



HI-LINES

A NEWSLETTER FOR JO-CARROLL ENERGY MEMBERS

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Shekleton Senate testimony
 The importance of rural broadband



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Together toward tomorrow
 Your co-op is committed to improving local communities



18F
Safe, reliable service
 Contractors help us serve you

Annual Meeting questions and responses

A big thank you to our members who attended and participated in Jo-Carroll Energy's 84th Annual Meeting of the Members. Highlights of the meeting can be found on the pages that follow. Members who were unable to attend were provided the opportunity to submit questions online. This year we had more than a dozen questions submitted prior to the meeting. The following are responses to several of these questions:

Q: Is there a discount for members who use more than one service from the cooperative?

A: No, because we track each business unit separately to allocate capital credits.

Q: Is there any likelihood of additional package tiers for the fiber service that might be in between the current tiers?

A: For example, a 100/100 or a 500/500 package? Good news, your board recently approved higher symmetrical speeds for the current tiers. For example, the 25/25 service will be upgraded to 100/100 for the same price. Details and a timeline will follow.

Q: How do I take advantage of streaming services and gain a better understanding of the cost of these services?



A: We recommend our StreamNow guide, which is a free tool and can be found on our Sand Prairie website (gostreamnow.com/sand-prairie/).

Q: What is Jo-Carroll doing to get off fossil fuels and supply electricity from green sources such as solar and wind power?

A: In addition to working closely with our members to interconnect solar, Jo-Carroll has supported three community, and one utility scale solar project, in our electric service territory. We also work closely with our wholesale power suppliers, of which we are member-owners, as they transition to a lower carbon future.

Q: Does the fiber come all the way into the home?

A: Yes, to the router located inside your home.

Q: Does Jo-Carroll have plans to encourage electric vehicle (EV) charging in the home?

A: Yes, we will be performing a rate analysis that will consider a future home-charging incentive

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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

April 27, 2023

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

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 – Representatives from an independent cybersecurity firm presented the results of an internal and external cybersecurity penetration test, which was an outcome of JCE's Enterprise Risk Management Plan. In addition, Dan Marcure, JCE Director of Technology, commented on the internal and external cybersecurity remediation measures for the few moderate vulnerabilities uncovered.

Governance Topics and Board Policy Review

Governance Talk Video – A Governance Talk Video was presented on Key Ratio Trend Analysis and the value that they can provide on tracking JCE's performance.

Board Policy Review – None.

CEO/Financial Operating Report

CEO Report – President and CEO Mike Casper provided the board an overview of the different communication channels that we use with our members, as well as the types of information that we share, such as where we are performing vegetation management.

Financial Operating Report – Chuck Woods, Chief Financial Officer, provided a summary of the financial operating report for March. Revenue year-to-date (YTD) is approximately \$18.1 million. Total operations and maintenance expenses are approximately \$14.1 million, which is approximately (\$1,224,111) under budget of \$15.4 million. Margins are approximately \$1.7 million vs. a budgeted amount of approximately (\$900,543) and amounts to \$2.6 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 V.P. and Chief Operating Officer Kyle Buros provided an update on the recent flooding that affected portions of our JCE service territory. Kyle shared that measures were taken in advance and monitoring continues.

Member Services Update – There was nothing additional to report outside of the written report.

External Affairs/Legislative Update – Terry Kurt, General Counsel, reported on his visit to D.C. as part of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's legislative conference. Terry, along with President and CEO Casper, Jesse Shekleton, Director of Broadband Services, and Chairman Senn, had the opportunity to meet with legislators to discuss legislation to preserve reliable and affordable energy, expand rural broadband and reauthorize rural development programs.

Human Resources – Merri Sevey provided the most recent new hire report.

Executive Assistant – Amy Johnston, Executive Assistant, had nothing to add outside of her written staff report.

Board Issues and Action Items

Select Dairyland Power Cooperative DPC Annual Meeting Attendees – Attendees were selected to attend the Dairyland Power Cooperative Annual Meeting.

Select Attendees for BLC Course 927/Cybersecurity – Attendees were selected to attend BLC Course 927/ Cybersecurity.

Select AIEC Annual Meeting Attendees – Attendees were selected to attend the AIEC Annual Meeting.

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JCE's Shekleton testifies on importance of rural broadband before Senate subcommittee

“Reliable, scalable internet access is critical to the growth and economic development of rural communities across northwest Illinois and the country as a whole,” Jesse Shekleton, Jo-Carroll Energy's director of broadband operations, said during a Senate hearing on rural broadband in May.

