

# HI-LINES

A NEWSLETTER FOR JO-CARROLL ENERGY MEMBERS

CONTENTS



Elizabeth, Illinois



800-858-5522



www.jocarroll.com



## 18D-E

### 2022 incentive program

Members receive benefits with energy efficient purchases



## 18F

### Sharing Success

Applications available for three grants totaling \$7,500



## 18G

### Broadband grant

JCE awarded Community Connect grant for fiber project

## Jo-Carroll Energy's board of directors approve 2022 budget

**A**lthough inflation has hit Jo-Carroll Energy (JCE) relentlessly with double digit increases almost across the board for all materials, your JCE directors and our team continue to be very conscientious of these increased costs and material shortages.

Keeping safety at the forefront, our team is managing the use of materials as efficiently as possible. In some instances, reusing and repurposing materials where feasible. By following our strategic objectives of operational excellence, growth, and enhanced cooperative value, the average rate increase of 2 percent across member classes is well below projected inflation and was approved by your board of directors as part of the 2022 budget.

Our goal is to curb rate increases for our electric, natural gas and broadband members at or below inflation. Growth will help us meet that goal. We anticipate additional growth in 2022 by adding 1,500 high-speed fiber internet service subscribers. Added fiber subscribers will bring in more dollars and spread fixed costs across more members. Growth combined with a continued focus on efficiency improvements will help stabilize rates further.

Jo-Carroll Energy employees are embedded in our communities and deeply care about each of you. We



### CEO'S REPORT by Mike Casper

continuously seek ways to work more efficiently, grow our membership and provide more value to you, which is indicative through the \$23 million in fiber grant awards. Without these grants, the majority of Northwest Illinois might never experience high download and upload speeds.

That performance will provide our children, homes, businesses, agriculture community, healthcare facilities, etc. a level playing field with our urban neighbors. Speeds that will also help attract a high skilled workforce and companies seeking unique areas to grow their business. In our recent 2021 member survey, 76 percent indicated high-speed internet is absolutely necessary to the quality of life, which was equal to last year's survey results.

We are committed to containing costs. We continue to encourage members to reach out to us if they are concerned about being able to pay their energy bills, working with members on a case-by-case basis regarding options and assistance that may be available to them.

Our energy advisor is available to discuss energy efficiency and steps individual members may be

(Continued on page 18F)

## For your information

### Your Board of Directors:

**David Senn**

Chairman

District 7

**Russell Holesinger**

Vice Chairman

District 8

**Marcia Stanger**

Secretary

District 3

**Jerry Meyer**

District 1

**Joseph Mattingley**

District 2

**Dan Tindell**

District 4

**Patricia Smith**

District 5

**Thomas Lundy**

District 6

**Larry Carroll**

District 9

**Robert Kuhns**

Treasurer

District 10

### 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

Oct. 29, 2021

The regular board meeting of Jo-Carroll Energy, Inc. (NFP) was held on Friday, October 29, 2021, at 9 a.m.

A Safety Moment was provided by Director Bob Kuhns.

**Presentation** – Jeff Harrelson, Director of Safety and Loss Control and Ken Sivertsen, Director of Member Services provided a presentation on business continuity, an ongoing process to ensure that the necessary steps are taken to identify the impact of potential losses and maintain viable recover strategies, recover plans and continuity of services to ensure continuity of operations and preserve brand value and reputation in the case of a catastrophic event affecting the cooperative.

**Financial Operating Report** – Chuck Woods, Chief Financial Officer provided a summary of the financial operating report for September. Year to date (YTD) revenue is approximately \$49 million vs. a budgeted amount of approximately \$48 million. Total operations and maintenance expenses were approximately \$1 million under budget. YTD margins are approximately \$4.7 million vs. a budgeted amount of approximately \$1.7 million. By general consent, the board moved to file the financial operating report with the auditor.

### Board Issues and Action Items –

**NRECA Course 2620/Board and Operations Process** – Attendees were selected for the NRECA Course 2620/Board and Operations Process.

**NRECA Course 935/Appraising and Compensations of the CEO** – Attendees were selected for the NRECA Course 935/Appraising and Compensations of the CEO.

**Capital Credits General Retirement** – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to approve the Capital Credits General Retirement.

**Annual Meeting Committee Report** – A report on the Annual Meeting was provided by Director Tindell, in which a location and date was discussed.

