

WIPCOinformer

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Have you visited our website?

We're excited to announce that updates have been made to our website, enhancing both its functionality and user experience. These improvements are just the beginning! Over the next few months, we will continue making updates to better serve you. Stay tuned for new features, content, and easier navigation to keep you connected with all things WIPCO. Be sure to visit www.wipco.com to see what's new!



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

WIPCO Welcomes back Youth Tour!

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!

We are accepting Youth Tour applications until March 7th, 2025. 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/iowa-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 for more information.



Co-ops Advocate for affordable and reliable power

Nearly 170 senior staff and directors from Iowa electric cooperatives, including Western Iowa Power Cooperative, traveled to downtown Des Moines on January 14 to attend our annual reception at the start of the 91st General Assembly of the Iowa Legislature. At the event, co-op advocates were able to discuss concerns and priorities face to face with their state legislators. The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives hosted the reception in conjunction with the Iowa Biotechnology Association, the Iowa Communications Alliance, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives and FUEL Iowa.

Representatives from Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives covered several important issues that could impact the affordability and reliability of electricity for the members and communities we serve.

Our top legislative priority this session is protecting the state's defined electric service territories. In Iowa, your location determines which electric utility will serve your home, farm or business. For almost 50 years, these defined electric service areas have provided certainty to electric cooperatives as we work to maintain affordable rates, foster a resilient electric grid and invest in economic development throughout rural Iowa. We strongly oppose any efforts to change or amend the service territory law and you can learn more about this issue at www.ProtectRuralIowa.com.

In the coming months, Iowa's 91st General Assembly will be addressing a multitude of issues, including energy-related matters that are central to Iowa's rural economy. Beginning with the Welcome Back Legislative Reception, Iowa electric

cooperatives will again be important advocates for a balanced approach in addressing energy issues as we work to power lives and empower communities. We'll have another opportunity to advocate for our members and communities at our annual Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) Day on the Hill event on March 19. Learn more about our advocacy efforts at www.IARuralPower.org.



“We deeply value our long-standing relationship with our state legislatures as we work to ensure the continued growth and stability of our electric cooperative and local communities.” -Stephanie Wiese, Interim General Manager



Why Iowa co-ops support defined electric service areas

Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives are committed to safeguarding defined service areas because they protect rural Iowans by supporting affordable electric rates, securing a resilient electric grid and encouraging economic development.

Defined service areas provide a high degree of certainty to Iowa's electric cooperatives which allows us to make long-term investments in power generation to maintain affordable rates, finance major grid upgrades to ensure resiliency and utilize new technologies to enhance service. Electric co-ops can also be proactive in maintenance and vegetation management to improve reliability for the homes, farms and businesses we serve every day. Additionally, defined service areas allow electric co-ops to robustly support economic development efforts in the communities we serve, which retain and create local jobs and provide needed services and tax revenue.

Any efforts to remove or weaken Iowa's defined service areas could result in higher bills and decreased reliability for Iowans. This issue is critical for Iowa's electric cooperatives, which are mission driven to power lives and empower communities by providing electricity that is safe, reliable and affordable.



Stephanie Wiese, Assistant Manager, named as Interim General Manager

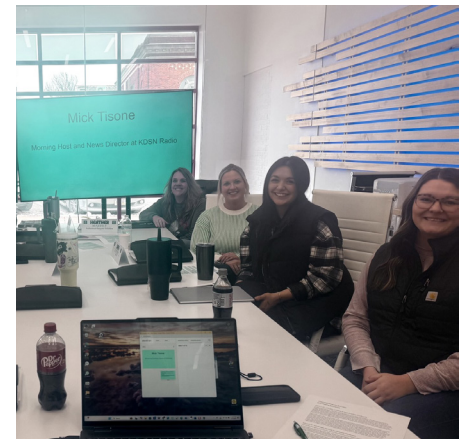


We are pleased to announce that Stephanie Wiese, Assistant Manager at Western Iowa Power Cooperative, has stepped into the role of Interim General Manager. Stephanie brings years of experience, leadership, and a deep commitment to

WIPCO and our members. As Assistant Manager, she has played an integral part in the cooperative's operations and community involvement. During this transition period, Stephanie will continue to work closely with the team to ensure that we maintain our high standards of service and support for our members. We are confident in her ability to lead, and her passion for the cooperative will guide us through this exciting time of growth and opportunity. We look forward to the continued success of WIPCO under her guidance.

2025 Rebates are Here!

We're excited to kick off our 2025 rebates, offering great savings on energy-efficient home upgrades! From improving insulation to investing in geothermal systems, these rebates are designed to help you enhance your home's energy efficiency while lowering your utility bills. Taking advantage of these opportunities is a great way to make sustainable upgrades without breaking the bank. Visit our website or reach out to us today for more details on how you can start saving and making your home more efficient this year!



