



JO-CARROLL

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative  **HI-LINES**



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Michael Hastings

New regulations, plants drive power costs

At Jo-Carroll Energy, providing you with safe, reliable, affordable energy is one of our top priorities. But, today, rising demands for energy coupled with aging power plants and looming federal regulations are putting pressure on resources.

Most of the power plants serving America's electric cooperatives were constructed in the 1970s and 1980s — a generation of coal-fired power plants that provided an ample stock of generation.

Coal is historically abundant, affordable and can be used to generate electricity on a large scale. In fact, the power supply in the Midwest is largely from coal-fired plants. Nearly 80 percent of the power provided by electric co-ops nationwide comes from coal, compared to about half for the rest of the electric utility industry.

Those same plants are now being saddled with heavy regulatory costs by a slew of environmental regulations. In fact, these rules could result in a chunk of America's coal-fired power plant fleet shutting down by 2018.

Compounding the issue, half of the nation's total generating capacity — 530,000 megawatts — passed the 30-year mark by the end of 2010, according to the U.S. Energy Information Association (EIA). As with anything, there are costs associated with maintaining a power plant.

Our affordable power supply is beginning to dwindle at a time when electricity needs are rising. Folks around the world are using more power; China has surpassed the United States as the top global energy user, and in just over two decades it's predicted to consume 68 percent more power than we do.

Americans are using more energy, too, despite efficiency measures. It's easy to see why — TVs, laptops, “iGadgets” and other electronics crowd power outlets. A typical American home uses 958 kWh every month — a 50 kWh increase in just one year.

Current conditions may place affordability and reliability at risk. While modern environmental equipment investments make coal-fired power plants increasingly clean, these upgrades cost more. New power plants — as well as older ones needing maintenance — are going to be much, much more expensive due to the required environmental controls and rising prices for construction materials.

These factors will impact our electric bills for many years to come. Our collective wallets are under pressure. In the meantime, the market price of power in the Midwest region is relatively low. While this is a short-term phenomenon due to the Great Recession, you may have noticed that your neighbors in other utilities' service areas have lower power costs than Jo-Carroll Energy. Although true for now, this will change as the economy recovers and the coal-fired power plants are retired. For now, we are tied to long-term contracts; we are not free to buy-up lower-cost market priced power for our members. As stated last month, Jo-Carroll Energy plans to end its primary power supply contract sooner rather than later.

In the coming months, we'll provide more information about what influences the price of power. You can stay informed on the issues and find out how you can help us keep the price of power affordable by visiting www.ourenergy.coop.

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 and claim your prize no later than the 10th of the month following publication.

Office hours

Elizabeth Office
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Savanna Office
8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Both Offices
Monday - Friday
800-858-5522

For all outages and
emergencies call
800-927-5254

Resume of Minutes

Regular Board Meeting • Nov. 30, 2011

The board met at the Cooperative headquarters in Elizabeth on Wednesday, November 30, 2011. The following is a summary of the meeting activities. The Agenda was approved as modified and the Consent Agenda was approved.

Chairman's Report—Chairman Mattingley discussed the success of Jo-Carroll Energy for 2011. He described the cooperative as resilient and able to recognize and confront obstacles it faces in a positive and successful manner.

Dairyland Report—Director Stadel described issues raised at recent Dairyland Power meetings regarding plant closings, union matters, how to deal with employees when plants close or are temporarily shut down.

AIEC Report—Director Smith provided the AIEC report describing a meeting with Prairie Power, review of federal legislation and the effect of politics on legislative decision-making. She reviewed various presentations provided to the AIEC Board of Directors, including Don Wood's comments on the effect the market cost of power has on cooperatives. Director Senn then provided a report on the NRECA Resolutions Review Committee. He referenced sweeping changes in committee structure and other portions of the historic approach to the resolutions process.

APGA Report—CEO Michael Hastings reported that the APGA will be discussing Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) rules at future APGA meetings.

Strategic Activity—Policy—Director Lundy stated that he had reviewed Policy 102D entitled Disciplinary Process for Director

Violation of Board Policy and did not identify any changes or corrections. A motion was made to approve the policy as presented.

