

# HI-LINES

A NEWSLETTER FOR JO-CARROLL ENERGY MEMBERS

JANUARY 2021 | Voluntary and open membership • Voluntary and open membership • Voluntary and open membership • Voluntary and open membership • Voluntary and open membership

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2021 energy efficiency incentives are here



## 20E Scholarships

Applications online for scholarships totaling \$25,000



## 20G Photo contest

Congrats to the 2020 winners, enter the 2021 contest

## A look forward

Last month, my column looked back on the year. In this month's column, I would like to share with you what is in store for 2021. Considering your feedback on what is important to you, the below categorizes our main initiatives. Our main focus is to stabilize rates while providing more value to you, our consumer-members.

### Growth

Our Sand Prairie broadband division will continue to build out fiber in areas awarded grants as well as areas with high member interest.

Although the grants we received will accelerate fiber buildout in unserved and underserved areas, it could take up to five years to complete buildout in these areas. Jo-Carroll Energy must contribute matching funds, typically upfront, which limits the quantity of fiber we can complete and still meet our financial obligations with our lenders in any one year. Another consideration is building out fiber in an efficient and cost-effective way. If you are not in a current buildout area ([connectsp.com/fiber/communities/all](http://connectsp.com/fiber/communities/all)) and you need fiber sooner, another option is for you to provide a contribution in aid of construction. We can assess what it would cost and provide you with a quote.

### Enhance cooperative value

Our second objective is to enhance the value we provide you. This ties into the vision for the cooperative, which is to enhance the quality of life for our members. Besides our growth plan for fiber, we continue to develop ways to enhance and improve our communications with you. The past few months we have emailed a shortened newsletter



## CEO'S REPORT

by Mike Casper

to those who have provided an email address, as another means to update you more quickly on activities, new services, and opportunities that might provide you more value or save you money. If we do not have your current email address and you would like to be added to the distribution list, please call us at 1-800-858-5522 between 7:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. M-F or add your email address to your contact profile within the MyAccount member portal or through the Jo-Carroll mobile app.

### Operational excellence

We continue to develop our business continuity plan that will ensure reliable service to you under severe circumstances such as pandemics, natural disasters and other serious events. Another primary focus area in the coming year will be internal business system improvements, which will improve overall reliability of services and create efficiencies that will help stabilize rates. Glenn Udel

We are fortunate to have such a great team at Jo-Carroll that is committed to bringing value to you through quality services. Whether it is reliable electric, natural gas, or broadband service or new services for your home or business, our employees are dedicated to carrying out the cooperative's vision statement.

These are just a few of the areas of our focus in 2021. I wish you all the best this coming year. Please do not hesitate to contact us with feedback through our [info@jocarroll.com](mailto:info@jocarroll.com) email.

## For your information

### Your Board of Directors:

**David Senn**

Chairman

District 7

**Russell Holesinger**

Vice Chairman

District 8

**Marcia Stanger**

Secretary

District 3

**Martin Werner**

District 1

**Joseph Mattingley**

District 2

**Dan Tindell**

District 4

**Patricia Smith**

District 5

**Thomas Lundy**

District 6

**Larry Carroll**

District 9

**Robert Kuhns**

Treasurer

District 10

### 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

## Jo-Carroll Energy Board Meeting Minutes Summary

October 28, 2020

The regular board meeting of Jo-Carroll Energy, Inc. (NFP) was held via video phone conference on Wednesday, October 28, 2020 at 9 a.m. A Safety Moment was provided by Director Bob Kuhns.

**Presentation** – Ken Sivertsen, Key Accounts Manager, and Jeff Harrelson, Director of Safety and Loss Control, provided a report on Business Continuity (BC). Harrelson reported that significant progress has been made over the last 7 months, noting that BC is a continuing process. A Pandemic Response Plan was created by the Incident Command Team, with the primary goal of planning for scenarios that can impact the cooperative, such as the current Covid-19 pandemic. The BC team meets twice weekly to provide reassurance that we are providing the most value in the event of an incident, with focus on educating our employees in that regard. President and CEO Casper thanked Ken and Jeff for their hard work leading the effort, noting that everyone has been very responsive and responsible within the organization.

**Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) Report** – Chairman Senn discussed how professional and efficient the Jo-Carroll Energy Linemen were at restoring power after the large derecho storm which affected a large portion of the Midwest. Senn also provided highlights from the NRECA Regions 5&6 Meeting and commented on various speaker presentations. Director Stanger also commented on the director education courses offered through the AIEC and the added value they provide to their continuing director education.

**American Public Gas Association (APGA) Report** – Director Carroll discussed the latest topics within the gas industry, noting that APGA continues to meet virtually with a series of online virtual conferences focusing on safety and reliability.

**Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC)** – Director Mattingley provided highlights from the DPC Report. President and CEO Casper noted that strategic growth and the importance of culture have continued to evolve within the organization. In addition, a fiber task force has been developed for which Jesse Shekleton, Jo-Carroll

Energy Director of Engineering, has been chosen as a representative.

**Prairie Power Incorporated (PPI) Report** – Director Kuhns provided a summary of the most recent generation numbers. President and CEO Casper added that a budget has been approved for 2021.

**Policy 140** – Policy 140/Fraud will be rewritten to synchronize with Administrative Policy 240.

**Policy 141** – A motion was made by Director Kuhns to approve Policy 141/ Use of Cell Phones as is, which was seconded by Director Tindell and carried unanimously.

**CEO Report** – President and CEO Mike Casper provided an overview of some of the major 2021 budget items that will be discussed at the December 10 budget meeting.

**Financial Operating Report** – CFO Woods provided a summary of the financial operating report. YTD revenue is approximately \$43.7 million vs. a budgeted amount of \$44.4 million. YTD margins are approximately \$(1.3 million) vs. a budgeted amount of \$(315,000). Most of the difference was due to the cost of purchased power, which is approximately \$1.1 million overbudget. All other O&M expenses are under budget by (\$235,181). These expenses are expected to catch up by year end. TIER and MDSC ratios for the year are below CFC's minimum requirements. By general consent, the board moved to file the financial operating report with the auditor.

### Board Issues and Action Items

- A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve the Form 990.
- A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve the Capital Credits General Retirement, in the amount of approximately \$1.5 million.
- A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the Illinois Bank and

"Meeting" continued on 20D

# SAVE ENERGY & MONEY with our

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY INCENTIVE PROGRAM



### 2021 energy efficiency incentives are here!

Being energy efficient puts dollars in your pocket by lowering your energy bill, and it also qualifies you for additional dollars through our incentive program.

Our 2021 Energy Efficiency program includes incentives for both our electric and natural gas members. Eligible members can qualify for rebates on: electric clothes washers, dehumidifiers, dishwashers, refrigerators, room air conditioners, freezer recycling,

refrigerator recycling, window air conditioning recycling, CFL and LED light fixtures, electric HVAC, natural gas HVAC, natural gas water heaters, stoves, and dryers.

To qualify for one of our incentives in 2021:

- ✓ Purchase and/or install a qualified energy efficient product in 2021.
- ✓ Submit required documentation as soon as possible as funds are limited.

Incentives are in place through Dec. 31, 2021 or until funds are depleted.

- ✓ Submit forms and documentation by Jan. 3, 2022.

Incentive forms and complete information are available on [jocarroll.com/energy-efficiency-incentives](http://jocarroll.com/energy-efficiency-incentives).



## WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

### Let's Keep Small Businesses Thriving.

It's time to power a Small Business Comeback across America.

Co-op Connections is a free member benefit program brought to you by **JO-CARROLL ENERGY**. Download the free app to find discounts from your local merchants. Now you can save money while you support your community's business owners.