### Operations and Regulatory Update

**Operations Update** – Kyle Buros, Senior V.P. and Chief Operating Officer provided an update on broadband, noting that Apple Canyon is the second fiber community completed by JCE. Buros stated that we continue to follow the business plan for building out fiber communities. Buros also noted that the first phase of the ITC Midwest transmission upgrade was completed in October. Buros

also provided an update on the progress of the collective bargaining agreements.

**COVID-19/Employee Update** – President and CEO Casper provided an update on new signage regarding mask mandates.

**External Affairs/Legislative Update** – Outside General Counsel, Terry Kurt provided an update on external affairs and local and state legislation.

**Member Services Update** – Jennifer Meyer, V.P. of Member Services provided information on the FirstCall program, noting that Per Mar has agreed to purchase the program from Jo-Carroll Energy. Per Mar offered a smooth transition for our existing members. On a separate note, Meyer shared that a safety survey will be sent to natural gas members.

### Reports/Updates –

**Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) Report** – Chairman Senn provided highlights from the AIEC Board Meeting.

**American Public Gas Association (APGA) Report** – Director Carroll discussed the latest topics within the natural gas (NG) industry that included proposed pipeline regulations and various other topics relevant to the industry.

**Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) –** Director Mattingley provided highlights from the DPC Board Meeting. Mattingley commented that DPC's President and CEO, Brent Ridge, continues to focus on price stabilization, operational efficiencies, and safety.

**Prairie Power Incorporated (PPI) Report** – Director Kuhns provided a summary of the PPI Board Meeting. In addition, Kuhns noted that a 5-year workplan was approved.

### Governance Topics and Board Policy Review –

- a. A motion was made by the Governance Committee, which was seconded and carried unanimously to approve Board Policy 100/Development Approval & Distribution.
- b. A motion was made by the Governance Committee, which was seconded and carried unanimously to approve Board Policy 100.1/Governing Style.

(Continued on page 18C)

## Resume of Minutes

(Continued from page 18B)

- c. A motion was made by the Governance Committee, which was seconded and carried unanimously to approve Board Policy 101/Communications.
- d. A motion was made by the Governance Committee, which was seconded and carried unanimously to approve Board Policy 121/Safety and Job Training.

**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 11:59 a.m.

**Action resulting from Executive Session** – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously that the Board of Directors of Jo-Carroll

Energy declares they have reviewed the President & CEO's performance and found that it exceeds expectations. With that finding, and pursuant to the terms of the President & CEO's employment contract, the board authorizes the execution of certain obligations therein.

**Other Business** – None.

**Adjournment** – Chairman Senn Adjourned the meeting at 12:02 p.m.

## Special Board Meeting Minutes

Nov. 29, 2021

*The special board meeting of Jo-Carroll Energy, Inc. (NFP) was held on Monday, November 29, 2021, at 10 a.m. via Zoom call.*

**Approval of Agenda** – A motion to approve the agenda was made, seconded, and carried unanimously.

**Union Contract Ratification** – A motion to approve the Union Contract Ratification was made, seconded, and carried unanimously.

**Amendment to the NRECA 401k Pension Plan** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve the amendment to the NRECA 401K Pension Plan, which would be in effect after December 31, 2021.

**Approve the 2022 Annual Meeting Date** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve the Annual Meeting date of June 2, 2022.

Chairman Senn adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

## Petitions available for 2022 director nominations

**N**omination petitions for the Jo-Carroll Energy Board of Director election are now available for the three director posts that are up in 2022.

Director posts up for election in 2022 include:

- District 1 (now represented by Jerry Meyer)
- District 2 (now represented by Joe Mattingley)
- District 4 (now represented by Dan Tindell)

Running for the board of directors and voting in the elections are benefits of being a co-op member. Directors are democratically elected by the membership.

Any Jo-Carroll Energy member residing in a district that is up for election – including the incumbent director – may petition for nomination in that district. Members interested in seeking election to the board may

download a nomination petition from the cooperative's website-[jocarroll.com/director-elections](http://jocarroll.com/director-elections). Anyone without internet access may call the cooperative at 800-858-5522 and request a petition be mailed to them.

Petitions must be signed by at least 25 Jo-Carroll Energy members residing in the district for which the director is to be elected.

Petitions must be filed at Jo-Carroll Energy's headquarters no later than April 1. Petitions may also be dropped in the secure drop box at the office. Candidates should provide a short biographical sketch and photo to be used in candidate profiles to be published in the co-op newsletter Hi-Lines and with election materials.

