

# WIPCO

# Informer



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## WIPCO welcomes back Youth Tour!

Western Iowa Power Cooperative will send one student on an all-expense paid Youth Tour Trip to Washington, D.C., in June of 2024!

At Western Iowa Power Cooperative, one way that we invest in the next generation of rural Iowa leaders is by participating in the national Electric Cooperative Youth Tour Program. We are looking for high school sophomores and juniors with a passion for government and public service to apply for a once-in-a-lifetime trip to our nation's capital in June.

One student will be selected from eligible candidates to attend the 2024 Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., from June 15th to June 21st along with 40 other student leaders from Iowa. The Iowa Youth Tour group will join with hundreds of students from across the country as they learn more about electric cooperatives and American history and come home with a greater understanding of their role as American citizens. Students will also learn about U.S. government and meet with their members of Congress. On the trip, students take in the sights of D.C. as they visit monuments, museums, and historical landmarks. Students who go on Youth Tour often call it the trip of a lifetime! 61-05-1050

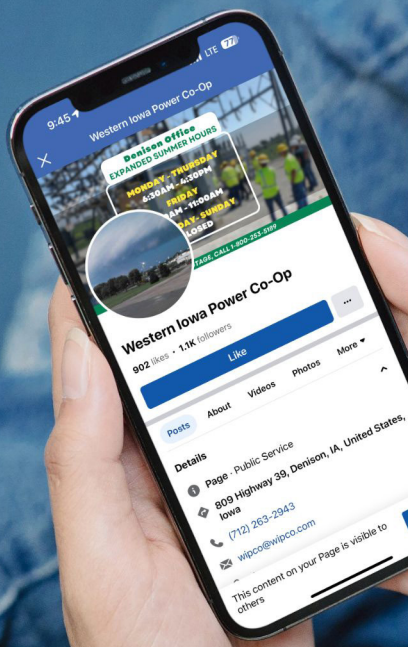
We are accepting Youth Tour applications from January 1st, 2024 to March 1st, 2024. Children of Western Iowa Power Cooperative members OR students attending high schools in the communities we serve are eligible to apply; the student must be a current sophomore or junior. Students will be asked to fill out an application with a few short answer questions, and their application will be decided on by the committee. After the tour, the student will be asked to record a video or come speak at our annual meeting about what they learned while on the trip and how the trip benefited them.

You can download the application at [www.wipco.com/youth-tour](http://www.wipco.com/youth-tour) or stop by our office for a printed copy. Contact Sadie Reisz, Communications and Benefits Coordinator, at 712-263-2943 or [sadie.reisz@wipco.com](mailto:sadie.reisz@wipco.com) for more information.

For more than 65 years, Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives have been sending deserving students to D.C. This program is a great resume builder for student leaders and a wonderful opportunity to kick-start one's passion for government affairs or advocacy. Make sure to apply for Youth Tour 2024 by March 1st, 2024!

Follow us on Facebook  
for real-time updates!

@WesternIowaPowerCoop



Western Iowa Power Cooperative's mission is to enhance our members' quality of life by providing safe and reliable electric services.



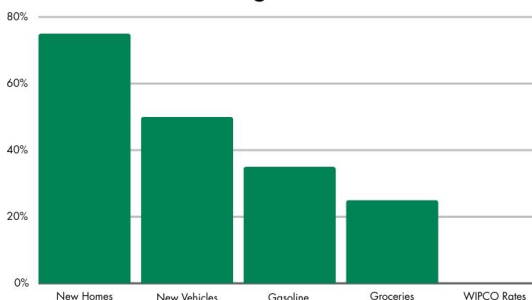


**Marcus Rihner**  
General Manager

Every few years, WIPCO undergoes a cost of service study. The process is complex, but the bottom-line purpose of any cost of service study is to make sure that the rates WIPCO charges for electric service are adequate to maintain our levels of reliability and financial stability while remaining fair and equitable to all of our members. WIPCO provides electricity to a very diverse group of members with many different service needs, and our members are placed in different rate groups (such as single-phase, irrigation, industrial, etc.) based on varying factors of their electric service. Our cost of service studies, conducted by a third party with high levels of involvement from WIPCO staff, compile and organize all the data associated with our electric system. The objective of these studies is to assist our directors and employees in making rate decisions that appropriately distribute costs among different rate groups.

