



# HI-LINES

A NEWSLETTER FOR JO-CARROLL ENERGY MEMBERS

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Elizabeth, Illinois



800-858-5522



[www.jocarroll.com](http://www.jocarroll.com)



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Jo-Carroll Energy, statewide scholarships available



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Give the gift of energy



## 18H

### Food drive

Help feed our community

## Safety is our priority

In September I shared with you what Jo-Carroll Energy is doing to prepare itself for emergency situations or natural disasters. This month I will share with you what we are doing to keep our employees, you and our communities safe.

I would like to start by thanking all of you and the Jo-Carroll team for helping keep our communities and each other safe. Safety is JCE's number one core value.

What is safety? Safety is being proactive and having an effective safety improvement plan in place. It is about finding exposure and continually reducing it. Implementing safety measures is just part of the picture.

At JCE a culture of safety is instilled throughout the cooperative by numerous proactive measures. A safety committee made up of a diverse internal group works to develop and promote a healthy and safe environment for all employees and members, which allows us to gain insight on hazards and concerns from all aspects of the company and the communities that we serve.

Within JCE, safety is also reinforced by learning from incidents and preventing them from reoccurring. We have an incident reporting program encouraging all employees to submit safety suggestions (internal and external) along with bringing forward any injuries, damages or near misses. We then discuss each of them to bring awareness of what happened and solutions to mitigate. In addition to incident reporting, our department managers conduct crew visits multiple times a year to ensure all safety practices and measures are being



### CEO'S REPORT by Mike Casper

performed at the jobsites along with answering any questions or concerns our employees may have.

Another great way we instill safety at JCE and the communities we serve is training our employees to ensure they know how to perform their job tasks at the highest level and in the safest manner possible. We conduct training through a variety of different measures whether it's virtually, electronically, in a classroom or hands-on. We are also in the process of using virtual reality (VR) as a training method for some of our employees, so they secure a sense of the job site and hazards present in a safe space.

We also work to ensure emergency responders are safe by training them on properly approaching a scene where our services may present a hazard (e.g., downed powerlines, car hitting a pole, natural gas leak, etc.).

JCE is also part of the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP), which is a national safety program that instills a framework for continuous improvement to improve safety performance and culture. Being part of RESAP means we have safety audits conducted by safety experts from our industry. When the audits are performed, safety recommendations are made based on the findings. One large project being implemented due to RESAP findings

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## For your information

### Your Board of Directors:

**David Senn**  
Chairman  
District 7

**Russell Holesinger**  
Vice Chairman  
District 8

**Marcia Stanger**  
Secretary  
District 3

**Robert Kuhns**  
Treasurer  
District 10

**Jerry Meyer**  
District 1

**Joseph Mattingley**  
District 2

**Dan Tindell**  
District 4

**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  
www.jocarroll.com

### For emergencies and outages call:

(800) 858-5522

# Resume of Minutes

Aug. 31, 2022

*The regular board meeting of Jo-Carroll Energy, Inc. (NFP) was held on Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2022.*

*A Safety Moment was provided by Director Joe Mattingley on safety in construction zones, noting that wearing a hard hat in a construction zone is required.*

**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.

**Presentations** – Sara Lechowicz, Communications and Marketing Coordinator, presented highlights from the Youth to Washington Tour recipients. Emma Blaum and Ruby Dickerson were selected to represent JCE. The Youth to Washington Tour, sponsored through the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) and its member cooperatives, provides high school students an opportunity to learn firsthand about our country's history and our federal government. Jo-Carroll Energy is proud to partner with AIEC in its continuing commitment to community.

Ken Sivertsen, Director of Member Services, presented an update on JCE's Business Continuity Management Program (BC program). Ken emphasized the importance of a BC program in protecting the JCE brand. In addition, Ken highlighted other steps JCE follows if normal business operations were interrupted. In addition, Ken provided an overview of our major commercial and industrial accounts.

### Governance Topics and Board Policy Review

**Board Policy 103/Director Conflict of Interest** – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to approve Board Policy 103/Director Conflict of Interest.

**Board Policy 107/Committees of the Board** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve Board Policy 107/Committees of the Board.