In order to qualify to have their names placed on the ballot, all

nominees must participate in an orientation process provided by the attorney for the cooperative, assuring that all nominees fully understand the expectations and responsibilities of directors. These include but are not limited to: time demands, education expectations and fiduciary duties.

Complete details on director qualifications and the nomination procedure can be found in Jo-Carroll Energy's bylaws posted on [jocarroll.com/minutes-bylaws](http://jocarroll.com/minutes-bylaws).

Election of directors is conducted by mail and online prior to the annual meeting of members, with results announced at the meeting. If only one candidate files for a district, election is by vote of acclamation at the meeting. The 2022 Annual Meeting of Members is set for June 2.

# 2022 incentive program launches

## Members receive multiple benefits with energy efficient purchases

**M**embers wanting to save energy and money in the new year should review Jo-Carroll Energy's 2022 energy efficiency incentive forms. If it's time to upgrade your old appliances or change out your heating or cooling system, we may have savings for you!

JCE offers energy efficiency incentives for our electric members in collaboration with Dairyland Power Cooperative, one of our wholesale power suppliers, to help members use energy wisely. We also offer an array of incentives for our natural gas members.

Eligibility criteria for each category is listed on the forms found at [www.jocarroll.com/energy-efficiency-incentives](http://www.jocarroll.com/energy-efficiency-incentives).

To receive an incentive, the member must purchase a qualifying item, fill out the incentive form and return the form and documentation to the cooperative within three months of purchase or installation (this will be clarified on the form). Equipment must be installed within the cooperative's service territory and, in most cases, be ENERGY STAR-rated.

### Changes for the 2022 program include:

- Smart power strips and flow restrictors for faucets and shower heads were removed.
- Air-source heat pump incentives increased from \$200/ton to \$250/ton.

## INCENTIVES SUMMARY FOR ELECTRIC MEMBERS

### HVAC - Geothermal

Upgrade existing ground source heat pump	
Interior equipment .....	\$500/ton
New Installations .....	\$700/ton
Ground source heat pump	
Exterior loop field	
Installation cost	

### HVAC – Residential Air Source Systems

Air source heat pump & mini-split.....	\$250/ton
New furnace w/ECM motor.....	\$35

### Electric Appliances

Inductive range.....	\$25
Heat pump clothes dryer.....	\$50
Energy Star Electric Appliances	

Clothes dryer.....	\$25
Clothes washer.....	\$25
Dehumidifier.....	\$25
Dishwasher .....	\$25
Refrigerator .....	\$25
Freezer.....	\$25

### Recycling

Freezer.....	\$25
Refrigerator .....	\$25
Window air conditioner .....	\$25

### Lighting

Occupancy Sensor.....	\$5/sensor
LED Lamp/fixture.....	\$.50 per 800 lumens
LED Exit Sign .....	\$5/sign

### Electric Water Heaters

Heat pump water heater .....	\$300
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### Following Require Load Control

Residential high efficiency water heater	
75-99 gallons.....	\$150
Residential high efficiency water heater	
≥100 gallons.....	\$300
Solar storage water heater w/electric backup	
75-99 gallons.....	\$150
≥100 gallons.....	\$300



### Touchstone Energy Home Program

New home must meet specific program/code requirements ..... \$500

**Up to \$500 incentive for all members doing air-sealing and/or insulation upgrades to their existing home.**

## INCENTIVES SUMMARY FOR NATURAL GAS MEMBERS

Stove .....	\$50
Clothes dryer .....	\$50
Fireplace insert .....	\$50
Other .....	\$50
Generator .....	\$50

### Natural Gas Heating

Natural gas furnace/boiler AFUE  $\geq$  95% ... \$125

**Additional fuel switching incentives also available.**

**Check out agricultural, commercial and industrial incentives online.**

### Natural Gas Outdoor Appliances

Pool heater .....	10% of equipment & material cost up to \$150
Hot tub .....	10% of equipment & material cost up to \$150
Deck heater .....	10% of equipment & material cost up to \$100
Outdoor fire pit .....	10% of equipment & material cost up to \$100
Grill .....	10% of equipment & material cost up to \$100

Questions about the program or general energy efficiency questions can be directed to our energy advisor **John Scott, [jscott@jocarroll.com](mailto:jscott@jocarroll.com) or 800-858-5522, ext. 1339.**

# Shut the Door on Energy Waste.

Did you know **25% to 40%** of energy used to heat and cool your home is wasted through air leaks? Seal all exterior doors with weatherstripping to minimize energy waste.