CEO's Report—The CEO reported on the following in addition to his written report:

- a. **Financial Operating Report**—The CEO reported an unaudited loss for October of (\$134,041.00).
- b. **Danisco Update**—The CEO commented briefly on ongoing discussions with Danisco.
- c. **Farmers Mutual Report**—CEO Hastings commented on the current status of negotiations with Farmers Mutual.
- d. **Rentech Update**—The CEO stated that negotiations continue with Rentech and that the 2012 budget will need to incorporate the effects on the Cooperative of the Rentech facility upgrades.
- e. **TCEDA Update**—The CEO reported that Russ Simpson will be providing an update on TCEDA in his CAO report.
- f. **CFO Report**—Tracy Heidenreich presented slides and otherwise led an extended discussion on the status of equity as well as its effect on borrowing and long-range planning. She said that capital credit checks will be mailed shortly.
- g. **CAO Report**—CAO Simpson commented that it has been three years since TCEDA was formed and organized. He commented on the excellent work of Cindy Lenz, Executive Director. Simpson also gave an update on the Campbell Center and commented on the ongoing success of the Culture of Excellence program. Merri

Sevey, Manager of Human Resources, described excellent sessions working to understand the difference between management and leadership.

- h. **COO Report**—COO Buros reported on the number of new broadband installations and he and gave an update on the acquisition of JISP, Inc. which helped Sand Prairie Wireless achieve the current level of over 1,000 subscribers. He then reviewed progress on the AMI program and the positive effects it should have on Cooperative operations and margins.
- i. **External Affairs Update**—Cox reported on limited actions taken by State and Federal Legislators. He described changes regarding funding for Highways 20 and 30 which will now be totally placed on the Governor's office and the IDOT.

Board Issues

- a. **Names of Nominees for the Election Committee**—Smith, Senn & Holesinger - The directors provided the names of their election committee members.
- b. **NRECA Course 2640.1** - Financial Decision-Making, AIEC, January 11, 2012 - Attendees - Directors identified who would be attending this course.
- c. **NRECA Course 2620.1** - Board Roles & Relationships, AIEC, January 12, 2012 - Attendees - Directors identified who would be attending this course.
- d. **NRECA Course 2630.1** - Strategic Planning, AIEC, February 2, 2012 - Attendees - Directors identified who

Continued on 16f ▶

First-term Republican U.S. Sen. Mark Kirk made a scheduled stop at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in Springfield on Thursday, Jan. 19. He addressed the Board of Directors on issues related to energy. Here, Board Director David Senn from Jo-Carroll Energy spoke directly to the visiting senator, representing your cooperative on the issues. Just a couple days after his visit, Kirk suffered a debilitating stroke, according to doctors. We are hopeful the senator makes a full recovery.



Mark your calendar for Annual Meeting

73rd Annual Meeting of Members
West Carroll School District, Thomson
April 14, 2012



Jo-Carroll Energy's Annual Meeting will be held at a new location at the West Carroll School District building in Thomson on Saturday, April 14.

Annual meeting registration will be from 8 to 10:30 a.m. and a hot



breakfast featuring pancakes and sausage will be served from 7 to 10 a.m.

We'll have displays and exhibits about many cooperative services and products, along with special displays by many of our Co-op Connections Card businesses. The business session begins at 10:30 a.m. You will learn about Jo-Carroll Energy's accomplishments for 2011, plans for the future and challenges facing the cooperative. Results of the election for the Board of Directors will be announced also.

Make sure to bring the registration card from this year's Annual Report (to be mailed in

March) with you to the meeting. Registration cards for all members attending the annual meeting are entered into a drawing in which we'll be giving away 10, \$25 bill credits a grand prize of a \$200 bill credit.

Your February billing statement included an RSVP/survey post for the annual meeting and breakfast. Please return the card or go to our website to RSVP for the annual meeting.

Jo-Carroll Energy is your cooperative. We encourage you to take this opportunity to meet your directors and participate in the cooperative by attending the annual meeting.

Three co-op board seats up for election

Democratic member control is the second of the guiding principles that cooperatives follow. Your Jo-Carroll Energy board of directors is elected by the membership. Cooperative members have equal voting rights—one member, one vote. **Isaac Morhardt**

Watch your mail in late March for the 2012 Jo-Carroll Energy Annual Report and ballots (mailed separately) for the board election. You will receive a ballot only if you live in one of the three districts with

elections this year: Districts 5, 7 and 8. Profiles of the candidates will be included in the annual report, along with other important information about your cooperative.

Each vote counts, so please remember to return your ballot. Strict anonymity is enforced with tallying the ballots. By signing the return envelope, your ballot is in no way associated with your account.

