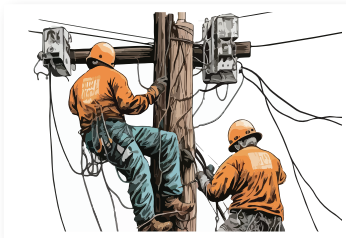


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 Elizabeth, Illinois |  800-858-5522 |  jcecoop.com



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#thankalinerworker



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Connecting communities

Earlier this year, I participated in the Northwest Illinois Economic Development (NWILED) annual meeting in East Dubuque. Attending the region-wide meeting were approximately 150 representatives from businesses and local governments from across the tri-state, primarily from Jo Daviess, Stephenson, Carroll and Whiteside counties.

JCE Co-op is a proud supporter of NWILED for connecting these communities and businesses, where we learn from and support each other. We come together to share our accomplishments, learn from each other and seek feedback. Growth and retention of our workforce and ample, affordable housing are two key elements that support our businesses, the economic engine of our region.

Why is this important? Growth and retention are necessary for our communities to flourish, which adds to our tax base to improve our communities, schools, infrastructure and natural resources, such as our area's beautiful parks and historic attractions. Growth also helps stabilize costs of goods and services.

Northwest Illinois Economic Development's Build It Grow program continues to support small businesses and provide them additional tools and an environment to collaborate with other businesses, learn from each other and grow. Not only does this program support local businesses, but it also helps support our local community college, which facilitates the program.



CEO'S REPORT
by Mike Casper

Two small businesses were highlighted at the meeting. One is a manufacturer, and the other is a service provider that supplies wholesale or finished products. You can read more about these and other businesses in the provided link [link: NW Illinois Economic Development - News (nwiled.org)].

What is common about both businesses is that they were homegrown: students who were raised, schooled, played sports or participated in other extracurricular activities (i.e., FFA, 4-H, band, theater, debate), and whose families live in and support our local communities. Retaining our home-based children is key to our area's continued growth. Our schools are an important contributor. We are fortunate to retain and draw educators who have a positive influence in our children's lives.

I would not be consistent if I didn't mention the importance of access to high-speed internet service, which is essential to these businesses to communicate, operate and expand. The main objective of this column is to show that connecting communities is more than just bringing high-speed internet access to our region, although it's an important element.

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

jcecoop.com

For emergencies and outages call:

(800) 858-5522

Resume of Minutes

Feb. 1, 2024

The regular board meeting of Jo-Carroll Energy, Inc. (NFP) was held on Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024.

Safety Moment – Director Dan Tindell discussed the potential danger associated with Power Lines.

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

Governance Talk Video – A Governance Talk Video, “The Risks of Micromanagement by the Board,” was shared with the board and staff. After the video, a discussion was had further clarifying roles.

Board Policy Review – None.

CEO/Financial Operating Report

CEO Report – President and CEO Mike Casper reviewed our strategic objectives and associated initiatives in preparation for strategic planning in April. He also emphasized the importance of remaining focused on our priorities.

Financial Operating Report – Chuck Woods, Chief Financial Officer, provided a summary of the December financial operating report. Revenue year-to-date (YTD) is approximately \$66 million. Total operations and maintenance expenses are approximately \$52.4 million, which is (\$4,094,150) under the budget of \$56.5 million. Margins are approximately \$4.3 million versus a budgeted amount of \$2,230.560 million and amounts to \$2,077,044 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 right-of-way maintenance activities, specifically tree trimming in Galena

and Hanover, beginning Feb. 9. Buros noted that members will be notified of tree trimming in their area. Additional information will be posted on the JCE Co-op website.

Member Services Update – PVP of Member Services Jennifer Meyer provided an update on the Affordable Connectivity (ACP) Program, noting that the program cannot accept new enrollees after Feb. 8. All current ACP households enrolled in the program as of Feb. 7 will be able to remain through the final month of service and not required to unenroll under the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules. Members are encouraged to contact their internet company to learn more about how the end of the ACP will impact their internet service and bill.

Human Resources Update – Kyle Buros, Senior VP and Chief Operating Officer and President and CEO Mike Casper provided information on new hires at JCE Co-op and future growth of the cooperative.

Executive Assistant Update – Amy Johnston, Executive Assistant, provided information on the upcoming NRECA Power Exchange Annual Meeting.

External Affairs/Legislative Update – General Counsel Terry Kurt noted that his presentation on proposed legislation and bylaw amendments will be held in Executive Session.

