

31st Annual Safety Fair

WIEC's annual Safety Fair began in 1994 to equip fifth grade students with knowledge about many ways to stay safe in the world around them. Due to COVID concerns, Western Illinois Electrical Coop. was unable to hold the Safety Fair in 2020 or 2021, but it has otherwise been held annually since it began. We were incredibly happy to be able to spend time instructing the students about safety again this year. The message of "Live Smart, Keeping Safe and Having Fun" has been shared with approximately 6,585 students over the years.

The day starts with a crowd favorite: the Live Line Demonstration from Steve Hancock of Corn Belt Energy. Corn Belt Energy is another Illinois electric cooperative and is located in Bloomington. Steve brings an energized electrical system and shows the kids the power of 7200 volts by touching a hot dog to the live line. He explains to them that the reaction the hot dog has is like what would happen if a person were to touch the line. School groups then move through various other instruction areas where each is focused on a different safety situation. For lunch the students, teachers, chaperones and presenters are served a hot dog, applesauce and chips on a frisbee to take home as a reminder of the lessons learned during the day. After lunch students are off to finish any of the various instruction areas they were unable to attend in their morning sessions. The event ends with



magician Chris Egelston wrapping up. He uses magic, laughter and fun to encourage the kids to stay drug-free.

This year's fair was held on Sept. 17 with seven schools in attendance and roughly 199 students learning about many ways to stay safe in different environments. Students were taught how to be safe around power lines by the WIEC line crew. In other instruction areas, these fifth graders also learned about bicycle safety and how to wear protective equipment; how to make a 911 call and interact with an ambulance crew; and how to be safe on and around the farm. In addition, the kids got to experience the Smoke House from the Carthage Fire Department to learn about fire safety. The presenters do a fantastic job of engaging and interacting with the students. Some presenters have games to play and prizes to win! Presenters allow kids to ask questions while helping them to understand the need to be safe.

Safety Fair 2026

THANK YOU - THANK YOU - THANK YOU

- **Illini West Student Council volunteers** – Cruz Cameron, Solon Cameron, Gunnar Donaldson, Layney McKune, Shianne Post, Logan Shirey and Kathryn Thompson
- **Carthage Clipper Fire Department, Carthage, Ill.** – Smoke House for Fire Safety presentation
- **Bickel's Cycling & Fitness, Burlington, Iowa** – Malinda Bickel – Bicycle Safety presentation
- **Hancock County 911, Carthage, Ill.** – Maria Hopp, Administrator – 911 presentation
- **Emergency Medical Services (EMS), Carthage, Ill.** – Ambulance presentation 3711-23
- **Lineworkers from Western Illinois Electrical Coop** – Pole Climbing and Safety Equipment demonstrations
- **Chris Egleston, Carterville, Ill.** – Magician
- **Steve Hancock, Corn Belt Energy, Bloomington, Ill.** – Live Line presentation
- **Sly Fox, Inc., Carthage, Ill.** – Lunch preparation and water donation
- **Lunch helpers** – Donna Cramer, Becky Dickinson, Lisa Morrison and Janet Spory
- **University of Illinois Extension Center, Carthage, Ill.** – Dawn Weinburg – use of the building and facilities



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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

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- **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.

Office closures



VETERANS DAY

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

The WIEC office will be closed on Wednesday, Nov. 11 in honor of Veterans Day. **Thank you, veterans, for your service! You are appreciated.**



HAPPY THANKSGIVING

The WIEC office will be closed Thursday, Nov. 26 to celebrate Thanksgiving. The office will reopen on Friday, Nov. 27. WIEC's directors and employees wish everyone a bountiful Thanksgiving and are thankful for the opportunity to continue to serve.

As always, in case of a power emergency, please call 217-357-3125 or 800-576-3125. If the 217 number rings busy, please redial using the 800 number, which should always ring through to our offsite call center.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Adjust your water heater settings to save energy. As cooler weather arrives, your water heater may be working harder to keep up with longer, hotter showers. Check its temperature setting and consider lowering it to 120°F, which the U.S. Department of Energy recommends for most households. Lowering the temperature can reduce energy use while also helping prevent scalding. Always check the owner's manual before making adjustments.

Source: Dept. of Energy



Welcome new members

August 2026

Adioc of Central Illinois, LLC
Harl, Riley & Karissa Johnson
Mcghghy, Richard & Margaret
Minasian, Michelle

Moore, Tia
Rettig, Brad 4710-63
Russell, George
Shawgo, Derek A & Marlyna A

POWERING YOUR FUTURE

20 SCHOLARSHIPS • \$3,000 EACH

At Western Illinois Electrical Coop. (WIEC), we believe the key to a brighter future lies in empowering the next generation. That's why electric cooperatives across Illinois are committed to investing in youth through scholarships that honor the legacy of our cooperative family while fueling the dreams and goals of tomorrow's leaders.

