Western Illinois Electrical Coop. NEWS

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

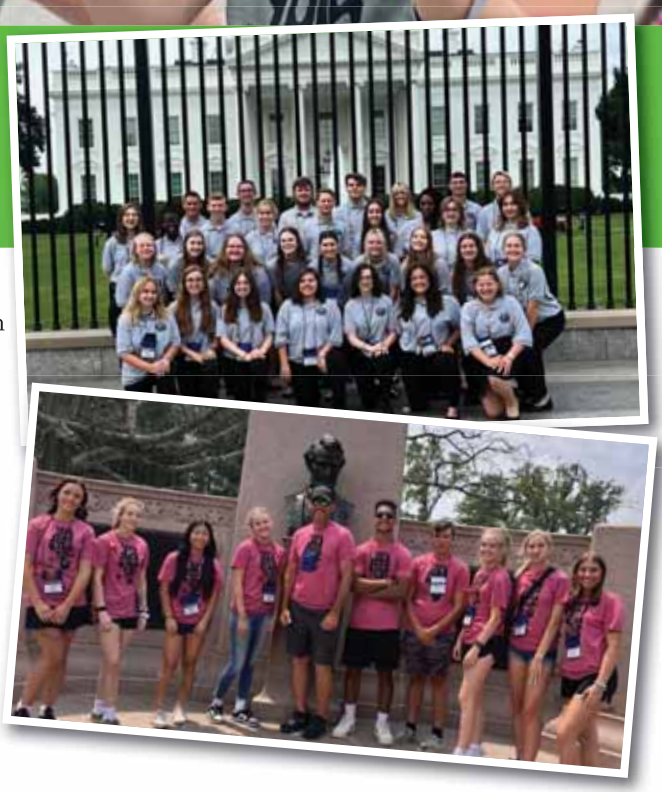
P.O. Box 338 ■ Carthage, Illinois 62321 ■ www.wiec.net ■ 800-576-3125

Don't miss your chance!

Deadline to apply is Feb. 16, 2024

Youth Day • Springfield • March 20, 2024

Youth Tour • Washington, D.C. • June 14-21, 2024



Western Illinois Electrical Coop. continues to encourage high school students to learn more about government and their role in it by sponsoring the Youth Day and Youth to Washington events.

Here's how it works. WIEC will award the top six entrants an all-expense-paid trip to Springfield, Ill., as part of the Youth Day/ Springfield event, to visit the Illinois State Capital on March 20, 2024. The group will get to see their state government in action, up-close and personal. One of these six students will then be awarded the trip to Washington, D.C., later in the year. **5531-7**

To enter the contest, students just need to complete a simple application. The application can be found on our website at www.wiec.net, or you may contact our office directly at 217-357-3125 or 800-576-3125 to have us send you one another way. **The deadline to apply is Feb. 16, 2024.**

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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

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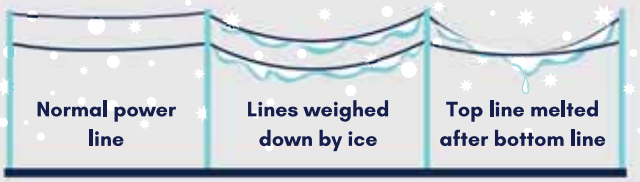
- **Todd Grotts** — General Manager
- **Ryan Biery** — Manager of Operations
- **Wendi Whitaker** — Finance and Accounting Manager

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.



ICE ON POWER LINES IS A WEIGHTY SUBJECT

When it comes to getting electricity across power lines and into homes, ice can be a force to be reckoned with.

ICE ON DISTRIBUTION LINES

Ice can quickly lead to broken power poles and other pole equipment. Ice can also make falling tree branches 30x heavier and much more likely to break power lines.

ON A 300-FOOT SPAN OF 1-INCH-THICK POWER LINES

- 1/2 inch of ice adds 281 pounds of weight
- 1 inch of ice adds 749 pounds of weight
- 2 inches of ice adds 2,248 pounds of weight

WHEN ICE MELTS

Melting ice can cause power outages. If ice on the bottom (neutral) line melts before the lines above, it can cause the lines to touch.

