

HI-LINES

A NEWSLETTER FOR JO-CARROLL ENERGY MEMBERS

MARCH 2023 | Voluntary and open membership • Voluntary and open membership • Voluntary and open membership • Voluntary and open membership • Voluntary and open membership

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I want to thank those who completed our all-residential member survey, as well as those who completed our member satisfaction survey. The information that you shared provides us a better understanding of what is important to you, which drives the development of new and improved programs and services that add value to you.

We value that you appreciate the reliability and quick and attentive service we provide. You also complimented us on being knowledgeable, friendly and effective communicators. These consistent year in and year out results aren't surprising because we have an invested interest in the communities that we serve.

Your responses also told us you are concerned about the cost of energy and rates.

As I shared in last month's Hi-Lines, historic inflation the past two years has caught up with us, and we continue to experience price increases in materials such as steel, copper and aluminum, which are used in transformers, distribution lines, piping, trucks, etc.

For example, the cost of a 15 kVA residential transformer has increased 40 percent in the last year. Poles, conductor, cabinets, meters, etc., are seeing similar increases.

As I shared with you last month, average electricity prices across the country increased 14 percent. Rate increases are not welcome news and Jo-Carroll Energy's decision for an average rate increase of 8 percent



CEO'S REPORT
by Mike Casper

was not taken lightly. Power supply amounts to approximately 65 percent of your electric bills and includes the generation and transmission costs to get the power to the distribution substations before it is delivered to you.

Besides inflation, the increase in power supply is partially driven by regulation and energy policies. As I shared with the Senate Committee on Agriculture last November, a transition to intermittent renewable energy generation must be paced and managed.

Timely siting and permitting of additional electric transmission and natural gas pipelines also is needed to deliver affordable power we promised to our consumer-members.

Much of our energy needs are covered through our generation and transmission (G&T) cooperatives' (Dairyland Power Cooperative and Prairie Power, Inc.) electric generating facilities with diverse fuel types. To date, we have not been subject to the price volatility of the market because of our G&Ts' ownership in generating facilities.

Rate details that affect most of you are published in a separate article, and all rate tariffs will be published on our website on March 1. Members will see the changes reflected on their billing statements in April.

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For your information

Your Board of Directors:

David Senn
Chairman
District 7

Russell Holesinger
Vice Chairman
District 8

Marcia Stanger
Secretary
District 3

Robert Kuhns
Treasurer
District 10

Jerry Meyer
District 1

Joseph Mattingley
District 2

Dan Tindell
District 4

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

Dec. 21, 2022

The regular board meeting of Jo-Carroll Energy, Inc. (NFP) was held on Wednesday, Dec. 21, 2022. A Safety Moment was provided by Director Pat Smith. Smith stressed the importance of sharing your location with a friend or loved one at all times. Smith also shared symptoms of a stroke and the importance of getting to a doctor immediately following to reduce possible negative effects.

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

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

Presentation – None.

Governance Topics and Board Policy Review – None.

Governance Topics and Board Policy Review – None.

CEO/Financial Operating Report

Financial Operating Report – Chuck Woods, Chief Financial Officer, provided a summary of the financial operating report for November. Revenue year-to-date (YTD) is approximately \$59.9 million and is under November YTD budget of \$60.4 million. Total operations and maintenance expenses YTD were approximately \$2.7 million under budget. Margins are approximately \$4.8 million vs. a budgeted amount of approximately \$1.4 million and amounts to approximately \$3.4 million over budget. By general consent, the board moved to file the financial operating report with the auditor.

Board Issues and Action Items

Budget Review and Approval for 2023 – The 2023 proposed budget was presented to the Jo-Carroll Energy Board of Directors by senior staff members of the cooperative. Responses were provided to previously received and new questions by the board. After discussion and a thorough understanding of the budget, a motion was made by Director Mattingley to approve the 2023 board budget, which was seconded by Director Smith.