### Board Issues and Action Items

#### Dairyland Power Load Forecast Resolution

**Approval** – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to approve the Dairyland Power Load Forecast Resolution.

**Select CFC Voting Delegate/Alternate** – CFC voting delegates were selected for the CFC meeting

that is held in conjunction with the NRECA Region 5&6 Meeting.

**Select Voting Delegate for the RESCO Annual Meeting** – The voting delegate was selected for the RESCO Annual Meeting that is held in conjunction with the NRECA Region 5&6 Meeting.

**Renew Illinois Bank and Trust (IB&T) Line of Credit** – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to renew the line of credit with IB&T with a vote of 9-0. Director Mattingley abstained from voting and removed himself from the board room during the discussion and returned after the vote.

**Select Attendees for the NRECA CCD Course 2600** – Attendees were selected for the NRECA Course 2600.

**NWILED Annual Meeting Discussion** – Attendees were selected for the NWILED Annual Meeting.

### CEO/Financial Operating Report

**CEO Report** – President and CEO Casper shared that he has been reappointed to the American Public Gas Association (APGA) Board of Directors for a second 3-year term.

**Financial Operating Report** – Chuck Woods, Chief Financial Officer, provided a summary of the financial operating report for July. Revenue year-to-date (YTD) is approximately \$38.7 million and is in line with July YTD budget of \$38,672,847. Total operations and maintenance expenses YTD were approximately \$1.6 million under budget. Margins are approximately \$2.9 million vs. a budgeted amount of approximately \$524,613. By general consent, the board moved to file the financial operating report with the auditor.

### Operations and Regulatory/Legislative Update

**Operations Update** – Senior V.P. & Chief Operating Officer Buross provided an update on contractors who assist Jo-Carroll Energy with the fiber expansion projects.

**Employee/Personnel Update** – V.P. of Human Resources Merri Sevey provided an update on new hires, both full-time and part-time and shared current open positions within the cooperative.

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## Reader prize

Each 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.

## Learn how to power up your efficiency with geothermal

Thinking about going geothermal for your heating and cooling? If so, you won't want to miss the Power-Up NW Illinois Power Hour on Nov. 9.

Presented by Jo-Carroll Energy and the Geothermal Alliance of Illinois (GAOI), this virtual session will discuss the benefits of geothermal and programs offered. Featured speakers are John Freitag of the GAOI and JCE's energy advisor John Scott (aka The Energy Detective).

You'll learn about the basics of geothermal and financial implications for a household or business.

Geothermal systems can save you 30-70 percent on your monthly utility bills. Installation is more affordable than ever with the current federal tax credit at 30% along with JCE's geothermal energy efficiency incentive at \$700 per ton.

A geothermal heating and cooling system takes advantage of the stable year-round temperature found a few feet below the

ground. The system circulates a water-based solution through the buried loop system, providing high efficiency. A single piece of HVAC equipment has the ability to keep your home comfortable all year long in addition to providing some or all of your hot water needs.

Learn more about geothermal and current incentive programs during the Power Hour presentation. You'll find a link to register for the power on our website at [jocarroll.com/geo-power-hour](http://jocarroll.com/geo-power-hour).

### Test for interruptible heat members set for Nov. 16

The Winter Preparedness Test for interruptible heat (dual fuel) accounts is set for Wednesday, Nov. 16.

This load control test is performed in advance of the winter Full Load Control season to ensure member familiarity with the control sequence and to ensure that backup heating systems have been validated for proper function.

During the test, residential interruptible heat load classes will be controlled as shown in the chart.

Time	Control Status
5:00 p.m.	Control start
5:05 p.m.	All loads interrupted (2,2W,4B)
8:30 p.m.	Class 4B loads restored
9:00 p.m.	Class 2 and 2W loads begin diversified restoral
10:00 p.m.	Class 2 and 2W loads fully restored

#### Safety continued from page 18A

is the construction of a new mechanics bay and maintenance building in order to support our growing fleet in the safest manner possible.

JCE strives to continuously be proactive in keeping our employees, members and communities safe. We train everyone to be responsible for their own safety, as well as responsible for the safety of those around them.

