

HI-LINES

A newsletter for members of JCE Co-op

MAY 2026

Elizabeth, IL

800-858-5522

jcecoop.com



CEO'S REPORT by Mike Casper

Our commitment to you



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY TOPIC— SENIOR PLANET

A.I. all around

MAY 7

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

MAY 26

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

HAVE A GROUP OF 5 OR MORE? REQUEST A SENIOR PLANET CLASS.

Want to learn about new tech topics? Call Taylor Smith at 815-591-0091 to set up additional classes.

MAY 7

Impact Life Blood Drive JCE Elizabeth Headquarters 2:30-5:30 p.m.

MAY 10

Mother's Day

MAY 25

JCE Co-op closed for Memorial Day

In 2026, JCE Co-op is focused on completing a significant portion of the fiber buildout across Northwest Illinois and continuing to enhance network reliability. And while most people hear "fiber" and think "faster internet," this investment is about a whole lot more than that.

Yes, fiber brings fast, dependable internet to our homes, farms and businesses. That's important, but in today's world, people need reliable connectivity for work, school, healthcare, farming and running a business. In rural communities like ours, that kind of access is essential. But what matters just as much is what fiber means for the future of our region.

It helps families stay here. It helps local businesses compete. It gives students better access to learning and helps connect patients to care. It supports precision agriculture and the kind of technology many farms depend on today. Put simply, fiber helps keep rural communities strong. It gives Northwest Illinois the tools to grow and stay competitive without forcing people to look elsewhere for the services they need.

That is why we believe this work matters.

Connecting more than people

There is another side to this investment that is just as important, and it often gets overlooked. Fiber is also helping us run a safer and better electric and gas utility. In plain language, fiber does not just connect people. It connects our utility system.

With our fiber network, we can receive near real-time information from key points on our utility system. That gives us faster, more accurate visibility when something goes wrong. Instead of relying only on phone calls and field checks to narrow down the problem, we can often tell much sooner what happened, where it happened, and what equipment was affected. That means our crews can head out with better information and work safer and faster. And when you are trying to restore power, that matters.

Fiber also helps us protect major equipment. In some cases, fast communication can trip a breaker before serious damage is done to equipment that can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to replace. It also helps us catch warning signs earlier, things like unusual voltage conditions, repeated momentary outages, or other indicators that tell us a bigger problem may be developing.

The sooner we see those signs, the sooner we can address them before they turn into a larger outage or a costly emergency repair. That is good for reliability, and it is good for controlling costs over the long term.

Why it matters

At the end of the day, this fiber buildout is not about chasing the latest trend. It is about making smart, long-term investments that serve our members well. It improves everyday life for the people who live and work here. And it helps JCE Co-op operate a stronger, smarter and more reliable utility.





CEO'S REPORT
by Mike Casper

Our commitment to you *(Continued)*

That is the value of this project. It serves both purposes at once, supporting the future of our communities while strengthening the services our members count on every day.

Bottom line

Finishing our fiber buildout is one of the most important investments we can make in Northwest Illinois. It helps connect our communities, support

local growth, improve reliability and manage costs more responsibly over time.

We are proud to be doing this work because that is what cooperatives are here to do. We invest locally, we think long-term, and we work to serve our members well, both now and in the future.



Plug into the future of JCE Co-op

Join our *NEW Insight Committee!*

At JCE Co-op, our members and communities are at the heart of everything we do. That's why we're excited to introduce our new Insight Committee, a refreshed approach to gathering member feedback and ideas.

The Insight Committee will replace the former Member Advisory Council (MAC) and was designed to offer a more flexible way for members to participate. We understand that schedules can be busy, so this new format allows members to share their thoughts through occasional surveys, provide feedback on new ideas, participate in occasional zoom meetings, and attend one open board meeting each year.

We are currently looking for individuals who are interested in sharing their perspectives and helping guide the cooperative forward. Insight Committee members will help us evaluate how we're doing, identify opportunities for improvement, and tell us what they would like to see from their cooperative in the future.

This is a great opportunity to have your voice heard while helping JCE Co-op continue to evolve, innovate and better serve our members and communities.

Together, we can build an even stronger cooperative.

Interested in joining the Insight Committee? Contact Taylor Smith at tsmith@jcecoop.com to learn more and sign up.





DON'T LET A GOOD BURN GO BAD

It's called a controlled burn for a reason. If you don't plan your controlled burn in advance and keep it under check, it can quickly spread too far and wide.

Controlled burns (or prescribed fires) are intentional, planned fires managed to reduce hazardous fuel loads like dead brush, they also restore forest health, recycle nutrients, kill invasive plants and improve wildlife habitats.

