

WIEC NEWS

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

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 



Peace on Earth will come to stay, When we live Christmas every day.

Helen Steiner Rice



The Board of Directors and Employees of Western Illinois Electrical Coop. wish our members peace on earth this holiday season.

In observance of Christmas, WIEC will close at Noon on December 24 and will reopen on December 26. The WIEC office will also close at Noon on December 31 and reopen January 2.

WIEC holds 18th Annual Safety Fair

Kids learn to Live Smart, Keep Safe and Have Fun

On September 26th, 200 fifth graders from seven elementary schools in WIEC's service territory descended on Carthage for the 18th Annual Safety Fair. Each year, students hear about different safety topics including electrical safety, bike safety, ATV safety, farm safety and emergency preparedness. The last session for the students is a magic show

where the underlying message is "Reach for Success Drug-free." Teachers tell us that the students have a lot of fun and they learned valuable information.

If one person will remember something they learned during Safety Fair, that keeps them from harm when faced with an emergency, then the day is deemed a success.



▲ Kyle Finley, of Live Line Demo, shows the equipment used to work on energized electric lines. Here, he uses the hot stick to grab this student's finger! Kyle explains how an electrical system works in ways the kids can understand. He always stresses the importance of staying in a car if involved in an accident involving a power pole. This year, he pointed out how drivers should not text while driving.

See additional photos on page 16c.



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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- **Rob Gronewold** —
President, Carthage
- **Jay Morrison** —
Vice President, Niota
- **Janet Spory** —
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Director, Basco
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- **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.

Newton earns CCD Certificate

In this era of increased scrutiny of boards and directors, it is more important than ever for directors to understand their roles and responsibilities and to have the knowledge and skills to govern today's cooperatives. National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Director Education program is specifically designed to address the learning needs of electric cooperative directors. Training courses offered address board governance, financial decision-making,



strategic planning, and current and emerging issues. Upon taking these classes and successfully completing a learning assessment for each, a director can earn the Certified Cooperative Director (CCD) designation.

WIEC Director Bill Newton, Burnside, was recognized at the Region 5 and 6 meeting in Minneapolis for completing the requirements to become a CCD and received his certificate. Congratulations Bill!

Attention High School Seniors...



The deadline for applying for the Illinois Electric Cooperatives' Memorial Scholarships is December 31, 2012. This applies to both paper applications and applying online. Ask your guidance counselor or call our office for an (4718-37) application and information from our Web site at www.wiec.net.

Consolidation Report

The WIEC Board of Directors decided at the October 25, 2012 board meeting to discontinue consolidation talks with Adams Electric Cooperative. The board's desire is to stay as we are and retain local control. The board members are proud of WIEC and are pleased with the cooperative we've become. WIEC is in strong financial shape, provides excellent customer service, and is very accessible and familiar with our members. We are positioned for continued success now and in the future.

The Western Board is grateful to the Adams Electric Cooperative Board and Management for their hard work and cooperation during the consolidation discussions.



Energy Efficiency
Tip of the Month

Did you know a computer can draw as much electricity as a new refrigerator? Turn it off when not in use or switch on its energy-saving mode. Also, cell phone and mp3 player chargers as well as plasma TVs and entertainment centers pull (4510-64) power even when they're off. Unplug these and other appliances to save on your electric bill. Find more ways to save at TogetherWeSave.com.

Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives



◀ *Linemen Andy Lafeber (L) and Cody Grainger (R) talk to students about the work they do. Later Lineman Tim Shumate demonstrated his pole climbing technique.* ▶



Thank you!

A big thank you goes out to the people and the organizations that are such an integral part of the fair. Without them, the Safety Fair would not be possible.