If you have any suggestions on how JCE could assist with additional safety training in our communities, please do not hesitate to contact us at 800-858-5522.

#### Minutes continued from page 18B

**Strategic Initiatives Update** – V.P. of Member Services Jennifer Meyer introduced a new dashboard to track initiatives as part of JCE's strategic plan.

**Board Update** – Executive Assistant Amy Johnston shared that the REAL ID deadline has been extended to May 2023 for U.S. travelers. The REAL ID is a more secure version of the traditional driver's license and is a new federal requirement to help prevent fraudulent identification.

**External Affairs/Legislative Update** – None.

#### Reports/Updates

**Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) Report** – Director

Senn announced that the AIEC Scholarship Program dollar amounts would be increasing.

**American Public Gas Association (APGA) Report** – Director Carroll discussed various new and proposed regulations affecting the natural gas (NG) industry and noted the proposed residential furnace rule, which would require installed furnaces to have a 95% or greater fuel utilization efficiency rate.

**Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC)** – Director Mattingley had nothing to add outside of the report that was sent in the board packet.

**Prairie Power Incorporated (PPI) Report**

– Director Kuhns provided a summary from the PPI President's report and the most recent generation numbers.

**Executive Session** – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to go into executive session at 11:50 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** – None.

**Other Business** – None.

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

# Electric budget billing accounts to recalculate

**J**o-Carroll Energy members with budget billing for their electric accounts will have their budget amounts recalculated in November.

Because a budget bill amount is based on an average of the previous 12 months' use and outstanding credits or accrued debits, this November true-up recalculation may result in an increase or decrease, depending on changes in your use patterns.

Be sure to look at your November statement to see if your budget amount has changed. If a change results from the recalculation, a message will appear on your statement in blue indicating the new budget amount.

If you do not see a message on your statement, your budget billing amount remained the same.

If you have more than one billing account on budget, it is possible that one or both amounts may change. You begin paying the new budget amount in December.

Invoice billed members should remember that no messages will print on your bill statement whether or not the budget bill amount changes.

If you would like to know your new budget bill amount, please call our offices between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday or email us at [info@jocarroll.com](mailto:info@jocarroll.com).

Budget billing can help you manage your energy costs by allowing you to allocate the same amount each month. Monthly utility bills can vary significantly throughout the year due to variations in your usage through heating and cooling seasons.

With JCE's budget billing plan you eliminate the month-to-month fluctuations caused by changing weather and use patterns. It is imperative that members on budget billing still watch their monthly use and outstanding balances to ensure a large increase does not occur during a recalculation month.

## Levelized billing also available

JCE also offers a levelized billing program. Under this plan, each monthly bill is the rolling average of your electric use for the most recent 12 months, thus eliminating true-up months.

This means you will not pay the exact same amount every month, but it will be close to the same. The amount you owe some months will be more than the average, other months it will be less.

Over the course of the year, you will have paid what you actually owe. Levelized billing does not reduce your bill; it helps you manage your utility payments.

If you have any questions regarding budget billing, your budget bill account or levelized billing, please contact the member services department at 800-858-5522.

You can also find more information about various payment options on our website at [jocarroll.com](http://jocarroll.com).



## Neighbor to Neighbor Care Funds offer help

**I**f you need assistance paying your energy bill this winter, help may be available through Jo-Carroll Energy's Neighbor to Neighbor Care Funds.

This program works in tandem with the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Members must first apply for LIHEAP funds to be considered.

If funds are available, you may receive a grant from the Neighbor to Neighbor funds. To find out if you qualify, contact your respective agency to start the application process.

- Jo Daviess County: Northwestern Illinois Community Action Agency (NICAA), 815-232-3141
- Carroll and Whiteside counties: Tri-County Opportunities Council, 800-323-5434
- Henry County Project Now, 309-852-4565



## Update on energy costs

**A**fter a grim reliability forecast last spring, Jo-Carroll Energy and our wholesale power providers have worked hard to keep the lights on. Safe, reliable electricity is a top priority at Jo-Carroll Energy, but electricity production has cost more than expected during the peak summer months.