Board Policy 411A/Small Distributed Generation Incentive – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve Board Policy 411A.

Executive Session – None.

Into Executive Session – None.

Out of Executive Session – None.

Action Resulting from Executive Session – None.

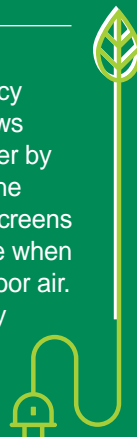
Other Business – None.

Adjournment – Chairman Senn adjourned the meeting at 11:20 p.m.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Washing windows and screens is a great way to practice energy efficiency during spring cleaning. Clean windows and screens make your home brighter by allowing more sunlight in, reducing the need for lamps and fixtures. Clean screens also allow more fresh air in the home when the windows are open to recycle indoor air. Natural light and clean air are energy savers, and they enhance overall health and productivity.

Source: energy.gov



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.

Board nominations open in three districts

Jo-Carroll Energy is owned and democratically controlled by the members we serve. The cooperative's service territory is divided into 10 director districts with each district represented by one director, elected by the member of the district to serve a three-year term.

In 2023, nomination petitions are available for members seeking election to serve their districts on the Jo-Carroll Energy Board of Directors for Districts 3, 6 and 9.

Who can run

Any member, including the incumbent directors, whose primary residence is in one of the districts up for election may petition for nomination in their district.

Not sure of your district number? You can find it on your bill from the co-op or call us at 800-858-5522 for assistance.

How to run

To run for the board of directors, a member must file a petition.

- Download a nomination petition from our website at jocarroll.com/director-elections. You may also call the co-op and ask that a petition be mailed to you.
- Collect at least 25 signatures from members residing in the district.
- File the petition at co-op headquarters in Elizabeth no later than April 6.
- Provide a short biographical sketch and photo to be used in candidate profiles.

Details on director qualification and nomination procedures can be found in the cooperative's bylaws posted at jocarroll.com.

Elections

If two or more candidates file in a district, ballots and voting instructions are mailed to members in that district. A member votes for one candidate either by mail or online through a special election website.

If only one candidate files in a district, no election materials are mailed. Election is by vote of acclamation at the annual meeting of members.

Candidate profiles are included with election materials when there is a contested election. All eligible candidates will be listed on jocarroll.com and in a future issue of Hi-Lines.

Annual meeting

The 2023 Annual Meeting of Members is scheduled for Monday, June 5 at the West Carroll High School in Savanna. Jessica L. Emilio Villalobos

Concern for Community

Area nonprofit, school and governmental organizations are encouraged to apply for Jo-Carroll Energy's

Sharing Success Grants

Four grants to be awarded in 2023

- Applications must have broad reach in impact for community served
- Matching funds to be applied for through CoBank's Sharing Success program

Complete details at
jocarroll.com/sharing-success-grant-application



Application Deadline: March 30, 2023

Inflation continues to drive rate increases



Rate increases approved by the Jo-Carroll Energy board of directors go into effect this month. The new rates begin to apply to electric and/or natural gas use in March and will be reflected on the bills members receive in April.

Making up the increase is an average 8 percent increase included in the 2023 budget, driven by inflation rates that continue to push costs higher for materials and energy supplies.

Included in the revised rates is a \$1 increase in the monthly facility charge for residential electric service (single phase), electric heat rates, along with increases on delivery for electric and natural gas rates. The remaining changes occur on the energy, generation and transmission charges for electric members.

The facility charge ensures members' expectations for reliable and continuous energy are met. It allocates each member a fair and equal share of the

cooperative's monthly operation and maintenance expenses no matter how much energy is sold. The facility charge provides the necessary funds that must be invested to build and maintain infrastructure, right-of-way maintenance and overall operating expenses.

The delivery charge increases a fraction of a cent for both electric services. The delivery charge is a per kWh charge that covers the cost of delivering electricity or natural gas to a member's home or business and maintaining the lines and pipe.