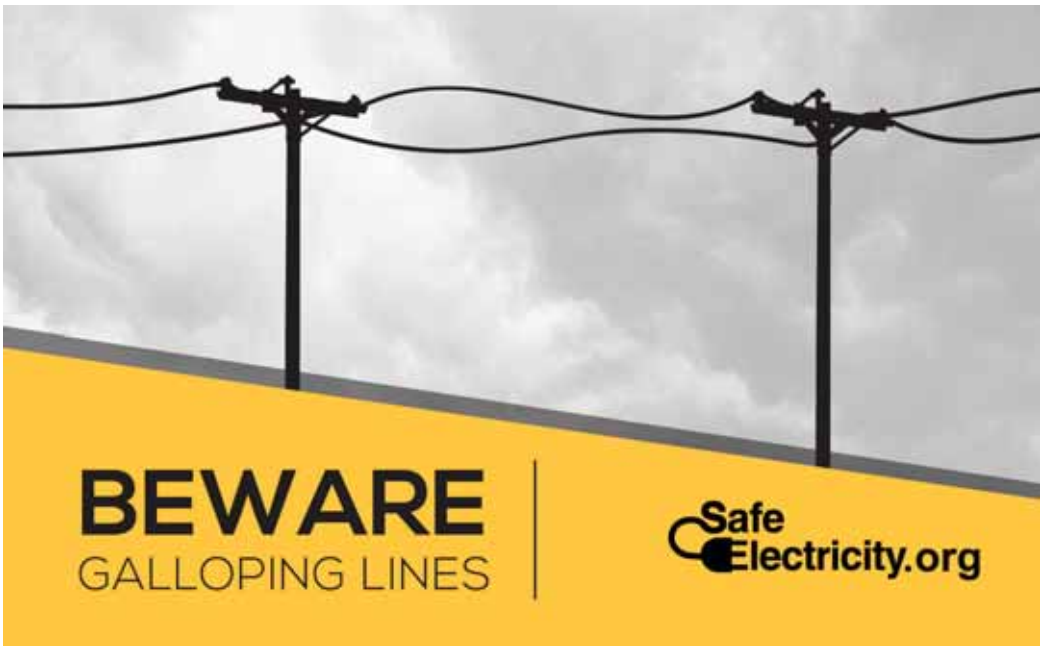
OTHER ICE FACTS

- Damage can begin when ice exceeds 1/4 of an inch
- 1/2 inch of ice can cause a line to sag up to 12 inches
- Pressure can also be caused by a broken tree limb
- Both ice and melting ice can cause power outages

SafeElectricity.org®

Source: Jerri Imgarten-Whitley and Victory Electric Cooperative

Horses gallop — and so can power lines



How can galloping lines impact power transmission and distribution?

Galloping power lines are typically caused when ice and high winds occur at the same time. Freezing rain creates icicles and odd-shaped ice formations on power lines and conductors. The ice buildup changes how wind and air impact the now misshapen, ice-covered line. This change in airflow can cause the power line to start to bounce. Once the lines get going, they can bounce and buck enough to hit another line, damage themselves enough to cause a power outage or even fall to the ground.

There is not much a power company can do to alleviate galloping lines, since the wild motion is caused by Mother Nature. To help prevent this, many power lines have special mechanisms, such as twisted wire or round or angular pieces of metal, attached to the line. While these can help, sometimes they are no match for severe ice and whipping winds.

