

Jo-Carroll Energy • Elizabeth, Illinois • 800-858-5522 • www.jocarroll.com

# JO-CARROLL

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



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Michael Hastings

### Safety First!

Safety has been a part of the fundamental culture at Jo-Carroll Energy since day one. It's a top priority at Jo-Carroll Energy as we provide you with safe, reliable energy and services.

The energy your cooperative provides day-in and day-out is an incredible resource, powering our lives. We work hard to make sure that electricity and natural gas are as safe as they are convenient, but energy must be respected. If safety isn't made a priority, what changes our lives for the better could change them for the worse in an instant.

It's not hard to understand why safety is a priority for us. Working around electricity and natural gas is, at times, a life or death situation for many of our employees. At Jo-Carroll Energy, safety is a main concern for not only those out in the field but all employees. As a result, we work hard to instill a culture of safety that our folks can take home with them and live 24/7.

During the course of the year more than 100 safety meetings are held to ensure we all are following safety rules and regulations in every department of your Cooperative. Safety meetings or trainings are held weekly for our line crews and gas technicians. Pole top and bucket rescue training are conducted for line crews along with other specialized trainings for the crews and technicians. All employees receive safety training four to six times per year including First Aid, CPR and AED training.

Safety is a part of the routine at the cooperative. Vehicles are inspected daily, and tools are inspected twice a year. Fire extinguishers and storage area checks are done on a regular basis.

Our company Safety Committee meets quarterly to review any reported injuries and to review and recommend solutions for safety concerns and guidelines. The committee also reviews

suggestions for our safety program that recognizes employee safety and wellness activities.

Jo-Carroll Energy employees recently received two safety honors during the Safety/Supervisory Technical Conference sponsored by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in Springfield. The awards were the "Best Accident/Illness Record" and "Best Lost Time Record" for 2011.

We also strive to raise safety awareness among our members. Member education to keep you safe is a large focus in our culture of safety. Articles in Hi-Lines, your center section in Illinois Country Living and on our website, emphasize the importance of safety.

In May, we're celebrating Electrical Safety Month. This is a good time to check your home for electrical hazards. Spending a few minutes to check for problems can make all the difference when you're faced with a potentially unsafe situation.

It's also a good time to concentrate on storm safety. Severe storms, tornadoes and flooding can leave more than damage in their wake—they can leave hidden dangers such as downed power lines. Be aware of these dangers, warn others to stay away and contact Jo-Carroll Energy. To stay safe during and after a major storm or natural disaster, develop a family action plan and make sure children are aware of the hazards following a storm.

To learn more about our commitment to safety, visit [www.jocarroll.com](http://www.jocarroll.com). You'll also find a wealth of safety knowledge at [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org). Spending some time with these helpful resources can make all the difference when you're faced with a possible unsafe situation. As always if you have questions or need more information, please call or visit our office.

From all of us at Jo-Carroll Energy, best wishes for a safe and enjoyable summer season.

## 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 • February 29, 2012

The board met at the Cooperative headquarters in Elizabeth on Wednesday, February 29, 2012. 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 reviewed the NRECA Resolutions Committee process. He mentioned the APGA meeting in Florida and briefly discussed the various businesses of the Cooperative commenting on the efforts to follow the strategic plan. Chairman Mattingley then acknowledged Dorothy Young's 30th Anniversary with the Cooperative and thanked her for her service.

**Dairyland Report**-Director Stadel reported that the union contracts were ratified and that the District Meeting went very well. He stated he had a concern regarding the date Dairyland rate increases are made effective annually and the consequence to members.

**AIEC Report**-Director Senn reported on his role as a member of the NRECA Standing Committee on the resolutions process. He has been contacted to consider serving on the Executive Board at AIEC. He reviewed with the Board a discussion held at the AIEC meeting regarding prepaid meters.

**APGA Report**-Director Carroll reported on the APGA meeting and information provided there. Director Holesinger commented on the information provided at the meeting related to improvements in the process of removing gas from shale. He stated that it appears natural gas will be the fuel of choice for many years into the future.

### Monthly Policy Review

- **Policy** - Director Lundy stated that Policy 102.1 entitled Director Elections will be referred to the Policy Committee for further review.
- **Annual Meeting Planning Committee Meeting Report** - Director Holesinger reported on the upcoming Annual Meeting on April 14th at the Thomson-West Carroll Middle School in Thomson, Illinois. Further info will be provided.
- **Resolutions Committee Report** - Director Senn reported that the Resolutions Committee met on Tuesday, February 21, 2012, at 1:05 p.m. at the Cooperative. Committee members decided to direct staff to bring to the Committee recommended changes in existing resolutions. The Committee then agreed to meet immediately following the March 28, 2012, board meeting.