Board Issues and Action Items

Deferred Revenue Resolution – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to defer up to \$2 million in excess operating margins booked in 2023 to be recognized in 2024 to help stabilize members’ rates over that period.

Select Directors Conference Attendees – Attendees were selected to attend the NRECA Directors Conference. Directors will have the chance to participate, collaborate, share new ideas and address the evolving challenges facing electric cooperatives.

Continued on page 18D ►

Thank a lineworker on Lineworker Appreciation Day

Electric lineworkers provide an essential service: They install and maintain overhead and underground power lines that keep electricity flowing. These specialized workers are on call 24/7 in case severe storms or other circumstances cause the power to go out.

Lineworkers work with high-voltage electricity, often at great heights, in all kinds of weather conditions. Maintaining the power grid is physically demanding. To become proficient, most lineworkers go through a technical training program and first learn on the job as apprentices under the careful eye of seasoned lineworkers who have earned journeyman status.

Electric power line installers and repairers held approximately 122,400 jobs in 2022, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Nearly half of these employees worked for electric power generation, transmission and distribution utilities.

Safety comes first

Lineworkers spend numerous hours in safety training each year and must understand and apply crucial safety regulations.

Protective clothing is required to shield lineworkers since they work around high voltages. Collectively, gear components can weigh up to 45 pounds. **Steve Junk**

According to the U.S. BLS, electric power line installers and repairers typically:

- Install, maintain or repair the power lines that move electricity.
- Identify defective devices, voltage regulators, transformers and switches.
- Inspect and test power lines and auxiliary equipment.
- String (install) power lines between poles, towers and buildings.
- Climb poles and transmission towers and use truck-mounted buckets to access equipment.
- Operate power equipment when installing and repairing poles, towers and lines.
- Know and implement safety standards and procedures.

When a problem is reported, lineworkers must identify the cause and fix it. This usually involves diagnostic testing using specialized equipment and repair work. To work on poles, they usually use bucket trucks to raise themselves to the top of the structure, although all lineworkers must be adept at climbing poles and towers when necessary. Workers use specialized safety equipment to keep them from falling when climbing utility poles and towers.

Storms and other natural disasters can cause extensive damage to power lines. When power is lost, line repairers must work safely and efficiently to restore service. We salute our lineworkers who work around the clock to keep the power on. Their safety, as well as yours, is our top priority.



2024 JCE CO-OP PHOTO CONTEST

JCE Co-op is accepting entries for its 2024 photo contest through June 30. Winning entries will be featured in the 2025 JCE Co-op photo calendar. Send us your favorite photos that represent life in our area. Entrants must be JCE members. All photos must be the work of the entrant and be taken within the co-op's service territory. We will choose 12 photos to appear on the calendar pages and two photos to be featured on the front and back covers. Several other photos are selected each year as honorable mentions. Complete rules and entry information can be found at ww.jcecoop.com/member-involvement.



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Select Dairyland District Meeting Attendees –

Directors were selected to attend Dairyland District Meeting. The meeting will focus on 2023 accomplishments, challenges and navigating a sustainable future.

Select Northwest Illinois Economic Development (NWILED) Annual Meeting Attendees –

Attendees were selected to attend the NWILED Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting provides a year-end review of the accomplishments and future opportunities that NWILED seeks.

Position Statement/Resiliency and Sustainability –

The Resiliency and Sustainability Position Statement was reviewed, which focuses on the reliability and resiliency of the cooperative

Executive Session

Into Executive Session – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to go into Executive Session at 11:12 a.m.

Out of Executive Session – A motion was made, seconded, and

carried unanimously to come out of Executive Session at 11:48 a.m.

Action Resulting from Executive Session –

None.

Reports/Updates

Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) Report

– Chairman Senn provided highlights from the AIEC board meeting, noting they would have a special guest speaker in August.

Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) –

Director Mattingley provided highlights from the Dairyland Board Meeting, sharing that DPC was awarded the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Battery Storage Grant for Rural Communities. The award will strengthen grid reliance by bringing long-duration energy storage opportunities to rural communities. In addition, Mattingley noted that natural gas (NG) prices have fallen.

American Public Gas Association (APGA) Report –

President and CEO Casper shared highlights from the APGA Legislative Summit that he, Director Mattingley and

Director Carroll recently attended. This meeting provided an opportunity to meet with members of congress to discuss issues affecting the natural gas industry and its impact on cooperatives. Director Carroll will provide the APGA marketing update at the next board meeting, Feb. 28.

