

## From the Desk of the Manager

# Powered by purpose



*Todd Grotts  
General Manager  
WIEC*

**T**his month, electric cooperatives across the country take time to celebrate National Co-op Month and reflect on the unique advantages of being part of a cooperative. It's also the perfect time to thank you — the members who make it all possible. For us, it's not just a celebration. It's a chance to reaffirm the values that guide everything we do.

As the manager of Western Illinois Electrical Coop., I see purpose in action every single day. Unlike investor-owned utilities, our co-op doesn't exist to make profits for distant shareholders. We exist to serve you — our members, our neighbors and our communities. That purpose is what sets us apart. It's why we were founded, and it's what continues to drive every decision we make.

At its core, being a cooperative means we are member-owned and locally controlled. That's not just a tagline; it's the very heart of our business model. Members have a voice in how our co-op operates. You elect board members who live right here in our service area and understand the unique challenges and opportunities our communities face. Decisions aren't made in corporate boardrooms hundreds

of miles away; they're made here at home, by people who care about the same things you do.

This local accountability means we can stay focused on what matters most: delivering reliable, affordable electricity and providing real value to the people we serve.

We do that by investing in essential infrastructure upgrades and technologies that strengthen our local grid and improve electric service. We work hard to manage costs and keep rates as low as possible — because we know how much rising prices affect families and small businesses in our area. And, when storms hit or outages occur, Western Illinois Electrical Coop. crews are here and ready to respond quickly, because we live here, too.

But our commitment doesn't end at the power lines. **3913-32**

Co-ops were built to meet community needs, and that purpose extends well beyond delivering electricity. Whether we're supporting local schools, sponsoring youth programs,

or partnering with volunteer organizations, we are always looking for ways to improve the quality of life in the places we serve. Community support isn't an afterthought — it's part of our mission.

We're also planning for the future. As electricity demand grows due to new technologies and economic development, electric co-ops are working to ensure we continue to meet those needs with a balanced, reliable energy mix. We know our members care about affordability and dependability, and we're committed to delivering both.

That's the power of the cooperative difference. That's what it means to be powered by purpose.

This National Co-op Month, I encourage you to take pride in your cooperative membership. You're not just a customer — you're an owner, a stakeholder and a vital part of a larger effort to keep our community strong, connected and energized.

Thank you for the trust you place in us. We're proud to be your local electric cooperative.

## Welcome new members

July  
2025

AT&T Mobility  
Clayton T Bollin  
Drew & Erica Carroll  
Juanita L Coleman  
Andrew Doyle & Andrea Fullerton  
Christine Gerling-Cole  
Raquel Gibson

Thomas E Hanks & Lori D Waddell  
Colin M LeMaire  
Val P & Thresa M Miller  
Ross Neff  
Jordan Pecaro & Dominique Prete  
Evelyn D Pratt  
Trent A Woulfe



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.

## Help reduce waste and cut costs!

*Did you know...*  
**Western Illinois Electrical Coop. offers an e-bill option to its members**

#### What is an e-bill?

It is simply an electronic way for you to receive your monthly invoice for electricity from the co-op via your preferred email address. You still receive the same detailed information, but electronically —there is no paper copy to deal with. This service is designed to reduce waste and save WIEC money which, in turn, helps keep rates as low as possible.

#### How do I get started?

Contact the office today to provide your email address and we can get you set up immediately. It's quick and simple! **3812-57**



#### What if I change my mind after I set up e-bill or don't like it for some reason?

No problem. You are not "locked in" to receiving an e-bill for any specific time period. Simply give us another call and we will be happy to change the account back to the way it was prior to the e-bill request.

Give us a call to help reduce waste and cut costs. Take advantage of WIEC's e-bill option today!

## How to Put Out Electrical Fires

Stay safe. Act fast. Know what to do.



#### Power down immediately.

If wires or appliances seem unsafe or smell odd, unplug if safe to do so, and switch off the circuit at the breaker box. If there's a fire, cut power, but only if you can do so safely.



#### Do NOT use water.

Water conducts electricity — throwing it on an electrical fire could cause a shock or electrocution.



#### Use a Class C fire extinguisher.

These are specifically designed for electrical fires and are the safest way to put out the fire.



#### No extinguisher? Use baking soda.

Baking soda can smother small electrical fires by cutting off oxygen.



Call for help, even if you think the fire is out. Evacuate the area immediately if the fire is too large to extinguish safely.



*A crew from Jo-Carroll Energy (Elizabeth, Ill.) helping WIEC after the June 2023 derecho*



*A crew from Cuivre River Electric Cooperative (Troy, MO) helping WIEC after the June 2023 derecho*

## Mutual aid in the electric utility industry and why it matters to you

From trimming trees to maintaining equipment to updating the grid — utilities work hard to reduce the likelihood of a power outage. But, when severe weather strikes, power outages can disrupt daily life in an instant. That's when a powerful network of cooperation known as mutual aid springs into action — helping communities recover faster.

