

WIEC NEWS

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

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Western Illinois and Adams Electric study benefits of combining cooperatives

The two not-for-profit cooperatives plan to study the benefits of combining forces to improve service and efficiency for members

Western Illinois Electrical Coop. in Carthage and Adams Electric Cooperative in Camp Point have initiated a consolidation study.

With the announcement of Western Illinois Electrical Coop. Manager Paul Dion's retirement in 2013, both Boards are evaluating the challenges and the benefits of consolidation. Initial discussions would have Jim Thompson, General Manager of Adams Electric Cooperative serving as interim manager with the goal of moving towards consolidation.

The study will determine how combining the cooperatives would financially benefit both memberships and provide a higher quality of service. Both Adams Electric Cooperative and Western Illinois Electrical Coop. are dedicated to improving the quality of life in western Illinois by providing reliable and affordable electricity to their members. Both Cooperatives have an excellent member service reputation.

"The goal will be to take two good cooperatives and make one great cooperative," said Paul Dion, Manager of Western Illinois Electrical Coop.

The two cooperatives have been sharing technical knowledge with metering equipment and will begin joint purchasing in 2012. "We have found many opportunities to work together for cost savings. We currently share expensive inventory items and line construction

equipment plus share knowledge of metering equipment," explained Jim Thompson, General Manager of Adams Electric Cooperative. "It all saves money for our membership."

"We look for every way we can to be as efficient as possible," said Paul Dion. "Costs are rising, and it is the management and board's duty to plan for the future and keep rates as low as possible."

The Board of Directors from both cooperatives will consider many topics including: finances, board governance (size, timing, elections), human resources (staffing levels and benefits), services and technological opportunities. There are many issues to resolve in order to develop a consolidation plan that is beneficial to the members of both cooperatives.

No employees will lose their jobs as a result of the consolidation as changes will be made through attrition. Both Boards see consolidation as an opportunity for employees in terms of growth and professional development.

The Boards also agree that it is crucial to keep both cooperative offices open for the convenience of their members.

"We want to be confident such a consolidation will improve the level of service and commitment to our members," said Robert Gronewold, President of Western Illinois Electrical Coop.'s Board of Directors.

For the consolidation to be approved,

each cooperative must gain approval from two-thirds of the members voting. If consolidation occurs, any capital credits and member equity earned will not be lost.

"Adams Electric Cooperative and Western Illinois Electrical Coop. share common borders in Adams and Hancock counties," said Jim Thompson. "It just makes sense for us to look at this in order to save money and improve service for our members."

Western Illinois and Adams Electric are among 25 electric distribution cooperatives in Illinois. Adams Electric has 34 employees who serve 8,516 members in Adams, Brown, Schuyler, Pike, Hancock, McDonough, and Fulton counties on 2,226 miles of line. Western Illinois has 15 employees who serve 3,600 members in Adams, Hancock, Henderson and McDonough counties on 1,209 miles of line. Both cooperatives are members of Touchstone Energy – an alliance of more than 700 consumer-owned electric utilities around the country.

"One thing that won't change is your voice as a member-owner of your electric cooperative," said Jim Benz, President of Adams Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors.

Both cooperatives will provide monthly updates in their member newsletters regarding the consolidation study progress.



Western Illinois
ELECTRICAL COOP.
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

524 North Madison | P.O. Box 338
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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.

Do you have what it takes to be a WIEC director?

The nominating committee will soon be meeting to find qualified candidates for the WIEC board of directors. Have you ever wanted to learn more about your cooperative? Would you like to know where the money comes from and where the money goes? These are just some of the topics you will learn about as a director.

Here are a few qualifications that are needed.

What a director needs to be:

- Be accessible to people in their district. While it helps to be sympathetic to the needs of the members, the director must keep the best interest of the entire cooperative in mind.
- Be able to attend most regular board meetings and any special meetings that come up from time to time. (Regular board meetings are usually the 4th Thursday of the month)
- Be an independent thinker, but also a cooperator.
- Be capable of acquiring the knowledge necessary to cope with the issues of a modern electric utility, including finances.
- Be one who can accept and direct change.

- Be of sufficient stature to command the respect of management, employees, fellow board members, cooperative members and the public.
- Be willing to commit adequate time to the work of the board to be an effective member and properly discharge the duties of the board. Be willing to accept the unpleasant moments of a director's (4718-25) experience;
- Let management manage.

What the board does not do:

- The board does not oversee WIEC's day-to-day operations. Directors establish policies and point the cooperative in the direction they want employees to follow. The employees decide the best way to get the job done.
- Directors aren't required to be walking encyclopedias about electric utilities when they are elected. But it is their job to become knowledgeable about issues facing Western Illinois Electrical Coop. so they can make intelligent decisions.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Don't get your electric bill caught in a spin cycle! When doing laundry, use cold water. If your dryer has a moisture meter, use it to prevent over-drying clothes — 50 minutes often works best for a full load. And remember to check your lint filter each time before you run a load to help your dryer run more efficiently (and save energy). Find more ways to save at TogetherWeSave.com.

Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

Planning any spring spruce-ups?

