

WIPCO Informer

What's inside...

Message from the Manager	2
What's Happening at WIPCO	3
Safety First	5
2024 Energy Trail Tour	6
Legislative Meetings Recap	7
\$25 Credit--Find Your Location # 8	

Summer Help Wanted

Western Iowa Power Cooperative is looking for summer help to assist our line crews in Denison and Onawa. The applicant must be at least 18 years old. The job is only for the summer months of 2024. Call 712-263-2943 or email michael.akers@wipco.com to request an application or for more information.



Are you ready to spring forward?

March 10, 2024



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

Empowering Safety: WIPCO's Safety Demo Week Enlightens Local Students on Electrical Safety

In recent weeks, WIPCO has been hosting Safety Demo Weeks in Onawa and Denison, inviting students from local schools to learn about electrical safety and cooperative principles.

Throughout these engaging sessions, students discover the fundamentals of electricity, learn about emergency protocols, and gain insights into the importance of exercising caution around electrical infrastructure. Using everyday items like hot dogs and oranges, they witness firsthand the potential hazards posed by electrical currents.

These Safety Demo Weeks underscore WIPCO's commitment to promoting safety and education in our community, empowering the next generation with the knowledge they need to stay safe in their homes and surroundings.



In photo one, Lineman Cameron Youll demonstrates the effects of electricity on the body using hot dogs while students observe. Photo two features Lineman Jaxson Pauley illustrating the consequences of a tree branch contacting an electrical line. In photo three, Assistant Manager Stephanie Wiese demonstrates a circuit, with students forming a circle to illuminate a ball.



In photo four, Lineman Jake Fox educates students on an electrical meter's function and operation. Photo five captures the excitement of a St. Rose student sitting in the Tesla. 29-22-3108 Lastly, photo six shows Jaxson Pauley demonstrating the effects of body contact with an electrical line using an orange.



Marcus Rihner
General Manager

Promoting Safety in our Communities

On the first page of this edition of the WIPCO Informer, you will find photos of and information on our 2024 school safety demonstrations. This annual initiative is one of the most important ways we promote electrical safety in our communities, and we greatly enjoy seeing these students each year to help them learn more about the electricity they utilize each day and how to stay safe while using it. In total, we hosted 17 fourth-grade classes from elementary schools throughout our service territory, at our Onawa office the week of February 12th and our Denison office the week of February 19th.

Each demonstration begins with a group photo, then students and their teachers join us for a presentation and conversation on electrical safety. A wide range of information is covered, including the physics of electricity, staying safe when using electric energy in our homes, calling Iowa 811 before digging, and what to do if a power pole falls on your vehicle in an accident (among many other topics). These conversations are highly interactive and we love to see the enthusiasm these students show for what they are learning!

After this discussion, each class moves into our warehouses, where our linemen have set up an electrical safety demonstration trailer we are able to check out from our state organization, the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. The students are able to see the principles they learned about in the WIPCO “classroom” come to life, as our highly skilled and trained line workers show what 7200 volts of electricity can do to props such as an orange or a tree branch. This is all done in a very safe manner while reinforcing our message of staying safe around power lines, electrical outlets, and anywhere else where the benefits of electrical energy are enjoyed. Before they re-board their buses, students get a chance to see a WIPCO bucket truck in action, with one of our linemen taking it up to its full 60-foot maximum height!

These demonstrations also give us the chance to educate these students on what a cooperative is and how we differ from other types of electric energy providers. The students even get to ask questions of our employees about their careers, education, and day-to-day work. This entire initiative is a great example of two of our Cooperative Principles in action: Education & Training and Concern for Community. If we can inspire children to be safer around electricity and to be more connected to the community they live and learn in, then our time has been incredibly well-spent.

As you can see through the photos, these demonstrations take a great amount of time and effort from many of our employees. I am grateful to these employees for this investment in our children’s safety and education, and to our area school districts for allowing us to spend time with these students. As we tell our students each year: when it comes to electricity, stop, think, and stay safe!

Congratulations to Mari Miller on her retirement!

After 34+ years of outstanding service, Mari Miller bids farewell to Western Iowa Power Cooperative, leaving behind a legacy of dedication and excellence.

From her early days to her recent roles as Onawa Office Supervisor and Co-Op Communicator, Mari has been a pillar of strength and leadership. As Mari begins this new chapter, we celebrate her remarkable career and the profound impact that she has made. Congratulations, Mari, on your well-deserved retirement!