Shekleton and other panel members called for prioritizing

With the help of funding from the USDA's ReConnect and Community Connect grant programs, Jo-Carroll has been able to expand its broadband footprint and today serves nearly 4,000 fiber broadband members and growing.

After starting in 2009 with fixed wireless service, Jo-Carroll has pivoted to building a fiber-only network

one of the largest economic sectors in Illinois — agriculture,” he continued. “Precision agriculture has grown in recent years with farmers and ranchers leveraging a wide range of connected devices to reduce input costs and improve yields. As precision and smart ag technologies expand to include autonomous tractors, soil sampling or field mapping, demands for bandwidth on the farm will continue to grow, underscoring why a robust and scalable connection is essential.”

In response to questions from the panel about minimum acceptable broadband speeds, Shekleton said, “We need to standardize a definition and finally move forward with what we have been talking about as a scalable and future-proof solution. If we are only looking at what is in front of us and simply meeting the needs of today, are we really giving consideration to the innovation and ingenuity of the American people? I don't think we are.”

Looking to the future, Shekleton pointed to the trends and data that scale out to the need for multi-gigabyte speeds by 2030. “That is absolutely something that can happen and become a reality,” he said. “When we say future-proof, we need to make sure we invest wisely with these tax dollars, and if this is truly a once in a generation opportunity with this funding, then we have one opportunity to get it right.”



scalable, future-proof networks and symmetrical speeds, as well as revisions to the requirements and processes in USDA funding programs for future rounds of federal broadband funding in their testimony before the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Subcommittee on Rural Development and Energy.

“Consumer and technology demands for increased internet speeds continue to grow and are trending toward a need for multi-gigabit service by 2030,” Shekleton said. “Prioritizing symmetrical speeds and network technologies that are scalable will ensure that rural and remote areas are able to meet consumer needs now and into the future.”

after determining that fiber “is the most effective and economic technology to provide robust broadband to our rural communities,” Shekleton said. “Fiber allows us to ensure that the investments we make in this network today will be able to meet existing and future utility needs, as well as improve the economic outlook and quality of life in the rural communities we serve.”

Fiber enables the cooperative as a utility to better manage member-consumer demands for electric and natural gas service during peak times, as well as expand other smart grid offerings to members, according to Shekleton.

“Improved connectivity also provides a massive benefit to



Co-op members hear how working together important for future

Members attending Jo-Carroll Energy's 84th annual meeting heard from co-op leaders that working together is important for the future.

Addressing a crowd of more than 200 co-op members, employees and guests, Jo-Carroll President and CEO Mike Casper noted that, "An important lesson that I have learned in the past six years is the value of working together. We can make a much larger impact, whether it is filling sandbags, raising funds for special projects or advocating for what is important to our communities.

Casper stressed that the co-op values member feedback "through discussion, survey, meeting and conversations at the local coffee shop. You are the catalyst. By working together, we can make a better tomorrow."

Echoing the meeting theme, "Together toward tomorrow," board chairman David Senn of Savanna said "Our lives have

evolved over the past few generations. Change can be scary, but it is not difficult if we work together toward the goal of a better tomorrow."

"The pioneers of the past worked hard to illuminate rural America," Senn said. "Now it is our turn to build on the past by bringing high speed internet to our rural communities and transition our energy sources to a lower carbon future in a paced and managed manner."

As a member-owned cooperative, Jo-Carroll Energy is committed to improving local communities, Casper said, and pointed to the co-op's work

in bringing high-speed fiber internet to members.

In addition to member involvement and feedback, Casper said agencies like the

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) are necessary partners in our mission to build and provide benefits to our rural communities beyond electrification.

On the energy front, the co-op's ability to maintain safe,

reliable, and affordable energy resources is critical, Casper said. Jo-Carroll continues to work closely with our industry partners to stress the importance of much needed new infrastructure to our Federal and state legislatures and regulatory agencies.



To maintain the reliability of the electric grid, Casper said intermittent resources such as wind and solar must continue to be complemented and supported by always available baseload resources.

Guest speaker Eric Hobbie, President & CEO of Prairie Power, Inc., also addressed the topic and presented information about power markets.

His key takeaway is that the future of the U.S. electric grid will be more uncertain and riskier. Volatility will only increase in the near future, he said, including volatility in pricing, reliability, regulatory environment and consumer expectations. Like any good portfolio, he stressed the importance of a diversified portfolio of electric generating resources.

Herman Kelly Arachkavitiz

Casper also noted that “this is not about prioritizing one energy source over another. Rather, to ensure we keep the lights on for rural American families and businesses, system reliability requires a base of firm, flexible, and dispatchable electric capacity.”