Find all the ways to save locally with Co-op Connections!

Visit [SmallBusinessComeback.coop](http://SmallBusinessComeback.coop) for more information.

### #POWERON



Jo-Carroll Energy

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

[jocarroll.com](http://jocarroll.com)



Sand Prairie

Connecting our members to the world.

[connectSP.com](http://connectSP.com)

## "Meeting" continued from 20B

Trust Change of Terms for Line of Credit. Director Mattingley left the meeting for this agenda item and returned after the vote on the motion.

- An overview of the Position Statement Regarding donations was discussed.

## Operations and Regulatory Update

**Operations Update** - Kyle Buros, Senior Vice President and Assistant General Manager, provided an operations update including information on the scope of the Reconnect grant for fiber. Buros noted that an environmental review will have to be completed prior to any execution of agreements. The projected buildout is approximately 5 years. Buros also provided an update on strategic planning. Buros also commented on OSHA recordables and what types of events are recordable.

**Regulatory Update** - Chris Allendorf, V.P. of External Relations and General Counsel provided an update on Covid-19 in the area, commenting that Region 1 is in Tier 2 mitigation. Allendorf also provided commentary on the upcoming federal election as well as state and local political races.

Jennifer Meyer, V.P. of Member Services, provided an update on subscriptions for the Illinois Shines solar program available through the cooperative. The goal is 100 percent subscription by the end of November.

Merri Sevey, V.P. of Human Resources provided an update on the Jo-Carroll Energy employee training day. Most training was completed virtually due to Covid-19. Sevey noted that safety is our number one core value, highlighting how to safely return to work according to our company guidelines.

**Action Resulting from Executive Session** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously that the Board of Directors of Jo-Carroll Energy declares they have reviewed the President & CEO's performance and found that it exceeds expectations. With that finding, and pursuant to the

terms of the President & CEO's employment contract, the board authorizes the execution of certain obligations therein.

**Other Business** – None.

**Adjournment** – Chairman Senn adjourned the meeting at 12:51 p.m.

## Feeling chilled? HEAT your SPACE safely



Before you dust off your space heater and plug it in, consider that most home heating fire deaths (86%) involve space heaters, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). In fact, heating equipment is the second-leading cause of U.S. home fires (cooking is the leading cause).

More than half of the heating-related home fires start when flammable items are too close to the heat source, according to the NFPA. Those items include upholstered furniture, clothing, a mattress or bedding.

Nearly half of all home heating fires occur in December, January and February.



### Here are some space heater safety tips:

- Only use them as the manufacturer recommends
- Do not leave them unattended
- Give them space: remove any flammable items within 3 feet
- Plug them directly into outlets; don't use an extension cord
- Consider using a dedicated circuit to avoid overload
- Keep children and pets away from space heaters at all times
- Turn them off before you leave the room or go to sleep

Learn more at: 

## 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.

# Scholarships totaling \$25,000


## Applications online


Jo-Carroll Energy is pleased to offer several scholarships for students whose parents or guardians are members of the cooperative.


As a cooperative, Jo-Carroll has a strong commitment to youth and the community. The cooperative offers five different scholarships to help support our youth, area students and communities.

All scholarships are funded by unclaimed or donated capital credits.


### Available scholarships


 Jo-Carroll Energy Scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 (two awarded in Jo Daviess and Carroll counties and one each in Whiteside and Henry counties) to current high school seniors whose parents or guardians are members of Jo-Carroll Energy.

 \$1,000 scholarships (one awarded in each county of the cooperative's service territory) for students who will attend two-year, technical or trade schools.

 Lineworker scholarships in the amount of \$2,000 each to students who plan to attend lineworker school.



 \$1,500 scholarships (one awarded in each county of the cooperative's service territory) for adult or "non-traditional" students, cooperative members who are returning to school or will attend a post-secondary or accredited training program for the first time.