Combined with higher-than budgeted purchased power costs in the energy market, expenses hit a threshold to issue a power cost adjustment (PCA). Due to the increase in wholesale power costs, the co-op will implement an increase in the PCA.

**What to expect:** When electric members receive bills generated in November, you will see a PCA charge that we are estimating at approximately 1.35 cents (\$0.01350) per kilowatt hour (kWh) used. For a member using 1,000 kWh per month that will be an extra \$13.50. Your amount may vary, depending on how much electricity is used.

This increase is driven by electricity production costs higher than expected due to high electricity demand, delayed coal deliveries and increased fuel costs (primarily natural gas).

The energy industry was in a decade-long stretch of low wholesale power market and natural gas prices until approximately June 2021. Since then, energy prices have increased at percentages in the U.S. and around the world not seen since the 1980s. The U.S. consumer-price index for electricity in August climbed 15.8% over the same month a year ago, the biggest such 12-month increase since 1981, according to a report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The index for natural gas increased 33% over the last 12 months.

Several factors explain why wholesale power and natural gas prices are higher than in the past and include the increased electricity consumption, demand for natural gas to power the energy grid, global demand increases and overall inflation.

The rising demand for natural gas and increasing prices may also impact the Purchased Energy Cost for our natural gas members bill this winter.

Read more about the PCA, energy price impacts and what we are doing to assist members at [jocarroll.com](http://jocarroll.com).



## Jo-Carroll Energy, statewide scholarship applications open

**J**o-Carroll Energy will award up to \$25,000 to students from its service territory through its scholarship program. In addition, Illinois electric cooperatives in 2022 will award 14 academic scholarships to high school seniors from across Illinois through a memorial scholarship fund.

### The Jo-Carroll Energy Scholarship Program:

- Six Jo-Carroll Energy Scholarships in the amount of \$1,000.
- Four \$1,000 scholarships for students who will attend two-year technical or trade schools.
- Two lineworker scholarships in the amount of \$2,000 each.
- Four \$1,500 scholarships for adult students.
- Ten Director's Scholarships of \$500 each. Applicants and at least one of their parents must attend the Annual Meeting of Members.

### IEC Memorial Scholarships available

Fourteen \$2,000 scholarships will be awarded through the statewide Thomas H. Moore IEC Memorial Scholarship Program.

Complete details and deadlines can be found at [jocarroll.com/scholarship-program](http://jocarroll.com/scholarship-program).



*Jo-Carroll Energy's offices will be closed on Friday, Nov. 11 in observance of Veterans Day.*

## Whiteside County partners with Sand Prairie for fiber buildout



**T**he Whiteside County Board of Directors unanimously approved a \$3 million dollar commitment to Jo-Carroll Energy's Sand Prairie broadband business unit to provide fiber optic internet access in underserved and unserved areas of the county.

By a 23-0 vote at its September meeting, the Whiteside County Board approved a plan to bring reliable fiber broadband access to the underserved and unserved residents, businesses, and organizations of the county.

The plan, recommended to the board by the Connect Whiteside Committee, calls for the equitable deployment of approximately 1,000 miles of fiber broadband access to more than 8,000 addresses and 21,000 residents. Whiteside County is committing \$3 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds the county received to the project, which is estimated to cost more than \$70 million.

In a press release, Whiteside County Board Chair James Duffy said, "Bringing high-speed broadband fiber to the entire county is a big thing. It is comparable to bringing the railroad to communities in the nineteenth century or the Interstate Highway System post-World War II.

"The deployment of fiber broadband across the county will keep the county and its businesses competitive in today's global environment, it will provide residents with an upgrade to their quality of life, whether it's remote work, education or healthcare, and greater access to entertainment options," Duffy stated. "The committee worked

hard on this, and I believe we have chosen the right partner, Sand Prairie, to help us deploy broadband fiber to every corner of rural Whiteside County."

This project will solve a long-term problem, leverage local engagement to ensure strong outcomes, and position the county to compete in a new digital economy that allows more and more Illinoisans to work, live, learn and recreate wherever they chose, according to Gary Camarano, Whiteside County economic development director.