WIPCO has been conducting our latest cost of service study for several months now. Our last study was conducted in 2020, but our last increase to base electric rates was implemented in 2017. As I'm sure anyone reading this is painfully aware, much has changed since 2017, both in the electric industry and in the U.S. economy. The graph shown here illustrates many of the challenges our members, as well as families and businesses across the country, are experiencing, from soaring new home and vehicle prices to substantially increased gasoline and grocery prices. Over this roughly seven-year period, we are proud to have been able to keep our base electric rates stable while all of these other critical cost categories increased at inflation rates not seen in several decades.

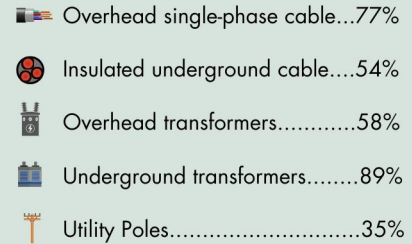
### 2017-2023 Average U.S. Inflation Rates



While we have been able to keep our base rates stable over this time period, it would be inaccurate to state that we have not faced many cost challenges of our own here at WIPCO over the past few years. Since we completed our last cost of service study in

2020, here are some examples of the average cost increases we have been forced to absorb in order to continue to provide the levels of service, safety, and reliability you have come to expect from your electric cooperative.

### Cost Increase from 2020 to 2023



As shown, many of our average inventory and material costs have skyrocketed in the last three to four years, as have those of nearly all utilities. Many other costs have gone up in a similar manner as well. While our cost of service study is in its final stages now, these inflation rates and cost factors are certainly one important factor in the results, which our directors and staff will take into consideration when determining WIPCO's electric rates moving forward. We will communicate any increases that may be necessary as soon as any such decisions are finalized (and well in advance of them taking effect).

By our very nature, WIPCO is a not-for-profit organization, and keeping our rates as affordable as possible is a pillar of who we are. Our governance structure provides that each of our directors must live on WIPCO lines (and many of our employees are WIPCO members as well), so the decisions made on our rates directly affect us as well. We also know that we only exist because of our members, and keeping our daily, weekly, and monthly costs as reasonable as possible is one of the most effective ways we can serve you. Please rest assured that these decisions are not taken lightly, and that we will keep communication open as we continue to navigate these challenging economic times.

I would be happy to discuss this (or any other Cooperative-related topics) in greater detail with any of our members, and I can be reached at our office or toll-free phone numbers at 712-263-2943 or 1-800-253-5189. Thank you for being a WIPCO member, and I hope 2024 is a year that brings joy to you and your family!



## Congratulations to Nate Mohr!

In November, Nate Mohr successfully obtained his Journeyman Electrician license. This achievement underscores Mohr's commitment to excellence and the Cooperative's dedication to fostering a highly skilled workforce. In Iowa, obtaining a Journeyman Electrician license typically involves completing a comprehensive apprenticeship program, accruing a specified number of on-the-job training hours, and successfully passing a rigorous examination. This licensing process ensures that electricians possess the necessary skills and knowledge to safely and effectively handle electrical systems. Nate Mohr's accomplishment not only reflects his individual expertise but also contributes to the overall competence and reliability of our WIPCO Team!



## The Gift of Giving

Both the Onawa and Denison offices contributed to our communities this holiday season! The Onawa office engaged in West Central Community Action's "Adopt-a-Family" initiative as well as their "Reverse Advent Calendar" where a gift is collected each day to be donated. The Denison office supported Goodfellows' Angel Tree program, providing gifts for three children in our community. These meaningful efforts were made possible by the generous donations from WIPCO employees, and we extend our heartfelt gratitude for their kindness in brightening the Christmas celebrations for these families! Pictured is Amy Johnston, Outreach Specialist in Monona County with donated reverse advent calendar gifts.

## Revolving Loan Funds

Western Iowa Power Cooperative created the Community and Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) to improve the quality of life in rural areas by contributing to long-term improvement in the local economy.