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

- **Financial Operating Report** - The CEO reported the Cooperative had an unaudited margin for January of \$622,055.
- **Power Supply Report** - The CEO reported Interstate Power & Light Company (IPL), said that there is a violation of the terms of the Agreement for 2010 and 2011. IPL has predicted that the cost of power will go down for 2012 and 2013.
- **Biomass Plant Update** - The CEO stated that we are continuing to focus on the possibility of constructing the plant.
- **Farmers Mutual Report** - CEO Hastings stated that conversations continue with Farmers Mutual.
- **Rentech Update** - The CEO stated that the good relationship with Rentech continues.
- **Danisco Update** - The CEO stated that ongoing negotiations with Danisco have resolved all pending issues.
- **TCEDA Update** - The CAO reported that TCEDA has hired a fund raiser and is working with several local businesses who may be considering leaving the area, focused on retention of jobs.
- **Rates** - Tracy Heidenreich reported on the rate study and that she will be reporting on it at the March Board meeting.
- **AIEC Survey** - Simpson reviewed information on the AIEC survey of members regarding the Cooperative efforts.
- **Energy Efficiency Loan Program/Year of the Cooperative** - Heidi Weber gave a presentation on a proposed Residential Energy Efficiency Loan program. A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to approve.
- **COO Report** - Kyle Buros gave a report on the recent outage in Savanna on February 19th. He reported that there were 38 new installs in February for a total of 1,060 units. He discussed the Rentech project reporting that there are numerous compliance issues which must be satisfied. He also reported that the gas pipeline purchase on the Iowa side of the Mississippi has been finalized. He said the Load Swap Agreement with Dairyland Power/IPL has been finalized.
- **Culture of Excellence** - Merri Sevey, Human Resources Manager, reviewed the status of the Culture of Excellence program and reported that significant progress is occurring. Safety Incentive Program - Dorothy Waters, Manager of Safety and Compliance, reported on the Jo-Carroll Energy Safety and Wellness Incentive Award activities and programs.

■ **External Affairs Update** - Cox reported on several activities of the NRECA to encourage legislators to eliminate the freight railroads exemption from Federal antitrust laws. He stated that efforts are proceeding to restrict Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulation of coal ash. Cox stated that the Highway Bill would probably be the last major policy bill of the year where there will be enough deal-making opportunities and home-state incentives to allow lawmakers to bridge their partisan differences.

### Board Issues

- **CRC Voting Delegate & Alternate** - A motion was made, seconded carried unanimously to approve Michael Hastings as the CRC Voting Delegate and Kyle Buros as the alternate for the CRC meeting to be held in San Diego.
- **APGA Legislative Conference Attendees, April 29 - May 2, 2012** - Directors Carroll and Holesinger will be attending.
- **Board Performance Evaluation** - Chairman Mattingley reviewed the process of board performance evaluation.
- **Danisco Letter Agreement** - CEO Hastings described his previous execution of a Letter Agreement with Danisco. A motion was made, seconded carried unanimously to ratify the Letter Agreement with Danisco previously signed by the CEO.
- **Members' concerns** - CEO Hastings reviewed information he had received on recent rate increases.
- **Director Stadel's concern** - Director Stadel raised a concern regarding a business activity to clarify whether or not any conflict of interest would exist with it. The Board and General Counsel determined that there was no conflict.
- **Set Policy Committee Meeting Date** - The next Policy Committee Meeting was scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on March 22, 2012.

The Board then heard reports on various meetings attended by Directors since the last board meeting.

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

**Other Business** - A meeting will be held after the Board meeting to review conflict of interest forms.

**Adjournment** - A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to adjourn the board meeting at 2:33 p.m.

# Does your house need a private investigator?

*Our Energy Detective can help find savings*

**D**oes your home have hidden leaks? If so, you could be spending more on energy than you should. Make an appointment with Jo-Carroll Energy's Energy Detective to help you investigate savings.

A drafty house, rooms that are too hot or too cold and the resulting high energy bills are common issues for homeowners. Installation of a new heating or air conditioning system, buying replacement windows or adding more insulation may fix part of the problem, according to John Scott, the cooperative's energy advisor and resident Energy Detective.

"You really need to find out where your home is inefficient before you can make improvements that make a difference," Scott said. "For better results, you need an integrated, 'whole-house' approach that looks at your house as a system."

Our Energy Detective can provide residential members with a whole house, low-cost energy analysis.