Discover a world of savings right at your fingertips with Co-op Connections by Touchstone Energy. WIPCO members have exclusive access to both local and national deals, courtesy of this innovative program. Whether you're looking for discounts on dining, shopping, travel, or healthcare services, Co-op Connections has you covered.

Signing up is a breeze! Members can simply create an account via the user-friendly website or download the app from the App Store. Once registered, start exploring a plethora of deals tailored to your preferences and location.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to stretch your dollars further while supporting local businesses. Visit platform.connections.coop/ today to start saving with Co-op Connections!"



Mark Trotter transitions into new role with WIPCO

At our monthly safety meeting on February 16th, we had the pleasure of announcing Mark Trotter's exciting transition from Denison Foreman to Denison Staking Technician. Mark's dedication and expertise have always been evident in his role, and we have no doubt that he will continue to excel in this new position. Congratulations, Mark, on this new adventure—we look forward to seeing your continued success in serving our team and community.



Winter Moratorium ends April 1st

Iowa's winter home heating moratorium protects customers certified for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), from electric service disconnection from November 1 through April 1. This year, the winter energy assistance disconnection moratorium ends on April 1. Western Iowa Power Cooperative members who are behind on their utility payments are urged to contact us at 712-263-2943 or 800-253-5189 to work out payment options to avoid disconnection. Iowa's not-for-profit electric cooperatives are willing to work with member-owners who have fallen behind on payments to find an agreeable solution; disconnection of service is always a last resort.

Budget Billing - For member-owners with tight budgets, seasonally high electric bills can cause financial strife. WIPCO's "budget billing" payment option ensures consistent electric bills month-to-month, making it easier to budget. If your home utilizes electric heat and/or air-conditioning, this is a great way to avoid those larger seasonal bills that can fluctuate with changes in the weather. To enroll in this billing option, contact WIPCO's billing department or speak to a customer service representative.

State of Iowa Resources - We also encourage anyone who has fallen behind on payments to contact the Iowa Department of Human Rights at (515) 281-3861 regarding eligibility for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). LIHEAP is a federally funded program that provides a one-time per year payment to assist with household heating costs for eligible households. LIHEAP funds are limited, but applications are still being accepted through April 30, 2024. A federally funded Weatherization Assistance Program is also available, which provides long-term financial relief by improving energy efficiency in homes and educating consumers about energy consumption.

Contact your local community action agency outreach office for assistance.

Crawford County

(LIHEAP and Weatherization information)

West Central Community Action

145 N 7th Street

Denison, IA 51442

Phone: 712-263-3538

Website: www.westcentralca.org

Monona County

(LIHEAP and Weatherization information)

West Central Community Action

801-B 10th Street

Onawa, IA 51040

Phone: 712-423-2603

Website: www.westcentralca.org

RECare - Members Helping Members

Your Rural Electric Cooperative has always extended a helping hand to those needing it. In response to actions by the Iowa General Assembly, your REC has established RECare, a program of Members helping Members.

RECare will provide funds to be distributed by local community action agencies to help pay winter heating bills and to assist in weatherization of homes of low-income consumers.

You may make a one-time contribution or you may make a monthly pledge that will be automatically added onto your monthly electric bill. You may also make your contribution part of a matching fund, if there is one established. Your contribution is tax deductible. Even a dollar a month pledge will help others!

Member Authorization Form

Yes, I want to be part of Members helping Members and contribute to RECare.

___ I will make a one-time contribution to RECare. My check is enclosed.

___ I will contribute \$ _____ per month to RECare. I understand that this amount will be automatically added to my monthly electric bill.

___ My fund is a matching fund gift.

The matching fund is _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Account No. _____

Mail to: Western Iowa Power Cooperative, PO Box 428, Denison, IA 51442-2705

Only certified workers can trim trees near power lines

Can anyone trim trees near power lines? The answer is no. Specialized tree trimmers, certified by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in utility clearance, are the only persons legally allowed to trim within 10 feet of power lines.

OSHA requires this certification because electricity is a serious and widespread hazard to tree workers. According to the Tree Care Industry Association, electricity is the leading cause of death in the tree care industry, causing about 15 percent of all industry fatalities. Tree care industry workers do not have to directly contact a power line to be electrocuted; about half of all electrocution fatalities are the result of indirect contact.

