

## New year, new faces

Western Illinois Electrical Coop. (WIEC) hired two new line crew members who both started in January of 2024.

First was Holton Burnett, born in Jacksonville, raised in Brown County and a graduate of Brown County High School. Although his first paying job was as a farmhand, Burnett says he has been interested in linework since he was in high



*Holton Burnett*

school. Burnett graduated from the powerline technician program at Northwest Iowa Community College and will continue to learn with the co-op. He starts as a groundworker to get the lay of the land and see how our crew

does things then will move into an apprentice lineworker position at the beginning of May 2024 due to his previous linework experience.

When he is not working for WIEC, Burnett enjoys hunting, running equipment, working on trucks, working with his hands and being outdoors, which is exactly what he says interests him about linework. Burnett's first day was potentially the longest in WIEC history. He made it to the office on a day when many did not venture out due to ice and snow, worked on some new-hire paperwork for an hour or so, then headed out to join the rest of the crew, some of whom had been out since 11:30 p.m. the prior evening. He finished that first "day," worked through the night and finished helping the rest of the crew get all members' lights back on around 9:30 a.m. the following morning. **6520-46**

A week later, on Jan. 16, our second new hire of the year started. Colton Ragain was born in Macomb, raised in La Harpe, and is an Illini West graduate. Ragain has several years of dependable work history, first with Chem Gro in La Harpe as an operator/applicator and most recently with Dallas Rural Water District located outside of Hamilton as an operator. He started as a

groundworker and should move into an apprentice lineworker position at the beginning of November 2024.

Ragain did not always want to be a lineworker but became interested when a friend of his started working for an electrical co-op. He is look-



*Colton Ragain*

ing forward to working with the diverse types of tools and equipment needed for linework and likes learning terminology. As an extrovert, he is especially looking forward to the camaraderie of his fellow WIEC crew members. Ragain says he has witnessed firsthand how hard the linecrew works, but also, how appreciated they typically are by our community, and he looks forward to pitching in. **6633-48**



**Western Illinois**  
ELECTRICAL COOP.  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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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

- **Mark Burling** —  
President, Carthage
- **Dustin Walker** —  
Vice President, Burnside
- **Janet Spory** —  
Secretary/Treasurer, Sutter
- **Kim Gullberg** —  
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer,  
Stronghurst
- **Landon Guymon** —  
Director, Carthage
- **Jay Morrison** —  
Director, Niota
- **Stephen Patrick** —  
Director, Carthage

#### MANAGEMENT TEAM

- **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.



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

### TIP OF THE MONTH

Lengthen the life of your clothes dryer with regular cleaning. Clean the lint filter after every load, which improves air circulation and safety. Check the lint trap opening to ensure it's clean. Use a vacuum to remove any lint that's fallen inside the opening.

If you use dryer sheets, check the lint filter for residue buildup. Remove any residue with hot water and a nylon brush or toothbrush. Over time, dryer sheets can leave a film on the filter, which can affect the performance of the motor.



Welcome new members

December  
2023

Emma Carmien & Logan Speer

Lois Ann Dively

## Director nomination and election process

In accordance with Article IV, Section 4, of your cooperative's by-laws, a nominating committee must be appointed between thirty and one hundred twenty days prior to the Annual Meeting of Members (June 27, 2024). **7516-43**

Directors shall be elected by and from the membership by ballot and shall serve for a term of three years, or until their successors shall have been elected and qualified. The terms of the Directors from Districts 1, 2 and 3 expire this year. Directors from all three of these Districts will be nominated.

District No. 1, currently represented by Kim Gullberg, is all of

the cooperative's service area in Henderson County, Illinois.

District No. 2, currently represented by Dustin Walker, is Appanoose, Montebello and Sonora Townships in Hancock County, Illinois.