"Never before have we offered such a comprehensive home energy audit program," noted Heidi Weber, manager of member relations and marketing. "The energy audit is conducted by John, who is certified by the Building Performance Institute (BPI) as a building analyst and building envelope professional."

The audit is a complete home examination designed to uncover existing conditions that could potentially cause homeowners to waste energy, resulting in high electric bills.

"Our energy audit includes a diagnostic test measuring the amount of air leakage from within the home and HVAC," Scott said. "Although the analysis focuses mainly on building shell improvements, we also assess appliances and other equipment in the home."

Jo-Carroll Energy offers both a walk-through energy assessment and a whole house energy audit.

Weber noted that a home energy analysis can help connect members to energy efficiency incentives, including Jo-Carroll Energy's own program designed to help members save while promoting energy efficiency.

Jo-Carroll Energy now offers a residential energy efficiency loan program, available to members who own an existing home served by the cooperative and who receive a monthly electric or natural gas bill. The home must be the member's primary residence.

Call 800-858-5522 or visit our website at [www.jocarroll.com](http://www.jocarroll.com) for more information about all of these programs.

## Jo-Carroll Energy

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



## Want to get started on your own?

*This checklist will help get you started. A DIY energy audit, this checklist assists in sizing up your home's energy efficiency.*

### (mini) Home Energy Audit

Clip this list and check each area of your home to see if you're using energy efficiently. Every nook and cranny holds potential inefficiencies, so it pays to be thorough! Visit [www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov) for more information on what's listed below.



#### INSULATION and DUCTWORK

- Attic
  - Insulation spread evenly
  - Insulation in good condition
  - Attic vents are unblocked by insulation
  - Attic access doors properly insulated and sealed

**R-Value** indicates an insulation's resistance to heat flow (the higher the better). Insulation should meet R-values recommended for your specific climate.

#### Walls and floors

- Minimum R-value of 13 for perimeter walls
- Minimum R-value of 25 for under-floor insulation

#### Basement

- Ductwork insulated and sealed
- Hot water pipes insulated
- Water heater insulated, if in unconditioned space

#### HEATING and COOLING

- Air supply vents are unblocked by furniture or curtains
- Return air registers are unblocked by furniture
- Return air handler filters are clean
- HVAC system has had annual maintenance check-up
- Programmable thermostat installed and programmed

#### AIR INFILTRATION

- Windows and Doors
  - Windows close and lock properly
  - Window gaskets in good condition
  - Window trim sealed and painted
  - Doors properly weather stripped
  - Doors close and latch properly

#### Exterior Penetrations

- Plumbing and wire openings sealed:
  - Kitchen cabinets
  - Bathroom cabinets
  - Utility room
- Fireplace damper sealed tightly

#### APPLIANCES and LIGHTING

- Refrigerator condenser coils clean
- Refrigerator door gasket tight
- Unused refrigerators and freezers unplugged
- Water heater set to 120 degrees or below
- Dishwasher energy-saving features turned on
- Washing machine loads run with cold water when possible
- Well Pump**
  - Operating properly
  - Good pressure
  - No leaks
- Lighting**
  - Compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) used
  - Outdoor lighting automatically triggered by motion or dark

Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association



# Be prepared for spring storms

**L**ightning from thunderstorms kills more people each year than tornadoes or hurricanes, according to the American Red Cross. As spring arrives, make sure you're prepared to handle storms that come with the changing season. Follow these tips from the Red Cross to stay safe.

**Stay away from downed power lines.** Electricity could still be flowing through them. Report them to Jo-Carroll Energy at 800-858-5522 (or your electric provider) immediately.

**Hear thunder? Head inside.** If you can hear it, you could be in danger from lightning. Stay indoors at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder—a recommendation from the National Weather Service. If you're outside and can't seek shelter indoors, avoid high ground, water, tall isolated trees, and metal objects like bleachers or fences.

**Unplug your electronics.** Avoid using electrical items and telephones, which can carry power surges. Keep a battery-powered TV or radio on hand for weather updates.

**Delay outdoor activities.** If conditions are right for a thunderstorm, postpone the baseball game and stay inside—it doesn't have to be raining for lightning to strike.

## Assemble an emergency preparedness kit with

- Water—one gallon per person, per day;
- Non-perishable food;
- Flashlight;
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (preferably NOAA weather radio) and extra batteries;
- First-aid kit;
- Seven-day medicine supply;
- Copies of personal documents;
- Cell phone with chargers;
- Emergency contact information; and
- Cash.



# Tips for avoiding hazards after severe weather

Storms with high-speed winds, heavy rains, and lightning can be frightening events. After a storm, your first instinct might be to return to life as usual, but safety is as important after the storm as it is during the storm.