When completing your ballot remember the following:

- The ballot must be filled out by the person under whom the membership is listed.
- The return envelope must be signed or the ballot is invalid.
- All ballots must be received by 4 p.m. on Friday, April 13.

Ballots can be returned by mail or dropped off at either of the cooperative's offices located in Elizabeth or Savanna. The ballots are counted by the Credentials and Election Committee.



A bylaw change approved in 2011 provides that ballots will be mailed to members only in districts where more than one candidate has been nominated. In districts with only one candidate, election will be by a motion of acclamation at the annual meeting.

Jo-Carroll Energy

793 U.S. Route 20 West • P.O. Box 390
Elizabeth, Illinois 61028-0390

Flower Fan-A-See, Mt. Carroll

Gwen Lowe graduated from Mt. Carroll High School already a business owner.

At 16, there was no question that Lowe would turn her life-long passion into a career. She purchased the flower shop from her grandmother in 1992 and made it her own Flower Fan-A-See.

This full-service florist has blossomed for Lowe. Fresh cut and live plants are abundant inside the shop and greenhouse.

Local wholesalers provide fresh-cut flowers daily to Flower Fan-A-See. Silk and dried flowers, wreaths, balloons, yard flags, memorials, cards, candles and other gifts are also available.

If you are planning a wedding, party or looking forward to prom, consider your many options at Flower Fan-A-See. Lowe can guarantee that your bouquets, corsages and boutonnieres for your special day will be completely original.

"Every florist has access to the same flowers, we just look at them



differently," Lowe said.

She loves flowers and wants everyone else to love them, too. Every design can be customized.

For those who prefer a simpler process, bouquets and arrangements are pre-designed on www.flowerfanasee.com.

"Many do not know that you can order and ship flowers around the world through our website," Lowe added. As a member of the Teleflora network, Flower Fan-A-See can help you send a beautiful live or

fresh gift to your loved ones across the country or globe. Local Carroll County delivery is also available.

Located at the intersection of US Highways 64 and 78, "We're right on the way to where everyone's going," Lowe said.

The location offers convenient service, great parking and ease of access without steps into the shop.

Lowe understands the importance of giving back to her community. When she is not at the shop, Lowe spends her time teaching local students about flower care in her "Flowers for Kids" program. She is very active in her local Relay for Life chapter, also.

Visit Flower Fan-A-See and receive 15% off live plants, cash & carry only, with your Co-op Connections Card. Open Weekdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call 815-244-1123 or visit www.flowerfanasee.com for your floral needs.



This little card means big SAVINGS!

Jo-Carroll Energy members have saved

\$104,687

on prescriptions as of December 2011 by using their Co-op Connections Card.

In December, members saved \$4,264.68.

We have the Power to **Make a Difference**



Employees at Jo-Carroll Energy embody the spirit of commitment to community, and are giving back to the communities where they live and work. On "T-Shirt Fridays," employees can wear their "Year of the Cooperative" t-shirts by donating a dollar. The money collected is donated to a different local community or charitable organization each month. Groups receiving donations are nominated by employees. To date, employees have raised more than \$400 for these groups. Pictured above is Pastor Floyd West, director of Great River Outreach Center (center), with Jo-Carroll Energy employees Elecia Walter, Cindy Price, Heidi Weber, and Jodi Sweeney.

Learn more at www.jocarroll.com

“Power marketers” may cause confusion

Have you received a telephone call or mailing promising savings on your electric bill for switching power suppliers?

The messages are not intended for Jo-Carroll Energy members. These power marketers, called alternative retail electric suppliers (ARES), are targeting customers of investor-owned utilities, such as ComEd and Ameren.

Unfortunately, these messages have mistakenly gone to many electric co-op members. Co-op members and municipal utility consumers are not intended to be part of this campaign.

The marketing efforts are the result of legislation passed in 1997 that allows investor-owned utility customers to decide who supplies the energy portion of their bill.

The Illinois deregulation law treated not-for-profit, consumer owned utilities - co-ops and municipalities - differently than the for-profit utilities, and did not mandate that these consumer-owned utilities enter the deregulated market. The reasoning was that consumer-owned utilities were already aggregating their buying power, operating on a not-for-profit basis and self-regulating by virtue of their democratic process.

The Citizens Utility Board (CUB) website (www.citizensutilityboard.org) says, “While it’s an interesting development in the electric market, long-term savings are not guaranteed. The jury is still out on whether residential competition is going to bring real value to consumers in the long run.” If you receive a marketing solicitation by phone or in the mail and have questions or concerns, please contact our office. We have more information posted on our website.

