

HI-LINES

A newsletter for members of JCE Co-op

JULY 2026

 Elizabeth, IL

 800-858-5522

 jcecoop.com



CEO'S REPORT *by Mike Casper*

Your co-op is here for you

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JULY TOPIC— SENIOR PLANET

Gardening tech at a glance

Do you want to improve your green thumb or just make gardening easier? Technology may be the answer.

JULY 9

Senior Planet—Mount Carroll
District Library 1:00–2:00 p.m.

JULY 28

Senior Planet—JCE Co-op
Elizabeth West Campus
10:00–11:00 a.m.

JULY 3

Offices closed for the holiday

JOIN JCE CO-OP AT THESE COMMUNITY EVENTS!

JULY 5

River Raised, Freedom Made
Festival—Savanna
Starts at 5:30 p.m.

JULY 25

Chadwick Fest
Mainstreet, Chadwick
Starts at 1:00 p.m.


JCE CO-OP
Electric • Gas • Fiber

One of the most important things a cooperative can do is pay attention.

We pay attention to storms moving across the service territory. We pay attention to the condition of our system before an outage happens. We pay attention to costs, reliability and the services our members depend on every day. Most of all, we pay attention when members are facing a change they did not ask for and may not be ready for.

We are seeing that now with home phone service.

Some members have received notices that their current phone service is being changed or phased out. For many households, that phone line is not just a convenience. It may be the number family members have used for years. It may be connected to a medical alert system, security system, farm operation or small business. In parts of our rural service area, cell coverage can still be inconsistent, especially during storms or in areas with hills and timber. Dependable home phone service still matters.

That is where your co-op can help.

JCE Co-op offers phone service that may be a better fit for many members, and in many cases, at a lower cost than what they have been paying. When we learned members were receiving notices about changes to their current phone service, our team began reaching out. We wanted to remind members that JCE Co-op has phone service available and that they do not have to sort through this change alone.

Not every member realizes we offer phone service. Many think of JCE Co-op

first as their electric provider. Others know us for natural gas, broadband or fiber internet. But our services have grown because the needs of our members have grown.

That same idea is behind our work with Senior Planet. As more of daily life moves online, we heard from senior members who wanted to feel more comfortable using technology. Things like email, video calls, online forms, telehealth visits and account tools can be helpful, but only if people feel confident using them. JCE Co-op offers Senior Planet classes to give members a place to learn, ask questions and build those skills at a comfortable pace.

Reliable service is one part of the job. helping members make good use of that service is another.

That has been true throughout our history. Rural residents formed this cooperative because larger companies did not see enough value in serving farms and small communities. Neighbors stepped up for neighbors. That same cooperative purpose is still at work today. When a service provider leaves members looking for answers, or when technology changes faster than people are comfortable with, JCE Co-op looks for a way to help.

Our member services team can review what is available at your location, explain the options and help determine whether JCE Co-op phone service is right for you. If you currently have home phone service through another provider and have received a notice about changes to your service, please contact us before making a decision.



CEO'S REPORT
by Mike Casper

Your co-op is here for you
(Continued)

The best time to ask questions is before your current service changes or ends. A short call to JCE Co-op may help you avoid higher costs, confusion or an unwanted interruption in phone service. If your phone is connected to a medical alert device, security system or other equipment, we can also help you understand what questions to ask before switching.

Being responsive to members is not a special project. It is part of our everyday work. Whether we are restoring service after a storm, expanding fiber, offering Senior Planet classes or helping members keep a dependable home phone, the reason is the same.

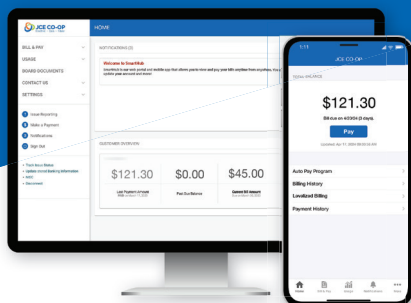
Ann Labotz

IMPORTANT REMINDER



Take a minute to double check your **SMARTHUB** account information

Make sure your phone number, email address, payment method and billing information are current. This helps ensure you receive important outage alerts, billing reminders and account notifications without interruption.



