

HI-LINES

A NEWSLETTER FOR JO-CARROLL ENERGY MEMBERS

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Elizabeth, Illinois



800-858-5522



www.jocarroll.com



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READER PRIZE

Each month we print the name of a Jo-Carroll Energy member who is eligible to win a monthly \$25 readership prize. If your name is printed in this month's edition, and not a part of any article, contact Jo-Carroll Energy.

Welcome to JCE Co-op!

I'm pleased to officially announce our updated brand name: JCE Co-op!

Over the years, the co-op has seen growth through economic development activities, one acquisition and one merger. As the co-op grew, we developed a mix of new and legacy programs, products and services — some with their own identities, such as Sand Prairie.

Looking ahead to our 85th anniversary in 2024, we wanted to ensure that our brand identity still connects and resonates with members while supporting the strategic direction of the co-op. No matter what combination of services a member has with the co-op, we want that identity to convey that you can expect the same reliable and high-quality service members have received since our beginning as an electric cooperative in 1939.

We are proud of our heritage, so it was important to us that the new name honors our heritage. Our new name of JCE Co-op keeps the abbreviation of the previous names, Jo-Carroll Electric Cooperative and Jo-Carroll Energy. Also important to us was putting



CEO'S REPORT
by Mike Casper

"Co-op" back in our name, reminding all of the co-op difference and advantage.

In creating concepts for the new logo, our own graphic designer and marketing coordinator, Paula Keck, gave careful consideration to how we connect with our members, landscapes and communities. Our new logo pays tribute to those connections.

Because rebranding can be expensive, we took a conservative approach to the process. Our communications and marketing team undertook the project over the past several months, relying on advice from peers and contacts through our trade associations rather than the co-op contracting an outside agency. Additionally, the team conducted multiple focus groups with employees and members to gain valuable insight, suggestions and

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The logo design process



Our new logo is meant to:

- ▶ Resonate a feeling of connection, with our members, landscapes and community
- ▶ Draw the viewer in with energy and color, using bright versions of our current brand colors – blue, green and orange
- ▶ Represent how we work in conjunction with our members, connect and bring us together. They are actually abstract "C"s (which stands for co-op) intertwined
- ▶ Be simple in shape and font, bold and easy to read

For your information

Your Board of Directors:

David Senn

Chairman

District 7

Russell Holesinger

Vice Chairman

District 8

Robert Kuhns

Treasurer

District 10

Dan Tindell

Secretary

District 4

Jerry Meyer

District 1

Joseph Mattingley

District 2

Allen Hendren

District 3

Patricia Smith

District 5

Thomas Lundy

District 6

Larry Carroll

District 9

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday

Elizabeth

793 U.S. Route 20 West

7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Savanna

103 Chicago Ave.

7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

1:30 to 4 p.m.

Geneseo

1004 S. Chicago St.

7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

1:30 to 4 p.m.

Services and Billing Questions:

(800) 858-5522

www.jocarroll.com

For emergencies and outages call:

(800) 858-5522

Resume of Minutes

Sept. 27, 2023

The regular board meeting of Jo-Carroll Energy, Inc. (NFP) was held on Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2023.

Safety Moment — Director Dan Tindell discussed hazards associated with utility poles and factors that you should be aware of if you are in close proximity of them.

Approval of Agenda — A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously approve the meeting agenda.

Consent Agenda — A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve the consent agenda.

Presentation — An overview of Jo-Carroll Energy's Form 990 was presented by FORVIS, a public accounting firm.

Governance Topics and Board Policy Review

Governance Talk Video — None.

Board Policy Review — None.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve Board Policy 113/Political Activities.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve Board Policy 114/Contributions and Donations.

CEO/Financial Operating Report

CEO Report — President and CEO Mike Casper discussed the impact of the potential government shutdown that could take effect on Sept. 30, which could delay federal grant reimbursements.

Financial Operating Report — Chuck Woods, Chief Financial Officer, provided a summary of the August financial operating report. Revenue year-to-date (YTD) is approximately \$44 million. Total operations and maintenance expenses are approximately \$35 million, which is (\$3,621,031) under budget of \$38.8 million. Margins are approximately \$3 million versus a budgeted amount of \$560,035 and amount to \$2.5 million over budget. By general consent, the board moved to file the financial operating report with the auditor.