Look up and live

Stay safe around power lines

It can be all too easy to overlook things that we see every day — such as overhead power lines. However, failure to notice high voltage power lines can be deadly.

Jo-Carroll Energy encourages everyone to look up and around you. Follow these guidelines as you prepare to work on outdoor projects this year:

- Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long tools like ladders and pruning poles. Be sure to lower your long equipment when you are moving it.
- Be careful when working on or around your roof. Never go up on the roof in windy or bad weather.
- Be especially careful when working near power lines attached to your house. Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from lines.
- Never trim trees near power lines—leave that to the professionals. Never use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines. Contact a professional maintenance contractor.

For more information on electrical safety and to see videos about power line safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.



Stay safe during a flood

Heavy rains can cause flooding in lowland areas, homes and basements. It can happen quickly or over a period of time. Safety measures to keep in mind include:

Stay away from downed power lines.

Be alert to electrical equipment that could be energized and in contact with water, along with other potential hazards that create a serious risk of electrocution.

- Never step into a flooded basement or other room if water may be in contact with electrical outlets, appliances or cords.
- Never attempt to turn off power at the breaker box if you must stand in water to do so. If you cannot reach the breaker box safely, call your electric utility to shut off power at the meter.
- Never use electric appliances or touch electric wires, switches or

fuses when you are wet or when you are standing in water.

- Keep electric tools and equipment at least 10 feet away from wet surfaces.

If you suspect a gas leak don’t light a match, use any electrical appliances, turn lights on or off or use the phone. Leave the area immediately and call your natural gas provider from a neighbor’s phone.

Cleaning up and using water-damaged appliances also carry safety risks. If an electrical appliance has been in contact with water, have a professional check it out before it is used. It may need to be repaired or replaced.

More information can be found on our website.

Board minutes continued from 16b

- would be attending this course.
- e. **“Project Yes” Workshop, January 25 & 26, 2012** – Attendees – All directors and senior staff confirmed their intent to attend the Workshop.
 - f. **2012 Pledge** – APGA Research Foundation (RF) – A motion was approved for a pledge to the APGA Research Foundation.
 - g. **2012 Contribution-International Year of Cooperatives (IYC)** – A motion was approved for a contribution to the International Year of Cooperatives.
 - h. **Resolution Debt Level** – This agenda item was moved to the December Special Meeting agenda.
 - i. **Resolution CFC New Power Vision Loan** – A motion was passed to approve the Resolution.
 - j. **NRECA 2012 Voting Delegate/Alternate** – Director Werner will serve as the voting delegate and Director Stanger will serve as the 2012 alternate voting delegate for the 2012 NRECA Annual Meeting.
 - k. **NRTC 2012 Voting Delegate/Alternate** – Director Mattingley will serve as the voting delegate. Director Senn will serve as the alternate voting delegate for the 2012 NRTC Annual Meeting.
 - l. **CFC 2012 Voting Delegate/Alternate** – Director Carroll will serve as the voting delegate Director Smith to serve as the alternate voting delegate for the 2012 CFC Annual Meeting.
 - m. **Ratify contract with JISP** – A motion was passed to ratify the contract with JISP, Inc. of Stockton, Illinois regarding broadband services.
 - n. **Preliminary 2012 Budget Discussion** – CFO Heidenreich led a discussion on the 2012 budget.
 - o. **Discuss December 6, 2011, 1:00 PM, Special Board Meeting** – Following a discussion, this meeting was cancelled.
 - p. **Discuss February 1, 2012 Board Meeting, move to January 24** – This meeting was moved to January 24, 2012.
 - q. **Discuss August 1, 2012 Board Meeting, move to July 25** – This meeting was moved to July 25, 2012.
 - r. **Set Policy Committee Meeting Date** – A meeting of the Policy Committee was scheduled for immediately following the Board of Directors meeting on January 24, 2012.

Consideration of Matters Discussed

During Executive Session - Motions were passed regarding legal issues related to power supply issues and employee matters.

Reports - The board heard various reports on numerous board activities since the last meeting.

Upcoming Meetings - The Board reviewed a list of upcoming meetings.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 2:25 p.m.

Special Board Meeting • Dec. 19, 2011

The board met at the Cooperative headquarters in Elizabeth on Monday, December 19, 2011. The following is a summary of the meeting activities. The Agenda was approved as modified and the Consent Agenda was approved.