Log in anytime through the SmartHub app or web portal to review and update your information.



WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

A power line falls across your vehicle after a storm.

You're driving home after a summer storm when a power line crashes onto your vehicle. Sparks are visible. The vehicle still runs.

What would you do?

- A) Get out quickly
- B) Stay inside and call 911
- C) Try moving the line yourself

Correct Answer:

- ✓ Stay inside the vehicle and call 911.

Always assume the line is energized. Your vehicle may actually be protecting you. Do not touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time.

If you must exit because of fire or smoke:



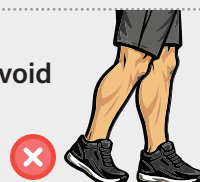
Do not touch the ground and vehicle at the same time



Jump from the vehicle with your feet together



Shuffle away, avoid lifting your feet



Use precaution:

- Downed power lines can energize up to 35 feet away. Even more in wet conditions.
- Never drive over downed power lines or anything in contact with them.
- Stay in place or inside your vehicle unless you see smoke or fire.
- Tell others not to approach vehicle, downed lines or anything that may be in contact with downed lines.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) sponsors National Electrical Safety Month (NESM)

STRONG COMMUNITIES start with SAFE COMMUNITIES

Join JCE Co-op for a **LIVE HOTLINE DEMO!**



**Tuesday
August 4**



**Carroll County
Fairgrounds**



**Live hotline demo &
electrical safety tips
2:00 p.m. & 3:00 p.m.**



**Electrical
safety**



**Farm equipment
safety**



**Vehicle & power
line incidents**



Home safety



**Family
preparedness**

*Protecting our members, neighbors and
communities is our commitment.*

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

 **JCE CO-OP**
Electric • Gas • Fiber

FREE EVENT • ALL AGES WELCOME • LIVE ELECTRICAL SAFETY EVENT

Sizzle smart this summer

Fireworks are often used to mark special events and holidays. Without proper supervision and safe handling, fireworks can lead to thousands of injuries every year.

Hot facts about fireworks



More than 31,000 reported fires are started by fireworks annually.



Burns account for 38% of the 7,400 injuries treated in emergency rooms in the month around July 4.



Half of the fireworks injuries at emergency rooms were extremities: hand, finger or leg. One-third were to the eye or other parts of the head.



Children younger than 15 years old accounted for 28% of the estimated fireworks injuries.



Sparklers account for 29% of fireworks injuries for children under the age of 5 treated in emergency rooms in the month around July 4.

Big summer fun doesn't need a fuse. Try these ideas instead:

- ☒ Glow stick scavenger hunt
- ☒ Flashlight tag
- ☒ Backyard bowling with glow sticks in water bottles
- ☒ Glow-in-the-dark sidewalk chalk art
- ☒ Firefly "catch and release"
- ☒ Outdoor movie night with blankets and popcorn
- ☒ LED balloon games
- ☒ Campfire storytelling (or flashlight stories if no fire)
- ☒ Glow ring toss

Keep the memories bright this summer by choosing fun that lights up the night — without the risk.



Each month, a JCE Co-op member is named for a chance to win a \$25 readership prize. If your name appears in this issue (and not in an article), contact JCE Co-op.

How HOT does a sparkler burn?

Sparklers may look harmless, but they burn far hotter than most people realize. In fact, a sparkler can reach temperatures hot enough to melt some metals.

1200 °F Sparklers



Source: U.S. Consumer Protection Safety Commission (CPSC).



SUMMER RECIPE FUN

Summer vacation is the perfect time to slow down, spend time together and make a few memories in the kitchen.