- Sly Fox Food Service – ordering, preparing the food and donating the bottled water
- Illini West High School Student Council and sponsor, MJ Palmer
- Marine Bank & Trust - supplying paper goods

We would also like to thank the following presenters for donating their time:

- State Trooper Dan Leezer
- Mitch Stice and Trevor Finch, Martin, Kroencke and Sullivan
- Carthage Clipper Fire Dept.
- Dawn Weinberg, University of Illinois Extension
- Maria Hopp, 9-1-1 coordinator – Hancock Co.
- Hancock Co. Ambulance Service

Students went through the Smoke House. When the “house” filled with smoke, they learned to feel the door handle to see if it was warm. A hot door knob indicates fire on the other side. Here, students crawled out the window to escape. ▶



◀ *Trooper Dan Leezer goes over hand signals with the students. Do you know which way they will turn?*

Mitch Stice of Martin Kroencke Sullivan, Carthage, brought an ATV and discussed the importance of wearing helmets and other steps to take to ride ATVs safely. ▶



Communities and counties form buying co-ops for power

Many communities and counties across Illinois are voting on aggregating their citizen's buying power into basically power purchasing cooperatives. This community and county wholesale power buying aggregation is what Illinois electric cooperatives have already been doing for their member-owners, in some cases for over 75 years.

Under the 1997 Illinois deregulation law, not-for-profit electric cooperatives such as WIEC and municipally owned utilities were treated differently than for-profit, investor-owned utilities such as Ameren and Commonwealth Edison. Because of their consumer-owned structure and aggregated buying power, the not-for-profit and locally owned and controlled electric cooperatives were allowed to maintain their local decision making authority on whether or not to maintain their aggregated buying power as a group, or to enter the deregulated market with both its risks and potential rewards.

Until recently, deregulation has not been a very successful experiment with a critical marketplace like electricity. And, (4616-25-1) there have been very mixed results in the few states that have deregulated the power marketplace.

With lower demand for electricity and excess supply of power caused by the recession, plus historically low natural gas prices due to new found reserves created with fracking technology, current market based wholesale power prices have declined. The decline in short term market based prices cre-

ated what some expect to be a short term opportunity for a number of Alternative Retail Electric Supplier (ARES) power marketers. They have been able to secure short-term contracts and have targeted individuals who could switch electric suppliers. More recently in Illinois, they have sought after aggregated markets, specifically communities and counties.

Electric cooperatives already provide market aggregation and have formed generation and transmission cooperatives to provide long-term stability in power supply and price. This long-term approach is different than the approach ARES power marketers have taken, which includes aggressive mail and phone marketing and the marketing of short term one to three year contracts for wholesale power. (3629-25)

A reasonable analogy would be entering into a short-term adjustable rate mortgage loan agreement that contained a low variable rate of interest and a "balloon provision" (which requires all amounts due and owing to be paid in full at the end of a two or three year term, or refinanced at a much higher rate). Contrast this with signing a loan for a 30-year period at a fixed rate. Prudence for those who expect to be in business long term would likely be to choose the long term fixed rate, rather than the riskier short-term rate that can be expected to increase over the long term. Your co-op has respectfully chosen what the board deems to be the more prudent approach for the

long-term. In January 2002, the WIEC board decided not to open our service territories to the deregulated market. This decision was reaffirmed at the August 2012 board meeting.

To enter into the deregulated market, member elected board members and locally elected municipal leaders would need to vote to open up their respective service territories to the marketing efforts of ARES power marketers. It is important to note that only the wholesale energy portion of electric bills would be open to the ARES marketing efforts. The responsibility for local service, billing and outages plus transmitting and distributing the wholesale power is still the local utility's obligation and expense.

The not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives and municipal utilities have invested millions of dollars on behalf of their members and consumers in power supply options from the latest clean coal technology to renewable wind energy projects so as to provide long-term power supply stability. A long-term diversified power supply portfolio is simply a prudent risk management approach. This power supply investment and diversification, plus cooperative aggregation of members' buying power has proven successful over the long haul, and should provide reliability and price stability for the energy needs of member-owners, not just in the short term of a few years, but for decades to come.

Welcome New Members

Kasey Bawden, Hamilton
Natasha May Brentise, Stronghurst
Austin Brown, Plymouth
Matthew & Kimberly Burford, Carthage
Melissa Derr, Niota

Chad & Elizabeth Dorothy, Carthage
Misti Duncan, Dallas City
Tonya Garnsey, Niota
Elizabeth Johnson, Stronghurst
Justin Horrichs, Plymouth

Beth Newton, Dallas City
Clinton Stambaugh, Lomax
Lucas Stassel, Gladstone
William & Deborah Tucker, Carthage
Russell G Willdrick, LaHarpe