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



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Clearing the path to reliability

Trees are majestic, beautiful and good for the soul. But we also know that you depend on us to deliver reliable power and internet to your homes and businesses. That's why JCE Co-op strives to balance maintaining the beautiful surroundings we all cherish with ensuring reliable service. There are several benefits to regular tree trimming.

Reliability

Keeping power lines clear of overgrown vegetation improves service reliability. After all, we've seen the whims of Mother Nature, especially during the winter storms that we experienced this year, as well as thunderstorms during the spring, summer and fall, with fallen or pulled down tree limbs taking down power lines and utility poles. While many factors can impact power disruptions, more than half of all outages can be attributed to overgrown vegetation. This is why you see JCE Co-op or our contractor, Zielies, out in the community trimming trees near our power and fiber lines. Trimming crews have been trained and certified based on the latest industry standards. More information about JCE Co-op's tree-trimming activities can be found inside on page 18F.

Scheduled trimming throughout the year keeps lines clear from overgrown or dead limbs that are likely to fall, and we are better able to prepare for severe weather events.



CEO'S REPORT
by Mike Casper

Plus, we all know it's more cost-effective to undertake preventative maintenance than it is to make repairs after the fact. The use of Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) technology will allow us to more efficiently and effectively manage vegetation in our beautiful region. Through the use of LiDAR, we can accurately monitor the health and growth of trees and identify potential problem areas.

Safety

Working near power lines can be dangerous, and we care about your safety and that of our lineworkers. For example, if trees are touching power lines in our members' yards, they can pose a grave danger to families. If children can reach those trees, they can potentially climb into a danger zone. Electricity can arc, or jump, from a power line to a nearby conductor, such as a tree.

Any tree or branch that falls across a power line creates a potentially dangerous situation. A proactive approach lessens the chances of fallen trees during severe weather events that make it more complicated and dangerous for lineworkers to restore power.

Continued on page 18F ►

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

Dec. 20, 2023

The regular board meeting of Jo-Carroll Energy, Inc. (NFP) was held on Wednesday, Dec. 20, 2023.

A Safety Moment was provided by Director Dave Senn. Senn discussed the importance of allowing yourself enough time to arrive at your destination by planning ahead; understanding that being in a rush increases the risk of accidents and proper planning helps reduce those risks.

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 & Board Policy Review – None.

Board Issues and Action Items

2024 Rate Analysis and Approval – Proposed 2024 rate schedules were presented based on an independent cost-of-service study. Examples of how the proposed rates would affect specific rate classes, including their annual impact, were also presented to assist in the decision process. After discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve the 2024 rate schedules as presented.

2024 Budget Review and Approval – The 2024 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 posed by the board. After discussion and a thorough understanding of the budget, a motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve the 2024 budget.

Wholesale electric power and natural gas costs, which make up the largest portion of the budget, are projected at approximately \$32 million, a slight decrease over last year due to projected lower energy and capacity costs.

Approximately \$16 million of capital expenditures were approved, in addition to \$23 million in operation and maintenance (O&M) expenses, an increase over last year due to growth and inflation.

Other expenses of approximately \$16 million include depreciation and long-term debt interest expenses. Depreciation expenses have increased and are driven by the continued investment in the system, while long-term debt interest expense is impacted by the investment in the system coupled with the rising cost of borrowing.

Executive Session - None.

Into Executive Session – None.

Out of Executive Session – None.

Action Resulting from Executive Session – None.

Other Business – In addition to the Rate/Budget Review, Kyle Buros, Senior V.P. and Chief Operating Officer, provided updates and lead times on projects that were included in the 2024 budget proposal. Jennifer Meyer, V.P. of Member Services, provided updates on neighbor-to-neighbor care funds and highlighted efficiencies associated with members opting to use auto draft and e-billing (paperless) for bill payment processing. Mike Casper, President & CEO, provided an overview of the results of the recent member satisfaction survey.

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



Board nominations

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

The 2024 nomination petitions are available for members seeking election to serve their district on the JCE Co-op Board of Directors. The districts up for election are Districts 5, 7, 8 and 10.

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.

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 jce-coop.com/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 JCE Co-op headquarters in Elizabeth no later than Friday, April 19.
- Provide a short biographical sketch and photo to be used in candidate profiles.