This summer, JCE Co-op is encouraging families to unplug for a little while, gather around the counter, and try a simple recipe kids can help create from start to finish. Whether it's measuring ingredients, stirring the bowl or adding toppings, cooking together is a great way to build confidence, share laughs and enjoy quality family time.

Best of all? No fancy equipment required—just a little teamwork.

No-Bake Energy Bites

Because summer kids run on snacks and chaos.

Ingredients

- 1 cup rolled oats
- ½ cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips
- ½ cup ground flax seed
- ½ cup crunchy peanut butter
- ⅓ cup honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

1. Gather all ingredients.
2. Stir oats, chocolate chips, flax seed, peanut butter, honey, and vanilla extract together in a bowl.
3. Roll dough into 24 balls with your hands. Arrange balls on a baking sheet and freeze until set, about 1 hour.
4. Serve and enjoy!

Kid jobs

- Pouring ingredients
- Mixing the bowl
- Rolling the bites
- Taste testing (the most important job)

Cooking together doesn't have to be complicated. Sometimes the best summer memories are made with sticky fingers, a messy countertop and a snack everyone helped create.

Have a favorite family recipe? Share it with JCE Co-op — we may feature more member recipes throughout the summer.

Source: allrecipes.com

These easy energy bites start with protein-packed rolled oats.

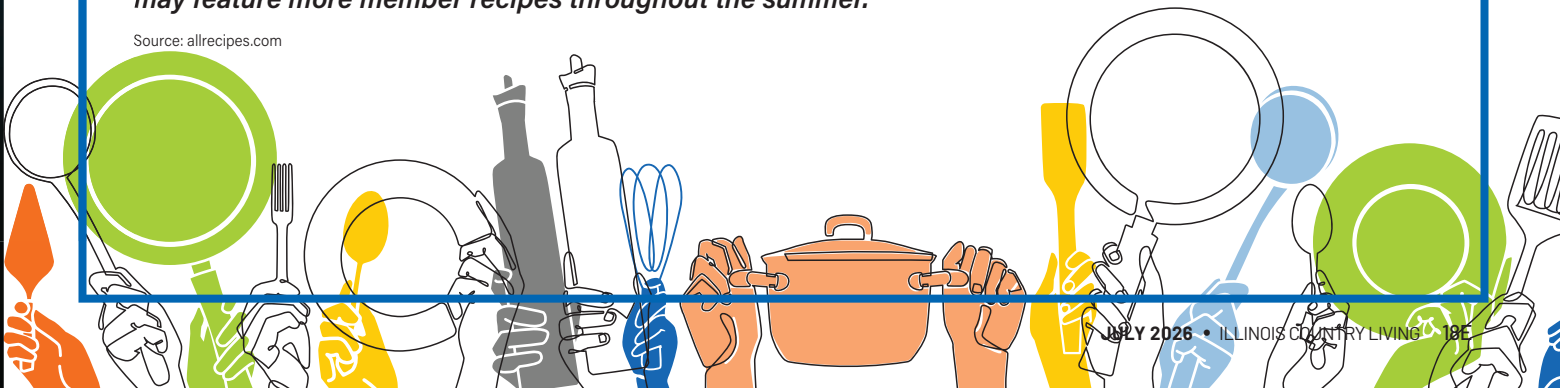
- **Chocolate:** Use semisweet, dark or milk chocolate chips or chunks.
- **Flax seed:** Ground flax seeds, full of fiber and protein, pack a nutritious punch.
- **Peanut butter:** This recipe calls for crunchy peanut butter, but you can use smooth if you prefer.
- **Honey:** These wholesome energy bites get their sweetness from honey instead of sugar.
- **Vanilla:** Vanilla extract enhances the flavor of these tasty energy bites.

How to store energy bites

- Transfer the no-bake energy bites to a zip-top bag or airtight container or store in the fridge for up to one week.

Can you freeze energy bites?

