

## Long-time WIEC employee Donna Cramer retires

**A**fter 42 years as a WIEC employee, Donna Cramer will be walking out of the WIEC office on April 2 for the last time. She will be leaving with a wealth of knowledge about our system and our history. Hopefully, she'll be taking some great memories of the members and her co-workers when she walks out the door. We know we'll have great memories of her, her smile and great attitude.



### *What's your favorite part of your job and why?*

Always learning something new or getting an answer about how electricity works. I have a great group of coworkers and they have always been like family.

### *What has changed the most in the 40-plus years you've been here?*

I have been here long enough to see the billing system change at least three times. We started billing with an old Burroughs in-house machine, and then we branched out to a satellite with

a big dish in the back of the office. Now, our system relies on the internet with the bills printed and mailed from another facility. Also, we went from using meter readers to the automatic AMR system. (3616-6) I used to manually enter all the meter readings each month, and now it is all uploaded each month automatically by computer.



### **Here is her story:**

#### *What was your start date?*

June 4, 1975

#### *Describe your role at WIEC.*

I feel my role at WIEC is to greet the members with a smile on my face and concern for them.

The members were my first priority. I always try to know who is walking in the door and call them by their name.

**The members were my first priority.**



### *What is on your wish list for the next five years?*

I hope to be able to do a little traveling, spend time with my grandchildren and my new great-granddaughter, volunteer and maybe pick up a little golf.

### *What might (someone) be surprised to know about you?*

I love to play cards, and I am very competitive.

### *What is the first thing you would buy if you won the lottery?*

I would probably plan a vacation for my whole family, somewhere warm in the winter, and then share the wealth with my kids, family and church.

**Good Luck! Donna!**



**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

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**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.



## Director nomination and election process

In accordance with Article IV, Section 4 of your cooperative's bylaws, a nominating committee must be appointed between 30 and 120 days prior to the Annual Meeting of Members (June 28, 2018).

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 directors from Districts #1, #2 and #3 will expire this year.

District No. 1, currently represented by Kim Gullberg, is all of the cooperative's service area in Henderson County, Illinois.

District No. 2, currently represented by William R. Newton, is Appanoose, Montebello and Sonora Townships in Hancock County, Illinois. (391-3)

District No. 3, currently represented by Jay D. Morrison, is

LaHarpe, Durham, Rock Creek, Pontoosuc and Dallas Townships in Hancock County, Illinois, and the cooperative's service area in Blandinsville Township in McDonough County, Illinois.

The nominating committee must post a list of nominations at the cooperative office at least 20 days before the annual meeting. Any 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 10 days before the annual meeting will be included on the official ballot. Later nominations by petition shall be treated as nominations from the floor. The chairman shall call for additional nominations from the floor. No member may nominate more than one candidate.

## Formulary rate plan adder update

After reviewing WIEC's year-end 2017 financial information and the 2018 budget, the WIEC board of directors approved reinstating the formulary rate plan (FRP) adder. The formulary rate plan, first introduced in 2016, is a way to ensure adequate revenues to maintain the operations and financial stability of WIEC.

The 2018 adder will be assessed per rate class:

FRP for Rate 1 will be \$2.50

FRP for Rate 3 will be \$9.00

FRP for Rate 4 will be \$20.00

This adder will go into effect April 1, 2018 and will continue until March 31, 2019. It will first appear on bills received around May 10, 2018.

The WIEC Board of Directors will continue to monitor the financial health of the cooperative each year to determine what steps are necessary to maintain the appropriate levels of margins required by our lenders.

## DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

Don't forget to spring forward on **March 11!** Set your clocks ahead by one hour.



## Cooperative Facts:

Did you know that WIEC has a tax status of 501(c)(12) which exempts cooperative electric companies, such as WIEC, from federal income tax.

To qualify for and maintain exemption under IRC 501(c)(12), WIEC must receive 85 percent or more of their income from members for the sole purpose of meeting losses and expenses each year.

WIEC has a service (3716-12) department that does wiring on the member's side of the meter and sells water heaters and electrical material, but our main service is to provide electricity to our member-owners.



## Good Friday observance

WIEC will be closed on March 30, 2018 in observance of **Good Friday**. Please call 1-800-576-3125 to report outages or to make payments.

# Power strips versus surge protectors

By Tom Tate

As the proliferation of electronics impacts our daily lives, we realize there simply are not enough outlets in our homes. This is particularly true for older homes. As a result, we end up with a number of “outlet expanders,” more commonly known as power strips.

Power strips are generic and fulfill a very simple function. They are inexpensive, and the quality, I suspect, is on par with the price.

Keeping this in mind, let’s look at factors to consider when purchasing a power strip or a surge protector, the power strip’s more talented cousin.

*Important tip:* Make sure you know the amperage rating of the outlet into which you are connecting the strip and other equipment. A residential circuit can overload if you are not careful.



## Purchasing a power strip:

- Look for power strips with a built-in circuit breaker. If you connect too many electronics and devices, the strip will kick out the circuit breaker rather than causing the breaker in your electric panel to trip.
- Pay attention to the orientation of the outlets. The typical design is along the length of the strip, facing the bottom or end of the strip. I recommend power strips with the outlets perpendicular to the length of the strip.
- Get a smart strip. These are becoming more common and less expensive. With smart strips, one outlet serves as a master, receiving power all the time. The other outlets do not receive power until the master device is turned on. This is ideal for home entertainment setups.

If you are connecting expensive electronics, you may want to consider a surge protector. Here, price is even more important because a cheap surge protector can be worse than none at all for two reasons. One, they use cheap, small surge fighting components. Two, these components can fail and the strip still will provide power, all without any indication that its protective side is gone.

Like power strips, there are some key factors to consider when buying a surge protector.

- Go for a significant joule (jewel) rating. This is a **(10528-56)** measure of how much energy it can withstand.
- Cable and internet connection protection. You may want to consider this for your entertainment and computing needs as surges can enter via any wired connection. Be sure the protector is designed to handle a digital television. Otherwise, it can cause pixilation if it’s only designed for analog signals.
- Indicator light that shows if protection has burned out.
- The same outlet orientation as previously mentioned.
- Power conditioning feature (for PCs, this is a nice-to-have feature but not a necessity).
- A smart capability as mentioned above.

Power strips and surge protectors are worth the investment when you follow these simple suggestions. Don’t get “burned” by purchasing cheap, inefficient strips and protectors. Pun intended.

## Welcome New Members

Kelly & Eric Bunnell, Augusta  
Natalia & Kevin MacMaster,  
Nauvoo  
Michael Marshall, Nauvoo  
Josh Miller, Blandinsville  
Jake & Denise Seitz, Gladstone

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



In spring and summer months, set your ceiling fans to turn in the counterclockwise direction. This will create a cool breeze. Remember: Ceiling fans cool people, not rooms. Turn them off when you leave the room.

Source: [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov)