

# WIPCO Informer

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## REGULAR DENISON

# OFFICE HOURS

BEGINNING  
SEPTEMBER 3RD

Monday	7:00am - 3:30pm
Tuesday	7:00am - 3:30pm
Wednesday	7:00am - 3:30pm
Thursday	7:00am - 3:30pm
Friday	7:00am - 3:30pm
Saturday	Closed
Sunday	Closed

## Landowners: Know the facts before signing a solar project lease

If you're a landowner in rural Iowa, you may have received solicitations in the mail offering land lease options for proposed solar projects. Often, these letters offer attractive per-acre rental payments for various phases of a long-term proposed project, promising steady and predictable income. However, like with all contracts, the devil is in the details. Before signing an agreement, we encourage you to do some homework and seek legal counsel to protect your rights.

Most of these letters are coming from companies outside of Iowa looking to lease land for future solar projects. We have noticed that many of these letters refer erroneously to Iowa law; referencing legislation (Senate File 2356) that did not pass last session. In fact, Iowa's electric cooperatives and other groups registered in opposition to the legislation due to its likely negative impact on electric co-ops and our members.

Some solicitations falsely claim local support for their solar initiative or that the electric output would somehow benefit your neighbors or the local electric cooperative.

Please consult your legal counsel before signing any agreement or contract. Your legal counsel can help explain the benefits and disadvantages of these agreements, answer any questions you have, and help negotiate fair and equitable terms. These are long-term agreements that can give the solar company exclusive options and control of your land for decades. Spending some extra time up front to better understand the terms and conditions of the proposed agreement can save you significant time, money and headaches in the future.

For more information, we encourage landowners to reach out to Stephanie Wiese, Assistant Manager at Western Iowa Power Cooperative. You can contact Stephanie directly at 712-263-2943 to learn more about these proposed projects.

WIPCO will be closed on Monday, September 2nd in observance of Labor Day.

*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

## Education Never Stops at WIPCO

It's hard to believe that another school year has officially begun. As a parent, it is a joy to see my kids excited for the chance to learn new things and make new friends each year (and I will say, the years are going by just as fast as everyone told me they would!).

I am a big believer in the idea that we never stop learning as we go through life. I think this is true for anyone, in any profession or walk of life; however, cooperatives have a specific principle we abide by which gives voice to this very idea.

**Education, Training, and Information—Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperatives.**

School resuming gives us a great opportunity to take a fresh look at a few ways WIPCO is continuing to educate our members, directors, and employees, all with the goal of helping us to more effectively serve you.

**Members** – Education for our members comes in many forms, including the newsletter you are currently reading. We have continued a focused effort to educate and provide valuable content on social media, and we would encourage you to follow us on Facebook under Western Iowa Power Co-Op. Our website, [www.wipco.com](http://www.wipco.com), is also a great place to learn more about your cooperative and the services we offer. Each summer, we also get involved with the county fairs in Crawford and Monona Counties, and we welcome the opportunity for discussions at these events. Keep an eye on your monthly statement as well, as we often include inserts or printed information on the back of our members' bills to help keep you informed. In addition, if you have a question related to the cooperative or our services, we always welcome these conversations and would encourage you to give us a call, contact us via e-mail or social media, or stop by one of our offices.

**Directors** – In addition to monthly meetings, WIPCO's directors attend classes and meetings regarding their responsibilities as directors, industry trends and issues, and effective leadership, among many other topics. Many of our directors have achieved or are working toward certifications from the National Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NRECA), including Board Leadership and Credentialed Cooperative Director certifications.

**Employees** – The energy industry continues to change rapidly, making continued education a necessity for our employees. Staying up to date on this education helps us to contribute more effectively to the development of our cooperative, and to further our mission to enhance our members' quality of life by providing safe and reliable electric services. Areas for focused training for WIPCO employees are very diverse and include safety, leadership and management, industry changes and trends, policies and laws at each level of government, and hands-on training for line or electrical work, among many other educational opportunities.

As our kids return to school, please know that education never stops at WIPCO. These efforts help us to stay informed and to keep you informed, so we can continue to advocate for and make the best decisions we can for our members.

## WIPCO selects local student to attend Iowa Youth Tour

Western Iowa Power Cooperative is proud to announce that Jackson Steinkuehler from Denison, Iowa, was selected to represent our community on the annual Iowa Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. This prestigious program offers high school students the opportunity to learn about our nation's history, government, and the cooperative business model while connecting with peers from across the country. Jackson's participation highlights WIPCO's commitment to supporting the future leaders of our community. We congratulate Jackson on this achievement and look forward to seeing the impact he will make in the years to come.