Prairie Power Incorporated (PPI) Report –

Director Kuhns provided a summary from the PPI power supply report and provided the most recent generation numbers. In addition, provided highlights from the PPI Board of Directors board meeting.

Strategic Planning Roundtable Discussion –

Directors shared highlights from the Board Leadership course on Strategic Planning, noting that the information received will be beneficial during the upcoming JCE Co-op Strategic Planning sessions set for April.

Other Business –

None.

Adjournment – Chairman Senn adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

Director nomination petitions due April 19

Nomination petitions for the 2024 JCE Co-op board of director elections are due to the cooperative by April 19.

Director districts up for election in 2024 are Districts 5, 7, 8 and 10. Any JCE member residing in a district up for election may petition for nomination in the district. Petitions must be signed by at least 25 JCE members residing in the district for which the director is to be elected.

Nomination forms are available on www.jcecoop.com/elections.

Petitions must be filed at co-op headquarters in Elizabeth no later than April 19.

Details on director qualifications and nomination procedures can be found in the cooperative's bylaws posted on jcecoop.com.

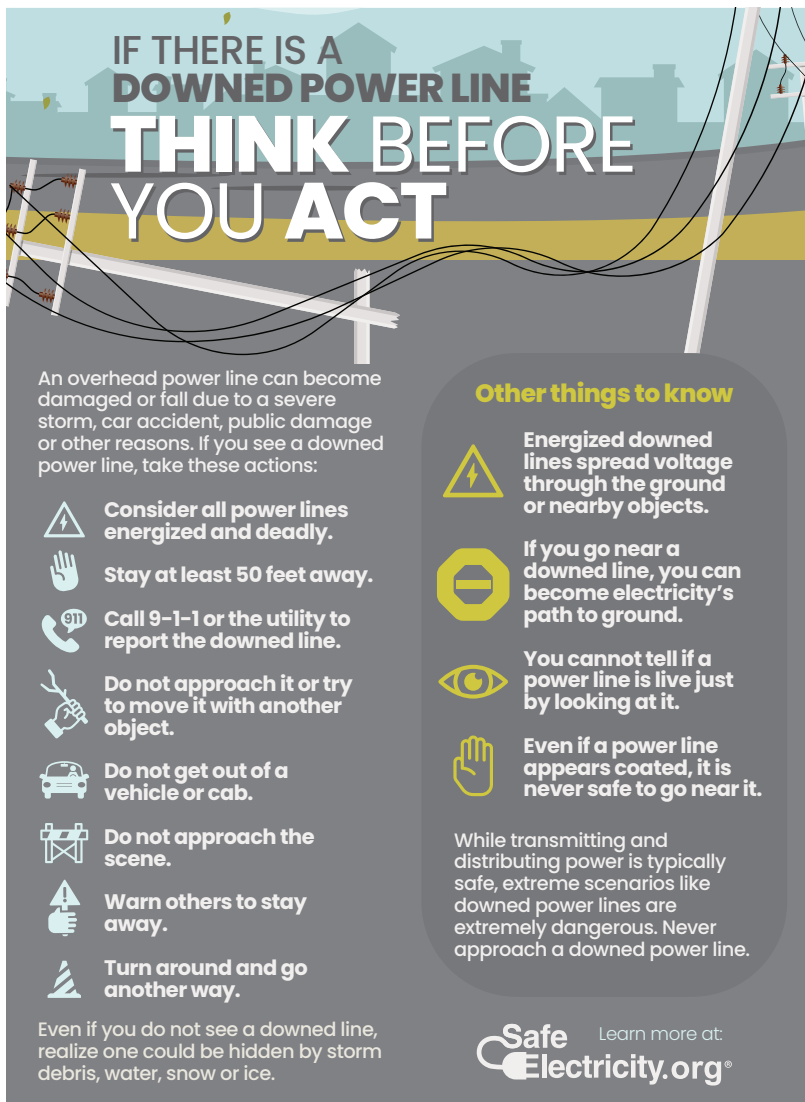
Director's Scholarship

High school seniors still have time to apply for JCE Co-op's Director's Scholarships that are awarded at the co-op's Annual Meeting of Members.

Up to 10 Director's Scholarships are awarded, one in each of the cooperative's 10 director districts. (If no applications are received from a district, that scholarship will become an at-large scholarship.)