The RLF is a local funding source with the goal of providing low-interest loans to assist with local economic and community development projects. Our priorities include job creation and retention, diversification of the local economy, improving the skills of the rural workforce, and upgrading the public infrastructure to improve the health, safety, and medical care of rural residents. This fund is administered by Western Iowa Power Cooperative's Board of Directors. To learn more about WIPCO's Revolving Loan Fund, visit our website, [www.wipco.com/revolving-loan-fund!](http://www.wipco.com/revolving-loan-fund!)



## Download the WIPCO App!



Google Play Store



Apple App Store

## Please report any suspicious activity in or near substations, other electrical equipment

Substations are part of the electrical generation, transmission and distribution system. Transformers are contained inside many of them, and their job is to transform voltage from high to low or vice versa, depending on their location within the distribution path.

Besides transformers, substations usually house switches, protective devices and control equipment. In large substations, circuit breakers are used to interrupt any short circuits or overloads that may occur.

No one should approach a substation, touch the fence or enter the gate unless they are authorized to do so. 27-02-3811

Paying attention to individuals and activity around substations and other utility equipment helps keep everyone safe. Here are some things to look for:

- Take notice of individuals in street clothes working near or on utility equipment; if you see this, please report it immediately.
- Notice whether individuals are dressed in proper personal protective gear or have utility identification badges.
- Check vehicles or work trucks in the area for utility branded logos or information.
- Report any suspicious behavior you see, including non-utility employees tampering with utility poles, meters, pad-mount transformers or other equipment.
- If you notice anything unusual at a substation, please report it to the utility. Examples include the following:
  - An open or unlocked gate.
  - A damaged fence.
  - Obvious damage to equipment inside the fence.
- Call 9-1-1 and then Western Iowa Power Cooperative if you see the following:
  - Smoke or fire.
  - Non-utility workers inside the substation fence.

Never try to address an issue yourself. Please report any suspicious activity or damage to the police or Western Iowa Power Cooperative.

### First responder safety

First responders should always wait for the go-ahead from the electric utility before addressing a fire or vandalism at a substation, power plant or solar farm. First responders should also communicate with and wait for the utility before approaching a downed power line or damaged pad-mount transformer.

### General substation safety

Western Iowa Power Cooperative and Safe Electricity remind you to:

- Never go near a substation.
- Teach children to never go near a substation or climb its fence to retrieve a ball or pet. Let them know they should always stay away and tell a parent or adult, who should call us to report the incident at 712-263-2943.
- Teach children about the dangers of electricity from an early age.
- Never try to extinguish a transformer that is on fire since water and electricity do not mix. Call 9-1-1 to report the fire.
- If you see an issue with or notice something unusual about a substation, transformer or power line, contact your electric utility Western Iowa Power Cooperative. Never try to address a problem yourself.





## How much can you save with your heating system?

### Heating Solutions with Unmatched Efficiency



#### Propane Heat

In today's heating market, propane furnaces have an efficiency range of approximately **95-98%**. While considered more traditional, it is essential to note that propane furnaces, while efficient, may not align with the sustainability goals of environmentally conscious homeowners.



#### Electric Heat

Electric furnaces, maintaining an impressive **100%** efficiency rating, stand out as a dependable and environmentally friendly choice. WIPCO emphasizes the reliability and eco-friendliness of electric heating, steering homeowners towards a more sustainable option.



#### Air-to-Air Heat Pump

Air-to-Air heat pumps have an efficiency rate of **200% or more**. This multifunctional unit not only replaces traditional heating systems, but also serves as central air conditioning. Homeowners are encouraged to embrace this two-in-one solution, optimizing energy consumption while minimizing their environmental impact.



#### Geothermal Heat

Efficiency lies within WIPCO's geothermal ground source heating systems. These systems showcase an exceptional efficiency rating of **400% or more**. This renewable energy solution ensures that every dollar spent yields at least four times the amount of heat, setting a standard for efficiency and sustainability in residential and commercial heating systems.

For more information on heating and cooling systems, call WIPCO at 712-263-2943!

# 6 Your Source of Power and Information

## Ready to Hit the Road, Energy Trail Tours 2024

Flip a switch, and the lights come on. Behind this simple action lies a complex network of people, power plants, and transmission lines working around the clock. Their mission is to ensure safe, affordable, and reliable electricity flows to more than 140 member cooperatives in nine states.