- Yes! Arrange the balls on a baking sheet and flash freeze for at least two hours. Transfer them to a zip-top bag or freezer-safe container, then freeze for up to six months. Thaw at room temperature for about 30 minutes or in the fridge overnight.



10,000

THANK YOU!

FIBER INTERNET MEMBERS

JCE Co-op connects our 10,000th fiber internet member!

We're excited to celebrate another major milestone of 10,000 active fiber internet members! A big welcome to the Puls family, who have been connected to our ultra-fast fiber internet service!

This milestone wouldn't be possible without the incredible teamwork behind the scenes. THANK YOU to our construction crews, line crews, engineers, installers, broadband technicians, operations, marketing, and sales teams who continue to grow and support our fiber network. We're proud to serve our communities as your LOCAL fiber co-op, and we're incredibly thankful for all of our loyal JCE Co-op members who continue to support us along the way.

Want to be our 11,000th fiber internet member?



**Sign up now to receive
FREE installation!**

Check availability, submit
your interest, or sign-up at
jcecoop.com/fiber

**Do not miss out on this
opportunity to have the
\$129.95 installation
fee waived!**

Pictured from left to right (front row): Mike Casper, President & CEO, Jonah Puls, Katie Herrig, Manager of Broadband Sales, and Robyn Jackson, Broadband Operations Administrator (back row) Derek Bradt, Broadband Marketing Strategist, Jerry Meyer, Vice Chairman of the Board and Trent Allen, Broadband Technician

 **JCE CO-OP**
Electric • Gas • Fiber

YOUR BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

Jerry Meyer
Vice Chairman
District 1

Dan Tindell
Secretary
District 2

Joseph W. Mattingley
District 3

Allen Hendren
District 4

Thomas Lundy
District 5

David Senn
Chairman
District 6

Larry Carroll
District 7

Ted James
District 8

Robert Kuhns
Treasurer
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

April 30 2026

Board Meeting Minutes Summary

The regular board meeting of JCE Co-op was held on Thursday, April 30, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

Safety Moment – Director Meyer shared important safety information on smoke alarms, noting that they have a 10-year life expectancy and that you can also obtain smoke alarms often through your local fire department. Other important factors are: Having one in every bedroom or outside each sleeping area on every level of the home, including the basement. It is also recommended that you test smoke alarms each month and replace batteries once a year.

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, which included the April 30th Minutes/Summary, Board Expense Summary, Discounted Estate Summary and written reports from staff and the CEO.

Presentation – The 2025 Independent Auditor's and Consolidated Report was presented by a representative of FORVIS Financial Group.

CEO | CFO Report

President & CEO Report – President and CEO Mike Casper reviewed JCE Co-op's strategic priorities: growth, value and operational excellence. He noted that these priorities are key to the long-term success of the Co-op and the communities it serves.

Casper emphasized JCE Co-op's focus on improving quality of life and creating real benefits for members through stronger reliability, expanded fiber connectivity, adoption of new technology such as the AMI platform and the transition to NISC and member-facing SmartHub. Casper stated that these initiatives are intended to improve efficiency, strengthen service to

members, and support more affordable services over time.

Financial Operating Report – Emily Doland, Chief Financial Officer, noted that March Revenue is approximately \$21 million. Total operations and maintenance expenses are \$15,577,148 million. Margins are approximately \$1,669,790. By general consent, the board moved to file the financial operating report with the auditor.

Operations and Regulatory | Legislative Update

Operations Update – Kyle Buros, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, provided an update on the ongoing installation of advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) systems. Buros also discussed emerging 'plug-in' or portable solar generation technologies, noting that while they are gaining interest in the market, they present potential challenges related to grid interconnection, system monitoring, and distribution safety due to the lack of standardized utility oversight and controls at the point of interconnection.

