

## Budget Billing enrollment begins July 15th

**W**IEC's Budget Billing program gives members a sure-fire 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.

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. **4715-49**

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.

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 either refunded via a bill credit for any member who has overpaid, or is invoiced, along with the usual June usage charges payable in July, to 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.



WIEC's office will be closed  
**JULY 4TH**  
in observance of  
**INDEPENDENCE DAY.**



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

- **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.

## Who owns what?

### *Understanding electric equipment responsibilities*

As July rolls in with longer days and rising temperatures, it also brings the increased potential for severe weather. Summer storms can arrive quickly and hit hard, sometimes causing significant damage to essential electric equipment throughout our community. **474-48**

Western Illinois Electrical Coop. (WIEC) is always prepared to respond swiftly to outages and restore power safely, but it is also important for homeowners to understand which parts of the electric system are their responsibility and which are maintained by us at the co-op. Understanding these key differences can help speed up repairs and ensure everyone stays safe when the weather turns rough.

Western Illinois Electrical Coop. is responsible for maintaining and repairing the equipment and lines that run to your home, including utility poles, distribution power lines, electric meters and padmounted transformers.

WIEC members are responsible for the equipment located between the electric meter and the home or business, including any underground service lines that lead into the structure and the service panel. Members are also responsible for the weatherhead and service mast located outside the home.

If any equipment that you (the homeowner) are responsible for is damaged, please call a licensed electrician to conduct the repairs. A professional has the experience and know-how to assess and manage these types of repairs.

When severe weather damages electrical equipment, it's important to note that any necessary repairs to the homeowner's equipment must be conducted before Western Illinois Electrical Coop. crews can restore power to your home or business. By understanding the equipment you are responsible for, the repair and restoration process will be smoother and faster.

Our community takes great pride in the beautiful trees and natural beauty where we live, however, regular trimming is essential to ensure reliable electric service and minimize damage from severe weather. WIEC regularly trims trees throughout our service territory to improve service reliability. If you spot a tree limb that is obstructing a distribution power line outside your home, please contact the office so we can trim those limbs and maintain those lines. **5816-9**

Any overgrown limbs or vegetation around the service line is the homeowner's responsibility, and in these cases, please call a professional tree trimming service to assist.

By working together to understand the essential equipment that powers daily life, we can all be better prepared to start the repair and restoration process if severe weather impacts our community.

If you have any questions about your electrical equipment, we're here to help. Please contact Western Illinois Electrical Coop. at 217-357-3125 or 800-576-3125.

### Welcome new members

April  
2025

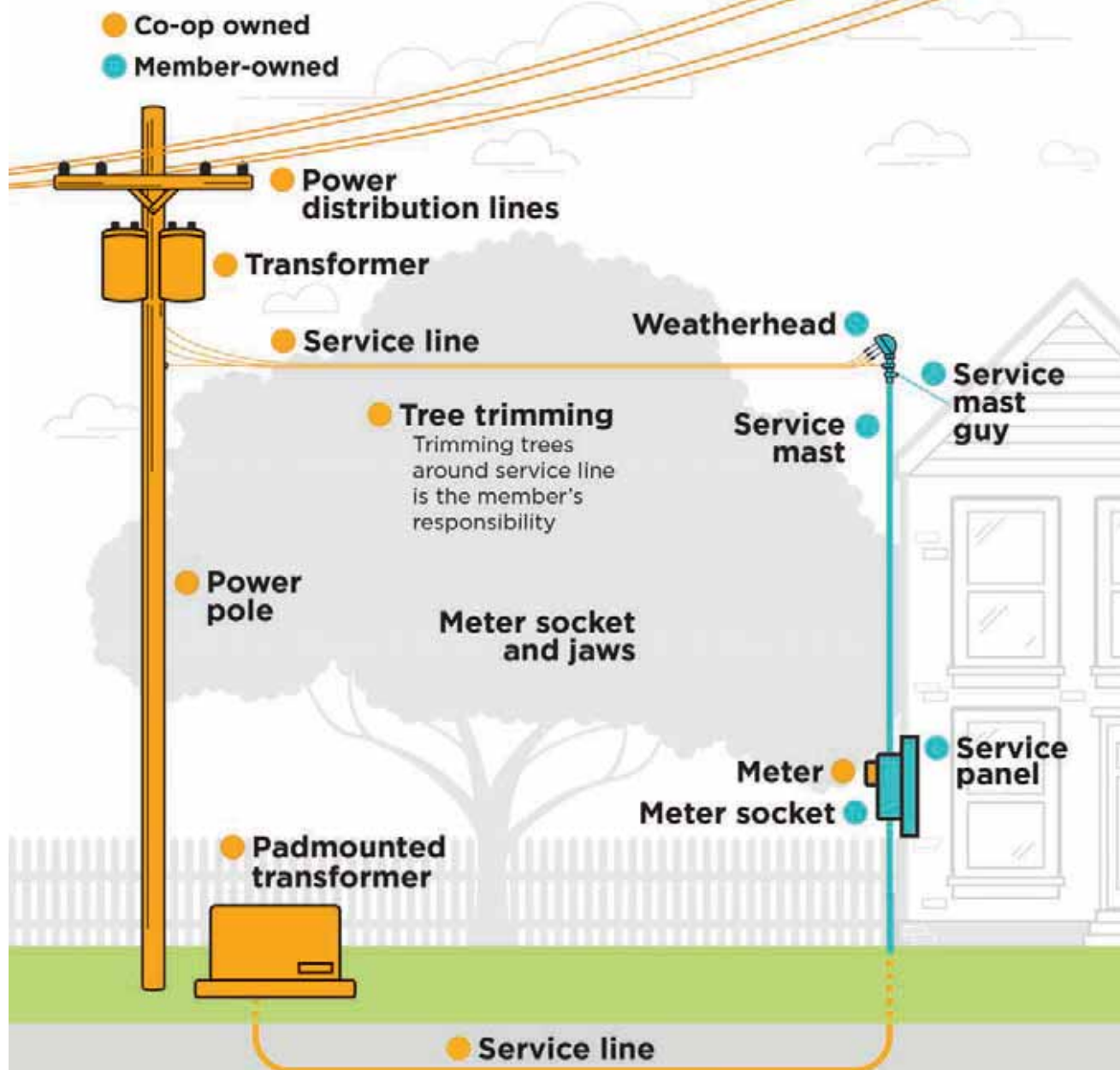
Jillian A and Patrick Haw  
Gregory A and Deb L Haverfield  
John and Jerri R Hooker  
Woodrow R Johnson

