

The commitment of an electric lineworker

Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 8.

Linemen serve on the frontlines of our nation's energy needs, and on April 8, 2019, Western Illinois Electrical Coop. will honor our line crew who work in challenging and often dangerous conditions to keep power flowing for our member-owners and protect the public's safety.

"Our linemen are the first responders of our electric cooperative, and they're always ready to get the job done, day or night, and they do it safely," said Todd Grotts, WIEC manager. "Whether they're restoring power after the endless snow and bitterly cold temperatures like we experienced this winter or maintaining critical infrastructure to our electric system, our linemen (5626-29) are at the heart of everything we do."

Braving stormy weather and other challenging conditions, lineworkers often must climb 40 or more feet in the air, carrying heaving equipment to restore power. Listed as one of the 15 most dangerous jobs in the U.S., lineworkers must perform detailed tasks next to high voltage power lines. To help keep them safe, lineworkers wear specialized protective clothing and equipment at all times when on the job. This includes special fire-resistant clothing that will self-extinguish, limiting potential injuries from burns and sparks. Insulated and rubber gloves are worn in tandem to protect them from electrical shock. While the gear performs a critical function, it also adds



additional weight and bulk, making the job more complex.

In addition to the highly visible tasks lineworkers perform, their job today goes far beyond climbing to the top of a pole to repair a wire. They are also information experts that can pinpoint an outage from miles away and restore power remotely. Line crews use their laptops and cell phones to map outages and troubleshoot problems. In our community, WIEC lineworkers are responsible for keeping 1,220 miles of lines across four of counties working, in order to bring power to your home and our local community 24/7, regardless of the weather, holidays or personal considerations.

WIEC is proud to honor our six linemen who have made the commitment to serve our member-owners. There are eight employees who are

on-call who go out to handle the after-hours outages, due to storms, animals, vehicle accidents and so many other reasons that can make the power go out. There are also two supervisors on call who are available to come to the office during large outages, to dispatch crews, prioritizing workload, handle communications to keep everything running smoothly. These 10 employees have the knowledge and commitment to make sure our member-owner's power gets restored as quickly as possible.

WIEC invites our co-op members to take a moment and think about the work our line crew does on a daily basis. If you see one of our linemen, buy them a cup of coffee or shake their hand. If you see them in a WIEC truck, give them a friendly wave.



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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

- **Kent Flesner** —
President, West Point
- **Mark Burling** —
Vice President, Carthage
- **Janet Spory** —
Secretary/Treasurer, Sutter
- **William Newton** —
Assistant Secretary/Treasurer,
Burnside
- **Rob Gronewold** —
Director, Carthage
- **Kim Gullberg** —
Director, Stronghurst
- **Jay Morrison** —
Director, Niota

STAFF

- **Todd Grotts** — General Manager
- **Ryan Biery** — Manager
of Operations
- **Becky Dickinson** — Finance/
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.

Reap what you sow: Stay safe during planting season

Long hours and fatigue are a constant battle for farmers during planting season. If you farm, remember to take care of yourself by getting as much rest as possible and allowing yourself breaks to clear your head.

Be especially aware of electrical hazards around the farm. Be cautious and think twice before acting around electricity. Safe Electricity offers farmers the following reminders:

- If your machinery or vehicle comes in contact with a power line, do not get out. Once contact has been made with a live line (even when your tractor or truck makes contact), you are now a "pathway to ground" and you could get electrocuted if you step out. Instead, stay where you are and call 9-1-1 to dispatch the appropriate utility to de-energize the power.
- If you come across an accident or incident near a downed power line, alert individuals (from a distance) to stay in the tractor or vehicle as long as there is no imminent danger. Do not approach the scene.
- When using machinery with long extensions or tall antennas and when using ladders, look up to avoid contact with overhead power lines.
- Even if there is no contact, an electrical current can jump or arc so keep equipment at least 10 feet from surrounding power lines at all times.
- Remember, non-metallic materials (such as tree limbs, ropes and hay)

can conduct electricity, depending on dampness and dust/dirt accumulation.

- Visually inspect overhead lines, which may not meet height codes due to age or pole damage. If a wire is hanging low or is on the ground, consider it energized and stay at least 50 feet away; call 9-1-1 to have the operator dispatch the utility.
- Every day, map out where equipment will be moved to ensure it will clear power lines.
- When working in the vicinity of power lines, always use a spotter who has a broad vantage point.
- Train anyone working with or for you (including seasonal employees) to be aware of power line locations and teach them proper clearance distance. Also design and implement a safety training program that includes a review of electrical hazards and how to safely deal with power lines.
- According to American Family Insurance, "know your PTO." To stay safe when working with a power take off (PTO), always disengage the PTO, turn off the engine and remove keys before getting off the tractor. Also, never step across a rotating power shaft.

For more information on electrical safety, go to SafeElectricity.org.



If your machinery or vehicle comes in contact with a power line, stay inside if possible.

When the lights go out, we've got your back.

