

## From the May board meeting...



### 2024 Youth Tour winner

*Corin Robinson (middle) with WIEC Board President Mark Burling (right) and WIEC District 6 Director Landon Guymon (left).*



### 2024 Thomas H. Moore Memorial Scholarship winner

*Jackson Klingler (middle) with WIEC Board President Mark Burling (right) and WIEC District 6 Director Landon Guymon (left).*



## Office closed...

WIEC's office will be closed on July 4th in observance of Independence Day.



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

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**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.

# CONSIDERING A HOME WIRING PROJECT?

Don't be a weekend warrior

Home wiring projects may sound easy — and even look easy on YouTube tutorials — but tackling wiring projects without the proper knowledge and expertise could result in a fire. **Those qualified to work on electrical components are armed with the following:**

**SKILLS**

They can demonstrate their skills in all aspects of electrical work.



**KNOWLEDGE**

They have the knowledge to complete projects safely and successfully.



**TRAINING**

They are trained in proper installation and know how electrical systems work.



**EXPERTISE**

They can identify hazards and reduce risks when it comes to home wiring.



The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) defines a qualified person as: "One who has demonstrated skills and knowledge related to the construction and operation of electrical equipment and installations and has received safety training to identify the hazards and reduce the associated risk" (NFPA 70E).

When in doubt, hire a licensed contractor to do the work.





# Hiring a home improvement contractor? Selecting the right one is key

Taking on significant home renovations or upgrades can be challenging, especially when selecting the right contractor for the job. Choosing the wrong one can result in disastrous consequences, including extensive damages, insurance loss and even injuries. As skilled professionals become harder and harder to find, always assure you have done the up front work to protect your interests.

Here are some tips to help you select the right contractor for the job.

## **Craft a detailed plan**

Before starting any home improvement project, it is crucial to have a detailed plan in place. The more detailed your plan, the more precise your cost estimates will be.

## **Know your material costs**

Since 2020, building material prices have surged by 35.6%. Understanding material costs before seeking a quote will reduce the risk of sticker shock.

## **Obtain referrals**

When searching for a contractor, always ask for references. Referrals from friends, coworkers and family members can provide insight. Additionally, consider seeking recommendations from neighbors, local hardware stores and past real estate agents.

## **Interview several contractors**

To ensure that you choose the right general contractor for your home improvement project, it is important to interview a minimum of three candidates. During this process, use a checklist and ask each contractor numerous questions,

including whether their business is licensed and insured.

Before hiring someone, check with your local municipality to learn about necessary licenses. Additional questions for prospective contractors may include: **5531-7**

- What is your experience with this type of project?
- Can you provide references from previous clients?
- What is your timeline for completing the project?
- What is your process for communicating with clients?
- What is your approach to solving problems and handling unexpected issues?
- How do you handle change orders or additional work requests?
- What is your payment schedule and method?
- What does your contract include? (See next section.)

Again, be sure to verify that prospective contractors have appropriate insurance and licenses, as well as a clear contract outlining the project scope, timeline, budget and any other important details.

## **Contract and ground rules**

Here are some important elements that should be included in a contract:

- Business name and contact information of the contractor.
- Contractor's insurance and licensing details.

- A highly detailed description of the work to be completed, including a timeline and schedule.
- A materials list (including model numbers) and who is responsible for providing the materials.
- Payment terms: Expect to put down a deposit before work begins. Certain states have restrictions on the size of the down payment for home improvement contracts. Check your state's laws and requirements before agreeing to a down payment amount.
- Required permits and who is responsible for securing them.
- A process for handling changes and disagreements.
- A termination clause to protect both parties.

## **Obtain lien releases and receipts**

To prevent a mechanic or construction lien from being placed on your property, request copies of receipts for all materials and lien releases from the general contractor and all subcontractors. This is especially important if your contractor fails to pay their subcontractors or suppliers, as attempts to collect the debt may result in the sale of your home to cover the unpaid amount.

## **Hold onto your wallet**

Delay making the final payment until you are fully satisfied with the finished work and have received lien releases and receipts. This should be outlined in your contract and payment schedule to avoid any misunderstandings or disputes. **4710-24**

# Budget Billing enrollment begins July 15th



**W**IEC's Budget Billing program gives members a surefire way to anticipate the amount of their next payment for electrical service and plan ahead for it. It's the perfect way to avoid large monthly fluctuations in the amount you pay. The program is designed to keep your electric payments consistent every month of the year, as long as you remain on the plan and your overall annual usage does not change drastically. It's the ideal way to accurately predict your monthly expense, which makes managing your money simpler than ever. **6728-40**

When you sign up for Budget Billing, our Billing Coordinator takes a look at your electric usage for the past 12 months. She determines your average monthly kilowatt hour usage, then calculates what the bill for that amount of electricity would be at current rates to determine your monthly payment amount. Agreeing to pay for your average usage each month with this program allows you to plan ahead for a consistent expense, even in very cold or hot months when actual usage may be significantly higher.

Enrollment in WIEC's Budget Billing program is free. It is offered to members who have accounts in good

standing with at least 12 months of service history to review. After enrolling, a member may opt back out of the Budget Billing program at any time by contacting WIEC's Billing Coordinator. If a member on Budget Billing becomes delinquent, they are typically removed from the Budget Billing program and any actual balance owed the co-op becomes due immediately. **5817-57**

For members who remain on the program, there is an annual "true-up" in July. The Billing Coordinator compares the total of the budget billing payments received from each member, which were based on an estimated average monthly usage amount, to the actual total kWh usage and charges for the most recent 12-month period. The difference in these dollar amounts is refunded via a bill credit for any member who has overpaid, and is owed, along with the usual June usage charges payable in July, by any member who has underpaid over the course of the previous year.

Enrollment for Budget Billing this year begins on July 15. For more information on the program, or other billing-related questions, please contact our office at 217-357-3125 or 800-576-3125.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Electricity used to operate major appliances accounts for a significant portion of your home energy use.

Here's an easy way to lighten the load on your clothes dryer. Before you dry a load of damp clothing, toss in a clean, dry towel. The towel will absorb excess water, shortening the drying time. If your dryer does not include an autosense feature to determine drying time, remember to reduce the timer to about half of what you normally would. Remove the towel about 15 minutes after the cycle begins. Shorter drying times will extend the life of your dryer and save energy.

Source: [homesandgardens.com](http://homesandgardens.com)

### Welcome new members

April 2024

Brianna L. Akers	Ryan Rumchak and Brian Begotka
Deanne and Mark Dawdy	Kevin Schmitt
Philip A. Haxel	Jeff Todd
Chad and Kristen Kaup	Rebecca E. and Jarrid L. Yard
Butikofer Heritage Investments LLC	