The electric cooperatives of Illinois will award **20 scholarships of \$3,000 each** to outstanding students as part of the **Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program**.

"This program is about more than financial aid — it's about empowering students," said WIEC Manager Todd Grotts. "While honoring those who came before us, we are investing in the future. Illinois' electric cooperatives are always looking for ways to spark positive change in our communities, and supporting youth through scholarships is one of the most impactful ways we can help shape tomorrow." 5820-15

Scholarships available:

- **Twelve scholarships** will be awarded to high school seniors whose parent(s) are members of an Illinois electric cooperative.
- The **Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship** will be awarded to a student whose parent is an Illinois electric cooperative employee or director, honoring a legacy of service within the cooperative family.
- **Six scholarships** will be awarded to students enrolling full-time at an Illinois community college whose parent(s) are electric cooperative members.
- The **LaVern and Nola McEntire Memorial Lineworker's Scholarship** supports students pursuing a career in linework through enrollment in the lineworker program at Lincoln Land Community College. Eligible applicants include children of cooperative members, relatives of employees or directors, and individuals who have served or are currently serving in the armed forces or National Guard.

The general scholarship application deadline is Dec. 31, 2026, and the line-worker scholarship application is due by April 30, 2027. For more information, contact Karmen Metternich at 217-357-3125 or visit aiec.coop or wiec.net. Information has also been shared with area high school guidance counselors.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for the next wave of bright minds in our co-op communities," said Manager Grotts. "These scholarships ensure that our future is powered by knowledge, service and a shared commitment to excellence. Together, we can light the way to a brighter tomorrow."

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

Stay alert for fraudulent utility calls. Scammers can spoof caller ID to make a phone call appear to come from your electric utility—even when it doesn't. They may threaten disconnection, demand immediate payment or ask for personal information. Don't rely on caller ID alone to verify a caller's identity. If you receive a suspicious call, hang up and contact your utility using the phone number printed on your bill or listed on the official website.

Source: FTC





Holiday cooking: Save energy in the kitchen

During the holiday season, you may spend more time prepping, cooking and baking for family and friends. A few small changes can help you save energy, lower utility costs and keep your kitchen running efficiently.

Saving energy in the kitchen starts with using the right appliance for the job, keeping equipment in good condition and making simple changes to everyday cooking habits.

Cooking and prep

- **Use small appliances when possible.** Choose an air fryer, microwave, slow cooker or toaster oven for small meals or side dishes. They often use less energy than a full-size oven.
- **Keep the stovetop clean.** Clean burners and surfaces help heat transfer evenly.
- **Match the pan to the burner.** Using a small pan on a large burner wastes heat. Choose a burner that closely matches the size of the pan.
- **Cover pots and pans.** Lids keep heat inside, help water boil faster and allow food to cook evenly at lower settings.

- **Keep the oven door closed.** Use the oven light instead of opening the door to check on food. Opening the door lets heat escape and makes the oven work harder.
- **Thaw frozen foods ahead of time.** Move frozen foods to the refrigerator in advance to avoid microwave defrosting.
- **Cook more at once.** Bake multiple dishes together when possible and make larger portions to freeze for later.
- **Cut food into small pieces.** Small pieces of vegetables and meat cook faster and more evenly than large ones.
- **Skip the self-cleaning cycle.** Use it sparingly, since it requires very high heat and uses extra energy. **6720-55**
- **Turn down the thermostat while cooking.** Cooking and baking can warm your home quickly, especially when guests are gathered.

Refrigeration

- **Let leftovers cool slightly.** Allow hot foods to cool before

refrigerating (but do not leave them out too long). This keeps your refrigerator from working harder to cool warm food.

- **Check the door seal.** Make sure the refrigerator door closes tightly. Test the seal by closing the door on a dollar bill. If it slides out easily, the gasket may need to be replaced.
- **Prevent frost buildup.** Too much frost can make the freezer work harder to maintain the right temperature.
- **Keep it full but not crowded.** Refrigerators work best when cold air can circulate.

Dishwashing

- **Run full loads.** Wait until the dishwasher is full before running it to make the most of each cycle.
- **Skip heated dry.** Use the air-dry or eco-mode setting to dry dishes while reducing energy use.



Small changes in how you cook, cool and clean up can help save energy, no matter the season.