Jo-Carroll Energy recommends the following safety precautions:

- Just because power lines are damaged does not mean they are dead. Downed power lines, stray wires, and debris in contact with them all have the potential to deliver a fatal shock. Stay away, and instruct others to do the same.
- Never enter a flooded basement if electrical outlets are under water. The water could be energized.
- Do not turn power off if you must stand in water to do so. Call your power company, and have them turn off power at the meter.
- Before entering storm-damaged buildings, make sure electricity and gas are turned off.



- Do not use water-damaged electronics before properly restoring them. Electric motors in appliances should be cleaned and reconditioned before use. It may be necessary to replace some of your appliances and electronics. Have your water-damaged items inspected and approved by a professional before using them.
- If you are driving and come along a downed power line, stay away and warn others to stay away. Contact

emergency personnel or your utility company to address the downed power line. If you do come in contact with a downed power line, do not leave the car. Wait for utility and emergency professionals to make sure the power line is de-energized before exiting the car.

- If you clean-up outdoors after a storm, do not use electronic equipment when it is raining or the ground is wet.



## Ag safety around electricity

**D**uring planting and harvest seasons, the days can get long and hectic. We've put together some reminders to keep you safe around the farm this spring.

### What to do if contact is made with power lines

It's almost always best to stay in the cab, call for help and wait until the electric utility arrives to make sure the power to the line is cut off. If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path and electrocution is the result.

Even if a power line is on the


ground, there is still potential for the area nearby to become energized. Stay inside the vehicle unless there is fire or imminent risk of fire.

In case of fire, the proper action is to JUMP—not step—with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Jump clear, without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. Then continue to shuffle or hop to safety keeping both feet together as you leave the area. Be sure that at no time you or anyone touches the equipment and the ground at the same time. The operator should never simply step out of the vehicle. The person must JUMP clear.

### Check your clearance height

Farmers may want to consider moving or burying power lines around buildings or busy pathways. If planning a new out building or farm structure, contact your power supplier for information on minimum safe clearances from overhead and underground power lines. Ask for assistance if you need the line height measured—remember, no one should attempt this on their own without professional assistance.

*Memorial Day*

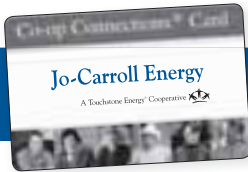


Jo-Carroll Energy's offices will be closed on Monday, May 28 in observance of Memorial Day.

**It took years to make it a farm...  
It takes one call to keep it safe.**



**811**  
Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.



## Bear's Drive-Inn, Thomson

The Creamy Dreamy Monster Cookie and Pineapple Upside Down Cake are two creations new to Bear's Drive-Inn this 2012 season. These sweet menu items are inspired by last year's employees and many loyal customers. Eric Paruch, a Chicago native and owner of Bear's Drive-Inn, is also sharing some of his roots with the addition of Italian sausage and Vienna beef hot dogs.

**Dena Olson**  
Everyone who has ever visited Bear's knows that friendly customer service is expected. "We're not perfect, but I teach everyone to care," stated Sue Prins, manager for 15 years.

For many of the employees, Bear's is their first job and it is Prins' job to give them an idea of what is expected in the work environment. She leads through example, and everyone has a lot of fun in the process.

"When my parents purchased the business, we were told that it was established in 1959," said Paruch. Prins recalls visiting Bear's as a child with her grandparents, and has been in love with the place ever since.

Paruch and his family have owned Bear's for three years now and love working in the community of Thomson. Paruch's father worked in the Savanna area before he and his family moved to Roselle. They have since purchased a home in the Riverview area of Thomson and the well-established, local restaurant.

Paruch and Prins both enjoy cooking. "People crave our food," stated Prins. Any combination of a meal or desert can be made as long as the ingredients are in stock. From a simple hamburger to a shrimp dinner and any arrangement of ice cream, chocolate and sweets, Bear's is the place to go.

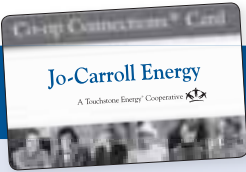


March 12 marked the 2012 season opening day for Bear's, which will remain open into the fall. The windows close at 8 p.m. in the spring and fall but are open until 10 p.m. in June and July.

Walk or drive over and see the big impact this little drive-inn is making on its community. Memories are made at Bear's.