#ThankALineworker



Vegetation management schedule

In order to maintain safe and reliable electric service, WIEC has contracted with Long Forestry Consultation for trimming, cutting and removing of trees and brush.

We plan to have crews performing routine brush spraying this spring and summer in all or parts of Montebello and Sonora townships.

Fallen trees and limbs account for many of our power outages, momentary flickers and blinks. Tree trimming is (5831-46-1) necessary to help insure the continuous service you deserve and expect.

Due to the advanced printing of this issue of the WIEC News, these plans are subject to change. If there are questions or concerns, please contact our office during normal business hours at 217-357-3125 or 800-576-3125.

Ways to serve your cooperative

Nominating committee appointed

One of the greatest resources of western Illinois is our people and their willingness to serve when asked. There are several ways to serve your cooperative. One is by being on the nominating committee who solicits members to run for the board. Another way to serve is actually running for a board of directors seat, if asked.

At the 2019 Annual Meeting, on June 27, two WIEC members will be elected to serve on our WIEC board. As a way to nominate members to be on the ballots, WIEC's board of directors recently appointed the following members to serve on the 2019 nominating committee. Those who will serve on the nominating committee are:

District No. 1 – Bradley Flatt, Media

District No. 2 – Spencer Berry, Nauvoo

District No. 3 – Harold (Tony) Herdrich, Dallas City

District No. 4 – Jason Jacquot, Carthage and Bryan Stevens, West Point

District No. 5 – Jonathan Fecht, and Austin Ufkes, both of Carthage

District No. 6 – Robert Menn, Plymouth

District No. 7 – Max Roskamp, Sutter

These members will nominate at least one member for a three-year term (4522-6) to represent Districts 4 and 5.

Currently, Kent Flesner represents District 4 and Mark Burling represents District 5.

If you are interested in running for a seat on WIEC's board of directors, please contact one of the above nominating committee members or contact the WIEC office about meeting dates. We'd like to hear from you.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Streaming content with electronic equipment that has earned the ENERGY STAR® rating will use 25 to 30 percent less energy than standard equipment.

Source: energy.gov



Jodelle Eddington and Michael Vorwerk

These members won \$10 because they found their map locations numbers in recent issues of the WIEC News. Each month, we hide four map location numbers in the WIEC News. It's so easy; find your number, call our office and you'll receive a \$10 bill credit on your next electric bill.

Remember, you can't win if you don't look!



Our directors make a difference

Can YOU be part of that difference?

As an electric cooperative, Western Illinois Electrical Coop. is guided by an elected board of directors who represents our members' when making important decisions. Being a member of the co-op's board is an important position. A director's decisions will impact issues, such as service rates, rights of way and work plans. This position holds great responsibility and requires men and women who understand their community's needs and will keep our members' best interest at heart.

With assets of over \$25 million and serving over 3,600 members, WIEC needs board members who can lead when necessary, yet show a willingness to listen and cooperate. Our directors attend monthly meetings and should be willing to commit adequate time to come to the meetings prepared. Although they aren't expected to be walking encyclopedias about electric industry, they should be prepared to learn about the issues facing WIEC, including finances, rate management and outside political pressures.

In order for members to elect strong directors to our board, we must have a pool of strong candidates, which is why we encourage members to consider running for a seat on our board. This month, 10 members who serve as our 2019 (5817-34) nominating committee (see page 20C for more information) will meet to place names in nomination for District 4, and District 5. These areas encompass St. Albans, Chili, Bear Creek, Prairie Carthage, Pilot Grove, and Fountain Green Townships in Hancock County, Illinois, and the cooperative's service area in McDonough County and Adams County Illinois. The nominated candidates will be voted on at our annual meeting in June. Any co-op member (in good standing) who lives on WIEC lines in these districts is welcome to run for a position on the board in their home district. Directors receive \$100 per board meeting.

Fresh ideas and new perspectives help us to enact policies that keep our cooperative strong for the future. Directors matter. Let's make a difference together.



Welcome New Members

JANUARY 2019

Megan Biddenstadt & Jason Lamporte, Carthage, IL
 Leighann Lunt, Hamilton, IL
 Larry & Cheryl Pratt, Tennessee, IL
 Tasha Speer, Carthage, IL

HELP KEEP ELECTRIC LINE WORKERS SAFE

- Be patient** when the power goes out. Workers need to work efficiently and **safely** to restore power.
- ZONE IN ON SAFETY**: Respect roadside work crews. Don't drive distracted. Reduce your speed. Change lanes.
- 1** work zone crash occurs every **5.4 minutes**
- 70** work zone crashes result in **injuries each day**
- 12** work zone crashes result in at least **1 fatality each week**
- Never plug a generator into a wall outlet** in your home or garage. The power that back feeds into the electric line could **electrocute** a utility worker or neighbor.
- DON'T** post signs on utility poles. Foreign objects can tear utility workers' protective clothing, which is the first line of protection from an electric shock.
- Electric line workers **RANK 15** on the list of **25 MOST DANGEROUS JOBS** in America. Help keep them safe!

Learn more at SafeElectricity.org