



Western Illinois Electrical Coop. holds 85th annual meeting

Members of Western Illinois Electrical Coop. (WIEC) gathered Thursday, June 26 at the University of Illinois Extension Center for the co-op's 85th Annual Meeting of Members. Prior to the meeting, those who attended received a \$10 bill credit, a ribeye sandwich dinner and a Dairy Queen Dilly Bar, and had the opportunity to enjoy a musical performance provided by Luke Biery, Katie Biery and Sarah Stinemates.

Board President Mark Burling called the meeting to order, and Board Treasurer Janet Spory presented her report. Burling returned to the stage to present a Time-of-Service Award to Manager of Operations Ryan Biery (10 years) and recognize both AIEC 2025 Earl Struck Scholarship winner Anna Biery and 2025 Youth Tour winner Drake Vancil. The meeting continued with the uncontested reelection of directors Mark Burling (District 5) and Stephen Patrick (District 4) to new 3-year terms. **561-43**

General Manager Todd Grotts took the podium and addressed WIEC members, emphasizing the power of the cooperative network both across the state and the nation. "Tonight, I am asking for your support in

helping with legislative issues that never go away on both the state and federal level to help keep your utility bill affordable. You may be asking, 'How can I help?'" he said. "One way would be to get to know your local representatives Neil Anderson and Norine Hammond. The other way is to sign up with Voices for Cooperative Power (VCP). VCP is a network of Americans dedicated to transforming rural and suburban communities. It educates policymakers on the localized, community-based approach that electric co-ops take to keep the lights on. As job creators, economic drivers and, most importantly, community members, co-ops play a key role in the future of rural and suburban America.

"You heard me talk about a bill last month," he continued. "There were over 4,000 letters sent to representatives across the state from cooperative members who had signed up with VCP because of our concerns with that bill [which ultimately did not pass]. ... The more letters that can be sent, the stronger impact we will have on legislation."

Prairie Power President/CEO Eric Hobbie and President/CEO of Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives Craig Sondgeroth also

addressed the membership. Burling followed with his report, addressing current transmission projects and vegetation management.

"We're working on multiple transmission projects scheduled through 2029," Burling shared. "Beyond transmission lines, we're staying aggressive with vegetation management, renewing our contract with IFP Land Services. Some folks might wonder why we're so focused on trimming trees, but every branch that comes down in a storm is a potential outage. It's about prevention, not just reaction."

Burling also reiterated the cooperative's commitment to the continued provision of safe, reliable and affordable electricity. "We'll continue investing in infrastructure that serves you for decades, not just years. We'll keep supporting economic development that creates jobs and opportunities right here at home. And, we'll keep fighting for energy policies that put reliability and affordability first," he said.

At the end of the meeting, names were drawn for prizes, including additional bill credits and gift cards. Five grand prize winners received 1,000 kWh of free electricity. Congratulations to all prize winners!



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.

2025 annual meeting prizes

GIFT	DONOR	RECIPIENT
\$50 Visa gift card	Air Med Care Network	Janet Faulkner
Spice Kit	Brownstown Electric Supply Co.	Diana Shults
\$100 Amazon gift card	CRC- Cooperative Response Center, Inc	Tim Harris
\$50 gift certificate	J & R Tire Service	Nathan Patrick
\$25 Visa Gift Card	Marine Bank & Trust	Mark Hanson
\$25 gift card to Law's Station	Law Service and Repair	Richard Melvin
\$25 gift card to Law's Station	Law Service and Repair	John Hartweg
\$25 gift card to Law's Station	Law Service and Repair	Yvonne Bryant
Tallman Hat & Koozie	Tallman Equipment	Cherie Cancel
Tallman Hat & Koozie	Tallman Equipment	Sandra Lovell
Tallman Insulated Waterbottle	Tallman Equipment	Darla Fisher
Tallman Insulated Waterbottle	Tallman Equipment	Ruth Burling
\$50 Cash	T & R Service	Jeremy Ussery
\$25 Fast Stop gift card	West Central FS, Inc.	Cecil Shipman
\$25 Fast Stop gift card	West Central FS, Inc.	Mark Buss
\$25 Fast Stop gift card	West Central FS, Inc.	Virgil High
\$25 Fast Stop gift card	West Central FS, Inc.	Tom Jefferson
GRAND PRIZE #1 Bill credit for 1000 kWh of electricity	WIEC	Lilian Gomez
GRAND PRIZE #2 Bill credit for 1000 kWh of electricity	WIEC	Lawrence Harrell
GRAND PRIZE #3 Bill credit for 1000 kWh of electricity	WIEC	Don Sewell
GRAND PRIZE #4 Bill credit for 1000 kWh of electricity	WIEC	Aron Metternich
GRAND PRIZE #5 Bill credit for 1000 kWh of electricity	WIEC	Julie Weber