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

Elections

If two or more candidates file in a district, ballots and voting instructions are available electronically and by mail 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 jcecoop.com and in future issues of Hi-Lines.

Annual Meeting

The 2024 Annual Meeting of Members is scheduled for Thursday, June 20 in Geneseo.



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.

Inflation continues to drive rate increases

Rate increases approved by the JCE Co-op 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.

An average 3% increase is driven by inflation that continues to push costs higher for materials. In 2023, we saw overall inflation moderate to just over 3%. In 2022, overall inflation was more than 8 percent.

Included in the revised rates is a \$2.00 increase in the monthly facility charge for residential electric service (single phase), as well as a \$2.00 increase in the monthly member service charge across all rate classes. The delivery charge increases by a fraction of a cent for both electric and natural gas services.

NO changes occur to the energy, generation and transmission charges for the majority of 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. **Gary P & Vicki S Imel**

The member service charge is a flat fee that covers the administrative costs of managing members' accounts. This includes



billing, postage, facilities, software systems and personnel. 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.

Single Phase Electric Rate			
Rate	Current	Revised	Change
Monthly Charges			
Facility Charge	\$33 per month	\$35 per month	\$2
Member Service Charge	\$5 per month	\$7 per month	\$2
Charges per kWh			
Delivery Charge	\$0.03620 per kWh	\$0.03870 per kWh	\$0.00250 increase
Energy Charge	\$0.03984 per kWh	\$0.03984 per kWh	No Change
Generation Charge ≤ 1500 kWh	\$0.04684 per kWh	\$0.04684 per kWh	No Change
>1500 kWh	\$0.01741 per kWh	\$0.01741 per kWh	No Change
Transmission Charge	\$0.02877 per kWh	\$0.02877 per kWh	No Change

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	\$7.00 per month	\$2
Delivery Charge	\$0.445 per therm	\$0.470 per therm	\$0.025 per therm
Energy Charge	Varies Monthly	Varies Monthly	

Green – Distribution | Orange = Purchased Energy

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 jcecoop.com.

A residential electric account using an average of 800 kWh per month will see a 3.87% increase or \$5.87 per month. A residential natural gas account using an average of 55 therms per month will see a 3.95% increase or \$3.37 per month increase. The gas calculation used an estimated energy charge.

Each year the co-op hires a consulting firm that conducts an independent cost-of-service study (COSS). The COSS identifies the equitable contribution to margins by the respective rate classes. Using the results of the COSS, we review each of the current rate designs to recover an equitable amount from each rate class. The objective is for each consumer class to pay for the costs incurred by the cooperative to serve them while contributing a reasonable margin to reinvest in upgrading and maintaining the system, as well as meeting financial requirements.

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 Co-op continues to look for opportunities to reduce our operating costs. Our strategic goal of operational excellence is to ensure 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. We work with members on a case-by-case basis regarding options and assistance that may be available to them. Our member care representatives can be reached at 815-858-2207 between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.



JCE Co-op's ROW plan

With all the snow and ice we have gotten in the last month, it seems hard to believe that we will be rolling into spring soon and starting yard work and spring cleanup.

Spring means tree trimming time for JCE Co-op. The co-op does a majority of our tree trimming during the spring and summer and after storms. We base where we trim in the service territory on a few different factors. First, we keep records of where we trim so that we can look back and see what areas have gone the longest without any trimming. Second, servicemen will often report any trees that threaten the lines or areas that need attention. These areas are often found after heavy snow, ice or storms. In all cases, we make every effort to contact landowners before we come.

Notice will be posted on our website, as well as in



the center section of Illinois Country Living. If yard trees are involved, our right-of-way coordinator or contractor will make every effort to meet with you in person. If all else fails, we will leave you a door card in advance, and you can give us a call if you have any concerns.

If you have a tree with a limb near the lines or plan on trimming a tree that is in danger of falling on the lines, we ask that you call us

at 800-858-5522 so we can send someone out to take a look.

Our contractor, Zielies, is currently trimming trees in the areas serviced by the Pilot Knob substation. Watch for a postcard communication in your mailbox. Crews will move on to a new location later this year. We will continue to post updates and notifications on our website at www.jcecoop.com.

CEO's report continued from page 18A

Affordability

As a co-op, JCE Co-op always strives to keep costs down for our members. If trees and other vegetation are left unchecked, they can become overgrown and expensive to correct. A strategic vegetation management program helps keep costs down for everyone.