*10% off any order over \$5.00 is awarded to Jo-Carroll Energy members who present their Co-op Connections Card at purchase. Visit Bear's on Route 84 in Thomson, call 815-259-2586 or visit their Facebook page for more information.*





## New businesses and savings

**15%**  
off all regular priced items

*New Co-op Connections Card Business!*  
**Apple River Canyon Photography**  
**815-745-2536**

www.backephotography.com  
9033 E. Canyon Rd. Apple River, IL 61001

**15%**  
off all regular priced items

*New Co-op Connections Card Business!*  
**Peaceful Pines Guesthouse**  
**815-745-2536**

www.peacefulpines.net  
9033 E. Canyon Rd. Apple River, IL 61001

**10%**  
off labor charges,  
must request at  
time of project  
scheduling

*New Co-op Connections Card Business!*  
**Trankamp Electric**  
**563-682-7944**

21 Country Rd. Miles, IA 52064

**10%**  
off water heaters

*New Co-op Connections Card Business!*  
**True Value Home & Building Center**  
**815-273-4304**

115 Main St. Savanna, IL 61074

**10%**  
off all in stock cell phone accessories

*New Co-op Connections Card Business!*  
**Stebbins Appliance**  
**815-273-4717**

www.stebbinsappliance.com  
1020 Viaduct Rd. Savanna, IL 61074

**10%**  
excludes  
cleaning fee  
Stay 2 nights, receive 10% off of rates,

*New Co-op Connections Card Business!*  
**Galena, IL Vacation Rental Homes**  
**630-971-2042**

www.vrbo.com/323494  
15 Washburne Ln. Galena, IL 61036

### Healthy Savings are new benefit of Co-op Connections Card

Jo-Carroll Energy's Co-op Connections® program can save you even more. The card that offers discounts at 54 local merchants and has saved members more than \$122,000 on prescriptions now offers members significant savings on chiropractic, dental and vision.

The Healthy Savings package is available at no cost to members who print paper cards from www.healthy-savings.coop and show it at participating providers. This new benefit is part of a commitment to helping members save during challenging economic times.

To locate providers who participate in the Healthy Savings program, call 800-800-7616 with your card handy or visit www.healthysavings.coop. Savings examples include 10 to 60 percent off eyeglasses, contact lenses and eye exams; 20 to 40 percent discounts on a range of dental care services; and 30 percent off chiropractic treatments.

If you do not have access to the internet, please call Jo-Carroll Energy and someone will assist you.

The Healthy Savings package is not insurance nor is it intended to replace insurance. This plan provides discounts at certain participating providers. This plan does not make payments directly to the providers of medical services. The member is obligated to pay for all healthcare services but will receive a discount from those providers who have contracted with the discount plan organization.

## Share your favorite photos in our calendar contest

**D**on't forget to enter your favorite photos in Jo-Carroll Energy's 2013 calendar contest.

You can participate by sending in photos that represent life in our service territory—whether they're action photos or scenic landscapes. Winning submissions will be

featured in our 2013 Jo-Carroll Energy calendar.

Entry deadline is June 30, 2012. The contest is limited to members of Jo-Carroll Energy. All photos must be the original work of the entrant and be taken within the Jo-Carroll Energy service area.

For complete rules and entry information, visit [www.jocarroll.com](http://www.jocarroll.com). For additional information, contact Peggy Francomb, corporate communications manager, at 800-858-5522.

# Budget billing accounts recalculate in May

Members with budget billing for their electric or gas accounts will have their budget amounts recalculated in May.

Because your budget amount is based on an average of the previous 12 months' actual charges and payments, the May recalculation could result in a higher or lower monthly budget amount than what you pay now.

The billing statement you receive in May will show your new budget amount. If a change results from the recalculation, a message will appear on your statement 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 June.

Budget billing can help you manage your energy costs by allowing you to allocate the same amount each month to your account. Monthly utility bills can vary significantly throughout the year due to variations in your usage through heating and cooling seasons. With Jo-Carroll Energy's budget billing plan, you eliminate the month-

to-month fluctuations caused by changing weather and usage patterns.

If you have any questions regarding budget billing or your budget bill account with Jo-Carroll Energy, please contact the Member Services Department at (800) 858-5522. You can find more information about budget billing on our website at [www.jocarroll.com](http://www.jocarroll.com).

Care. Share. Connect.

More than *just* Internet service.

**36%**  
Average savings on prescription medication in March 2012

We care about you—we save you more.

When you choose Sand Prairie Wireless, you become a member of the Jo-Carroll Energy cooperative and save even more.

Co-op members have saved **more than \$122,000** on prescription drugs by using their Co-op Connections card since the program began in 2008. How much more could you be saving?

**Sand Prairie** WIRELESS  
Connecting our members to the world.  
A service of Jo-Carroll Energy

Learn more: [connectSP.com](http://connectSP.com) or call toll-free: 877.571.9851