Call WIEC and J.U.L.I.E. before beginning any outdoor projects



Is there a new deck in your future? Did the trees in the back yard die due to last summer's dry spell? Before beginning any spring digging projects, look down. Are there any underground utility lines, water lines or telephone cable in the way? Even when digging down only a few inches, it's important to know what's there. Many utilities are buried just inches below the surface.

Please call the WIEC office to locate underground electrical lines on either side of the meter. We ask for 24-hour notice. To locate water, sewer, phone, gas, cable and all other utility lines, call JULIE at 8-1-1 (or 1-800-892-0123). They require 48-hour notice. Both services are free.

By having professionals mark any underground lines in the area, you will avoid any potential serious injury and prevent possible damage to the utility lines that could disrupt service to your home and your neighbors. Besides being a good idea, calling (4612-8) J.U.L.I.E is the law.



Call WIEC
1-217-357-3125 ♦ 1-800-576-3125 ♦ Weekdays 8-5

Welcome New Members

Donna Davidson, Warsaw
Bethany Gingerich, Niota
Amber Scheeler, Dallas City

John C. Schmitt, Quincy
Terry Turner Farms, Inc, Hamilton
Matt Tucker, Lomax

Nominating committee appointed

WIEC's Board of Directors recently appointed the following members to serve on the 2012 nominating committee: District No. 1 – Harold Ravenscraft, Lomax and Alan White, Carman; District No. 2 – Spencer Berry, Nauvoo; and Lane Sinele, Niota; District No. 3 – Roger Hogan, Niota and Ned Woolverton, Niota; District No. 4 – Ryan Jacquot, Carthage; (356-28) District No. 5 – Jonathan Fecht, Carthage; District No. 6 – Robert Menn, Plymouth; and District No. 7 – Max Roskamp, Sutter.

Two members are appointed from the districts whose board terms expire each year, with one being appointed from remaining districts. These members will nominate at least one member for a 3-year term to represent Districts 1, 2, and 3.

Currently, Mike Ford represents District 1, Bill Newton represents District 2 and Jay Morrison represents District 3.

The first meeting of the 2012 Nominating Committee will be at 7 p.m., April 9 at the Carthage office.

WIEC's office will be closed in observance of Good Friday on Friday, April 6.

As always, in case of power emergencies, call 217-357-3125 or 1-800-576-3125.

Please wait and call for questions concerning billing, payment arrangements, capital credits or other non-emergency matters until normal business hours



Consider electrical hazards during spring planting season

Avoid raising the arms of planters, cultivators or truck beds near power lines.

Planning season will soon be underway, bringing with it long hours for farm workers in the fields. Before planting gets underway, Safe Electricity urges farm workers to evaluate their farm activities and work practices that take place around power lines.

Many farm workers are killed each year when their farm equipment makes contact with overhead power lines. With the knowledge of a few safety rules, these tragic accidents can be (3616-9) prevented.

“Make sure you know the location of power lines and keep farm equipment

at least 10 feet away from them,” says Molly Hall, Safe Electricity Director. “Keep in mind, the minimum 10 foot distance is a 360-degree rule – below, to the side and above lines. It may take a little more time, but ensuring proper clearance can save lives.”

Today’s larger farms require transporting tractors and equipment to fields several miles away. Before transit, avoid raising the arms of planters, cultivators or

The minimum 10 foot distance is a 360-degree rule – below, to the side and above lines

truck beds near power lines. Utility lines typically are not insulated, meaning that the lines are bare; this makes it easier to create a channel for electricity and electrocution to occur. So, it is very important to be aware of increased height when loading and transporting larger modern tractors.

Also, many tractors are now equipped with radios and communications systems that have antennas extending from the cab to fifteen feet above the ground. When near power lines, these antennas are hazardous.

Spring Planting Guide 101

Look up to see potential problems

Congratulations! You just brought home a beautiful tree to plant. But is it the correct one for where you’re going to plant it? Look up! Are there any overhead electric lines around? Consider these lines as you develop a landscaping plan. Planting a tree that will grow to 40’ directly under a 30’ tall power line is not a good idea. Overhead lines need to be free of tree branches that could come into contact during heavy winds or ice or that could bounce into power lines on windy days, causing blinking lights or momentary outages.

Consult your arborist at the tree nursery before you buy for ideas on what types of trees that will be a good match for planting around power lines.

All responsible arborists and their associations subscribe to the following tree-planting rules in relation to overhead power lines.

Low Zone: Tree species that will not exceed 25 feet in height can be planted directly beneath power lines and for 20 feet to either side. Taller existing trees in this zone will have to be pruned so they’ll grow around the wires. Such pruning may (and probably will) detract from the beauty of the tree and may leave it susceptible to insects and disease.

Medium Zone: Trees that grow to 40 feet in height at maturity are recommended for areas immediately adjacent to the Low Zone. This will rule out

the possibility of limbs overhanging the power lines and will need pruning or trees that can topple into the lines during a bad storm.

Tall Zone: Taller maturing trees should be planted at a distance of 50 feet or more from the power lines. This will ensure they’ll reach their full potential undisturbed by pruning. There is also little likelihood that wind or ice will cause them to do damage to the power lines.

Trees and overhead power lines can co-exist. But when the wrong tree is planted in the wrong place, the result may be an impending power outage during an ice or windstorm.