Controlled burns typically happen during the dormant seasons of spring (March–May) and fall (October–November), when plants are not actively growing, weather is cooler and humidity is moderate. If you are considering implementing a controlled burn (also known as a prescribed fire) to address vegetation or weed management, follow several precautions to stay safe.

Controlled burn safety checklist:



Plan ahead

- Define your burn area and objectives
- Create firebreaks around the entire perimeter
- Have a water source and tools ready (hoses, shovels, rakes)



Protect utility equipment

- Clear at least 10-15 feet around power poles
- Wet the base of poles before burning
- Keep flames and heat away from electrical equipment



Notify & get approval

- Check with your local town or village office
- Notify your local fire department
- Inform nearby neighbors
- Obtain any required permits



Burn safely

- Never burn alone—have help on-site
- Start small and stay in control
- Constantly monitor the fire's behavior



Check conditions

- Review weather forecast (wind speed & direction)
- Ensure relative humidity is 40% or higher
- Avoid dry, gusty or unpredictable conditions



Stay until its out

- Do not leave the fire unattended
- Fully extinguish all embers and hot spots
- Douse, stir and check the area thoroughly
- Inspect for hidden fire damage (especially utility poles)
- Monitor the area for re-ignition

Even with the best laid plans, a utility pole could catch on fire during a burn; however, planning in advance can decrease the chances. Fire damage to a power pole is usually evident by blackening and scorch marks, but even slight discoloration can cause serious problems. Sometimes the poles burn from the inside out, and the damage is not immediately apparent. Take

the time to plan ahead, or your controlled burn could get expensive. The person who causes damage to a utility pole is responsible for the fees associated with replacing it. There are many other safety considerations. Plan carefully and burn smart. If you do notice any fire damage to a utility pole, contact JCE Co-op immediately so we can have someone come out and inspect it.

Watt a bright idea—let's color!

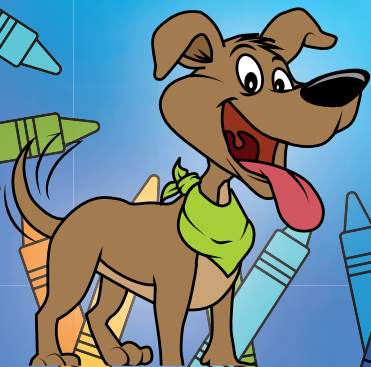
Winners will receive a set of supplies for the fall season and other fun prizes. In addition, we donate five energy-related children's books to the child's community library.

Coloring sheets, along with the entry form and rules, can be found at your local library or downloaded at jcecoop.com/member-involvement. Only one entry per child is allowed, and each entry will be placed into one of the three age groups 5-6, 7-8 and 9-10. Entries are due by July 31st and may be delivered to any office or submitted digitally to tsmith@jcecoop.com.

Artwork will be judged based on creativity, originality and use of color. All artwork will not be returned except upon request and will be displayed in our Elizabeth, Savanna and Geneseo offices.

2026 Color Contest

*Get creative with Scout and Inspector Watts!
Learn more at jcecoop.com/member-involvement*



BE PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER

JCE Co-op Blood Drive

Thursday, May 7

2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Meeting Room

793 U.S. Route 20 West



To book appointment,
scan QR code, visit
bloodcenter.org or
call ImpactLife at
800-747-5401.



ImpactLife

HOW WILL YOU MAKE YOUR MARK?



Pictured from left to right: Taylor Smith, Natalie Reisner, Tony McCombie, Ryker Kurek and Jordan McLane.



POWERED UP FOR LEADERSHIP, LOCAL STUDENTS TAKE ON SPRINGFIELD!

Two outstanding local students, Ryker Kurek of Stockton and Natalie Reisner of Geneseo, recently had the opportunity to attend Illinois Youth Day—an unforgettable experience centered on leadership, government, and the cooperative difference. During their visit, they met with Tony McCombie (House Minority Leader and State Representative), gaining firsthand insight into state government and the role of elected officials.

Their day included a tour of the historic Illinois State Capitol and an immersive visit to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, where

they explored Illinois' rich history. Alongside fellow students from electric and telephone cooperatives across the state, Ryker and Natalie also deepened their understanding of how cooperatives serve their communities.

A highlight of the experience was hearing from Michael Frerichs (Illinois State Treasurer), whose message on leadership, financial responsibility, and public service left a lasting impression. Youth Day provided these students with a meaningful look at civic engagement while reinforcing the values of cooperation, community, and future leadership.