The Connect Whiteside Committee, made up of 18 members, was formed to discuss the lack of access to reliable, affordable broadband, methods to address it, best practices from across the nation and the results of a community survey. After researching potential internet service providers and conducting an extensive interview process, the committee unanimously voted to recommend Sand Prairie, a local provider, in its proposed plan to the county board.

"Since 1939, we have been delivering utility solutions to local underserved and unserved rural residents and communities in Northwest Illinois to enhance the quality of life," said Mike Casper, Jo-Carroll Energy president and CEO. "We look forward to working with the county to accelerate the buildout of high-speed fiber internet service to homes, businesses, and communities throughout Whiteside County."

Casper added, "We will work together to take advantage of the historic federal and state broadband funding currently available to accomplish the project."

Whiteside County and Sand Prairie will finalize an agreement to work together, perform necessary engineering studies and project plans and write and submit grant applications.

"The process will require close cooperation between the two parties to accomplish the deployment of 1,000 miles of fiber," Casper stated.

The estimated timeline for the project is five years. "This will definitely be worth it – for the improved quality of life and competitiveness it will bring to the county," said Camarano. "This is a game changer for the county."

## Co-op commitment to bringing fiber to our local communities

Access to fast, reliable internet service is a necessary component to the quality of life and to keep our communities and rural areas moving forward.

We realize that it may be frustrating to wait for a neighborhood to advance from interest to construction and installation. It is our objective to get multiple neighborhoods to the construction phase in the coming months and years.

Jo-Carroll Energy and Sand Prairie are committed to our communities and members we serve, to enhance their quality of life. We appreciate your patience and support as we continue our fiber buildout efforts.

We continually seek opportunities through grants and member-interest, to build out fiber-to-the-premise internet services in Northwest Illinois.

While our focus remains within our electric and natural gas service area footprint (including portions of Jo Daviess, Carroll, Whiteside and Henry counties), we review opportunities to expand and grow the cooperative.

### *Recent updates and phase changes*

Fiber construction crews are busy this fall with the buildout of fiber in many of our fiber neighborhoods. Chadwick, Galena, Mount Carroll, Savanna, Stockton, Warren, and The Galena Territory areas all have neighborhoods move ahead in the build-out process!

#### **Pre-Construction to Construction**

Stockton: STK1-STK5

#### **Construction to Schedule Install**

Galena: 13, 18, 20, 21

Mount Carroll: MTC7

Stockton: STK6

#### **Fiber In-Service**

Galena Territory: GT6

Mount Carroll: MTC4

Savanna: SAV1

York: YRK 2

Follow your community's progress on our Fiber Communities Map at [connectsp.com](http://connectsp.com).

**Holiday Energy Credits**

Warm someone's heart  
this holiday season.

**GIVE THE  
GIFT OF ENERGY**

A wonderful gift for any Jo-Carroll Energy member!

Certificates are available in any amount and are applied to the member's energy bill for the amount purchased.

Ask any of our member service representatives for more information 800.858.5522.



Light Up  
The Holidays

# Food Drive 2022

Donate & receive a FREE Light Bulb!

Donations of nonperishable items accepted at

Go-Carroll Energy Offices

**Elizabeth**  
793 US Rt 20 W

**Savanna**  
103 Chicago Ave

**Geneseo**  
1004 Chicago St

Donations will benefit

Albany Food Pantry  
East Dubuque Food Pantry  
Elizabeth Food Basket  
Erie Food Pantry  
Geneseo Food Pantry

Hanover Food Bank  
Helping Hands Food Pantry  
Savanna/Mt. Carroll Food Pantry  
Thomson/Fulton Food Pantry  
United Churches of Galena

Begins  
**Mon, Nov 7**  
Ends  
**Fri, Dec 16**



800-858-5522 | [jocarroll.com](http://jocarroll.com)





# The flag of freedom

Honor, perseverance, blood and victory ... Each star and stripe on our flag represent the sacrifice made by servicemen and women from across this great land who continue to fight for our freedom. Take time this Veterans Day to proudly display your flag and show your support to our military heroes both here and abroad.



Jo-Carroll Energy

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