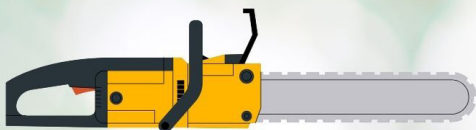
Qualified line-clearance trimmers must be specially trained in how to safely work in proximity to energized lines. They must understand how an electrical grid functions, the effects of tree growth patterns and tree damage and how to implement directional pruning, as required by the American National Standard for Arboricultural Operations' safety standards.

According to OSHA, the duties of line-clearance certified tree trimmers typically include the following:

- Undergoing annual evaluations by licensed professionals to ensure continuous adherence to industry best practices. 63-02-1005
- Requesting job briefings from employers and other crew members before starting a job or when environmental conditions change.
- Properly wearing approved personal protective equipment, including fall protection equipment when needed.
- Complying with material handling and mechanical equipment requirements.
- Working with a second line-clearance tree trimmer within voice range.
- Determining the voltages of lines before work begins or assuming that the line is operating at the highest possible voltage if it is not possible to determine voltage.
- Ensuring body parts and any ladders, platforms or aerial devices being used remain outside the minimum approach distance from any energized equipment.
- Using only insulated tools and equipment to remove branches and limbs that are in contact with, or are within the minimum approach distance of, energized lines or equipment.
- Determining if weather conditions are no longer safe to work in, such as the presence of high winds, ice, thunder or lightning that would make the work hazardous.
- Beginning work on storm restoration efforts in the aftermath of a storm if they have been trained in the special hazards involved with this type of work.

Please contact WIPCO if you have any questions about line-clearance tree trimmers or tree trimming near power lines.

TRIMMED TREES = BETTER SERVICE



When you see us trimming trees near power lines, know that we are doing so because:

- **Tree foliage overgrowth** can interfere with power distribution.
- **Power lines** can give off a spark or arc that may land on a nearby branch and ignite.
- The lights in your house may flicker when tree branches brush power lines during **high winds**.
- **Stormy weather** can cause nearby limbs to break off and land on power lines. Unobstructed power lines make it easier and **safer** for lineworkers to **maintain equipment** or **restore power**.

