

*From the Desk of the Manager*

## Wired for growth: Balancing data center demand and reliability

Data centers may feel like a big-city phenomenon, but more and more of them are showing up in rural communities like ours — and there’s good reason for that. Rural areas offer what data centers need most: affordable land, room to grow and access to transmission lines that can move large amounts of power.

What makes data centers different from other large businesses is their appetite for electricity. These facilities run 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Servers must stay online constantly, which means

power has to be reliable every minute of every day. For electric cooperatives like Western Illinois Electrical Coop. (WIEC), powering data centers creates both opportunities and challenges.

On the plus side, data centers have the potential to bring steady, long-term load growth that helps support investments in the local grid. With proper planning and policy support, those upgrades — including new substations, stronger lines and smarter technology — could benefit all Western Illinois



*Todd Grotts  
General Manager  
WIEC*

Electrical Coop. members and help keep electricity rates steady.

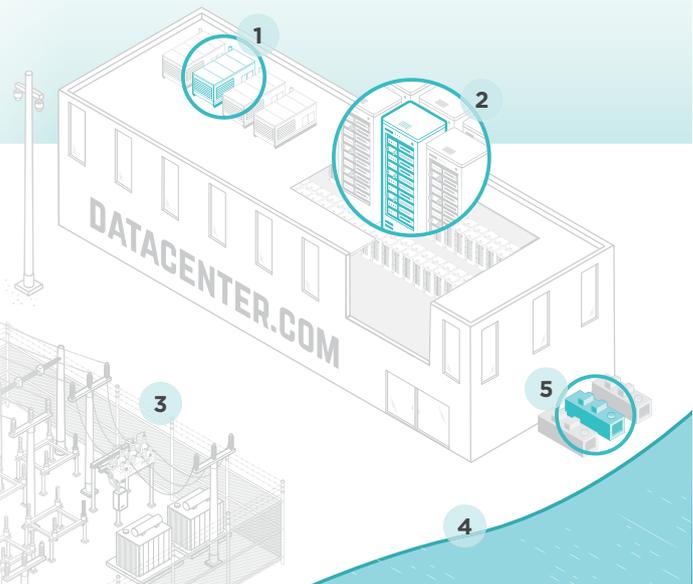
But providing power to data centers presents challenges, too. These large facilities can be constructed and

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## Big Data, Bigger Demands

Many companies are choosing rural areas for their data centers because of cheaper land, available power and potential tax breaks. Data centers require huge amounts of electricity to operate, which presents new opportunities and challenges for electric co-ops.

- 1 **HVAC:** Constant cooling is needed to ensure the servers function properly.
- 2 **Servers:** Servers run applications and process data 24/7. One server rack can consume enough electricity to power a small home. A large data center can house thousands of server racks.
- 3 **Infrastructure:** Data centers often require new electrical infrastructure to meet their power needs.
- 4 **Water Source:** Many large data centers are deploying evaporative cooling, which is more efficient than compressor-based systems.
- 5 **Backup Power:** On-site generators keep data centers running during power outages and can also be used to help lower demand when electricity use spikes.





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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.

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operating in as little as one year, but ensuring the necessary infrastructure, equipment and electricity requires longer lead times and significant financial investment. Strategic planning and partnerships, as well as long-term power supply strategies are essential to the process. **571-17**

While Western Illinois Electrical Coop. does not currently serve any data centers, co-ops nationwide are fielding requests and inquiries from tech companies. It is reasonable to anticipate that WIEC could also receive these types of requests in the not-too-distant future.

As a member-owned cooperative, our responsibility is twofold: to listen to the communities we serve and to provide reliable, affordable electric service to all Western Illinois Electrical Coop. members. Balancing those responsibilities is not always simple, especially as new types of large-scale

energy users like data centers become part of the local landscape.

No matter what the future holds, our priority will be supporting any type of growth with fairness — that means ensuring large-scale energy users pay their fair share so residential bills don't spike and our local communities feel invested in.

The energy landscape is changing, and with it comes both opportunities and challenges. My commitment, and the commitment of WIEC's board and employees, is to continue listening, communicating and working with our members and community partners to ensure all decisions reflect the best interests of the people and businesses we serve.

If you have questions or concerns regarding data centers, your energy bills or any other co-op matters, we encourage you to stay engaged and reach out.

Your voice matters at Western Illinois Electrical Coop.

## Spring into Tax Day with energy-efficiency tax breaks

**I**t's tax time. Save on energy costs and increase your energy efficiency with these federal tax credits. With federal energy efficiency credits alone, you can claim up to \$3,200 this year.

### Home energy audit

Not sure where to start? Claim up to \$150 for a home energy audit that can estimate the energy and cost savings of efficiency improvements and recommend the best options for your home. Visit [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov) for more details.

### Energy-efficient home improvement credit

Upgrade your doors, insulation and windows and get 30% back — up to \$1,200. **5816-24**

### Install heat pumps, water heaters or a biomass stove

Save 30% (up to \$2,000) on energy-efficiency upgrades including heat pumps, water heaters, biomass stoves and biomass boilers. For details visit [energystar.gov/about/federal-tax-credits](http://energystar.gov/about/federal-tax-credits).