Current high school seniors, whose parents or guardians are JCE members and who have not won another JCE scholarship, are eligible to receive a Director's Scholarship. Deadline to apply is May 1.

The applicant and at least one of their parents or guardians must attend the annual meeting scheduled for Thursday, June 20 at St. Malachy School in Geneseo, Ill. Application forms and details are found under the Community tab of our website.







IF THERE IS A DOWNED POWER LINE
THINK BEFORE YOU ACT

An overhead power line can become damaged or fall due to a severe storm, car accident, public damage or other reasons. If you see a downed power line, take these actions:

-  Consider all power lines energized and deadly.
-  Stay at least 50 feet away.
-  Call 9-1-1 or the utility to report the downed line.
-  Do not approach it or try to move it with another object.
-  Do not get out of a vehicle or cab.
-  Do not approach the scene.
-  Warn others to stay away.
-  Turn around and go another way.

Even if you do not see a downed line, realize one could be hidden by storm debris, water, snow or ice.

Other things to know

-  Energized downed lines spread voltage through the ground or nearby objects.
-  If you go near a downed line, you can become electricity's path to ground.
-  You cannot tell if a power line is live just by looking at it.
-  Even if a power line appears coated, it is never safe to go near it.

While transmitting and distributing power is typically safe, extreme scenarios like downed power lines are extremely dangerous. Never approach a downed power line.

Safe Electricity.org Learn more at: SafeElectricity.org



Reader prize

Each month we print the name of a JCE Co-op 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 JCE Co-op.



HAVING A BACKUP PLAN FOR MEDICAL DEVICES CAN BE LIFESAVING

If you depend on electric medical equipment, your power provider will do all they can to assist you during a power outage by giving your residence a priority tag. Examples of lifesaving medical devices include an oxygen concentrator or a ventilator.

If you or someone in your household depends on life-sustaining medical equipment, contact your local electric utility to let them know.

Although the utility will do all they can to help, it is best to have a backup plan in place in case of severe weather events, which can cause prolonged outages.

Backup safety tips include the following:

- Have an emergency plan in place with friends and family that outlines places you can go in the event of a long-term outage.
- Before an outage occurs, find out if the medical equipment safely runs on a backup power source and for how long (see manufacturer's recommendations).