Aside from ice storms, year-round storms can cause damaging winds, which can knock down power lines and blow trees and limbs onto the lines. Keep the following safety tips in mind:

- When you see power lines on the ground, stay away, warn others to stay away and contact the electric utility or 911. Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live. **483-50**
- Any utility wire, including telephone or cable lines that are sagging or down, could be in contact with an energized power line, also making it dangerous. Do not try to guess the type of line — stay away from all lines.
- Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide electrical hazards. Downed power lines can energize objects around them, such as chain-link fences and metal culverts.
- Keep in mind that a dead line could become energized during power restoration efforts or with improper use of generators.
- Never drive over a downed line. It could start a chain reaction and cause additional poles or other equipment to collapse.
- If you are in a car that has contacted or is near a downed power line, stay in your vehicle. Wait until the utility crew has arrived and deenergized the line. Warn others not to approach the car.
- Only exit a car or cab near or on downed lines if there is a fire. If this happens, cross your arms over your chest and make a solid jump out and away from the car with both feet together. Then hop away at least 50 feet or more while continuing to keep both feet together.

For more electrical safety information, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Welcome new members

November 2023

Jesse Hamilton
Scott Meyer
Jeffrey Moses

Mary Prchal
Usiel Almazain Reyes &
Lidia Paola Arallano

Sharon L. Robey
Jacob Swearingen
Charlene Winking

How extreme winter weather impacts reliability

When outdoor temperatures drop, our electricity use increases. That's because we're doing more activities inside, and our heating systems are running longer and more often to counteract colder outdoor temperatures. Factor in that we all tend to use electricity at the same times — in the morning and early evenings — and that equals a lot of strain on our electric grid.

At Western Illinois Electrical Coop., we work closely with our generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative in resource and infrastructure planning to ensure you have the power you need whenever you flip a switch, but the electric grid is much larger than your local co-op and the supplying G&T. **5817-41**

In winter months, when even more electricity is being used simultaneously across the country, it is possible for electricity demand to exceed supply, especially if an unexpected event like a sudden snow or ice storm or equipment malfunction occurs. If this happens, which is rare, the grid operator for our region of the country may call for rolling power outages to relieve pressure on the grid, and Western Illinois Electrical Coop. will inform you about the situation.

WIEC and our G&T take proactive steps to create a resilient portion of the grid and ensure electric reliability in extreme weather, including regular system maintenance, grid modernization efforts and disaster response planning, but it takes everyone to keep the grid reliable.

To help keep the heat on for you, your family and neighbors, here are a few things you can do to relieve pressure on the grid (and save a little money along the way):

- Select the lowest comfortable thermostat setting and turn it down several degrees whenever possible. Your heating system must run longer to make up the difference between the thermostat temp and the outdoor temp.
  - ✓ **PRO TIP:** Seal air leaks around windows and exterior doors with caulk and weatherstripping. Air leaks and drafts force your heating system to work harder than necessary.
- Stagger your use of major appliances such as dishwashers, ovens and dryers.
  - ✓ **PRO TIP:** Start the dishwasher before you go to bed and use smaller countertop appliances like slow cookers and air fryers to save energy.
- Ensure that your heating system is optimized for efficiency with regular maintenance and proper insulation.
  - ✓ **PRO TIP:** Make sure your furnace filter isn't clogged and dirty. Replace it as needed.
- When possible, use cold water to reduce water heating costs.
  - ✓ **PRO TIP:** Setting your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees can help you save energy and reduce mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.
- Unplug devices when not in use to eliminate unnecessary energy use. Even when turned off, electronics in standby mode consume energy.
  - ✓ **PRO TIP:** Plug devices into a power strip so you can turn them all off at once with the push of a button.

As we face the challenges posed by winter weather, understanding its impact on energy demand is crucial for maintaining a reliable power supply. By adopting energy conservation practices during periods of extreme cold, not only can you save money on your electric bills, you can also each contribute to the resilience of the power grid, keeping our local community warm and connected.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY
TIP OF THE MONTH

Area rugs are an easy, cost-effective solution to cold floors. Adding area rugs to hard-surface flooring can add warmth to any room and keep your feet cozy on cold winter days. **582-3**

Choose rugs made from wool or other natural fibers and plush or high-pile textures for the most insulation. Place rugs in areas where you need additional warmth, like the foot of a bed or under a coffee table. Area rugs can enhance the aesthetic of your home and keep you cozier.