Strategic Activity-Policy Committee Report

- (i) **Revision to Bylaws** – Article IX, Section 2 - A motion was made by Director Lundy that was seconded by Director Smith and carried unanimously to approve the Policy Committee recommended changes to Article IX, Section 2.
- (ii) **Revision to Bylaws** – Article IX, Section 1 - A motion was made by Director Lundy that was seconded by Director Werner and carried unanimously to approve the Policy Committee recommended changes to Article IX, Section 1.
- (iii) **Modification of Board Policy 129** – A motion was made by Director Lundy that was seconded by Director Senn and carried unanimously to approve the Policy Committee recommended changes to Board Policy 129.

CEO Report

- a. **November 2011 Finance Operating Report** – The CEO reported that the Cooperative had an unaudited margin for November of \$387,986.
- b. **IPL Contract Update** – The CEO reviewed the status of the progress on actions taken by the Board of Directors

at the last meeting regarding power supply.

- c. **Dairyland Update** – The CEO advised the Board of a planned increase in power costs from Dairyland Power for 2012. He also reported that the swap agreement with Dairyland has been approved by the Dairyland Power Board of Directors.

Board Items

- a. **Consideration of 2012 Budget** - CEO Hastings reviewed the budget information previously provided to the Board. A motion was passed approving the proposed 2012 budget.
- b. **Approval of 2011 Strategic Plan** - The Board reviewed an itemization of the results of the Strategic Planning meeting previously held at Eagle Ridge Inn. A motion was passed approving the 2011 Strategic Plan for Jo-Carroll Energy.
- c. **Approval of Transaction with Northern Natural Gas** – The CEO reported that discussions have progressed with Northern Natural Gas (NNG) for Jo-Carroll Energy to purchase 1.3 miles of 8-inch gas main which crosses the Mississippi River at Savanna, Illinois. There is also a need for an easement from NNG at their station to allow for use of a maintenance “Pig” and the location of an odorizer. A motion was passed authorizing the transaction with Northern Natural Gas.

- d. **CFC Mortgage Approval and Resolution** – A CFC Mortgage Approval and Resolution was presented to the Board for its consideration. A motion was passed approving the CFC Mortgage Approval and Resolution.

- e. **Set Policy Committee Date** – The next Policy Committee Meeting date was scheduled for after the regular Board meeting, January 24, 2012.

- f. **Set Resolutions Committee Meeting Date** – Director Senn advised the Board that he would meet with Norm Conrad of the AIEC and John Cox and then would schedule a Resolutions Committee Meeting.

Upcoming Meetings - The board reviewed a list of upcoming meetings.

Other Business - Miscellaneous items of other business were discussed by board members regarding the upcoming NRECA Legislative Conference in Washington DC in May as well as the APGA Annual Meeting. There was also a discussion regarding Director Carroll being a member of the Marketing Committee at Jo-Carroll Energy.

Adjournment – The board meeting was adjourned at 3:48 p.m.

**YOU'RE ONLY
AS ENERGY
EFFICIENT AS
YOUR OLDEST
APPLIANCE.**



**That old beast
can cost you
money. Unload
it and save.**

For an energy-smart deal on your next appliance:

- Read the EnergyGuide label (required for refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, clothes washers, water heaters and select HVAC systems)
- Compare the energy use of competing models.
- Estimate their differences in energy costs.
- Consider both purchase price and estimated energy use when deciding which brand and model to buy.

TOGETHERWESAVE.COM

Incentives can help you SAVE

Jo-Carroll Energy's incentive program is designed to help members save money and to promote energy efficiency.

Electric incentives

Purchase one of the following Energy Star rated appliances and receive a \$25 incentive: clothes washer, dehumidifier, dishwasher, refrigerator or window air conditioner.

Lighting energy credits are available as follows:

- \$5 per CFL for minimum 300 watt equivalent (limit 5)
- \$2 per lamp for minimum 5w LED lamp
- \$2 per strand for LED holiday lights
- \$15 per fixture for minimum 30w LED technology security lighting
- \$5 per switch for occupancy sensors

Recycle one of the following and receive \$25: refrigerator, freezer or window air conditioning unit.

Natural gas incentives

All natural gas incentives (available to Jo-Carroll Energy members with current natural gas accounts) are only for fuel switching or new construction.

Install a new natural gas furnace

*Apply for any two natural gas incentives and your natural gas appliance incentive **DOUBLES!***

or boiler as part of new construction or switch to natural gas from propane, fuel oil or electricity provided by another utility to be eligible for an incentive of \$125. (AFUE must be ≥ 95 percent.)