The accompanying charts illustrate the changes for the single-phase electric rate, which includes most residential members, and the farm and residential natural gas rate. Additional charts and information can be found on our website at jocarroll.com.

Electric rates

For single-phase electric rates, in addition to the \$1 increase

in the monthly facility charge, increases are found in the delivery, energy and generation charges.

The energy charge is the base cost to produce the energy. It is a per kWh charge for the energy used during the service period.

The generation charge is the base cost to produce energy and the costs of the physical infrastructure needed to produce the energy.

The transmission charge covers the cost to transmit energy from the generation supplier to JCE. All three charges increase a fraction of one cent.

Natural gas

Natural gas members on Rate 42, farm and residential gas service, will see an increase in the delivery charge per therm. This charge will increase four cents per therm.

There is no change in the facility or member services charges for natural gas.

A residential electric account using an average of 750 kWh per month will see a 7.36% increase or \$10.40 per month.

A residential natural gas account using an average of 53 therms per month will see a 6.05% increase or \$4.75 per month. The gas calculation used an estimated energy charge.

Single-Phase Electric Rate			
Rate	Current	Revised	Change
Monthly Charges			
Facility Charge	\$32 per month	\$33 per month	\$1
Member Service Charge	\$5 per month	\$5 per month	No Change
Charges per kWh			
Delivery Charge	\$0.03321 per kWh	\$0.03620 per kWh	\$0.00299 increase
Energy Charge	\$0.03655 per kWh	\$0.03984 per kWh	\$0.00329 increase
Generation Charge ≤ 1500 kWh	\$0.04297 per kWh	\$0.04684 per kWh	\$0.00387 increase
> 1500 kWh	\$0.01597 per kWh	\$0.01741 per kWh	\$0.00144 increase
Transmission Charge	\$0.02639 per kWh	\$0.02877 per kWh	\$0.00238 increase

Green – Distribution | Orange – Power Supply

Natural Gas Rate 42			
Rate	Current	Revised	Change
Facility Charge	\$20.00 per month	\$20.00 per month	No Change
Member Service Charge	\$5.00 per month	\$5.00 per month	No Change
Delivery Charge	\$0.405 per therm	\$0.445 per therm	\$0.040 per therm
Energy Charge	Varies Monthly	Varies Monthly	

Green – Distribution | Orange – Purchased Energy

CEO's report continued from page 18A

Unfortunately, we must implement these changes so that we are able to continue to provide you with the reliable, quality service you expect. While profit is not the goal, we must recover the costs of doing business, as well as maintain sufficient margins to reinvest in the distribution system and satisfy covenants with our lenders.

The expectation is that inflation will begin to decrease over the next two

to three years and we will be able to moderate future increases.

As a not-for-profit member-owned cooperative, we strive every day to deliver energy to our members safely, efficiently and responsibly while keeping costs as low as possible. JCE continues to look for opportunities to reduce our operating costs. Our strategic goal of operational excellence ensures continued improvements in efficiencies.

We anticipate revenue growth by adding more high-speed-fiber internet service to members. Added fiber services will also spread fixed costs across more members.

We continue to encourage members to reach out to us if they are concerned about being able to pay their energy bills, working with members on a case-by-case basis regarding options and assistance that may be available to them.

Play it safe:

10 do's and don'ts when using portable generators

Storm season is upon us, which means greater potential for power outages. If you're planning to use a portable generator in the event of an outage, Jo-Carroll Energy reminds you to play it safe.

With proper use and maintenance, portable generators can provide great convenience during an outage. However, when generators are used incorrectly, they can be extremely hazardous. In a 2022 report, the Consumer Product Safety Commission estimated 85 U.S. consumers die every year from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gasoline-powered portable generators.