 "Director's Scholarships" of \$500 each to be awarded to a student from each of the cooperative's 10 director districts. Current high school seniors, whose parents are members of Jo-Carroll Energy, are eligible for these scholarships. Attendance at the cooperative's annual meeting is required; award is by drawing. (If we are unable to hold an "in person" annual meeting in 2021, drawings will be conducted during a Zoom call with our president and CEO Mike Casper and board members.)

### Application deadlines

Applications are posted on the cooperative's website at [jocarroll.com/scholarship-program](http://jocarroll.com/scholarship-program). Submit applications for all scholarships except the Director's Scholarship by March 1, 2021. Deadline for the Director's Scholarship is May 1, 2021.

Eligibility details are listed on the website and may vary between scholarships.

### Contact information

If you have any questions regarding the scholarship program, please contact Peggy Francomb, [pfrancomb@jocarroll.com](mailto:pfrancomb@jocarroll.com) or call 800-858-5522, ext. 1218.

# WINTER WEATHER

## CAN BRING POWER LINES DOWN



### DID YOU KNOW:

### STAY WHERE YOU ARE

You've just been in an accident involving a downed power line. Your first instinct might be to get out and run, but that could cost you your life. In most cases, the safest place to be is inside your car or truck. Wait there until electric utility workers deenergize the power. If your car is on fire or you see smoke, escape as safely as possible by making a clean, solid jump out and hop away with both feet together as far as you can. Warn others not to approach the scene.



- That downed power lines are extremely dangerous and even deadly?
- The current could spread throughout the ground and anything touching the ground?
- Stray voltage spreads like ripples on a pond?
- If you step from one "ripple" (voltage) to another you could be electrocuted?
- Downed lines could be hiding under standing water, ice or debris?

Learn more at:

 Safe  
Electricity.org®



## Enter our 2021 Photo Contest

Jo-Carroll Energy is planning a 2022 calendar that captures the spirit of our cooperative community.

We invite you to submit photos that show the Seasons of the Cooperative and evoke the heart of the cooperative lifestyle.

Share with us and your fellow co-op members the quiet scenes and breathtaking vistas that define our area, as seen through your eyes. Whether it is a scenic landscape, a snapshot of everyday life or an action photo, we invite you to share your images.

Winning entries will be featured in the 2022 calendar. Cooperative members, directors, employees and their family members are eligible to enter. Photos may be any appropriate subject or scene, and must be taken in the Jo-Carroll Energy service area.

An entry form and more information can be found on our website at [jocarroll.com](http://jocarroll.com).



## Congratulations to our 2020 contest winners

Our 2021 Photo Calendar features the work of these talented cooperative members:

- Nichole Lewis, Geneseo
- Sarah Hartman, Savanna
- Mark Robinson, Galena
- Donna Berlage, Galena
- Laurie Starrett, Munster, IN
- Laura Edmonds, Galena
- Diane Turczynski, Elizabeth
- Samantha DeFilippo, Geneseo
- Debbie Borkgren, Geneseo
- Vicky Enyeart, Atkinson
- Grant Strzelczyk, Galena
- Barb Virtue Townsend, Galena
- Rod Hurban, Galena

## Employees recognized

Twelve Jo-Carroll Energy employees were recognized in 2020 for a combined 160 years of service.



Ryan Randecker  
Keith Hayes



Merri Sevey Kurt Krohmer  
Dan Marcure Jennifer Meyer  
John Scott



Tim Grau  
Tina DeGarmo  
Jesse Shekleton



Jeremy Werner



Laurel LeSage

Three directors were also recognized for years of service.



