residents had electricity or indoor plumbing to modern times with cell phones, and Facebook. He reminds us that we can grow older, but don't necessarily have to grow up. He strives to share lots of humor that reaches all ages, with an inspirational message based on the importance of leaving a legacy of rural values.

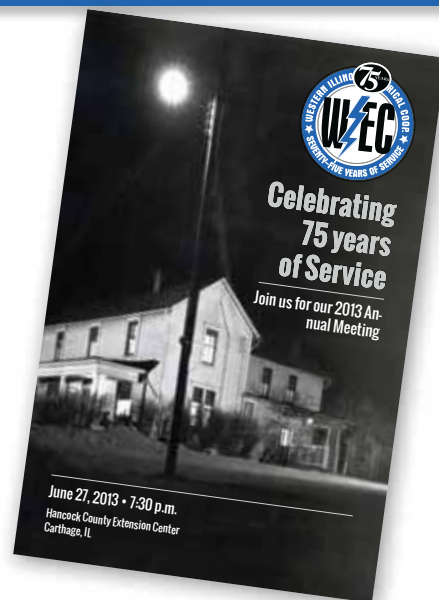
Jerry has spoken at many rural gatherings all over Illinois and all over the United States, including several electric cooperatives in Illinois.

Jerry began his career as a newspaper journalist and later managing editor of the Decatur Herald before moving into corporate communications in the insurance field. Since retiring, Jerry continues to do public speaking as well as ministry in his



home church and volunteer work in his community. He and his wife, Pat, live in Bloomington but have traveled extensively. They have been married 45 years and have two children (7814-2) and five grandchildren.

See page 9 for more details about the 2013 Annual Meeting!



Watch for the Annual Meeting booklet in your mailbox. It will contain the registration card, proxy card and other important information. To save time, please bring the registration card to the annual meeting.

Learn the basics of wiring and electricity

Kids

Sign up for the 4-H Electricity School

The 2013 4-H Electricity School is co-sponsored by the University of Illinois Extension and Western Illinois Electrical Coop.

Participants will be divided into groups depending on their wiring and electrical experience. WIEC electrician Mark Kissinger will help beginning students learn the basic

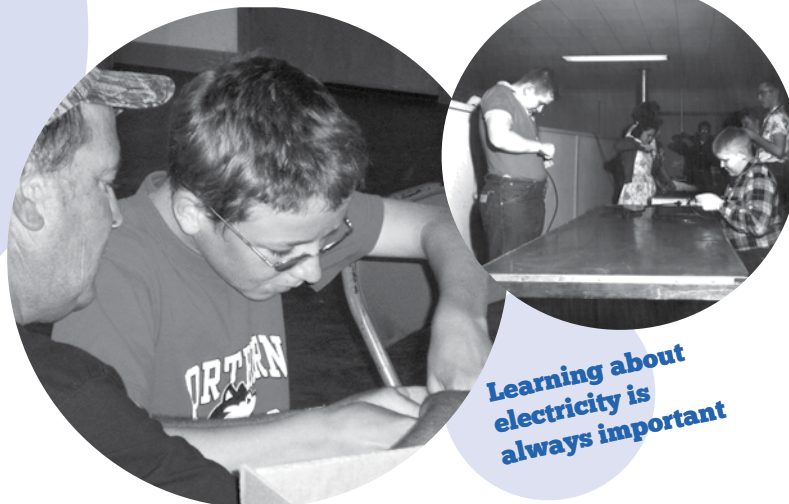
techniques. The more advanced students will make projects that will challenge them as well. All students will take part in skill sessions. The cost of the class will be for materials only.

Students should bring a flat head screwdriver, pliers with a wire cutter, a wire stripper and a pocket knife (with parental consent.) (7710-14)

Who: Children ages 8-18 who live in Hancock or Henderson County. Students do not have to be a member of 4-H to attend.

When: Friday, June 28th from 9:00-10:30 a.m.

Where: Hancock County Extension Center in Carthage



Learning about electricity is always important