## Applications open for **Sharing Success grants**

**J**o-Carroll Energy is seeking applications for the 2022 Sharing Success grants. JCE will award up to three Sharing Success grants totaling \$7,500 this year.

Deadline for application is March 30. In addition, matching funds for the three grants will be applied for through CoBank's Sharing Success matching grant program, bringing the total possible grants to \$15,000.

To qualify for the grants, an organization must be a certified 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, school or governmental entity such as a police, fire or ambulance department and be located within the JCE service territory. Applications also must have a broad reach and impact for the community served.

Recipients of the 2021 Sharing Success grants were:

- Great River Outreach, Savanna, to support expansion and renovation of facilities, including Bridges of Carroll County, Classy Closet and The Table.
- Jo Daviess Carroll Career Technical Education (CTE)

Academy, Elizabeth, to purchase and install perimeter fencing around the pre-school playground.

- Whiteside County Sheriff's Office, Morrison, toward the cost of a K-9, training and equipment.
- West Carroll CUSC 314, Mount Carroll, to support an upgrade of the district's phone system.

Earlier Sharing Success matching grants were made to Savanna Police Department, Chadwick Fire Department, Antique Engine & Tractor Show (Geneseo), Savanna Fire Department, Galena Area Emergency Medical Service District, Thomson Chamber of Commerce, Fulton Police Department, Village of Chadwick/Chadwick Police Department, East Dubuque Fire Department, the Galena Arts & Recreation Center, and Village of Thomson.

Organizations interested in applying for Sharing Success grants should contact Merri Sevey, JCE vice president of human resources at [msevey@jocarroll.com](mailto:msevey@jocarroll.com) or 800-858-5522,



ext. 1216. Details and application can be found at [jocarroll.com/sharing-success-grant](http://jocarroll.com/sharing-success-grant).

CoBank is a cooperative lending institution that provides loans and other financial services to vital industries throughout rural America. CoBank is headquartered outside Denver, Colo., serving customers from regional banking centers across the U.S. The Sharing Success matching grant program was launched in 2012 as a way to highlight the International Year of Cooperatives. It is designed to celebrate the vital role that cooperatives play in individual communities across the country.

### **CEO's Report**

(Continued from page 18A)

able to take to save energy and money. Jo-Carroll offers an extensive energy efficiency incentive program. Highlights of that program can be found inside this issue and are detailed on our website at [jocarroll.com/energy-efficiency-incentives](http://jocarroll.com/energy-efficiency-incentives).

Specifics about the 2022 increase and new rates will be communicated in future Hi-Line issues, as well as our electronic newsletter and on [jocarroll.com](http://jocarroll.com).

### **Reader prize**

**E**ach 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.

### **Offices Closed**

Jo-Carroll Energy's offices will be closed on Monday, Feb. 21 for an all employee-training day.

# JCE awarded Community Connect grant for fiber project



*Fiber construction crews worked on Sand Prairie projects in rural areas of the co-op's service territory last fall and early winter.*

**J**o-Carroll Energy was awarded a \$2.3 million Community Connect Grant by the USDA for a fiber-to-the-premise (FTTP) internet project that will deliver high-speed, reliable broadband internet service to a rural area in Jo Daviess County.

The grant, announced Thursday, Dec. 16, 2021, will be used to bring access to fiber internet to more than 220 homes, businesses and community institutions in the Schapville and rural Scales Mound areas in Jo Daviess County.

"We are extremely pleased with the grant award from the USDA," said Mike Casper, JCE president and CEO. "Expansion of fiber broadband in our rural areas is a much-needed development in our region. This grant will assist our efforts to provide high-speed, reliable internet service to our co-op members."

Sand Prairie, JCE's broadband division, will use the \$2,347,300 in grant funds to construct 5.5 miles of aerial mainline fiber, 35.5 miles of underground mainline fiber and 37.5 miles of drop fiber to approximately 220 premises in under- or unserved areas.

Total proposed project expenditures are \$2,812,148. Jo-Carroll Energy will fund a 15 percent grant match, or \$464,848. Grant recipients have three years to spend funds. Engineering details are being finalized.