### Going renewable

Claim up to 30% back on the cost of clean energy installations including solar, wind, geothermal and battery storage, with no annual or lifetime dollar limit (except for fuel cell property) through Dec. 31, 2025. To learn more visit [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov), or to find information about specific technologies visit [energystar.gov/about/federal-tax-credits/solar-energy-systems](http://energystar.gov/about/federal-tax-credits/solar-energy-systems), [energystar.gov/about/federal-tax-credits/geothermal-heat-pumps](http://energystar.gov/about/federal-tax-credits/geothermal-heat-pumps), and [energystar.gov/about/federal-tax-credits/battery-storage-technology](http://energystar.gov/about/federal-tax-credits/battery-storage-technology).

### Home energy rebates

These rebates help reduce the cost of energy-saving upgrades for both single-family and multi-family homes. You can use these discounts for things like Energy STAR appliances, insulation and more. Check the Energy STAR's Rebate Finder tool to starting saving: [energystar.gov/rebate-finder](http://energystar.gov/rebate-finder).

# Just a reminder ...

These charts reflect the rate changes that will go into effect for usage starting April 1, 2026. You will see them for the first time on the bills you receive in early May that will be due on May 26, 2026. You can look at your current bill to see what rate (or rates) you are on, then check below to see how they will change on April 1st. **4811-17**

| Rates 1, 2, 13<br>Single-Phase | 2025 RATE | Rate Effective<br>4/1/2026 |
|--------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| Facility Charge                | \$58      | \$65                       |
| First 2,000 kWh                | .1275/kWh | .1300/kWh                  |
| Over 2,000 kWh                 | .1150/kWh | .1200/kWh                  |

| Rates 3 & 33<br>Three-Phase | 2025 RATE | Rate Effective<br>4/1/2026 |
|-----------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| Facility Charge             | \$76      | \$85                       |
| First 2,000 kWh             | .1575/kWh | No Change                  |
| Over 2,000 kWh              | .1150/kWh | .1200/kWh                  |

| Rate 4<br>Large Power | 2025 RATE | Rate Effective<br>4/1/2026 |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| Facility Charge       | \$120     | \$135                      |
| All kWhs              | .1150/kWh | No Change                  |
| Demand                | \$12/KW   | \$12.50/KW                 |

| Rates 40, 41,<br>403, 413<br>Electric Heat* | 2025 RATE | Rate Effective<br>4/1/2026 |
|---|-----------|----------------------------|
| Facility Charge                             | \$6       | No Change                  |
| *October-April Only                         |           |                            |
| All kWhs                                    | .1150/kWh | No Change                  |

| Rates 60, 61, 603, 613<br>Geothermal | 2025 RATE | Rate Effective<br>4/1/2026 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| Facility Charge                      | \$6       | No Change                  |
| All kWhs                             | .1150/kWh | No Change                  |

| Rate 75<br>Non-metered<br>Attachments | 2025 RATE | Rate Effective<br>4/1/2026 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| Facility Charge                       | \$43.50   | \$48.75                    |

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

As spring arrives, take advantage of milder temperatures to save energy at home. Open windows on pleasant days to bring in fresh air instead of running your HVAC system. It's also a great time to replace dirty air filters, which helps your system run more efficiently and improves indoor air quality. As daylight increases, turn off unnecessary lights and rely on natural sunlight when possible. Small seasonal adjustments like these can reduce energy use, lower monthly bills and help keep your home comfortable as winter transitions into spring.



Welcome new members

December  
2025

Tod & Christine Schwerin

Deaira Stewart

## YOUTH DAY IN ILLINOIS IS MARCH 25 THIS YEAR.



Over the years, thousands of Illinois high school students have learned how government works and why it's important for every citizen to get involved in it. Western Illinois Electrical Coop. is proud to be a part of the group providing this opportunity for the leaders of tomorrow to meet and to be inspired and encouraged by today's state senators and representatives.

We would like to wish this year's participants a safe and memorable trip.



## Director nomination and election process

In accordance with Article IV, Section 4, of your cooperative's by-laws, a nominating committee must be appointed between thirty (30) and one hundred twenty (120) days prior to the Annual Meeting of Members (June 25, 2026).

Directors shall be elected by and from the membership by ballot and shall serve for a term of three years, or until their successors shall have been elected and qualified. The terms of the Directors from Districts 6 and 7 expire this year. Directors from both of these districts will be nominated. **4722-41**

District No. 6, currently represented by Landon Guymon, includes Augusta, St. Mary's, Hancock and Harmony Townships in Hancock County, Ill., as well as Lamoine and Tennessee Townships in McDonough County, Ill.

District No. 7, currently represented by Janet Spory, includes Wythe, Wilcox, Rocky Run and Walker Townships in Hancock County, Ill., as well as Lima Township in Adams County, Ill.

The nominating committee must post a list of nominations at the cooperative office at least twenty (20) days before the annual meeting. Any fifteen (15) cooperative members may act together and nominate another member by petition. These nominations will be posted with those made by the nominating committee. Nominations made by petition at least ten (10) days before the annual meeting will be included on the official ballot. No member may nominate more than one candidate.