## Shining the light on local volunteers

To celebrate local volunteers, the Shine the Light contest returned for a fourth year and received 75 volunteer nominations throughout the month of June! Employees and members of Iowa's locally owned electric cooperatives were invited to nominate someone who makes a positive difference in their community.

Out of 75 nominations, three winners will be awarded a \$3,000 donation to their charity of choice and will be featured in the September issue of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living Magazine. Although WIPCO's three area nominees were not selected for the donation, we proudly celebrate their outstanding commitment to community and extend our thanks to their nominators:

- **Marcia Bachmann** of Denison for her work with Crawford County (CC) Happy Cats, Inc. (Nominated by Jan Patchin)
- **Warren Hawn** of Denison for his work with Crawford County Hunger Fighters. (Nominated by Craig Dozark)
- **Kathy Schneider** of Denison for her work with Crawford County Hunger Fighters. (Nominated by Dale Schneider)

"WIPCO is pleased to partner with the IAEC to shine the light on our local volunteers," said Marcus Rihner, Executive Vice President and General Manager. "Thank you to Marcia, Warren, and Kathy for their volunteer efforts and for making a positive impact in their communities!"



## WIPCO's Commitment to Continuing Education and Safety

At Western Iowa Power Cooperative, we understand that education doesn't stop after the classroom—it continues throughout our careers. We take great pride in ensuring our employees are well-trained and equipped to serve our members safely and efficiently.

In August, WIPCO dedicated a full day to continuing education, focusing on pole climbing exercises and other safety training. This event was conducted in partnership with the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), who provided expert guidance and support. The training session emphasized the importance of safety procedures, proper climbing techniques, and emergency response protocols.

These hands-on exercises are crucial for our team, as they not only reinforce existing skills but also introduce new safety practices and technologies. At WIPCO, we believe that investing in our employees' education directly contributes to the quality of service we provide to our members.

We are proud of our team's dedication to their craft and their commitment to safety. By continuously advancing their skills, WIPCO employees remain prepared to meet the challenges of maintaining a reliable power supply for our community.



*Crews preparing for early morning pole climbs.*



*Crews observing Scott Meinecke (IAEC) during training.*



*Jake Fox (left) and Wade Pitt (right) climb and prepare to set an arm.*



*Wade Pitt (left) and Chris Merritt (right) complete their climbs.*



*The sun rises as crews complete their climbing training.*



*Jaxson Pauley completes his pole climb after installing a transformer gin.*

## We're looking for students interested in public service and leadership

*High schoolers who attend our Zoom sessions in October will have a chance to win AirPods and a \$1,000 college scholarship!*

Guided by our cooperative commitment to community, Western Iowa Power Cooperative has a long history of supporting students in the communities we serve through scholarships and leadership opportunities. In the last year, we have also rejoined other cooperatives in the state in sending deserving high school students to our nation's capital every summer for years as part of the National Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program.

Iowa's electric cooperatives are pleased to once again offer a virtual opportunity for rural students to learn more about advocacy, electric cooperative career opportunities, and the cooperative business model with a three-part webinar series in October. The Iowa Youth Leadership Academy is open to any high school student in our service area and they are invited to register at [www.iowaYouthTour.com](http://www.iowaYouthTour.com). 03-13-3669

At Western Iowa Power Cooperative, we believe that this new program is perfect for rural Iowa students who have a passion for public service, leadership, or government. The goal of the program is to raise students' awareness of how local electric co-ops power people's lives and empower communities. We also want to talk about exciting cooperative career paths that are available in smaller communities.

Once students register online for the Iowa Youth Leadership Academy, they can attend the webinars from their own computer or mobile device. Each Zoom session will last around 45-60 minutes and focus on a specific topic:

- Tuesday, October 1, 7:00pm - Cooperative Business Model
- Thursday, October 17, 7:00pm - Rural Iowa Advocacy
- Thursday, October 24, 7:00pm - Leadership

At the end of each live session, one lucky attendee will be selected at random to win a pair of Apple AirPods. Students who attend all three sessions will be entered into a random drawing for a \$1,000 college scholarship. All students who register online by September 25 will receive a special box of co-op goodies in the mail.

During the Zoom sessions, students will be inspired by our lineup of speakers and presenters. Participants will learn how to advocate for issues that are important to them and build leadership skills from a motivational speaker. Attendees will also hear about Iowa Youth Tour. Students with an interest in government and public service are encouraged to apply for this week long trip to Washington, DC. The 2025 Youth Tour is slated for June 15-21 next summer.

