

WIEC helps build a stronger rural economy

Western Illinois Electrical Coop. is joining with 30,000 other cooperatives nationwide in October to celebrate National Cooperative Month, which recognizes the many ways cooperatives help to build stronger communities and a stronger economy. “Cooperatives Build” is the theme for this year’s celebration, spotlighting the many advantages cooperatives offer to their members and the communities in which they live and work.

Nationwide, cooperatives create 2.1 million jobs and generate more than \$650 billion in sales and other revenue annually.

“Our cooperative delivers electricity to over 3,600 homes and businesses in our four-county service area in Western Illinois,” says Tommie Long, manager of WIEC. “WIEC generated over \$6 million in revenue last year. Revenue beyond what is required for expenses is either returned to our members as capital credits or reinvested as system improvements to make our system stronger and more reliable. Those dollars circulate close to home, helping to (7710-33) strengthen the local economy.”

WIEC has 15 local employees, with half being WIEC members themselves. Through the real estate, sales and payroll taxes, WIEC contributes to the tax base of our area, helping support schools, police and fire protection and other vital services. A recent economic impact study revealed that

the total economic impact of WIEC employment and our annual operational expenditures pumps over \$2 million dollars back into the local economy. These expenditures impact the bottom line of local business, including hospitals, banks, restaurants, retail stores, and auto repair shops.

Besides having local employees, WIEC has a local board of directors, elected by our membership. We have farmers, bankers, and businessmen and women who serve on our board. Their unique combined skillset brings to the board room an understanding of the dynamics of rural Illinois. Our board sets policy on issues that impact all WIEC members, both residential and commercial. Our board is not just pro-residential or pro-business, they are pro-member. They understand that their

decisions not only impact margins of WIEC, but also our members’ bottom line.

In 1938, the investor-owned utilities had no interest in serving the rural areas, so a group of farm families worked tirelessly to form an electric cooperative that would bring electricity to western Illinois. They named their cooperative Western Illinois Electrical Coop. A cooperative was the way they could have electricity to make their lives not only easier, but more productive and more profitable. WIEC was founded on the belief that an electric cooperative could have a positive impact on the community in which we live. Our board and employees work hard on maintaining the principles on which we were established and keep our members’ best interests at the forefront of all we do.



CO-OP MONTH | OCTOBER 2016



524 North Madison | P.O. Box 338
 Carthage, IL 62321
 www.wiec.net | 800/576-3125

OFFICE HOURS

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
 Monday - Friday

BUSINESS OFFICE

217-357-3125

TO REPORT AN OUTAGE

800-576-3125

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **Rob Gronewold** —
President, Carthage
- **Jay Morrison** —
Vice President, Burnside
- **Janet Spory** —
Secretary/Treasurer, Sutter
- **William Newton** —
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer,
Burnside
- **Mark Burling** —
Director, Carthage
- **Kent Flesner** —
Director, West Point
- **Kim Gullberg** —
Director, Stronghurst

STAFF

- **Tommie Long** — Manager
- **Todd Grotts** — Manager
of Operations
- **Becky Dickinson** — Office
Manager

MAP LOCATION CONTEST

Every month we are printing four members' 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.

Don't be fooled by common energy myths

By Abby Berry

Eating carrots will greatly improve your eyesight, cracking your knuckles leads to arthritis, watching too much TV will harm your vision. We've all heard the old wives' tales, but did you know there are also many misconceptions about home energy use? Don't be fooled by common energy myths.

Myth: The higher the thermostat setting, the faster the home will heat (or cool).

Many people think that walking into a chilly room and raising the thermostat to 85 degrees will heat the room more quickly. This is not true.

Thermostats direct a home's HVAC system to heat or cool to a certain temperature. Drastically adjusting the thermostat setting will not make a difference in how quickly you feel warmer. The same is true for cooling. The Department of Energy recommends setting your thermostat to 78 degrees during summer months, and 68 degrees during winter months.

Myth: Opening the oven door to check on a dish doesn't really waste energy.

While it can be tempting to check the progress of that dish you're cooking in the oven, opening the oven door does waste energy. Every time the oven door is opened, the temperature inside is reduced by as much as 25 (8610-62-1) degrees, delaying the progress of your dish and, more importantly, costing you additional money. If you need to check the progress of a dish, try using the oven

light instead.

Myth: Ceiling fans keep your home cool while you're away.

Believe it or not, many people think this is true. Ceiling fans cool people, not rooms. Ceiling fans circulate room air but do not change the temperature. A running ceiling fan in an empty room is only adding to your electricity use. Remember to turn fans off when you're away and reduce your energy use.

