



PilotLight

Spring/Summer | 2026

A newsletter for JCE Co-op natural gas members.

Q&A with JCE Co-op CEO Mike Casper



? How does your system give back to the communities you serve?

JCE Co-op was created by and for the members and communities we serve. We don't just provide service to our communities; we are an integral part of them. Some of the ways we achieve this include:

- Donations to area food pantries plus a member and employee food drive
- Donations to schools and community organizations as well as the area fire and ambulance districts
- Volunteer projects in our communities
- Sponsorships of community and school events
- Participation in area events from parades and fairs to back to school and annual Night Out events
- Member appreciation events
- Employees serving on area chambers of commerce and other community events
- Involvement and support of local economic development activities
- Career fairs at local high schools and area colleges; hosting school group visits at our facilities
- Sponsoring high school students at the annual Youth Day at our state capitol and on the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.
- Scholarships for graduating high school seniors and adults who are seeking their first degree or certificate
- Senior Planet by AARP technology/internet lectures, courses and workshops for our older members

? What are some unique ways you keep gas costs competitive for members?

We utilize gas storage (approximately 20%) and forward purchasing strategies to protect against volatile market gas prices. Additionally, we leverage technology to perform tasks more efficiently, reducing the labor burden. We are also fostering a culture of fiscal responsibility, where everyone understands that their decisions can make a meaningful impact.

? What are some recent accomplishments that your system has achieved?

We recently received the American Public Gas Association (APGA) Silver System Operational Achievement Recognition (SOAR) award, highlighting our commitment to operational excellence. In addition, we maintain a strong relationship with the Illinois Commerce Commission and are proud to report a record free of violations.

? Safety is a vital aspect to natural gas utilities; how do you best manage safety on a day-to-day basis?

We are committed to continuous improvement and fostering a culture of employee engagement. Our employees are empowered to make sound decisions and understand that prioritizing safety is always the right choice. Safety concerns are openly discussed as a team, without fear of disciplinary action. Both leadership and field staff embrace the principle of '200% responsibility'—100% for oneself and 100% for co-workers.

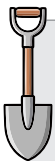
? What are some operations or pipeline initiatives that you are currently undertaking to improve and ensure safe, efficient delivery of natural gas to customers?

We are currently completing an Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) deployment, which will significantly enhance member services by reducing the need for estimated bills and improving operational efficiency. Additionally, we are in the planning stages of a transmission pipeline extension designed to improve safety, increase reliability, and diversify the ways we can supply natural gas to our system.



Fueling a safe summer.

As temperatures rise and summer routines begin, it's a great time to give a little attention to the natural gas appliances and equipment that help keep your home comfortable year-round. With more time spent outdoors gardening, landscaping and enjoying backyard activities, it's also an ideal season to think about safety around your home and property. From outdoor grilling to water heating and home energy use, natural gas plays an important role in many households—here are a few simple seasonal steps that can help improve safety, efficiency and peace of mind this summer.



Can you dig it? Call first.

Before you dig, make the call that protects it all—Call 811. Here's how it works:

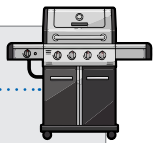


- Call 811 at least three business days before digging begins.
- Wait for utility lines to be marked.
- Dig safely and confidently, even shallow projects will pose a threat.
- Its a **FREE** service.

\$5,000

The amount of the fine that can be issued in Illinois per violation for failure to notify the service.

Keep the sizzle safe.



Key Points

- Grilling season peaks during May and June.
- Seasonal grill inspections help prevent fires.

Safety Tips

- Check hoses and connections.
- Clean grease buildup regularly.
- Never leave a grill unattended or close to a structure..

10,000+

Amount of grill fires that occur in the U.S. each year according to NFPA (National Fire Protection Association).



Landscape without the mishaps.

Key Points

- Mowers and trimmers can damage meters or exposed piping.
- Shrubs and landscaping should not block meters. Keep meters clear and visible.
- Avoid hitting equipment with mowers or trimmers.
- Never move or repair a meter yourself.



Mower and landscaping equipment strikes are one of the most common causes of preventable meter damage.



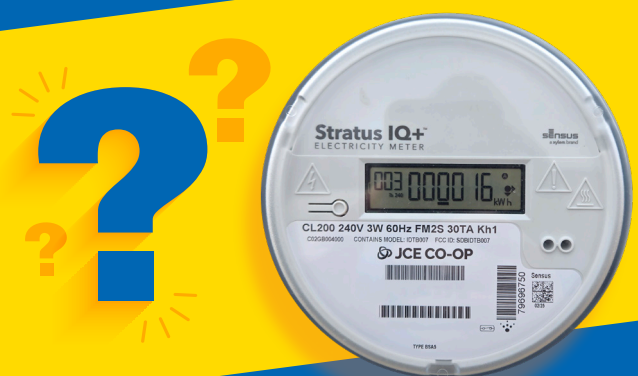
Smell gas?

Safety Steps



- Leave the area immediately.
- Avoid switches, phones or vehicles nearby.
- Call 911 and your utility provider from a safe location.

What's your meter trying to tell you?



Got questions about your new AMI meter? We're putting together educational videos to show you how to read your meter and we want to make sure we're answering your real questions. **Send them our way!**

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