Tim Magee  
Serenah LP and Alexis C Minasian  
Jimmy and Linda Pinick  
Jeff and Kari Wittmeyer

# Who Owns What?

## Electric Co-op Owned Equipment vs Member-Owned Equipment

This graphic depicts equipment owned by the co-op (in gold) and the member (in blue). If a storm damages any equipment owned by the co-op, we are responsible for repairs. If a storm damages any member-owned equipment, the member is responsible for repairs. Members should hire a licensed electrician when making any repairs to member-owned equipment.



*Note: This graphic depicts overhead and underground service. Please be aware of which type of service you receive at your home.*





# How to keep your devices charged when you're off the grid

## Quick tips

- Bring power banks and a solar charger for backup power in the wilderness.
- Keep chargers in your car to recharge while you're on the road.
- Use airplane mode, dim screen brightness or simply turn off your phone to save battery life.
- Make sure you pack flashlights and extra batteries.

Spending time outdoors is important. It's also important to stay connected while you're camping, hiking or on the water in case of bad weather or emergencies.

Without easy access to outlets, keeping your electronics charged requires planning. Here are ways to extend battery life and stay powered up and safe outdoors.

## Charge before you go

Fully charge your phone, camera, GPS and other devices before you hit the road. Don't forget extra batteries for flashlights or headlamps.

Keep chargers in your car but only charge devices while the engine is running to avoid draining the car battery. Hide cords and chargers from view if you leave your car unattended.

## Pack smart

When you're camping, everything you pack needs to be worth its weight in gold, or at least double as a backup battery. Bring lightweight power banks and multi-use gear like solar lanterns with USB ports. Emergency radios and portable speakers often offer charging jacks, too.

## Optimize battery life

Switch to airplane mode to prevent your phone from searching for a cell signal. This also helps you fully unplug without the distraction of text messages or Instagram notifications.

Turn off Bluetooth, Wi-Fi and GPS when not in use. Dim screen brightness or enable power saving mode — or simply turn your phone off when not in use. Save your battery for essential tasks such as navigation or emergencies.

## Choose campsites with power

Look for campgrounds with electric hookups to make charging simple and stress-free. Bring an outdoor-rated extension cord to charge multiple devices at once.

## Harness alternative energy

Flexible solar panel chargers are perfect for sunny days outdoors. Hook one up directly to your phone or power bank. For overcast conditions, hand-crank chargers can offer enough power for an emergency phone call, while wind, water and fire-powered options provide additional back up. **582-3**

## Protect your devices

Keeping your devices safe and functional is just as important as keeping them charged.

- Use waterproof cases to guard against rain or spills.
- Avoid extreme temperatures, as batteries drain faster in hot or cold weather. During cold weather, keep electronics close to your body for prolonged battery life.
- Store devices securely to prevent damage from falls or dirt exposure.

With these tips, you'll stay safe and connected while you recharge in the great outdoors, ready for any adventure!

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

During summer months, run large appliances that emit heat such as clothes dryers and dishwashers during the evening when the outdoor temperature is lower. Running heat-emitting appliances in the evening will reduce indoor heat gain during the day when outdoor temperatures are highest and ultimately keep your air conditioner from working harder than necessary.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