GIFT	DONOR	RECIPIENT
\$50 Gift Card to Farmhouse Meats	WIEC	Raymond Siegrist
\$50 Gift Card to Farmhouse Meats	WIEC	Jerry Walker
\$50 Gift Card to Farmhouse Meats	WIEC	William Weaver
\$50 Gift Card to Farmhouse Meats	WIEC	Larry Meeks
\$50 Gift Card to Farmhouse Meats	WIEC	Sharon Thompson
\$50 Gift Card to Farmhouse Meats	WIEC	Eric Johnson
\$50 Gift Card to Farmhouse Meats	WIEC	Betty Gray
\$50 Gift Card to Farmhouse Meats	WIEC	Wayne Spory
\$50 Gift Card to Farmhouse Meats	WIEC	Phoebe Wilson
\$50 Gift Card to Farmhouse Meats	WIEC	Carol Knoche
\$50 Gift Card to Farmhouse Meats	WIEC	Landon Guymon
\$50 Gift Card to Farmhouse Meats	WIEC	DC Cooper
\$50 Gift Card to County Market	WIEC	Steve Renard
\$50 Gift Card to County Market	WIEC	Jay McHugh
\$50 Gift Card to County Market	WIEC	Ross E. Wear
\$50 Gift Card to County Market	WIEC	James Sewell
\$50 Gift Card to County Market	WIEC	Rob Gronewold
\$50 Gift Card to County Market	WIEC	Darold Bruns
\$50 Gift Card to County Market	WIEC	Flo Martens
\$50 Gift Card to County Market	WIEC	Doris Holtsclaw
\$50 Gift Card to County Market	WIEC	Norma Neill
\$50 Gift Card to County Market	WIEC	Bobby Knowles



Youth Tour opens minds and builds leaders

Local student represents Western Illinois Electrical Coop. in D.C.

Every June, a select group of high school students from across Illinois leave their rural communities to spend a week taking in the historic sights and bustling energy of the nation's capital.

This year, 48 students sponsored by 25 Illinois electric and telephone cooperatives took part in the 2025 Youth Tour to visit Washington, D.C., held June 16 to 23, for an immersive weeklong experience designed to educate and inspire the next generation of cooperative and civic leaders.

Western Illinois Electrical Coop. (WIEC) sponsors students within its service territory to go on this trip every year. Drake Vancil represented the co-op and joined more than 2,000 students from 44 states for the annual event.

"This trip is so much more than sight-seeing," said Brooke Gross, member services manager and facilitator of youth programs at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. "It's about building relationships, learning leadership and showing that they have the power to shape their communities and futures."

Learning by doing

Central to the Youth Tour experience is the formation of a mock student-run cooperative called Chip 'n' Pop Co-op. Students began their journey at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) headquartered in Springfield, where the students selected a co-op board. The board later interviewed and selected a co-op manager.

Throughout the week, the co-op handled snack sales, decision-making

and budgeting — giving participants a hands-on look at how cooperatives operate. **7610-59**

"Being part of a co-op helps students understand what makes a co-op different," said Gross. "It's all about working together and making decisions that serve everyone — not just one person or company."

A full week of history

Over the course of the week, students visited historic landmarks including Gettysburg, Arlington National Cemetery and, for the first time in many years, had the opportunity to tour the White House, where the students caught a glimpse of President Donald Trump. They also toured the U.S. Capitol, strolled the National Mall, stood at the steps of the Supreme Court and explored the Smithsonian museums.

Midweek, students took part in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Youth Day, where they joined hundreds of other teens from across the country to hear from national leaders and learn how to use their voices back home.

From sobering visits to the Holocaust Memorial Museum and the 9/11 Pentagon Memorial to moments of laughter at the Museum of Illusions and team-building at Beat the Bomb, the Youth Tour experience was unforgettable.

A trip that lasts a lifetime

An important component to the trip — the students voted for one of their



peers to represent Illinois on the Youth Leadership Council (YLC). Those interested in becoming Illinois' YLC representative filled out an application, and five were selected to give a speech in front of their peers.

Adams Telephone Co-Operative's Micah Anderson was selected as the 2025-2026 YLC representative for Illinois. He will represent the state at national and state meetings and events in the year ahead.

The week concluded with a farewell dinner and dance, and by the time students returned home on June 23, many said they felt changed by the experience.

"Whether or not these students go into politics or work for their local co-op, one thing is certain — their time on the Youth Tour gave them tools, friendships and insights that will serve them for years to come," Gross said.

High school students who live within the service area of WIEC are eligible to participate in the annual program. To learn more about Youth Tour, go to youthtour.coop or facebook.com/ILYouthTour.



Thank you for coming. We loved having you!

The Macomb Park District's Special Recreation Association (SRA) operates an annual summer camp for special needs adults. Several participants from the McDonough County SRA Summer Camp program stopped by the cooperative office for a visit on June 12, and a good time was had by all! The camp strives to provide opportunities for socialization with friends while having some great adventures along the way.

Each week of the camp is arranged around a theme. The theme for the week of the co-op visit was "Community." The campers enjoyed learning about their community through mini field trips. Knowledge of how the co-op works and some basic electrical safety lessons were shared with the campers by various staff members as they toured the facility and asked questions. 7522-30



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Replace your cooling system's filter regularly to maintain strong airflow and boost energy efficiency. A clean filter means your system doesn't have to work as hard, saving energy and lowering your utility bills. Factors like allergies and pets in the home can impact how often filters should be replaced. Check the filter every month and replace it as needed. Changing filters regularly also reduces wear and tear on your cooling system, helping extend the life of the unit. 7812-17

Source: energy.gov

Welcome new members

May 2025

Brad W Baker
Cheryl and Robert Corzatt
Lisa D DeJaynes
Caston M Hillery
Thomas P and Nancy L Gilson
Good News Radio, Inc.
Ricky Kent
Helen T Haviland
Matthew D Kraus and Amber J Mosley

Ian and Andria Miller
Jill L and Matt R Mitchell
Larry D and Sameta M Riddle
Dustin P Root
Denise L Thompson
Daniel J and Joni A Wood
David J Woods and Karen A Kusmierz