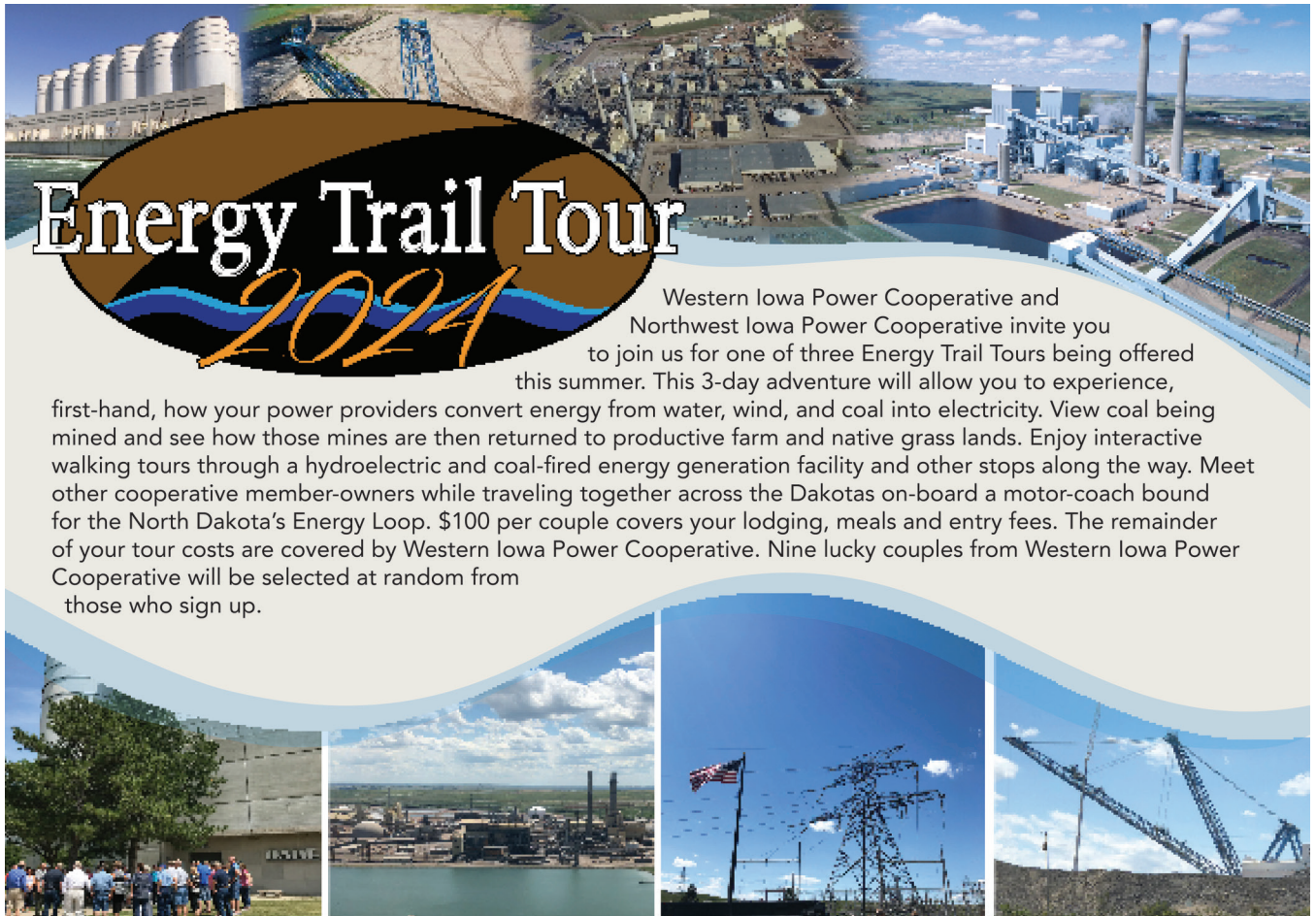
6 Your Source of Power and Information

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.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, USDA, its Mission Areas, agencies, staff, offices, employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Program information may be made available in language other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language) should contact the responsible Mission Area, agency, or staff office; the USDA TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY); or the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a complainant should complete a Form, AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online at: <https://www.ocio.usda.gov/document/ad-3027>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of the alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

- (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
- (2) Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) Email: program.intake@usda.gov

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Members with Load Control Switches and Sub-meters

WIPCO members that participate in the Switch Makes Cents program have radio-controlled switches and sub-meters installed. The member saves money because special rates or credits are available on equipment connected to Switch Makes Cents.

There is a cost to the member for installation of load control switches and sub-meters; however the equipment is owned by WIPCO and should not be installed or removed by anyone other than WIPCO employees.

If you make any changes to your heating/cooling system or water heater, your Switch Makes Cents needs to be wired back up by WIPCO—not your contractor.

In addition, if you leave for an extended period of time, please do not shut off the breaker to your water heater. If your breaker is shut off, your sub-meter will not register, and qualifying kWhs will be billed at the higher rate.



SWITCH MAKES CENTS

LOAD MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

WIPCO Informer

from your member-owned Western Iowa Power Cooperative
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

(USPS 9340)

Contact Us

Denison Office
809 Highway 39 North - P.O. Box 428
Denison, Iowa 51442
712-263-2943 OR 800-253-5189
FAX 712-263-8655
wipco@wipco.com

Onawa Office
418 East Iowa Avenue - P.O. Box 115
Onawa, Iowa 51040
712-433-1622 OR 800-253-5189
FAX 712-433-2725
wipco@wipco.com

wipco.com



@westerniowapowercoop

Published monthly by
Western Iowa Power Cooperative
809 Highway 39 North, Denison, IA 51442

Periodicals postage paid at Denison, IA
Phone: 712-263-2943 OR 800-253-5189

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
WIPCO Informer, PO Box 428, Denison, IA
51442

Marcus Rihner, Executive V.P./General
Manager

Sadie Reisz, Editor

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

Safety Tip

Do not use electric yard tools when the ground is damp or wet. If you have cordless yard tools that run on battery power, charge the batteries safely and follow all manufacturer's instructions. Store yard tools out of children's reach.



Safe
Electricity.org



Back again for 2024 is KDSN's Farm 40 Free contest! If you have 40 acres available to farm in corn or soybeans this coming spring, register to win all the inputs at Western Iowa Power Cooperative! Be on the lookout for this upcoming contest with KDSN Radio Station. Western Iowa Power Cooperative is a proud sponsor of Farm 40 Free by KDSN. For more information, visit kdsnradio.com!

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 February newsletter belonged to Reid Stracke and William Wright.

**SAVE
\$25**

