

WIEC NEWS

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

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

Celebrate National Cooperative Month with WIEC

Join Western Illinois Electrical Coop. in celebrating cooperatives in Illinois and across America during National Cooperative Month for Member Appreciation Day on Wednesday, October 24 at the Carthage office. Members can talk with WIEC employees and enjoy cookies, cider and coffee. All registered members will receive a free gift.

Every October, cooperatives are recognized for the qualities that make the business model unique: local democratic control, commitment to supporting the communities they serve and improving quality of life, special benefits and services, and the return of margins (the co-op term for profits) back to members in the form of capital credits.

“Cooperatives are special,” says Paul Dion, WIEC Manager. “We have an obligation to provide reliable, afford-

able, and safe electricity, but we take that a step further. We also have a responsibility to support our members and the communities where we all live.”

WIEC is proud to be part of America’s cooperative network, which employs more than 850,000 people. Across the nation, 29,000 co-ops and credit unions generate \$74 billion in annual wages and nearly \$500 billion in revenue. WIEC is one of more than 900 electric cooperatives, public utility districts and public power districts serving 42 million people in 47 states.

“Electric cooperatives were formed because rural communities were struggling for lack of investment,” Dion explains. “Seventy-four years ago, neighbors banded together and lit up Hancock and Henderson Counties when no one else would. That’s what we celebrate each October.”

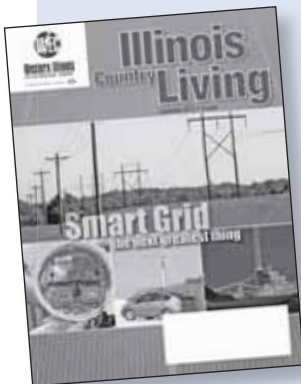
Member Appreciation Day!

Help us celebrate October as Cooperative Month

October 24th
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. at the
WIEC Office

Cookies, cider and coffee
will be served

All registered members
will receive a
FREE GIFT.



Why do I receive the WIEC News?

We send the WIEC News imbedded in the Illinois Country Living to our members because it is a convenient and economical way to share information. It takes the place of many mailings we would otherwise make to get the information about our services, important meetings, current happenings and other information we want the members to know about. Especially with the proposed consolidation with Adams Electric being discussed, getting information (8620-56) out is essential. Besides, members tell us they love the recipes in the back of the Illinois Country Living.

Sending members the WIEC News/Illinois Country Living helps fulfill one of our basic principles – to educate and communicate openly with our members.



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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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.

Cooperative Trivia

Each month you pay your electric bill to Western Illinois Electrical Coop. But what exactly is a cooperative. Most know that we are owned by our members and that we have an Annual Meeting in June. WIEC also sends their members the Illinois Country Living with those great recipes in the back of the magazine. But just how much do you know about cooperatives? Take this little quiz and test your knowledge.

QUESTION: How many times would cooperatively owned distribution power lines circle the equator? _____

QUESTION: How many people in the world live without electricity? _____

QUESTION: Today a wooden utility pole costs about \$265. How much did a pole cost in 1940? _____

QUESTION: How many states have electric cooperatives? _____

QUESTION: What percentage of America's landmass do electric co-op lines cover? _____

QUESTION: How many people do America's electric co-ops employ? _____



Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

Two degrees can make a big difference on your electric bill. Setting your thermostat 2 degrees Fahrenheit higher in summer and lower in the winter results in major energy savings. Investing in a programmable thermostat can save even more—these devices automatically lower and raise your home's temperature. Set it and forget it! Find more ways to save at TogetherWeSave.com.

Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

Welcome New Members

Central States Tower, Wheaton Il Ashley Thoennes, Plymouth
Margaret Robinson, Carthage

Consolidation Study Update

The board of directors from both cooperatives created six committees to focus on different areas of the consolidation study. The six committees are: Board Restructuring/Governance; Bylaws; Wages and Benefits; Communication; Rates and Finance. The committees met for their first discussions the second week of August.

The Board Restructuring/Governance Committee is working on defining a new territory map covering the total consolidated area and dividing it into nine director districts. They are considering options to move from 16 directors down to nine directors. They are also comparing director guidelines and requirements.

The Bylaw Committee is comparing bylaws between the two coop-

eratives. They will also use a bylaw model provided by the national organization (NRECA) for comparison. Both cooperative attorneys will be involved in developing legal plans for consolidation.

