



P.O. Box 338 ■ Carthage, Illinois 62321 ■ [www.wiec.net](http://www.wiec.net) ■ 800-576-3125

From the Desk of the Manager

## Working together to lower demand



Todd Grotts  
General Manager  
WIEC

When outdoor temperatures drop, electricity use naturally rises. Colder weather drives us indoors, where we rely more heavily on home heating systems, more lighting and household appliances. Heating systems run longer and more frequently to maintain comfortable indoor temperatures. Combine that with the fact that most people use electricity at the same times — typically in the mornings and early evenings — and the result is significant pressure on our electric grid.

Western Illinois Electrical Coop. works closely with Prairie Power, Inc., our local generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative, to plan for these seasonal weather patterns and changes and ensure you have reliable power every day of the year. This partnership involves detailed resource and infrastructure planning to make certain electricity is available whenever you need it. However, it's important to remember that our local system is part of a much larger regional and national electric grid. **9612-33**

During the winter months, when homes and businesses across the

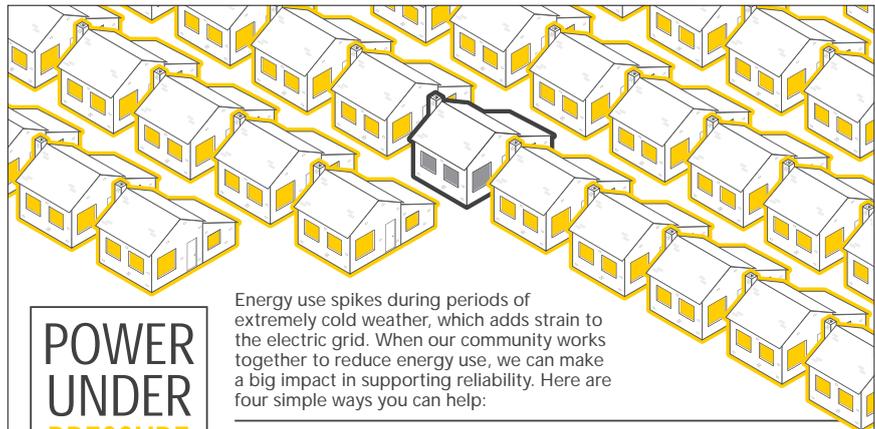
country are using more electricity simultaneously, overall demand can approach — or occasionally exceed — available supply. This is especially true during severe weather events, such as ice storms, sudden temperature drops or equipment malfunctions that reduce generation capacity. In rare cases when demand threatens to outpace supply, the regional grid operator may call for temporary, controlled outages—often referred to as rolling blackouts—to prevent broader system failures. If such a situation arises, Western Illinois Electrical Coop. will provide updates and information to members via our Facebook page.

To prepare for these scenarios and minimize risks, Western Illinois

Electrical Coop. and our G&T partner take proactive measures to strengthen reliability year-round. These include routine system maintenance, investments in grid modernization and comprehensive disaster response planning. These proactive steps are designed to ensure our portion of the grid remains resilient even under extreme conditions. Yet, maintaining a reliable electric system requires a collective effort — and every member plays an important role in lowering demand when the grid is under stress.

You can help by taking simple actions during periods of high electricity use, especially on the coldest days of winter: **7815-24**

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### POWER UNDER PRESSURE

Four Ways to Ease Grid Strain This Winter

Energy use spikes during periods of extremely cold weather, which adds strain to the electric grid. When our community works together to reduce energy use, we can make a big impact in supporting reliability. Here are four simple ways you can help:

1. Lower your thermostat. Even a difference of a few degrees can help.
2. Delay using large appliances. Run them in the evenings or midday when demand is lower.
3. Lower your water heater to 120 degrees and avoid back-to-back showers.
4. Unplug unnecessary devices. Electronics and lighting add up. Unplug any unused items.



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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

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- **Todd Grotts** — General Manager
- **Ryan Biery** — Manager  
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- **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.

"Working together" continued from 18A

- Lower your thermostat slightly. Even reducing the temperature by a few degrees can help.
- Delay using large appliances during peak hours in the early evenings and on the weekends. Run dishwashers, washing machines and dryers during off-peak hours — typically midday or late evening.
- Adjust your water heater. Setting it to 120 degrees F and spacing out showers helps conserve both energy and hot water.
- Unplug unnecessary devices. Power used for lighting and electronics adds up and accounts for a significant portion of home energy use. Disconnect unused items to reduce energy waste. **765-19**

Understanding how winter weather impacts electricity demand is key to maintaining system reliability. By practicing simple energy conservation habits at home, you not only save money on your monthly bill — you also help strengthen the resilience of the grid that powers our community. Together, through small actions and shared awareness, we can ensure that our homes remain warm, our lights stay on, and our local grid continues to serve us reliably throughout the season.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

TIP OF THE MONTH

Winter weather can cause your home heating system to work overtime. Check for air leaks and drafts around doors and windows, then seal them with weatherstripping or caulk. Close fireplace dampers when not in use, and consider installing insulating curtains to help keep warm air inside. You can also save energy by lowering your thermostat a few degrees. Even small adjustments like these can reduce heating costs and improve comfort during the coldest months.