This summer, WIPCO members will join members from thirteen other Western and North Central Iowa electric cooperatives on a three-day excursion through the Dakotas to learn about where their electricity comes from and have some fun along the journey. The tours are part of WIPCO's commitment to providing education for directors, employees, and members.

If you would like to be a part of this experience this year, please find more information below, on our website, or on our Facebook!



Western Iowa Power Cooperative and Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative invite you to join us for one of three Energy Trail Tours being offered this summer. This 3-day adventure will allow you to experience, first-hand, how your power providers convert energy from water, wind, and coal into electricity. View coal being mined and see how those mines are then returned to productive farm and native grass lands. Enjoy interactive walking tours through a hydroelectric and coal-fired energy generation facility and other stops along the way. Meet other cooperative member-owners while traveling together across the Dakotas on-board a motor-coach bound for the North Dakota's Energy Loop. \$100 per couple covers your lodging, meals and entry fees. The remainder of your tour costs are covered by Western Iowa Power Cooperative. Nine lucky couples from Western Iowa Power Cooperative will be selected at random from those who sign up.



YES, please enter our names in the drawing for the trip. We understand that if our names are drawn, we will be billed \$100.

Our first and second choice of dates:

June 26-28    1st   2nd   3rd   (please circle)  
July 10-12    1st   2nd   3rd  
July 24-26    1st   2nd   3rd

I/we  have  have not participated in this tour in the past.

First Person \_\_\_\_\_

Second Person \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

*Clip this coupon and return to cooperative by May 1, 2024.*





## WIPCO Residential Rebates



### New Appliances

\$50/unit for new energy star clothes washer, \$25/unit for energy star refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, and dryer, with a maximum rebate of \$250 per member, per year.



### Heat Pumps

Ground-coupled heat pumps (up to \$1,400/ton), air-to-air heat pumps (up to \$700/ton), and ductless mini-split heat pumps (up to \$700/ton). Maximum rebates allow 30% of the cost, capped at \$10,000 per home for all units, with specific criteria for new and replacement installations.



### General Insulation

Receive 30% of the cost for various insulation types, including blown-in, spray foam, AeroShield, insulating concrete forms, rigid Styrofoam panels, and structural insulated panels. To qualify, the building must have electric heat as the primary heating source. Maximum rebate is \$800 per building per year.



### Water Heaters

For units 50 gallons and larger, enjoy rebates ranging from \$300 to \$500 based on capacity and an Energy Factor (EF) of 90% or higher. Eligible for hot water use only, these rebates apply to both conventional restrictive and heat pump-type water heaters. Note that on-demand or tankless systems are not covered, and the maximum rebate is either a lump sum or 30% of the installed cost. Check our website for full details and compliance information.



### Electric Vehicle Chargers

Level 2 Chargers must be 208-240V, with members providing details like make, model, serial number, and specifications. Ensure compliance with a built-in, accessible meter or utility meter, a load control switch, and adherence to all codes during hardwired installation. The maximum rebate is 50% of the cost, capped at \$750 per charger, with a limit of two chargers per household.



### Air Conditioners

Get a \$100 rebate per unit on air conditioners applicable exclusively to ENERGY STAR® certified models, requiring connection to a load control switch. Eligible for new equipment only.

Check our website, [www.wipco.com/rebates](http://www.wipco.com/rebates), for full details and compliance information.

(USPS 9340)

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**“This institution is an equal  
 opportunity provider and  
 employer”**

**Safety Tip**

Start discussions about electrical equipment and safety when children are young. When babyproofing your home, don't forget about potential electrical hazards. Learn child safety tips at [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

Welcome To  
**Co-op Connections**  
 The free membership program that gives you incredible discounts on everyday expenses.

Download on the **App Store** GET IT ON **Google play**

Hidden somewhere within these pages are **two** Member location numbers. Find *your* location number in this newsletter, call the REC office by the 20th of the month, and you will receive a \$25.00 credit on your energy bill!

The location numbers in the December newsletter belonged to John Gordon and Norman Stanislav.

**SAVE**  
**\$25**

**DOWNLOAD OUR MOBILE APP!**

ANDROID APP ON **Google play** Download on the **App Store**