Bob Kuhns



Dave Senn



Tom Lundy

*The service awards were donated to local charities.*

# SAND PRAIRIE FIBER INTERNET UPDATE

*Imagine what you can do...*

## Sand Prairie Fiber Neighborhoods

Sand Prairie fiber internet service is available in 20 different fiber neighborhoods. If you live in one of these areas, simply visit [connectSP.com](http://connectSP.com) or call us a 800-855-5522 to have service installed:

- ▶ Apple Canyon Lake (CYN 6, 7)
- ▶ Elizabeth (ELZ1-6, 8-10)
- ▶ East Dubuque (ED1)
- ▶ Galena (G0, 8, 15,17)
- ▶ The Galena Territory (GT10, 14)
- ▶ Scales Mound (SM1)
- ▶ Sinsinawa (MEN4)

Fiber internet packages start at 25 Mbps for \$59.99 per month. Upgrade to 10x more speeds at 250 Mbps for just \$74.99 per month! Looking for even higher speeds? Upgrade to 1 Gig (1000 Mbps) for \$99.99 or our maximum speeds of 2 Gig (2000 Mbps) for \$299.99 per month.

## Under Construction

Thirty-two additional areas are in construction or pre-construction (as of press time):

### Pre-Construction

- ▶ Apple Canyon Lake (CYN2)
- ▶ Casper Ridge (CPR1)
- ▶ Chadwick (CDW1-3)
- ▶ Elizabeth (ELZ11)
- ▶ Fenton (FTN1)
- ▶ Galena (G13, 18, 20, 21)
- ▶ The Galena Territory (GT6, 13, 15)
- ▶ Hanover (HAN1, 2)
- ▶ Menominee (MEN2, 3)
- ▶ Mount Carroll (MCS1)
- ▶ Nora (NOR1)
- ▶ Palisades (PAL1, 2)
- ▶ Sand Ridge (SR1, 2)
- ▶ Woodbine (WBN1)

### Construction

- ▶ Apple Canyon Lake (CYN3, 4)
- ▶ Chestnut (CHT2)
- ▶ Galena (G16)
- ▶ The Galena Territory (GT5)

## Sign-Up Open!

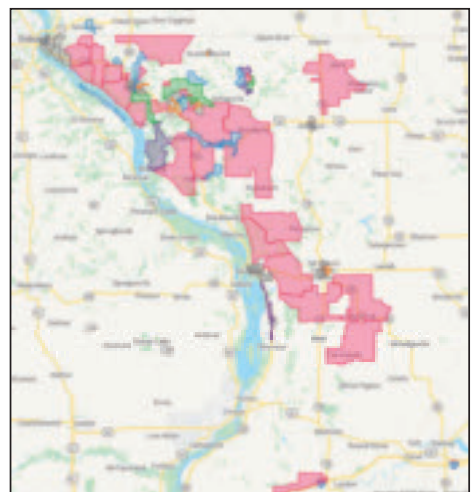
Several other fiber neighborhoods have reached the level of interest so that we can complete engineering and members can select a package and sign up for service.

- ▶ Galena (G22, 23)
- ▶ The Galena Territory (GT9, 11)
- ▶ Mount Carroll (MTC4, 7)
- ▶ Scales Mound (SM2)



## Track our Progress!

Visit [connectSP.com/fiber/communities](http://connectSP.com/fiber/communities) to find your neighborhood and see if service is available in your area.



Map data ©2020 Google Last Updated: 11-25-2020



## Want fiber internet in your neighborhood?

You can tell us you want fiber in your neighborhood by completing the short and simple interest form at [connectSP.com/iwantfiber](http://connectSP.com/iwantfiber).

AND, you can encourage your neighbors to submit interest also. This helps us determine where to build fiber next.



800-855-5522 connectSP.com 793 US 20 West, Elizabeth, IL 61028





# Spirit of the community

Local businesses are the backbone of our community – a source of pride.

Buying locally supports local artisans, tradesmen and merchants.

In addition, funds from sales tax stay in our community for schools, fire and police departments, city parks, natural resources, and more.

Keep the spirit of our community alive. Shop locally!

*Brought to you by your local Touchstone Energy Cooperative*



Jo-Carroll Energy

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 