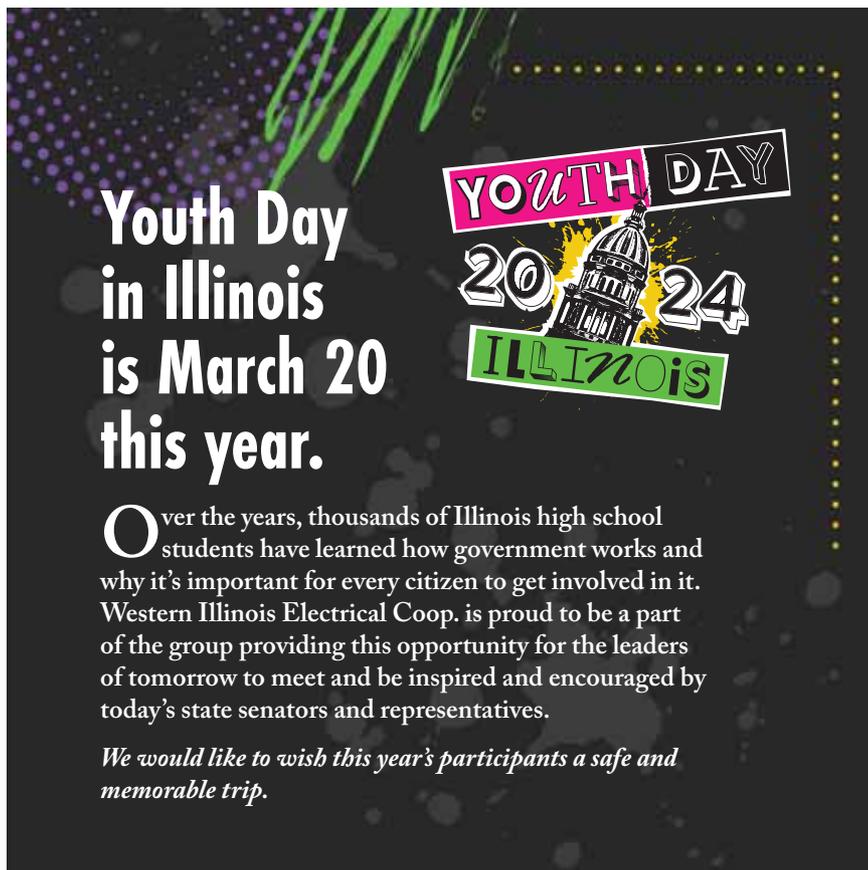
District No. 3, currently represented by Jay D. Morrison, is LaHarpe, Durham, Rock Creek, Pontoosuc and Dallas Townships in Hancock County as well as Blandinsville Township in McDonough County, Illinois.

The nominating committee must post a list of nominations at the cooperative office at least twenty days before the annual meeting. Any fifteen cooperative members may act together and nominate another member by petition. These nominations will be posted with those made by the nominating committee. Nominations made by petition at least ten days before the annual meeting will be included on the official ballot. No member may nominate more than one candidate.

# OFFICE CLOSED

March 29, 2024

The WIEC office  
will be closed on  
Friday, March 29,  
in observance  
of Good Friday.



**Youth Day  
in Illinois  
is March 20  
this year.**

**YOUTH DAY**  
**20 24**  
**ILLINOIS**

Over the years, thousands of Illinois high school students have learned how government works and why it's important for every citizen to get involved in it. Western Illinois Electrical Coop. is proud to be a part of the group providing this opportunity for the leaders of tomorrow to meet and be inspired and encouraged by today's state senators and representatives.

*We would like to wish this year's participants a safe and memorable trip.*



# A balanced team for reliability

The winningest basketball teams in history are ones that are consistent and have players with varying abilities. Some are better at shooting three-pointers; some are best at defense. Having a balanced mix of skills makes the team a powerhouse on the court. The way to keep electricity reliable is a bit like that, too.

The power team first requires a foundation of consistent sources that can be put in the game any time they're needed. Having enough "always available" fuel sources like natural gas and coal can ensure consistent power generation.

Just like a team needs different players for different situations, our power grid requires multiple sources to keep the grid running. Relying solely on one player to win every game is not an effective strategy — if they get injured, you'll likely lose. Similarly, using a single fuel source for electricity generation poses a significant risk to energy reliability. Natural disasters, geopolitical

tensions or unforeseen disruptions can severely impact the supply chain of a particular fuel. A diverse mix of energy sources acts as a safeguard, ensuring that the grid remains operational even in the face of unexpected challenges. **677-58**

A diverse energy mix also enhances grid flexibility by accommodating the intermittent nature of renewable energy sources like solar and wind. Think of solar power like a team's inconsistent three-point shooter. It's awesome when the sun is shining bright, but what if it's nighttime or a cloudy day? That's where the other players, like wind, hydro, nuclear, natural gas and coal, can step up and keep the team scoring.

Diverse fuel sources contribute to the stability and reliability of the electric grid. The different sources have varying characteristics, including generation patterns, responsiveness and storage capabilities. This diversity allows for a more balanced and resilient energy system that can adapt to

fluctuating demand and unforeseen circumstances. Having a mix of these energy sources is like having a team with different skills to handle various situations and scenarios.

A diverse set of energy sources is essential, but that's not the only thing we need to have reliable electricity — or a winning team. Basketball teams are always trying out new plays or training rookies to create a versatile lineup. Similarly, electric cooperatives are constantly innovating to maintain reliability for tomorrow, but creating new ways to make our power sources more efficient and reliable takes time, money and advances in technology that aren't necessarily ready yet.

As we continue to work on the innovations of tomorrow, the key to keeping our electricity reliable right now is ensuring a diverse "team" of fuels. Each one brings something special to the table, and together, they make sure we have the power we need, whenever we need it.