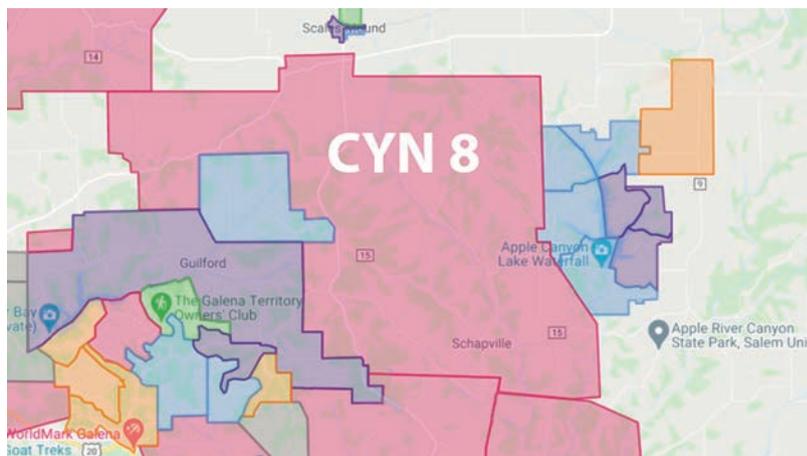
Sand Prairie identifies its project areas as numbered polygons or fiber neighborhoods. The grant area has been named CYN8. A map on the connectSP.com website details Sand Prairie's fiber neighborhoods and is where members can express their interest in fiber and track progress.

All members within the grant area who had previously expressed interest in fiber will receive an email from Sand Prairie containing a customized link to sign up for service at their location. All other members within the CYN8 fiber neighborhood will be notified by other means or can go to connectsp.com and complete the Sign-Up step.

"The project supports economic development in our rural service area by increasing property values,

attracting new residents and providing more residents the ability to work remotely, all factors that, in the long term, support community growth, boost our community's tax base, enhance medical practices and support our schools," said Jesse Shekleton, JCE director of broadband operations.

Sand Prairie offers fiber internet service packages with speeds from 25 megabits per second up to 2 gigabits per second to meet the growing needs of area residents, students and businesses.



*The new Sand Prairie CYN 8 fiber neighborhood, funded in part by a USDA Community Connect Grant, includes Schapville and rural Scales Mound areas.*

The Community Connect award is the third grant funding the cooperative has received for its fiber to the premise projects.

"We continue to explore funding options to speed progress toward the goal of bringing fiber service to all members who want it," Shekleton said.

JCE and Sand Prairie are applying for additional grant funds for qualifying rural areas in Jo Daviess, Carroll and Whiteside counties.

In addition to the grant area, Sand Prairie currently has several other projects throughout its service territory in the construction stages. Visit connectSP.com for more information.



# Win a trip to Washington, D.C.



## Youth Day 2022

March 29  
Springfield, Illinois

Meet your elected representatives during the Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperative Youth Day at the State Capital and tour the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum.

**You may even win a trip to Washington, D.C.!**

Visit [jocarroll.com](http://jocarroll.com)  
to learn more  
& to apply.

**Application  
deadline is  
Feb. 18!**

## Youth Tour 2022

June 17-24  
Washington, D.C.

The Youth to Washington Tour gives a few lucky students the chance to spend a week in our nation's capital visiting historic sites and touring some of our most moving memorials. They will also visit the Supreme Court.

# 2022 JCE SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Jo-Carroll Energy will award up to \$25,000 to students from its service territory through its scholarship program in 2022

**6** JCE Scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each to current high school seniors who will enroll in a college or university; students' parents or guardians must be JCE members.

**4** Two-year/Technical School Scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each to current high school seniors who will attend a two-year/tech school; students' parents or guardians must be JCE members.

**10** Director's Scholarships of \$500 each to be awarded to current high school seniors; students' parents or guardians must be JCE members.

**2** Lineworker scholarships in the amount of \$2,000 each to students who plan to attend lineworker school; the student or their parents or guardians must be JCE members.

**4** Adult or "non-traditional" student scholarships in the amount of \$1,500 each to co-op members returning to school or who will attend a post-secondary or accredited training for the first time; must be JCE members.

**All JCE scholarships are funded by unclaimed and donated capital credits. Application deadline: March 1. Director's Scholarships deadline: May 1.**

**Applications may be submitted at [jocarroll.com](http://jocarroll.com)**

# BATMOBILE? BUCKET TRUCK.



We're not your typical energy company, we're a local, not-for-profit cooperative. That's because we don't have customers, we have members. Putting people first is our super power.

To learn more about the cooperative difference, visit [TouchstoneEnergy.com](http://TouchstoneEnergy.com)

**YOUR SOURCE OF POWER. AND INFORMATION.**



Jo-Carroll Energy

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