## Welcome new members

October  
2025

Mallorie R & Luke M Arnold  
Christopher M Barr  
Marie E & Robert L Berry  
Ryan C Berry  
Phil G & Mary E Bisenius  
Lisa Dooley & Jimmy Rea  
Kerley Properties LLC/John Kerley

McKenna Main & Sherri Main  
Benjamin D Ream &  
Kaylee Quetzal Ream  
Jared M Roskamp &  
Bridget L McGarry  
Rodney Lee Savage  
Stambaugh Farms LLC



# Youth Day, Springfield – March 25, 2026

## Youth Tour, Washington, D.C. – June 15-22, 2026

Western Illinois Electrical Coop. continues to encourage high school students to learn more about government and their role in it by sponsoring the Youth Day (Springfield, Ill.) and Youth Tour (Washington, D.C.) events. These events give high school students an up-close look at both their state and federal governments and how they operate. **8516-19-1**

This contest is a great way for a high school sophomore, junior or senior to win an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. Western Illinois Electrical Coop. will award one son or daughter of a WIEC member an eight-day trip to our nation's capital that includes transportation, meals and hotel accommodations.

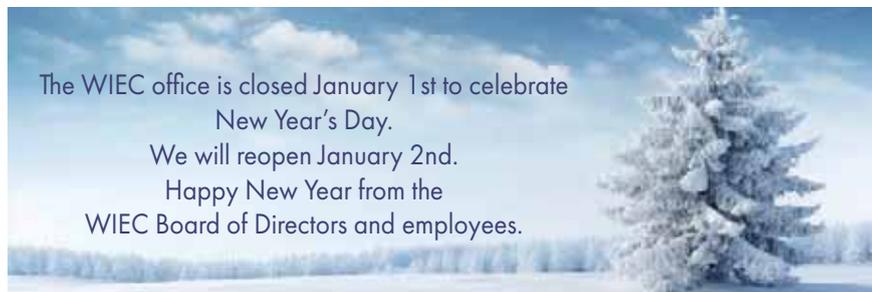
The WIEC winner will join about 50 other Illinois high school students in Washington during the week of June 15, 2026. During their time in D.C., students will learn about

American and rural electric history, in addition to how the federal government operates. In past years, students met with representatives in the House and Senate, visited Arlington National Cemetery and Gettysburg, the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, Mount Vernon, the World War II Memorial and the U.S. Memorial Holocaust Museum, and even danced the night away on a river boat cruise on the Potomac River.

Here's how it works. WIEC will award the top six entrants an all-expense-paid trip to Springfield, Ill., as part of the Springfield Youth Day

event, to visit the Illinois State Capitol on March 25, 2026. The group will get to see their state government in action, up close and personal. One of these six students will then be awarded the trip to Washington, D.C., later in the year.

To enter the contest, students just need to complete a simple application. The application can be found on our website at [www.wiec.net](http://www.wiec.net), or you may contact our office directly at 217-357-3125 or 800-576-3125 to have us send you one another way. **The deadline to apply is Feb. 27, 2026.** With only a small investment of time, a student could win the trip of a lifetime!



The WIEC office is closed January 1st to celebrate New Year's Day.

We will reopen January 2nd.

Happy New Year from the WIEC Board of Directors and employees.



# HEATING SAFETY TIPS FOR WINTER

## Simple precautions can help you avoid **fire hazards** and **electrical dangers**

There is nothing like curling up by the fire on a cold winter day. But heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths. With a few simple steps, you can prevent most heating fires from happening.



### STAY **COZY** AND SAFE THIS WINTER:

- Keep anything that can burn at least 3 feet away from heating equipment like furnaces, radiators, fireplaces, electric or wood stoves and space heaters.
- Maintain a 3-foot kid- and pet-free zone around heating equipment.
- Plug heaters and electric fireplaces directly into wall outlets. Never use extension cords or power strips.
- Plug only one heat-producing appliance into an electrical outlet at a time.
- Turn off portable heaters when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Unplug heaters when not in use.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Test smoke alarms every month.
- Hire a qualified professional to install or service stationary heating equipment and water heaters according to manufacturer's instructions.
- Have your heating system, vents and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.



### SMART TIPS:

- Install and test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to alert you before it's too late.
- Have a home fire escape plan and practice it with your family.

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