Here are 10 do's and don'ts to keep in mind when using portable generators:

1. **DO:** Install backup CO alarms.
2. **DO:** Keep children and pets away from portable generators at all times.
3. **DO:** Position generators at least 25 feet outside the home, away from doors, windows and vents that can allow CO to enter the home.
4. **DO:** Ensure your generator is properly grounded. Use a portable ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to prevent electric shock injuries.
5. **DO:** Use three-pronged extension cords that are rated to handle the load of the generator. Inspect extension cords for cuts, frays or other damage before use.



Photo Source: Honda

Position portable generators at least 25 feet outside the home, away from doors, windows and vents that can allow CO to enter the home.

6. **DON'T:** Operate a generator inside your home or an enclosed (or partially enclosed) space. Generators produce high levels of CO, which can be deadly.
7. **DON'T:** Open windows or doors while the generator is running.
8. **DON'T:** Rely on generators as a full-time source of power. They should only be used temporarily or in emergency situations to power essential equipment or appliances.
9. **DON'T:** Overload generators. They should only be used to power essential equipment. Make sure your generator can handle the load of the items you plan to power.
10. **DON'T:** Connect generators directly into household wiring unless

you have an appropriate transfer switch installed. If a generator is connected to a home's wiring without a transfer switch, power can backfeed along power lines and electrocute utility line-workers making repairs.

While generators provide convenience during power outages, they can quickly become hazardous — even deadly — if improperly operated. Before you operate a portable generator, be sure to thoroughly read the owner's manual for important safety information and tips.

If you have questions about proper use of portable generators, we're here to help. Give us a call at 800-858-5522 or visit our website at jocarroll.com/electrical-safety-and-generators.

Member, employee contributions support 2022 food drive

Across our service territory there are unfortunately many individuals and families who face hunger or food insecurity every day, a problem that has worsened with the pandemic and inflation. Community food pantries are on the forefront to provide assistance, relying on volunteers and donations, and that's where we come in.

The members and employees of Jo-Carroll Energy come together every year during our Light Up the Holidays Food Drive by donating

nonperishable items to our local food pantries to help those in need of meals.

Following JCE's food drive in 2022, the cooperative was able to donate approximately 60 pounds of food to each pantry along with a \$500 cash donation. We want to thank everyone who donated to this cause and look forward to another successful year in 2023.

Food pantries we supported with food donations in 2022:

- United Churches of Galena Food Pantry
- East Dubuque Food Pantry
- Elizabeth Food Basket
- Hanover Food Pantry
- Albany Food Pantry
- Mt. Carroll/Savanna Food Pantry
- Chadwick/Milledgeville Helping Hands Food Pantry
- Thomson/Fulton Food Pantry
- Erie Food Pantry
- Geneseo/Atkinson Food Pantry
- Stockton Food Pantry



Elizabeth Food Basket



Albany Food Pantry



United Churches of Galena Food Pantry



Hanover Food Pantry



Stockton Food Pantry



Helping households connect.

Jo-Carroll Energy, with its Sand Prairie internet service, has been approved by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as a provider for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) a new longer-term program that replaced the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program on December 31, 2021 to help lower the cost of high-speed internet to eligible households in our area.

The program will continue to help households struggling to pay for internet service during the pandemic. This new benefit will connect eligible households to jobs, critical healthcare services, and virtual classrooms. The Affordable Connectivity Program will provide an on-bill credit of \$30 per month towards broadband service for qualifying households.

Who is eligible?

A household is eligible if one member of the household meets one of the following criteria:

- Has an income that is at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines
- Participates in certain assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, SSI, WIC, or Lifeline
- Receives benefits under the free or reduced-price school breakfast or lunch program
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income program

How do members apply?

Members interested in applying for assistance must:

- First, apply for the Affordable Connectivity Program and be approved by the Universal Service Administration Co. (USAC). More information can be found here: www.fcc.gov/acp.
- Once eligibility is approved, complete a benefit enrollment request application with Jo-Carroll Energy. A webpage including the application form and additional information is available at www.connectsp.com/acp.



800-858-5522 connectSP.com 793 US 20 West, Elizabeth, IL 61028