Leading Edge Program with Chamber & Development Council of Crawford County

Western Iowa Power Cooperative is proud to support the Leading Edge Program, a Crawford County initiative focused on developing leadership skills and fostering community engagement among local professionals. This program offers participants the opportunity to connect with area leaders, explore key community issues, and enhance their impact within the region. Sadie Reisz, our Communications and Benefits Coordinator, is excited to be part of this program, representing WIPCO while gaining insights to help strengthen both our cooperative and the broader community.



Sparkling Curiosity with our 3rd-Grade Business Partners



This holiday season, Sadie Reisz, Communications and Benefits Coordinator, visited our 3rd-grade Business Partners at Broadway Elementary to demonstrate a fun circuit experiment with Christmas lights and batteries.

For 18 years, WIPCO has proudly participated in Denison's Business Partnership Program, inspiring students and showcasing local career opportunities. We look forward to welcoming the class to our facility later this school year!



ENERGY STAR Appliances: Do they really save you money?

If you are in the market for a new appliance, you might wonder if buying an ENERGY STAR-certified version will make a difference in your energy bills.

The short answer is yes, when you compare its estimated energy costs to its less efficient counterpart.

In fact, there are really two costs to consider before buying an appliance: the cost itself and the projected monthly energy costs.

The energy-conscious appliances donning the square-shaped Energy Star logo use 10 to 15 percent less energy and water than standard models, according to Energy.gov. For example, Energy Star clothes washers use about 40 percent less energy than conventional clothes washers while also reducing water bills.

And the longer answer is yes, if you consider the appliance's lifespan.

Energy Star appliances and other products used throughout your home can save you a collective \$750 over their lifespan, according to Energy.gov. (Besides appliances, there are other Energy Star-certified products, such as lighting and electronics).08-22-1353

While selecting energy-saving designated appliances could have a slightly higher price tag, they don't always. Compare prices and don't assume they cost substantially more than less efficient models.

The biggest bang for your energy-savings buck might be your refrigerator, especially if it is 15 years old or older. By replacing your old fridge with a new Energy Star-certified model, you can save more than \$200 over a 12-year lifespan.

Tip: EnergyStar.gov offers a "Flip Your Fridge" calculator to estimate savings depending on the size and age of your largest kitchen appliance.

Bottom line?

The typical U.S. family spends around \$2,200 a year on home utility bills. Switching to ENERGY STAR products can help lower these costs over time.



NEED HELP WITH YOUR HEATING BILL?

The 2024-2025 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has been established to help qualifying low-income Iowa homeowners and renters pay for a portion of their primary heating costs for the winter heating seasons.

The assistance is based on household size, type of fuel, and type of housing.

If you are not sure where to apply you can dial 2-1-1, visit <https://hhs.iowa.gov/> to locate and contact your local community action agency, or write to:

LIHEAP
Iowa Department of Health & Human Services
Capitol Complex
Des Moines, IA 50319

WIN \$25 OFF YOUR NEXT ENERGY BILL

Hidden somewhere within the pages of each Western Iowa Power Cooperative Informer are two member's location numbers. Find your location number in a monthly newsletter and call our offices by the 20th of that month, and you will receive a \$25.00 credit on your energy bill the following month!

The location numbers in January's newsletter belonged to Dane Nemitz and Jason Bird.

WIPCO Offers Scholarships to Area Students

Western Iowa Power Cooperative (WIPCO) in conjunction with Basin Electric Power Cooperative (BEPC) will be awarding six scholarships for the 2025-2026 school year. This program, now in its 35th year, recognizes and encourages academic and community achievements of students whose parents are WIPCO members.

Selection

A selection committee will choose the recipients of the scholarships. The selection committee's decisions are final. Awards are based on the following criteria: grade point average, work experience, participation in school and community activities, a personal statement of career goals, and a written recommendation by a third party. We ask that if the student has taken a college entrance exam (ACT and/or SAT), that score be included with their application materials. Should a student plan to attend a college that does not require ACT/SAT, please indicate that on the application form.

Scholarship Amounts

BEPC will award one \$1,000 scholarship and WIPCO will award one \$1,000 and four \$500 scholarships. Two of the \$500 scholarships will be designated specifically for students enrolling in vocational and/or technical schools.

The scholarship must be used for educational costs, and the student must enter college in the fall of the school year for which the scholarship is given. Scholarships will be awarded without regard to other awards, loans, or financial assistance the applicant may have obtained. Previous scholarship award winners are not eligible.

Eligibility

Applicant must be a US citizen and the dependent of a WIPCO member. Applicant must be a student who is enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time undergraduate or graduate course of study at an accredited, two-year or four-year college, university, or vocational/technical school.



How to Apply:

Applications are open. To apply, visit WIPCO's website or contact our office.

Application deadline: February 7th, 2025.

THE LAST WATER HEATER YOU'LL EVER NEED TO BUY

Rheem®Marathon® water heater is the most durable electric water heater ever made. Its industry-best warranty makes it a smart purchase you can count on for years to come.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
WESTERN IOWA POWER COOPERATIVE
1-800-253-5189



Western Iowa Power Cooperative offers a unique and educational experience with its Energy Trail Tour, a hands-on opportunity for members to learn more about the cooperative's services and energy efficiency initiatives. The tour provides an inside look at the technology and infrastructure that power the region, including renewable energy sources, system upgrades, and smart grid technology. Participants can engage with knowledgeable staff, who explain how energy is generated, transmitted, and delivered to homes and businesses. The Energy Trail Tour is designed to help members better understand the cooperative's efforts to improve energy reliability, reduce costs, and support sustainable practices. It's an informative and interactive experience for anyone interested in the future of energy in western Iowa.