Cooperative Services Update – Jennifer Meyer, Vice President of Cooperative Services, shared that JCE recently reached the six-month milestone of implementing the NISC software platform. Meyer highlighted the system's performance-enhancing features and the wide range of tools it provides across the organization. She noted that the platform has improved workflow efficiency, made daily tasks more user-friendly, and strengthened service to members, with anticipated long-term operational efficiencies.

Human Resources and Marketing Update – Merri Sevey, Executive Vice President of Human Resources, presented the Fiber Installation & Scheduling Dashboard, which outlined total installation goals, installations completed to date, and the remaining targets

Resume of minutes *(Continued)*

needed to meet year-end 2026 objectives. Sevey also noted that the organization is actively promoting home phone services, as another carrier is discontinuing that offering.

IT Technology Report – Dan Marcure, Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, reviewed the Open Systems Network (OSI) Model as a framework used to explain how network communications function, from physical fiber connections to end-user applications. The discussion highlighted the roles in transmitting data over fiber infrastructure, managing switches and equipment, and directing data through routers. The presentation provided board members with a general overview of how network systems support fiber communications and service delivery.

External Affairs| Legislative Update - Terry Kurt, General Counsel, provided an update on proposed state legislation relevant to utility services. Kurt also shared highlights from the recent legislative summit in D.C. where representatives from the Co-op met with our Federal legislators to discuss issues important to JCE and co-ops across the country.

Board Issues and Action Items

Audit Presentation Results – The 2025 Audit Report was presented with a clean, unmodified opinion. No issues with accounting policies, management judgement, or estimates were found. Director Hendren made a motion to approve the summary, which was seconded by Director Lundy, and the motion carried unanimously. The Independent Auditor's Report and Consolidated Financial Statements are located on JCE Co-op's website under the My Co-op | Other | Financials tab.

Broadband Competitive Business Policy – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to approve the Broadband Competitive Business Policy.

Approve 2025 Margin Allocations – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to approve the 2025 Margin Allocations.

Select DPC Annual Meeting Attendees – Attendees for the Dairyland Annual Meeting were selected.

Select Dairyland Class A Director & Alternate Director (to serve on Dairyland BOD representing JCE for two-year term) – Dan Tindell was selected as the Director and Ted James was selected as the Alternate Director to serve on the Dairyland BOD representing JCE for a two-year term.

Prairie Power Inc., (PPI) Designation of Voting Delegate and Alternate Delegate for the PPI

Annual Meeting – Bob Kuhns was selected as the voting delegate, and Jerry Meyer was selected as the alternate voting delegate for the PPI Annual Meeting.

Prairie Power Inc., (PPI) Certification of Candidates for Director & Alternate Director (to serve as director and alternate of Prairie Power) – Bob Kuhns was selected as the candidate, and Jerry Meyer was selected as the alternate candidate to serve on the PPI board of directors.

Reports | Updates

Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) Report – Chairman Senn had nothing to report outside of the submitted written report.

American Public Gas Association (APGA) Report – Director Carroll reported on APGA's recent meetings and provided an update on the latest activities within the natural gas industry.

Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC Report) – Director Tindell shared highlights from CERAWEEK where he participated along with a representative from Dairyland Power Cooperative. The conference brought together leaders from across the energy sector to discuss key industry trends impacting utilities. Conversations focused on electric grid reliability, growing power demand, transmission expansion, renewable energy, natural gas and generation planning, and the increasing impact of AI and data centers on electricity usage. Additional emphasis was placed on energy policy, regulations, and cooperative strategies to ensure continued reliable and affordable service for members.

Prairie Power (PPI) Report – Director Kuhns provided generation data from PPI's units. The board did not meet in April.

Executive Session

Into Executive Session – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to go into Executive Session at 11:26 AM.

Out of Executive Session – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to come out of Executive Session at 11:58 AM.

Action Resulting from Executive Session – Action taken consistent with discussion in executive session regarding employment contract between JCE Co-op and CEO Mike Casper.

Other Business – None

Adjournment – Chairman Senn adjourned the meeting at 12:00 PM.