John Joyce

Hit us with your BEST shot!



JCE Co-op members are invited to submit their best photos for our 2026 photo contest. Entries must be submitted by June 30. Entrants must be JCE Co-op members; spouses and children of members may submit photos also. All photos must be the work of the entrant and be taken within the JCE Co-op service area.

We will choose 12 photos to appear on the pages of our 2027 photo calendar pages. Several other photos may be selected as honorable mention. Some of these may also be used on our website or ads. For complete rules, entry information and helpful tips, please visit jcecoop.com/member-involvement.

WI-FI SPEEDS EXPLAINED



Understand your home or business Wi-Fi






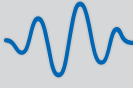
WIRED	VS	WI-FI (WIRELESS)
 <p>Hardwired (Ethernet) Fast. Stable. Direct connection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Physically connected to your router. ☑ Delivers the most consistent performance. 		 <p>Wi-Fi (Wireless) Convenient. Flexible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Connects using wireless signals ☑ Performance depends on your environment.

Your fiber internet delivers full speed to your home or business—but Wi-Fi speeds depend on how the signal reaches your devices.

WHY WI-FI SPEEDS ARE DIFFERENT

The fastest speeds come from a wired connection, but Wi-Fi offers greater convenience when that's not practical.

Wi-Fi signals must travel through your home or business and are affected by distance, obstacles and how your network is used.

WHAT'S NORMAL	WHAT AFFECTS YOUR WI-FI			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ 40-60% of your package speed on Wi-Fi (NOTE: Wi-Fi speeds don't need to match your package speed to work well—what matters is how your connection performs during everyday use. ☑ Speeds may vary throughout the day ☑ Performance depends on your environment 	 <p>Distance Farther away, weak signal</p>	 <p>Floor plan Larger or complex spaces require additional coverage</p>	 <p>Interference Walls, glass, appliances can disrupt signals</p>	
	 <p>Device load More devices need more bandwidth</p>	 <p>Devices used Older devices limit speed</p>	 <p>Frequency 5.8 Ghz—Shorter range 2.4 Ghz—Longer range</p>	

HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR WI-FI

- ☑ **Extend coverage**—Use mesh extenders or access points for better reach.
- ☑ **Optimize placement**—Keep router central and unobstructed.
- ☑ **Choose the right package**—Ensure enough speed for all devices.
- ☑ **Upgrade devices**—Newer devices support faster performance
- ☑ **Test your speed properly**—Use a wired connection for accurate results.



Speeds can vary based on signal strength, device limitations or number of connected devices. If your connection is not performing as it should, please give us a call at 800-858-5522.

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

February 25, 2026

Board Meeting Minutes Summary

The regular board meeting of Jo-Carroll Energy, Inc. (NFP) was held on Wednesday, February 25, 2026.

Safety Moment – Director Mattingley shared a safety moment on fireplace safety, both wood and natural gas. He reminded everyone not to store flammable items near a fireplace, such as debris, sparks, and heat can pose a fire hazard. Installing a fireplace screen can help provide an extra layer of safety. Additionally, a handheld thermostat for a gas-fired fireplace should not be placed near an exterior window, which may cause inaccurate temperature readings throughout the home, leading to inefficient heating.

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 to approve the Consent Agenda, which included the February 25th Minutes/Summary, Board Expense Summary, and written reports from staff and the CEO.

Governance Talk Video – None.

Presentation – None.

CEO | CFO Report

President & CEO Report – President and CEO Mike Casper discussed messaging related to rates and the steps the cooperative is taking to ease the impact on members. He shared examples of communications that will be featured on the website, as well as through media outlets and newsletters, to keep members informed. He also addressed both natural gas and electric rates.

Financial Operating Report – Emily Doland, Chief Financial Officer, noted that December Revenue is approximately \$76 million. Total operations and maintenance expenses are \$56,462,071 million, which is \$2,087,259 over the

budget of \$57,374,812. Margins are approximately \$3,607,024. 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 Elizabeth to Depot transmission pole replacement project. In addition, Buros discussed potential load growth opportunities.

Cooperative Services Update – Jennifer Meyer, Vice President of Cooperative Services, presented a report reminding the board of the organization's position statements. Meyer reviewed the Energy Assistance position statement and highlighted the Neighbor-to-Neighbor Care Fund, including how funds are received and distributed. Additionally, Meyer provided an update on budget bill recalculations and explained how installment amounts are determined.

IT Technology Report – Dan Marcure, Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, reported that he has initiated a new fiber circuit connection to Chicago to enhance network capacity and reliability. He also provided an update on the new broadband outage map.