Find more information below, and enter for a chance to go on the Energy Trail Tour by clipping the coupon below or by filling out the form on our website.



Energy Trail Tour 2025

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 18-20 | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | (please circle) |
| June 25-27 | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | |
| July 9-11 | 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 April 25, 2025.

Utility Scams in this age of AI

How to spot and avoid fraud.

Someone calls claiming to be from your utility company. They say your service will be cut off if you don't pay them immediately. Real utility companies don't do this. But scammers want to scare you into paying before you have time to confirm what they're telling you. And scammers are now using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to craft frauds that are difficult for consumers to detect. Learn how to protect yourself.

Beware of these common scam tactics

- Disconnection threats: Scammers claim your service will be cut off without immediate payment.
- Caller ID spoofing: Fraudsters use software to make their calls appear legitimate.
- Overpayment claims: They may say you've overpaid and ask for personal or banking information to issue a refund.
- Smishing: Scammers send fake text messages that seem to come from your utility company.
- Phishing attempts: Beware of emails that look like bills; always verify the sender's email before clicking links.

If you have any doubt about the status of your electric service, call your utility company using the customer service phone number on their website.

Watch for the following red flags

- High-pressure tactics that demand urgent action.
- Unusual payment method requests (wire transfer, gift cards, reloadable cards or cryptocurrency).
- Poor grammar, misspellings and suspicious email addresses.

AI use enhances utility scams

By leveraging AI-powered techniques, utility scammers can create sophisticated and convincing frauds that are hard for consumers to recognize and avoid.

- AI helps scammers craft convincing emails that appear to be from legitimate utility companies and include the use of company colors and logos.
- Scammers use AI to create realistic-looking utility company websites that are nearly indistinguishable from legitimate ones.
- AI technology can clone the voices of utility company representatives, making phone scams convincing.
- AI analyzes victims' online presence and social media to create highly personalized spam related to your utility services.
- Scammers create geographically targeted online ads that appear when users search for keywords related to their energy bills.
- Scammers use AI to launch large-scale utility scam campaigns quickly and efficiently. 51-10-17078

According to Kathy Stokes, AARP Director of Fraud Prevention Programs, "the ability of AI to improve and scale scam tactics is the equivalent of the Industrial Revolution for fraud criminals."

Protect Yourself

- Take your time: Don't rush into payments or action.
- Verify any communication by calling your utility company directly using the number on your bill.
- Never share personal information. Legitimate companies won't ask for sensitive details over the phone.
- If someone claims to be a utility worker, request official identification.
- If you suspect a scam, report it to your utility company and the FTC at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/ReportFraud).

Remember, legitimate utilities will provide multiple notices before disconnection and will not pressure you for immediate payment. If you are in doubt, let your utility company know so they can take proactive measures to both protect you and others from becoming victims.



Download the WIPCO App

Take control of your energy account with the Western Iowa Power Cooperative app! With just a few taps, you can easily view and pay your bill, monitor your energy usage, and stay updated with important notifications and news from WIPCO. The app is free, user-friendly, and available for download on both iOS and Android devices. It's a convenient way to manage your account anytime, anywhere.

Search for "Western Iowa Power Cooperative" in your app store and experience the ease of staying connected to your cooperative. Download it today and simplify your energy management!

Leadership

Stephanie Wiese, Interim General Manager

Board of Directors

Janet Iversen, Ross Wood, Craig Riesberg, Gary Volkert, Brian Lundell, Louis Reed, Mike Blum, Bart Heisterkamp, Peter Alexander, Ken Smith

Informer Editor

Sadie Reisz, Communications & Benefits Coordinator



Keep Your Valentine Safe This Year...

Valentine's Day is a time to celebrate love, but it's also important to be aware of the safety risks associated with metallic balloons. These balloons are powerful conductors of electricity and should never be released outdoors or near power lines. If they come into contact with electricity, they can cause power outages, damage, and costly repairs. Additionally, tying a balloon to a child's wrist can be dangerous, as it could lead to serious injury or even death if the balloon touches power lines. Safe Electricity urges everyone to enjoy the holiday, but remember to puncture and dispose of metallic balloons to keep them away from electrical equipment. For more information on electrical safety, visit safeelectricity.org.

Contact Us

WIPCO Office Hours

📍 809 Highway 39 North, Denison, Iowa
Monday - Friday: 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

📍 413 East Iowa Avenue, Onawa, Iowa
Monday - Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Give Us a Call!

Toll Free: 800-253-5189

Find Us Online!

wipco.com
wipco@wipco.com
[@WesternIowaPowerCoop](https://www.facebook.com/WesternIowaPowerCoop)