“Rural electric cooperatives were built by and belong

to the communities that we serve, and we remain dedicated to delivering affordable reliable energy to our members,” Casper concluded. “Today, our mission goes beyond electrification. Jo-Carroll is committed to ensuring access to high-speed internet and other value-added services for our rural families, businesses and communities to give you a level playing field with our urban counterparts today and tomorrow.”

During the business session, co-op members approved an amendment to the bylaws that provides flexibility and guidance to the board of directors in the event a vacancy occurs during the term of a director and clarified dates and events that have already passed and no longer necessary.

Members re-elected District 9 director Larry Carroll to another term by a vote of acclamation. Carroll was running unopposed.

In other election results, Allen Hendren was elected to the District 3 directorship while Tom Lundy was re-elected in District 6.

Congrats

to the members who won prizes:

Home Energy Audit:

Vernon and Thelma Law

Bill Credit Door Prize Winners:

\$25 Kathleen Filipiak

\$25 Robert Lott

\$25 Albert and Ruth Thede

\$25 Brad and Sharon Law

\$25 Randall Stadel

\$25 Clyde Eden

\$25 Clarence Dunn

\$25 Margaret Wurster

\$25 Woodland Township Garage

\$25 Ronald and Nancy Shear

\$50 Roger Johnson

\$50 Melvin and Patricia Halstead

\$50 Denise Harridge

\$50 Craig Schnitzler

\$20 Bill Credit Question Winners:

Patricia and Stewart Allen

Jonathan Wallace

Keith Rath

Thomas and Shelby Foreman

Edwin and Nancy Gable



Contractors help provide safe, reliable services

Jo-Carroll Energy employees work hard every day bringing safe and reliable services to our members. At times, that means we use contractors to assist in many areas, ranging from right-of-way maintenance and pole testing to line and broadband construction.

This year JCE has a variety of contractors working on projects throughout the service territory. Please remember to use caution while driving and encountering these companies' employees and our own line workers and technicians as they work along roadsides.

Osmose Utility Services, Inc.

Osmose Utility Services, Inc., provides pole inspection and treatment. Approximately five to 15 of their employees will be doing work for JCE in the fall. Osmose is headquartered in Buffalo, N.Y.

Vannguard Utility Partners, Inc.

Vannguard Utility Partners is the cooperative's JULIE locating partner, providing service systemwide, except in the Geneseo area. Approximately five to 15 Vannguard employees may do work for JCE throughout the year. Vannguard is from Deforest, Wis.

Karcz Utility Services, LLC

Karcz Utility Services of Pulaski, Wis., performs underground facility inspections, maintenance and painting work. From two to 10 Karcz employees can be found working in JCE territory during the spring.

J&R Underground

Throughout the construction season, J&R Underground provides natural gas, electric and fiber underground installation for JCE. Headquartered in Blanchardville, Wis., this contractor's employees work throughout the service territory, except in the Geneseo area.

ZieLies Tree Service, Inc.

Jo-Carroll Energy has a new tree service to assist with the co-op's tree trimming. That contractor is Zieles Tree Service, Inc., from Bruce, Wis. Zieles provides tree trimming and removal services for the co-op systemwide year-round.

Stichter Construction

From Erie, Ill., Stichter Construction does right-of-way clearing in JCE's natural gas service territory.



Crews from Wolf Line Construction are among the contractors Jo-Carroll Energy utilizes for a variety projects. Wolf Line is assisting with fiber construction project.

JJ Vondrum & Sons, Thurin Excavating, Down to-Earth Media and Underground Systems

JCE utilizes four contractors for underground fiber construction, including boring, trenching and plowing. They are JJ Vondrum & Sons of Lancaster, Wis.; Thurin Excavating of Viroqua, Wis.; Down-to-Earth Media of Lena, Wis.; and Underground Systems of Eau Claire, Wis. They work throughout the JCE service territory in fiber buildout areas.

Wolf Line Construction

Wolf Line Construction of Charleston, S.C., assists the co-op with overhead fiber construction and overhead and underground drop construction. They will work system-wide in fiber buildout areas.

Bahr Electric and Revolution Technology

Employees from Bahr Electric of

West Salem, Wis., and Revolution Technology of Tomah, Wis., assist our crews with inside fiber installations throughout the service territory in fiber buildout areas.

Vantage Point Solutions

JCE utilizes the services of Vantage Point Solutions of Mitchel, S.D., for field engineering, inspection and project management in fiber buildout areas system-wide.

Fiber Ops

Fiber Ops of Whitelaw, Wis., performs fiber splicing for JCE. Their employees do work in the fiber buildout areas.