Switch your fuel source for one of the following appliances or install as part of new construction and received a \$50 rebate: natural gas water heater (energy factor $\geq .67$), natural gas stove or natural gas dryer.

Bill credits only

All incentives will be issued in the form of bill credits. Please allow three to five weeks for your request to be processed once proper documentation has been received.

All accounts are eligible for only one rebate per appliance/unit within a 5-year time period.

Items must be purchased and installed between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2012. Claim forms must be returned to Jo-Carroll Energy before Jan. 3, 2013 and include proper documentation. In the case of fuel switching, vendor certification is required.

For energy efficiency incentives on commercial/agriculture/industrial accounts, please call for custom quotes.

Community events

Relay for Life of Carroll County - Survivor Dinner, 3 p.m. Saturday, June 23 at United Methodist Church, 216 S. Main St., Mt. Carroll; Survivor Victory Lap, 6 p.m. at West Carroll Middle School, 633 S. East St., Mt. Carroll. All cancer survivors are invited to celebrate life and the hope for a cure by joining in the Relay For Life Survivor Dinner and Victory Lap. RSVPs for the dinner

are needed. Contact Bev Lundquist at 815-244-9684 with questions.

Galena Rotary Club Roundtable, 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 21, at Eagle Ridge Resort and Spa. Admission is \$40 or \$35 pre-registration. This year's theme is "Blue Gold... WATER, our #1 Liquid Asset," focusing on the importance of clean safe water. Information and pre-registration

forms are available at www.galenarotary.org.

Hi-Lines will publish community events on a space available basis, and reserves the right to refuse items. The newsletter assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of information submitted for publication. To be considered for inclusion, email pfrancomb@jocarroll.com. The May deadline is March 15.

ELECTRICITY: What's it worth to you?



From powering our homes and businesses to energizing entire communities, electricity is one of the most valuable and reliable products we use

Electricity is a great value!

Take a look around — virtually everything is either powered by electricity or produced with the help of electric power. This includes your home appliances and power tools in the garage as well as the energy behind the clothes you wear, the food you eat and the cooled or heated air you breathe.

Here at Jo-Carroll Energy, we have a special responsibility to make sure your electric service is safe, reliable and affordable. But we also believe that when compared to other commodities, electricity remains a great value.

Compare the value of electricity in your life.

From powering our homes and businesses to energizing entire communities, electricity is there when you need it. As consumers, we directly or indirectly use electricity almost all the time. While the per kilowatt hour price of electricity has been on the rise due to government regulations and legislative changes, the contribution of electrical energy in our lives remains one of the best values your dollar can buy.

Over the past 10 years, gasoline has shot up 10.9 percent on average every single year, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. A loaf of white bread has increased 4.2 percent annually and a dozen eggs 6.5 percent per year.

For more than 30 years, the price of the basic unit of electricity has stayed relatively low, while we are using much more electricity to power more items each year.

We are using electricity in new ways: from computers and

cell phones to big-screen televisions; from electronic picture frames to gaming consoles. Our houses are also larger today. In the 1970s, American homes were around 1,500 square feet—now they average more than 2,200 square feet—so we are cooling and heating much more space.

When you consider how reliable electricity is, the value goes up even more. It is an undeniable bargain and one of life's great conveniences.

Increase the value of your energy dollar.

Small changes make big impacts. Find out how little changes add up by taking the free online home tour today. Go to www.TogetherWeSave.com, then click on the picture of the house to begin.

Have you tightened up your home? Have you ever heard of an energy audit? Talk to the experts at Jo-Carroll Energy to meet with you and arrange a time for an energy assessment for your home. We are here to answer your questions and recommend money saving, energy efficiency improvement plans. Some improvements may even qualify for rebates, conservation incentives or low interest loans.

At Jo-Carroll Energy, we are looking out for you by working together to keep electric bills affordable, controlling costs through innovation and putting you, our members, first.

Contact Jo-Carroll Energy at 800-858-5522 or visit our website for energy saving ideas.

Saving energy saves you money!



Students: You can win a week-long trip to Washington, D.C.!

The 2012 Youth to Washington Tour • June 15-22

Visit historic monuments and museums

Meet with U.S. Representatives and Senators

Join hundreds of young people from across the country

High school sophomores, junior or seniors are encouraged to apply

Deadline is March 16

Applications can be downloaded at www.jocarroll.com