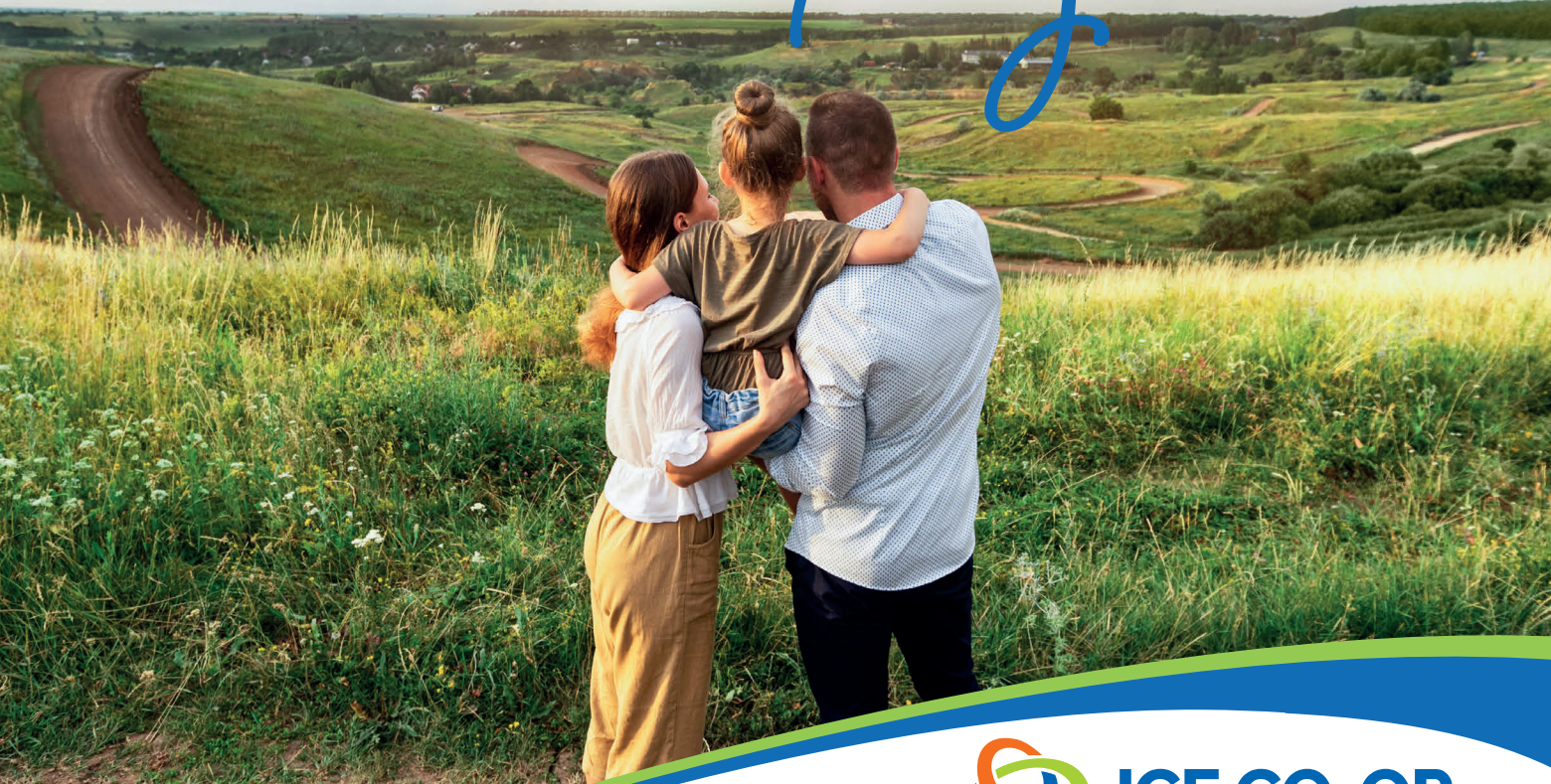
- Keep a full charge on battery-powered devices or have extra batteries available.
- If recommended by the manufacturer, consider purchasing a portable battery pack to power devices.
- Gather related resources that will last for two weeks, including batteries, supplemental equipment and prescriptions.
- Realize that local shelters and hospitals that are also experiencing an outage may be at capacity and have limited resources, including auxiliary power.
- Think about the other special equipment you might need, such as coolers for refrigerated medicine.
- Like any important device, keep up regular maintenance.
- Keep a file that includes the device's manufacturer, serial numbers and photos of the device.

Learn more about preparing for an emergency at:



2024 Annual Meeting of Members

GROWING *for you*



Thursday, June 20, 2024

Saint Malachy School

595 E Ogden Ave
Geneseo, IL 61254

4:30 p.m. Member registration

6:00 p.m. Meeting

7:00 p.m. Dinner (details to come)

Check jcecoop.com/annual-meeting for updates.

Please RSVP

by May 27, 2024 via one of the following methods


Name: _____

Member#: _____ *located on your bill*

attending: Meeting _____ Dinner _____
Estimate if uncertain.

- Return this form to any JCE Co-op office dropbox located in Elizabeth, Savanna or Geneseo
- Mail form to PO Box 390, Elizabeth, IL 61028
- Call 800-858-5522 ext. 1208
- Scan the QR code or go to jcecoop.com/annual-meeting



793 U.S. Route 20 West, P.O. Box 390 | Elizabeth, IL 61028 | jcecoop.com | Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

5000

THANK YOU!

FIBER INTERNET MEMBERS

JCE Co-op connects our 5000th fiber internet member!

We are very excited to announce our 5,000th fiber internet member! Owner Bob Hatheway and store managers Miranda Hatheway and Brooke Gilman of Shaw's Marketplace in Mount Carroll have installed and connected to our amazing fiber internet and phone service!

We have remarkable crews that are working day after day to bring fiber internet to our members. THANK YOU to the line crews, engineers, installers, broadband technicians, operations, marketing, and sales teams here at JCE Co-op! We are proud to serve as your local fiber co-op!



Pictured from left to right: Derek Bradt, JCE Co-op broadband marketing & sales administrator; Bob Hatheway, Shaw's Market owner; Miranda Hatheway and Brooke Gilman, store managers; and Katie Herring, JCE Co-op broadband sales representative.

Want to be our 6000th fiber internet member?

Check availability, submit your interest or sign-up at:

JCECOOP.COM/FIBER

 **JCE CO-OP**
Electric • Gas • Fiber

800-858-5522

793 US 20 West, Elizabeth, IL 61028