The Wages and Benefits Committee are currently considering options to consolidate wages and benefits. Options for the retirement benefits are being discussed. Health care will be discussed in more detail at the next committee meeting.

The Communications Committee will keep employees and members informed about the consolidation study by utilizing the internal and external newsletters, and providing informational meetings and discussions where necessary.

The Rate Committee is putting

together a timeline to include a cost-of-service study for a new cooperative in 2014 and a plan to consolidate rates. Most rate structures are similar and will not require major changes. In general, WIEC's rate structures have lower facility charges and higher kWh charges while AEC's rate structures have higher facility charges and lower kWh charges.

The Finance Committee is examining the financial forecast of a consolidated cooperative compared to independent cooperatives. They are also reviewing equipment budgets, capital credit retirements, construction work, insurance levels, and loans.

As the committees move forward in their discussions, watch for updates in this newsletter and on our website at wiec.net.

Shop Co-op!

WIEC is one of more than 900 electric cooperatives in America. But we're just one type of cooperative—more than 29,200 operate in our country, including a large segment of the agriculture industry. From dairy to oranges, and almonds to cotton, our nation's farmers know the value of the cooperative business model.

The next time you're at the grocery store, see how many items you can purchase that were produced by a co-op.

Starting in the produce section, pick up some Ocean Spray cranberries or Sunkist oranges, tangerines, grapes, or grapefruit.

Cruise on over to the refrigerated cases and take a look at the eggs—95 percent of America's eggs are produced and marketed by co-ops. Then pick up some Florida Natural orange juice, Land O'Lakes butter, Cabot or Tillamook Cheese, and Organic



Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc. cooperative is celebrating their 75th anniversary

Valley milk. Need a warm drink? Try Equal Exchange coffee, tea, and hot chocolate.

Finally, drop some Blue Diamond almonds in your cart—a perfect pick-me-up for that 3 p.m. slump.

Now that you've finished your grocery shopping, make your way to Ace Hardware or True Value to get supplies for your weekend projects. Or go to a mall (7512-58) to replace your old, falling-apart blue jeans with a new pair from GAP, Banana Republic, or Guess—all three get their cotton from

Plains Cotton Growers Cooperative's Denimatrix. But before you do that, head to your credit union—another cooperative® to make a deposit to cover all your purchases.

The cooperative business model promotes self-sustainment and local economic growth. Support our nation's cooperatives and local co-ops, as we work together to build a better world. Find a co-op near you at www.gocoop.org.

YOU get the credit

WIEC retires more than \$145,000 to members

It's time for you to get the credit—capital credits, that is—for helping build, sustain, and grow Western Illinois Electrical Coop. This month, WIEC retires more than \$145,000 to our members who were on our lines in 1978.

When you signed up to receive electric service from WIEC you became a member of an electric utility. While investor-owned utilities return a portion of any profits back to their shareholders, electric co-ops operate on an at-cost basis. So instead of returning leftover funds, known as margins, to folks who might not live in the same region or even the same state as you do, WIEC allocates and periodically retires capital credits based on how (7815-44) much electricity you purchased during a year.

This year, members who were on our lines in 1978 will receive capital credits check in the mail, reflecting their contribution of capital to and ownership of, the cooperative during those years. That may seem like a long time ago. However, those funds helped us keep the lid on rates, reduced the amount of money we needed to borrow from outside lenders to build, maintain, and expand a reliable electric distribution system, and covered emergency expenses.

The capital credit checks should be in the mail the first week in November.

LIHEAP heating assistance money available

Call now for 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 (7713-2) household.

For households with children less than five years of age, appointments begin on October 1. For the general public, appointments begin on 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.

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.

If your household income is at or below these levels, you may be eligible for assistance:

Household size	30 Day Income
1	\$1,396
2	\$1,891

(add \$495 for each additional house member)

Answers:

- U.S. electric cooperatives own 2.5 million miles of distribution lines—enough to circle the equator more than 100 times! WIEC has over 1,200 miles of line (58 miles underground and 1152 miles overhead) which would be almost 6 round trips to Springfield IL from Carthage.
- 2 Billion
About \$8—\$27 if you include installation costs and labor.
- 47 (Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island do not.)
- 75%
- 70,000 people—in 900 different electric coops. WIEC employs 15 full time employees.