Learn more at [www.iowaYouthTour.com](http://www.iowaYouthTour.com) or contact Sadie Reisz at [sadie.reisz@wipco.com](mailto:sadie.reisz@wipco.com).



**WANTED:  
Rural Iowa  
high school  
students  
who have a  
passion for  
leadership**



Attend our webinar series in October for a chance to win Apple AirPods and a \$1,000 college scholarship! Learn more at [IowaYouthTour.com](http://IowaYouthTour.com)

# 6 Safety Spotlight

## Beyond opening the box: Take steps to operate a generator safely

When the electricity goes out, your initial thought might be to run to the local hardware or big box store and buy a generator. However, using a generator should not be taken lightly, since it can be dangerous and even life-threatening if used incorrectly. There are several steps you should take before ever starting one up.

### But first, homework

Before purchasing a generator, the first step is to research the best option for your home and budget. The second, and more important step, is to educate yourself on how to use one safely.

Homeowners can choose from two types of generators: standby and portable. Standby generators are installed directly into the home's electrical system and are typically powered by natural gas or propane. These generators start automatically when the power goes out.

A portable generator is usually gas powered and is, well, portable. You can power appliances by plugging them into it. Your generator should have more output than the wattage of the electronics plugged into it. This way, the generator can create the extra electricity it takes for the initial power surge. Make sure there is nothing plugged into the generator when turning it on.

### Safety tips

When you refuel a portable generator, make sure the engine is cool. Keep children and pets away from the generator, as it could burn them.

Generators pose electrical risks, especially when operated during inclement weather. Use a generator only when necessary during wet conditions. Protect the generator by operating it under an open, canopy-like structure and on a dry surface where water cannot form puddles or drain under it. 46-02-43456

### Generators can be deadly

Carbon monoxide fumes emitted by the gasoline engine on the generator can be deadly. Always operate your portable generator outdoors at least 20 feet from your home.

Misusing a portable generator or using a standby generator that is not installed correctly (and does not meet the electrical code) can cause backfeed, which puts others in danger. Backfeed happens when a generator feeds electricity back through a home's electrical system and meter into the power lines. To prevent this dangerous scenario, standby generators should have a transfer switch installed by a licensed professional. Do not plug a portable generator directly into a home outlet or electrical system. Instead, use a properly rated extension cord to plug appliances into an outlet on the generator for power.

### When not in use

Operate your generator once a month for 10 minutes to ensure it is running properly. Keep your generator well maintained and follow all manufacturer's instructions. Have a standby generator installed in an easily accessible, weatherproof area.

For more electrical safety information, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

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

WIPCO, through its generation and transmission cooperative, Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (NIPCO), is a member of Basin Electric Power Cooperative's power supply system. This regional wholesale power supply cooperative has nearly 7,000 megawatts of generating capacity and 2,500 miles of high-voltage transmission lines - all managed with you, the member-owner, in mind.

This summer, WIPCO members joined members from thirteen other Western and North central Iowa electric cooperative on a three-day excursion through the Dakotas to learn about where their electricity comes from and have some fun along the journey.



**Tour 1: Dale and Carolyn Vontersch**



**Tour 2: Dean and Beth Argotsinger, Bryan Goslar, and Rhonda Wessel-Goslar**



**Tour 3: Martin and Lori Bast, Vicki Sickels, Terry Andersen, Lorraine and Don Graeve**

## Energy Trail Tour Stops

### Oahe Power Plant and Dam

On the first electric-generation stop of the three-day tour, guests visited Pierre, South Dakota to learn about hydroelectric generation and the innovative rolled-earth dam creating Lake Oahe, the fourth largest U.S. reservoir.

### Antelope Valley Station

The tour encompassed a model room introduction and a guided walk through the power plant featuring visits to the turbine deck, control room, boiler, and 1th floor observation deck.

### The Coteau Properties Company Freedom Mine

Tour guests learned how lignite coal is produced at a surface mine and how the land is returned to its original state. A guided drive-through tour took members through active mining areas where they witnessed giant earth moving equipment in action.



# 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

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Marcus Rihner, Executive V.P./General  
Manager

Sadie Reisz, Editor

*"This institution is an equal  
opportunity provider and  
employer"*

## Safety Tip

Always use a spotter when there is potential for equipment to encroach overhead power lines. A spotter's perspective provides a much broader vantage point than the view from a cab. If your equipment brushes or contacts a power line or pole, stay in the cab and call 9-1-1.



Safe  
Electricity.org



Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.

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 August newsletter belonged to Kurt Fertig and Drew Hieber.

**SAVE  
\$25**



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MOBILE APP!**

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Google play

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App Store