Myth: Reducing my energy use is too expensive.

Many consumers believe that reducing energy use requires expensive up-front costs, like purchasing new, more efficient appliances or construction upgrades to an older home. But the truth is, consumers who make small changes to their energy efficiency habits, such as turning off lights when not in use, sealing air leaks and using a programmable thermostat, can see a reduction in energy consumption.

Remember, energy efficiency doesn't have to be difficult. Focus on small changes to save big. Learn more about ways to save energy by visiting www.togetherwesave.org.

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs 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.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



An average household dedicates about 5% of its energy budget to lighting. Switching to energy-efficient lighting is one of the fastest ways to cut your energy bills. By replacing your home's five most frequently used light fixtures or bulbs with models that have earned the ENERGY STAR rating, you can save \$75 each year.

Source: energy.gov

Security Lights

A small price to pay for home safety and security

As you drive around the countryside at night, security lights dot the horizon. Each security light is added safety and protection to the farm or home it illuminates. A well lit yard or residence provides:

- Safety - to avoid injury when outside in the yard after dark
- Security - to help deter prowlers and varmints, discourage vandals and welcome you home to a lighted yard
- Productivity - a little extra “daylight” can be very valuable when it gets dark so early in the winter months

WIEC has begun phasing out some of our older high pressure sodium rental lights with LED security lights. When a member calls our office with a non-working high pressure sodium security light, we will look at the age of the light and the repair history. If we determine that the light is older, has been repaired a lot or if it cannot be fixed, we will give the member the option of replacing it with a LED rental light.

Although the LED lights cost more, they do last longer, use much less electricity and are more durable than their predecessors.

They do not contain a gas or an element of any kind. Instead, the entire LED is made up of a semiconductor; which is solid in nature and makes LEDs more durable. LEDs achieve full illumination immediately and have an estimated lifespan of almost 50,000 hours, which works out to about 11 years (working 12 hours a day). All this will reduce the repair and maintenance costs WIEC incur.

The LED rental costs are below. The replacement LED lights will have a bright white light instead of the amber color of the high pressure sodium lights.

LED Rental Costs	Type	High-Pressure Sodium Lights Rental
\$5/month	Member pays for electricity WIEC maintains the lights	\$2.50/month
\$10/month	WIEC pays for electricity and maintenance	\$7/month
\$215 plus tax	Purchase the light with free installation	\$104 plus tax

Either way you choose, a security light can be very useful as it lights your way around your home or farm.

Welcome New Members

Todd Courtois, Warsaw
Schyler & Kaitlin Hochgraber,
Sutter
Heather Howell, Burlington IA
Jeffery L & Sandra J. Kimmel,
Stronghurst

Mat Kissinger & Tiffany Mohr,
Carthage
Jennifer Lemmer, Basco
Teretha Miller, Plymouth
Lashay Rodeffer, LaHarpe
Vickie Russell, Carthage

Matt & Rachel Stansbery,
Warsaw
Joshua Yeakey, Niota

WIEC partners with Air Evac

Membership pays

Western Illinois Electrical Coop.'s residential members have the opportunity to join Air Evac Lifeteam (part of the AirMedCare Network) program through an affordable billing plan. This is an easy and affordable way to get the fast air transportation you and your family may need someday in an emergency.

Members have the option to choose the convenience of paying a monthly fee or an annual fee. Each plan is offered at a discounted rate to members of WIEC.

Options are:

■ Option 1 – The monthly fee of \$5 per household will appear right on your monthly WIEC bill. Members can pay for their Air Evac Lifeteam membership when they pay their electric bill.

■ Option 2 – WIEC members can enroll annually and pay an annual fee of \$55 directly to Air Evac. This gives WIEC members a \$10 annual discount.

■ Option 3 – Memberships for longer than one year are available as well. (Contact our office for details.)

As a member, you're covered by the entire AirMedCare Network—hundreds of bases across 32 states—with continuous expansion of additional bases. AirMedCare is known as providing air medical services to medically (681-12) underserved areas of



rural America. And, WIEC is known for providing our members with the best customer service.

We have joined together to improve the quality of life to those we serve.

Call the WIEC office for more details.

LIHEAP heating assistance money available

Call for now 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.

For households with residents over 60 years and receiving disability payments, appointments began on September 1. For families with children under 6, appointments begin on October 1. (8516-19-1) For the rest

of the general public, appointments can be made after November 1.

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	\$1,485
2	\$2,003

(add \$520 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