Sorenson Telcom

Sorenson Telcom of Onalaska, Wis. Performs NID (outdoor drop enclosure) installs and emergency fiber splicing. Their services are utilized in fiber buildout areas.

Linderlake Corporation

Linderlake Corporation of Montgomery, Ill., assists the cooperative with easement attainment in fiber buildout areas.

USDI-Utility Safety & Design, Inc.

USDI of Olney, Ill., assists the natural gas team with recording compliance tasks, audits and large construction projects.

In addition to these contractors, JCE utilizes many local contractors, service providers and businesses.

Minutes continued from page 18B

Select Attendees for BLC Course 929/Current Governance Issues in Policy Development – Attendees were selected to attend BLC Course 929/Current Governance Issues in Policy Development.

Designation of Prairie Power Inc. (PPI) Voting Delegate and Alternate Voting Delegate for Annual PPI Meeting – The PPI Delegate and Alternate Voting Delegates were selected.

Certification of Director and Alternate Director to serve on the Prairie Power Inc. (PPI) Board of Directors – A Director and Alternate Director were selected to serve on the PPI Board of Directors.

Approve Revisions to Rate Policy 730 – A motion was made by Director Meyer to approve revisions to Rate Policy 730, which was seconded by Director Stanger and carried unanimously. Rates were revised to reflect increased costs for after-hours reconnect and disconnects, as well as other service calls.

Connect Illinois Board Resolution Funding Request

– A motion was made by Director Holesinger to approve the Connect Illinois Board Resolution Funding Request, which was seconded by Director Kuhns and carried unanimously. The resolution commits JCE resources to submit applications to the Connect Illinois Program for funds to improve broadband services in unserved and underserved areas of Whiteside County.

Approve 2022 Margin Allocations – A motion was made by Director Smith to approve 2022 operating margins to be allocated to members of \$2,707,562, which was seconded by Director Holesinger and carried unanimously.

Into Executive Session – None.

Out of Executive Session – None.

Action Resulting from Executive Session – None.

Reports/Updates

Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) Report

– Director Senn commented that there was not an April AIEC board meeting and had nothing to add outside of the written report.

American Public Gas Association (APGA) Report

– Director Carroll shared information on various new and proposed regulations affecting the natural gas (NG) industry, noting a potential ban on NG stoves.

Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC)

– President and CEO Mike Casper shared that purchased power costs continue to be favorable to budget, which resulted in a power cost adjustment credit, which is being passed onto JCE members.

Prairie Power Incorporated (PPI) Report

– Director Kuhns commented on the storm damage repair that was ongoing and noted that PPI is collaborating in a proposed utility-scale battery storage facility.

Other Business – None.

Adjournment – Chairman Senn adjourned the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

CEO's report continued from page 18A

rate during off-peak periods (e.g., nighttime hours), which may also include an EV charger incentive through our wholesale power provider.

Q: We have been signed up for fiber-optic internet for years and are wondering how much longer until it comes to our rural area?

A: You can follow our progress on connectsp.com. We have a strategic buildout plan for the entire service area. Many variables, including overall member interest, may help improve buildout lead times. Please keep reminding your neighbors to sign up.



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.

GET SMART about home lighting!

Your Wi-Fi connection offers an array of cutting-edge functionality and convenience for smart lighting.



BENEFITS



Energy efficient

Get control of when and how you light your home, resulting in less energy.



Convenience and control

Control lighting settings from your app or voice assistant from anywhere.



Personalized lighting

Bright, warm, purple, green— create a mood to fit your style, the possibilities are endless.

To use a smart bulb, the wall switch it's connected to must be on so the bulb receives power, which enables it to connect to a Wi-Fi network.

If you need additional options to operate the lights, consider a smart light switch. Today's smart switches tend to play nicely with smart bulbs. If you're looking to take the plunge and integrate multiple smart bulbs to your home lighting system, your best bet may be a kit, like the Philips Hue Starter Kit. Most kits include several bulbs and any additional tools you'll need to get started.

If you're new to smart home tech and looking to start small, try a smart bulb in a high-traffic

area of your home. It's also worth noting that smart plugs are a great starter option and allow convenient control of lamps or other lighting fixtures that are plugged in to a wall outlet. Smart plugs are inexpensive and simply plug in to your existing outlet. Electrical items that are connected to the smart plug can be controlled from a smart phone app, just like smart bulbs.

Whether you're looking for more convenience, colorful options or better ways to manage energy use, smart lighting can provide multiple benefits. Determine which smart lighting features are most important for your needs, then start shopping!

Sign up or express your interest at

connectsp.com/iwantfiber



Sand Prairie

A service of Jo-Carroll Energy