Operations and Regulatory/Legislative Update

Operations Update — Senior VP and Chief

Operating Officer Kyle Buros provided an update on the purchase of a building which will be used for additional office space. In addition, Buros noted that OSMOS Pole Inspection would perform pole inspections throughout areas of our service territory. The inspections help to identify and measure signs of decay and provide reinforcement and/or replacement if needed.

Member Services Update — VP of Member Services Jennifer Meyer provided an update on the rollout of the JCE rebranding and how it will be communicated to our members. In addition, she provided highlights from the JCE Strategic Plan.

Human Resources Update — Merri Sevey, VP of Human Resources, provided an update on Federated, our cooperative workman's comp insurance provider.

Executive Assistant Update — Amy Johnston, Executive Assistant, announced that Great River Outreach (GRO) of Savanna was selected to receive a grant award from Dairyland Power as part of their Cooperative Contributions Program. The program targets nonprofit community service/development, education, environmental and emergency funded organizations.

External Affairs/Legislative Update — General Counsel Terry Kurt noted that his presentation will be held in Executive Session. **Justin W & Megan J Ferguson**

Board Issues and Action Items

Form 990 — By general consent, contingent upon the review by the General Counsel and the CFO, the board approved Form 990 that was compiled and presented by FORVIS.

Right of Way (ROW) Position Statement — The Position Statement for ROWs was presented to the board as part of a review process prior to the 2024 strategic planning session.

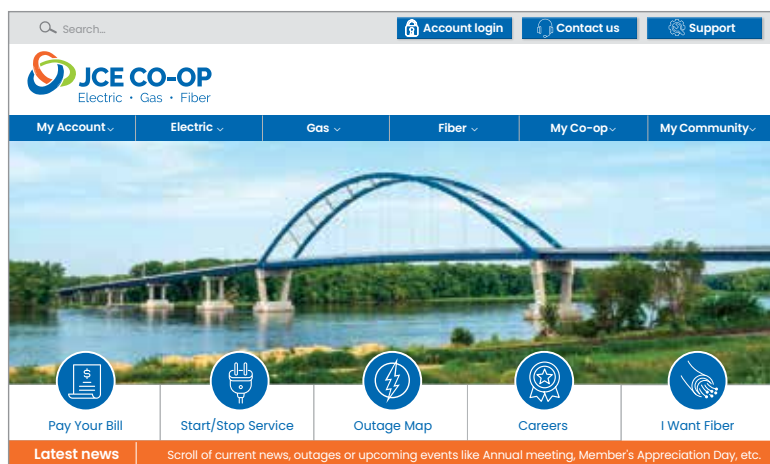
Attendees for CCD/2620 & BLC 965

— Directors were selected to attend

Continued on page 18F ►

Updated website coming . . . *sneak peek!*

An updated brand identity gives us the opportunity to provide enhanced communications with members. In January, our websites for the co-op and our Sand Prairie fiber will be merged into one new site at jcecoop.com.



Hero image (video) will feature all our communities and landscapes.

The new website will have:

- ▶ A streamlined main menu, new landing pages for our three business units and updated page design for ease of navigation
- ▶ News and program sections that will update frequently to provide members with more information about programs and services, including build out of JCE Fiber (currently known as Sand Prairie Fiber)
- ▶ A merged social media site, Jo-Carroll Energy and Sand Prairie will be joined into one JCE Co-op page. Other digital platforms such as YouTube and Instagram will be updated immediately.

CEO's report continued from page 18A

feedback, working to achieve consensus on our new brand identity.

Although our new name becomes effective Jan. 1, you can expect to see a gradual rollout of items branded with our new name and logo to conserve budget dollars. The brand rollout also coincides with our 85th anniversary, allowing us to wrap the new logo into our anniversary communications and celebrations.

We plan to replace office signage and vehicle graphics the first of January. Then, over the coming months, we will continue working to update more things with the new co-op logo and name. Some changes are easy and have no associated cost, like updating the logo on the front page of this monthly newsletter.

Others will take time, so you will probably see both the new and old logos for a while as items are used up or age out. This way, we are able to spread

costs out and replace most items as new ones are needed.

For example, we will use up stationery with the old logos, and you may still see employees wearing clothing with either the Jo-Carroll Energy or Sand Prairie logos for a time. Employee apparel will sport the new logo as new items are needed.

Other projects, such as signage at co-op substations and other facilities, will be updated as replacements are needed in the coming months and years. This way, we are able to spread costs out and replace most items as new ones are needed.