When it comes to vegetation management, there are ways you can help, too. When planting new trees, make sure they're planted a safe distance from overhead power lines. Medium-height trees (40 feet or smaller) should be planted at least 25 feet from power lines. Taller trees (over 40 feet) should be planted at least 50 feet from power lines. You can also practice safe

planting near pad-mounted transformers. Plant shrubs at least 10 feet from the transformer door and 4 feet from the sides. If your neighborhood has underground lines, remember to contact 811 before you begin any project that requires digging.

Additionally, if you spot an overgrown tree or branch that's dangerously close to primary overhead lines, please let us know by calling 800-858-5522 or emailing info@jcecoop.com.

We have deep roots in our community, and we love our beautiful surroundings. It takes a balanced approach, and our vegetation management program is a crucial tool in ensuring service reliability.

Substation upgrades, AMI replacement

JCE Co-op continuously strives to enhance the reliability of our systems and provide long-term benefits to our members. Several projects are continuing forward in 2024 while others are beginning.

69KV upgrade

As ITC Midwest progresses on upgrading transmission lines it acquired from JCE Co-op in 2019, our Engineering department is focusing on the associated upgrades at our substations served by ITC. Phase I completed an upgrade from 34.5 kV to 69 kV on a west loop from York Substation in Thomson to Savanna 161 Substation. This phase included a number of our large industrial members.

This year, design begins on the east loop from our York Substation to the Savanna 161 Substation. This eastern loop includes replacement of the old Clay Substation in Mt. Carroll with the new Railroad Substation and upgrading Chadwick substation, both at the higher 69 kV supply voltage. With these improvements, Chadwick will be able to back up the Thomson area and allow for the retirement of the Argo Fay substation.

Brad Edler, JCE Co-op's Director of Engineering, notes that these projects will enhance reliability and allow for growth due to the increased power line capacity.

Supply chain issues continue to impact work on the electric distribution system. For example, the new transformer for the Chadwick Substation is expected to be delivered in 2025. Edler noted that, in addition to increased cost, it is now taking from 70 - 120 weeks for a transformer to be delivered compared to 20 - 30 weeks in 2019.

Frentress Lake Substation

In East Dubuque, Frentress Lake and Pioneer substations will see upgrades to allow them to be connected. This project will provide better reliability to the area, allowing backup to each other and the Menominee area. Because the two substations are at different distribution voltages, 13.8 kV and 12.47 kV, they will connect with a transformer and voltage regulators to maintain proper voltage. The modifications are expected to be completed in 2024.

Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)

JCE Co-op is currently incorporating a new AMI system for both natural gas and electric metering.

The co-op first began using AMI in 2010, after completing a pilot project and then moving forward with deployment of AMI meters. The current project will replace those earlier meters, installing new smart AMI meters for electric across the co-op's entire service territory and add natural gas smart AMI in its southern natural gas footprint.

Edler noted the new meters and gas smart nodes will utilize a leading edge technology, provide more advanced data to facilitate future grid enhancements and reduce operating costs.

During 2024, test meters and base communication stations will be installed with meter replacement beginning later in the year. Full replacement of all meters will be on a three-year schedule, with expected completion by the end of 2026.

Blazing fast. More reliable. JCE Co-op Fiber Internet.



Work



Learn



Play



Stream



Game

Do it all with JCE Co-op Fiber!

Fiber internet delivers the fastest internet speeds available through an ultra-reliable connection. Get unmatched reliable and affordable internet speeds from your locally member owned co-op. Select a package that meets your needs.

- No data caps
- No hidden fees
- No contracts

\$59⁹⁹
per month

Fiber-Link Home

100Mbps Download speeds
100Mbps Upload speeds

\$74⁹⁹
per month

Giga-Link

1000Mbps Download speeds
1000Mbps Upload speeds

\$99⁹⁹
per month

Giga-Link Plus

2000Mbps Download speeds
2000Mbps Upload speeds

\$149⁹⁹
per month

Hyper-Link

5000Mbps Download speeds
5000Mbps Upload speeds

Sign up!

jcecoop.com/fiber



FREE Installation
(\$129.95 Savings)

Free basic installation (\$129.95 value) covers on-premise wiring in one facility completed during one installation trip.



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