It's not unusual to see utility trucks from a dozen different states lined up in a parking lot in the aftermath of a major storm. These lineworkers leave their families and travel long distances to help strangers, working in tough conditions to restore power, safety and a sense of normalcy.

For residents, knowing that help is coming — from near and far — can be a source of comfort during difficult moments. **5530-52**

### What is mutual aid?

Mutual aid is a longstanding system of collaboration in which electric

utilities help one another during major, multi-day outages to restore power quickly and safely.

Think of it like neighbors helping neighbors, but on a national scale. If a storm knocks out power in your area and your local crews can't reach everyone fast enough, utility companies from nearby states — or even across the country — may send lineworkers and other utility personnel, trucks and supplies to lend a hand. This support continues until everyone's power is restored.

### How it works

Even with year-round preparation, major weather events can still cause widespread outages. That's when mutual aid is activated.

Mutual aid agreements are not spontaneous offers of help. They're part of a well-organized system that allows utilities to quickly request and receive help when disaster strikes, and are most often used after:

- Hurricanes or tropical storms
- Ice storms or blizzards
- Tornado outbreaks
- Wildfires
- Earthquakes or other large-scale emergencies

When a utility anticipates a major weather event, it can prearrange support. Crews can be staged nearby and



*Sleeping quarters (known as "tent city") for WIEC crews helping Satilla REMC in Alma, Ga., after Hurricane Helene in 2024*

ready to respond as soon as conditions are safe. Once deployed, they help assess damage and replace poles and lines to get the lights back on as quickly and safely as possible.

### Why mutual aid matters

Mutual aid dramatically shortens the time it takes to restore power after a disaster. But mutual aid isn't just about speed — it's a powerful example of compassion, resilience and unity. It ensures that no matter a utility's size or location, customers can count on timely service during critical times, and entire communities can recover more quickly.

### Thank you, lineworkers

Mutual aid works because of the dedication, courage and selflessness of lineworkers nationwide.

We owe a deep debt of gratitude to the crews who answer the call — not just in their own communities, but wherever they are needed.

So, the next time the lights go out, remember: you're not alone. There's a powerful team ready to help. In the utility world, mutual aid means everyone is part of the same family.



*One of the many parking lots for mutual aid crews after Hurricane Helene in 2024. WIEC crews traveled to assist Satilla REMC in Alma, Ga.*



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

As winter approaches, now is the time to inspect your home for air leaks around windows. Leaks reduce indoor comfort and lead to higher heating costs.

If you can see daylight around the edges of a window frame or if a window rattles slightly when touched, air is likely leaking.

Caulking and weatherstripping are simple, effective methods for sealing windows. These materials are available in a variety of compounds and forms, each designed for different types of surfaces. Choose the right product and apply it properly to reduce heat loss, improve comfort and lower energy bills.



## Member Appreciation Day is October 27th

To celebrate Cooperative Month in October, WIEC will have **Member Appreciation Day on the 27th from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

Because we are owned by the members we serve, electric cooperatives have strong commitments to the local communities they serve. The better we know you as individuals, the better we can serve you and attempt to align our goals with your changing needs. Please stop by the office to say hello or ask questions and have a cookie and some cider.

Both sizes of the 2026 pocket calendars everyone loves should also have arrived by then. Don't forget to pick one up!



## Did you know ...

### **Western Illinois Electrical Coop. offers multiple autopay options to its members**

#### **What is autopay?**

It is simply an automated way for you to make your electric payment each month on the due date. You still receive a monthly bill for information purposes, but there is nothing more for you to do. There is no need to stop by the office to drop off a payment, no monthly check to write out, nothing to mail in, and there is no need to log on to our website or that of your bank or credit card company to schedule a monthly payment. This service is designed to save WIEC members both time and money, and it is absolutely free to utilize.

#### **What are my autopay options?**

Western Illinois Electrical Coop. allows automated monthly payments from either a bank account (checking or savings) or from a debit or credit card at no charge to the member.

If both autopay options are workable for you, please consider selecting the bank account option. The credit/debit card companies charge WIEC

interchange fees, whereas there is no similar charge for the use of bank accounts. Selecting the bank account options keeps costs as low as possible for the co-op which, in turn, helps keep rates as low as possible. **366-47**

#### **How do I get started?**

Just give us a call at 217-357-3125 during business hours. You will need to provide both the account and routing number information for bank accounts; or the name on the card, card number, expiration date, and 3-digit code for debit or credit card use.

#### **What if I change my mind after I set up autopay or don't like it for some reason?**

That is not a problem at all. You are not "locked in" to using autopay for any specific time period after you sign up. Simply give us another call and we will be happy to change the account back to the way it was prior to the autopay request.

Give us a call today and let us help simplify your hectic life!