External Affairs | Legislative Update

- Terry Kurt, General Counsel, provided an update on new IL legislation that supports additional information to be posted on electric cooperatives' website, noting that JCE already adheres to most of these requirements. He also reviewed procedures for members to address the board on matters related to the governance and operation of the cooperative.

Resume of minutes *(Continued)*

Board Issues and Action Items

Annual Committee Meeting Discussion – Members from the Annual Committee Meeting met and finalized a date of September 29th, 2026, for the JCE Annual Meeting, which will be held at the Elizabeth Community Building and coincide with the Elizabeth office Member Appreciation Day. It was also decided to include the annual report in the August ICL magazine as an additional cost-saving measure.

Approve 2026 Proposed Bylaws – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve the proposed 2026 bylaws. The bylaws will be presented and voted on by the membership at the Annual Meeting.

Approve Rates 902, 903, and 904 – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to approve the large load electric rates.

Approve Rates 707 and 707A – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to approve the revised area lighting and street lighting rates.

Mid America Cooperative Council Membership Renewal (MACC) – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to not renew the membership with MACC.

Reports | Updates

Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) Report – Chairman Senn shared highlights from the AIEC board meeting, noting that there were several bills introduced that are of special interest to IL co-ops.

APGA Report – Director Carroll reported that APGA's recent meetings emphasized federal advocacy efforts, including legislative engagement on energy policy, along with natural gas supply reliability and market conditions. Additional topics included safety and regulatory compliance, environmental impacts, workforce challenges, and governance initiatives.

Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC Report) – Dairyland did not hold a board meeting due to district meetings; however, Dan Tindell presented and briefly reviewed key internal highlights and talking points provided by Dairyland.

Prairie Power (PPI) Report – Director Kuhns provided insights from PPI's February committee and board meetings, as well as generation data from PPI's units.

Roundtable Discussion – Directors who attended Board Leadership Course 976.1 participated in a

roundtable discussion, highlighting the course and sharing key takeaways.

Executive Session

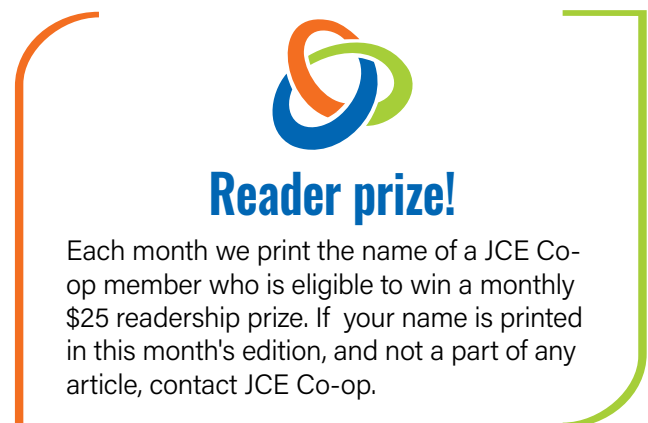
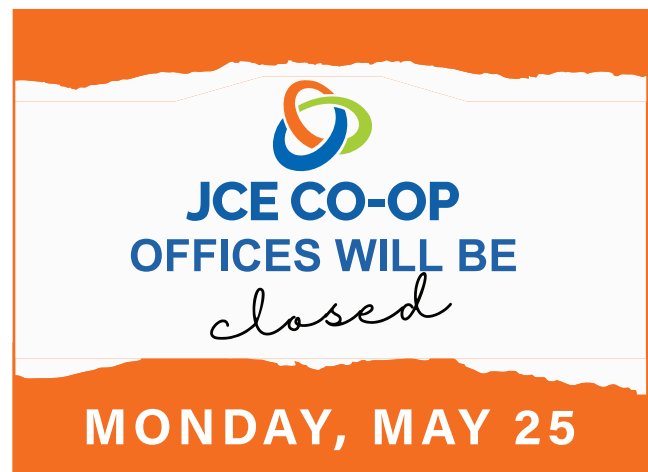
Into Executive Session – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to go into Executive Session at 12:06 PM.

Out of Executive Session – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to come out of Executive Session at 12:15 PM.

Action Resulting from Executive Session – None

Other Business – None.

Adjournment – Chairman Senn adjourned the meeting at 12:16 PM.





MEMORIAL DAY



— R E M E M B E R & H O N O R —

**This Memorial Day, we honor the
brave men and women who gave
everything for our freedom.**

**Their service powers the lives we live today.
We remember. We honor. We thank you.**





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