An updated brand identity also gives us the opportunity to provide enhanced communications with members. In January, our websites for Jo-Carroll Energy and our Sand Prairie fiber will be combined into one new site at jcecoop.com.

The new website will have a streamlined main menu, new landing pages for our three business units and updated

page design for ease of navigation. News and program sections of the site will update frequently to provide members with more information, including buildout of JCE Fiber (currently known as Sand Prairie Fiber).

Our social media pages for Jo-Carroll Energy and Sand Prairie will be merged into one JCE Co-op page. Other digital platforms such as YouTube and Instagram will be updated immediately.

From a marketing and sales perspective, we will save money by combining the different businesses units under one brand.

This was an exciting project for us as we explored alternatives and options for a logo and name to visually represent your co-op. We think the result is one that reflects our relationship with our members and communities, the pride we take in serving you and our dedication to enhancing the quality of life in our communities.



JCE celebrated its members and communities this fall

J o-Carroll Energy celebrated with its members and community this fall in honor of National Co-op Month.

Starting at the end of September and throughout October, co-op employees spent time catching up with members and giving back to our communities at several co-op and community events.

We ended September with a bang with our Member Appreciation Days, where we welcomed more than 700 members to celebrate with us at our Elizabeth, Savanna and Geneseo offices. Members





were treated to a grilled pork chop sandwich or hot dog lunch, played games for prizes and had the chance to talk with co-op employees and board members.

First thing in October we hosted our annual blood drive with ImpactLife. Community members and co-op employees generously donated to help meet our goal. Then, on Oct. 5 we partnered with NW Illinois Economic Development and Jo Daviess Carroll CTE Academy to host a Manufacturing and Trade Day. This event took about

350 area sophomore high school students into manufacturing facilities for site visits and to the CTE for interactive hands-on learning sessions led by area trades-focused businesses.

JCE had the honor of hosting the West Carroll sophomores. The students got to spend time with a lineworker, gas technician, broadband technician and an operations coordinator.

We finished out the month of October with some Halloween fun, which found us going "Back to the Future" in

the Galena Halloween Parade. Our float featured the theme "Back to the Future," celebrating our history as we gear up for our 85th year and welcoming some exciting changes as we look to the future.

Finally, we finished our co-op month activities at St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church's Trunk or Treat in Elizabeth.

JCE to retire capital credits this month

Jo-Carroll Energy will retire capital credits totaling approximately \$1.7 million in December. The board of directors approved the retirement at its November board meeting.

Approximately 23,200 members and former members will receive a check or bill credit in December. Active members will receive capital credits up to \$599.99 as a bill credit. Active members with retirements of \$600 or more and all inactive members will receive a check. As in previous years, the minimum check amount is \$10; any retirement less than \$10 will be carried over until

the next year or the minimum is reached.

Capital credits represent a member's ownership in Jo-Carroll Energy and is one of the benefits of being a cooperative member. Allocating and retiring capital credits to members helps distinguish cooperatives from for-profit utilities.

Jo-Carroll Energy is proud to support our members and communities by putting money back into the pockets of those we serve.

In 2014, Jo-Carroll Energy changed to a hybrid method of retiring capital credits. Previously, the cooperative

had retired capital credits using the "first in, first out" method (FIFO) on a delayed schedule of about 25 years. Under the process, members who were first to purchase energy were the first to be paid back.

The hybrid method keeps the 25-year rotation plus retires five percent of the remaining capital credits at a discounted rate. The method retires capital credits to more active JCE members while not neglecting the cooperative's commitment to return capital credits to its longtime and former members.

Board minutes continued from page 18B

CCD/2620/Board Operations and Process; in addition, directors were also selected to attend BLC 965/Electric Vehicles Strategy and Policy Considerations. These classes are part of the required education that the board of directors are responsible for completing.

Attendees for the National Rural Electric Cooperatives (NRECA) Power Exchange Meeting —

Attendees were selected to attend the NRECA Power Exchange Meeting.

Executive Session

Into Executive Session — A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to go into Executive Session at 11:31 a.m.

Out of Executive Session — A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to come out of Executive Session at 11:41 a.m.

Action Resulting from Executive Session — An engagement letter

for legal services will be drafted and presented to the board chair for signature.

Reports/Updates

Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) Report — No report was given, as there was not a scheduled September AIEC board meeting.

Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) —

Director Mattingley provided highlights from the Dairyland board meeting, as well as the strategic planning session. Mattingley shared that DPC margins continue to be favorable. In addition, the DPC board approved a refund back to Class A members, which JCE will pass back to the membership through a power cost adjustment (PCA) credit.

American Public Gas Association (APGA) Report —

Director Carroll discussed various new and proposed regulations affecting the natural gas (NG) industry, noting that federal agency actions and

regulatory policy are driving consumers to convert to all electric, impinging on consumer choice.

Prairie Power Incorporated (PPI) Report —

The PPI Board of Directors did not have a regularly scheduled meeting in September. In lieu of a meeting, Director Kuhns provided a summary of supplemental information that was provided by PPI, which shared July power supply and financial information.

Region 5 & 6 Roundtable

Discussion — Directors who attended the NRECA Region 5 & 6 meeting reported how informative the meeting was and highlighted topics from the event, noting that there was valuable discussion on broadband and right of ways (ROWs).

Other Business — None.

Adjournment — Chairman Senn adjourned the meeting at 11:41 p.m.

Five ways to safeguard your home this winter

As the temperatures drop and the days grow shorter, there is a natural inclination to create a warm and cozy haven at home. Unfortunately, as we see increased use of heating equipment, candles and electrical items, the number of home fires tends to increase during winter months.

Here are five ways you can safeguard your home for the winter season.

- 1. Ensure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly.** If your detectors are battery-operated, replace the batteries annually. Test the detectors once a month and give them a good dusting to ensure the sensors are clear of dirt and debris.
- 2. Inspect electrical cords.** We depend on more cords during winter, whether for holiday lighting, extension cords or portable heaters. Before using any corded items, double check to make sure cords are not frayed or cracked. If you use portable space heaters, remember to keep them at least 3 feet away from flammable items. Use models that include an auto shut-off feature and overheat protection. Space heaters can take a toll on your energy bills. Use them efficiently (to heat smaller spaces) and safely. Never plug a space heater into a power strip. Speaking of power strips ...
- 3. Avoid overloading electrical outlets and power strips.** When overloaded with electrical items, outlets and power strips can overheat and catch fire. If you use power strips for multiple devices, make sure the strip can handle the electrical load. For a safer bet, look for power strips that include surge protection.



- 4. Clean the fireplace to improve safety and efficiency.** There is nothing better than a warm fire on a chilly night, but it is important to maintain your fireplace for safety. As wood burns, a sticky substance known as creosote builds up in the chimney. When creosote buildup becomes too thick, a chimney fire can ignite. The chimney should be cleaned at least once a year to reduce fire risks. Regular cleaning also improves air flow and limits the amount of carbon monoxide that seeps indoors.
- 5. Practice safety in the kitchen.** As we spend more time in the kitchen during the holiday season, be mindful of potential fire hazards. Never leave food that is cooking on the stovetop unattended. Clean and remove spilled foods from cooking surfaces and be mindful of where you place flammable items like dish towels.

Jo-Carroll Energy wants you and your family to stay safe during the winter season. Visit jocarroll.com for additional safety tips.

GIVE THE GIFT OF ENERGY
HOLIDAY ENERGY CREDITS

A wonderful gift for any Jo-Carroll Energy member!

Certificates are available in any amount and are applied to the member's energy bill for the amount purchased.

Ask any of our member service representatives for more information 800.856.5522

HOLIDAY Schedule

CHRISTMAS
December 25 & 26: Office Closed

NEW YEAR
January 1: Office Closed

SYSTEM MAINTENANCE
All systems will be offline starting at 12:00 p.m. on Dec 31 and we expect them back online around 1:00 p.m. on Jan 1.

We Wish You a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year



'Tis the season for **MORE SPEED!**



Technology *of the past*

You. Needed. To. Be. Very. Patient. The. Dial-up. Modem. Connected. To. A. Computer. With. A. Blazing. Speed. Of. 13.75. Bytes. Per. Second.

Technology *of the present*

Fiber at present provides the fastest and most reliable internet there is . . . and you can't afford to take connection chances with "the big guy".



Technology *of the future*

... yeah, that fast.



The need for fiber internet speed will continue to evolve and grow! Is your current internet connection "future ready"?

Get Connected at:
connectsp.com/iwantfiber



Coming Jan. 1, 2024



Sand Prairie
A service of Jo-Carroll Energy

becomes



JCE CO-OP
Electric • Gas • Fiber