

# POWERLINE

NEWSLETTER FOR CO-OP MEMBERS OF CORN BELT ENERGY



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## Corn Belt Energy adds a new spin to the classic car show

Dozens of local electric vehicles lined the parking lot of Corn Belt Energy's Bloomington office on Friday, July 19, for the Corn Belt Energy Electric Vehicle Drive-In. This new take on the classic car show showcased local electric vehicles from across Central Illinois.

Alongside the 35 vehicles lined up for the event, owners consisting of both Corn Belt Energy members and non-members sat in chairs or stood next to their electric vehicles and talked with those who passed by about their cars.

The dialog about the electric vehicles was just as hot as the weather and the heat and humidity on that July evening, but it didn't stop hundreds of people from attending this fun, family night out.

The sleek cars which included the Tesla Model 3, Tesla Model S and Corn Belt Energy's Chevy Bolt, weren't the only eye-catchers at the car show. A number of vendors were on hand including two local food trucks, Carl's ice cream, and free mini-golf to keep the kids entertained.

Local car dealers offered test drives of their current electric vehicle models and a couple of the electric vehicle owners even took a few people for rides allowing attendees a taste of what an electric vehicle has to offer.



Corn Belt Energy is proud to support the growing local electric vehicle community. If you have questions about electric vehicles or are interested in our electric vehicle pilot rate program, please contact our energy advisor Jeremy Myers at [jeremy.myers@cornbeltenergy.com](mailto:jeremy.myers@cornbeltenergy.com) or 800-879-0339 x221.



## From devastation to restoration - The Barn III brings joy to those who visit this unique venue

In a rural town like Goodfield, Illinois, an oversized red barn does not appear out of place. This is no ordinary barn though.

Surrounded by cornfields and patches of timber, the original barn was built in 1941 for use as a cattle sale barn. It was repurposed for use as a dinner theater, a joint venture between Chaunce Conklin and Mary Simon, in 1975. “Conklin Players Dinner Theater” enjoyed its

heydays in the early 1980’s, with as many as 13 shows and 2,000 guests per week. After a brief closure from 1994-1995, the barn reopened as “Conklin’s Barn II” and remained a community landmark until August 2015, when a windstorm caused severe damage to the structure and it was later deemed unsafe and unrepairable. In November of 2017, the structure was largely demolished.

Around the time of the planned demolition, the neighboring property, a historic home with ties to Abraham Lincoln, had been listed for sale and captured the attention of nearby Congerville, Illinois, native Abby Reel. Abby, whose family were longtime friends of the dinner theater, originally took an interest in the “brick house” next to the barn as a potential business investment related to her wedding linen business. The timing

of purchasing the brick house and feeling the community’s devastation over the demolition of the beloved barn, started wheels turning in

**“If it weren’t for Mary, and the connection to that loyal audience, and their support, that’s what we needed to get the bank’s attention”**

**– Abby Reel**

Abby’s mind. With a phone call to then barn owner Mary Simon, a new plan was born to resurrect the community landmark.

A fundraising campaign was created and well supported by the community. Enough so that Abby, with Mary by her side, was able to achieve the difficult task of securing a Small Business Administration Loan for the purchase and rebuilding of the property.



# Meet our employees

In summer of 2018, construction began on “The Barn III”. Douglas Fir was shipped in from Washington state and assembled “like legos” in a traditional, yet modern, peg-barn fashion.

Along with her plan to recreate the dinner theater aspect of the barn, Abby utilized her experience in the wedding industry to create a dual business venture for the structure. Before there were even walls or beams in place, Abby had booked her first wedding at The Barn III. Wedding bookings continued to pour in throughout phases of the building process, based on nothing more than architect renderings of what the barn would look like, and faith in Abby’s vision and enthusiasm.

While Abby took over ownership of the barn, Mary Simon maintained an integral role in the rebuilding, and remains on staff today as “Managing Director”. Mary’s 40+ years in theater offers The Barn III a network of more than 20 actors for use in various shows, which are hand selected by Mary.

The Barn III opened its doors on February 7, 2019, with the dinner show “Death by Golf” and immediately experienced sold out crowds despite miserable winter weather. “Nana’s Naughty Knickers” followed, which was the show in rehearsal the night of that 2015 windstorm. The first wedding was hosted at The Barn III on May 5th, 2019, with a “Cinco de Mayo” theme. Abby prides her staff on offering “above and beyond” service to their wedding clientele, from custom building donut bars, cigar bars, and smores bars, to having the entire wait staff dress up as Disney characters for a Disney-themed wedding. Future plans for

The Barn III include upgrades to the outdoor space such as a pergola-covered patio to allow for smaller, outdoor, event bookings at the scenic location.

“We’re glad to be back in Central Illinois, and we really treasure the fact that Corn Belt Energy has worked with us and that they’re still with us and that we have a new way to approach it, in their energy savings, and they’ve helped us with that. We’re really very excited about it. We feel like we’re all a part of the same community and we love that we’re able to still continue to do this, and to have them be such a supporter of us.”

-Mary Simon

Corn Belt Energy was pleased to work with The Barn III to provide over \$5,000 in rebates for lighting and HVAC upgrades. Inefficient, decades old stage lighting, as well as all decorative lighting, was all replaced with energy efficient LED’s.



For information about available rebates for your home or business, contact Jeremy Myers at [jeremy.myers@cornbeltenergy.com](mailto:jeremy.myers@cornbeltenergy.com) or by calling 800-879-0339 ext. 221.

Dinner theatre tickets for The Barn III can be purchased online at [www.thebarniii.com](http://www.thebarniii.com) or by calling 309-965-2545.



**Susan Bohm**  
Plant Accountant

*How long have you worked at Corn Belt Energy?*

**18 years**

*What is your role at Corn Belt Energy?*

**My role is to maintain plant records, review all completed work for accuracy and other accounting duties.**

*What aspect of your role do you enjoy the most?*

**I enjoy reviewing the completed work and putting all the pieces together. What I mean by that is taking the materials put in the field and transferring that to the plant records.**

*If there is one piece of advice that you could share with our members, what would it be?*

**Always treat everyone with respect and kindness.**

*Corn Belt Energy puts SAFETY FIRST. What safety tip would you share with our members?*

**Always treat downed lines as live. Electricity is invisible until you touch it!**

*What are your hobbies and outside interests?*

**I enjoy genealogy, reading, and walking.**

*Who or what inspires you?*

**I am passionate about preserving family history. So many times we get wrapped up in the here and now not taking time to listen to the older generation's stories.**

*If you had to select a hashtag to describe yourself, what would it be?*

**#familyfirst**



## 2020 education grant applications now available

Corn Belt Energy is now accepting applications for our 2020 Education Grants Program. Five schools that serve children of Corn Belt Energy electric members will each be awarded a \$1,500 grant and one school will be awarded the \$2,000 Jeff Reeves Memorial Education Grant to fund innovative programs that enrich students' education.

Teachers and administrators of public or private K-12 schools may

apply; the facility does not need to receive electricity from Corn Belt Energy, but must serve families within our footprint in Central Illinois. Multiple projects within the same school can be combined to a total of the awarded grant amount.

An impartial panel of judges will review the grant applications and preference will be given to projects and programs that enhance learning and are not currently being funded

through the school's budget.

The application deadline for the 2020 Education Grants is December 31, 2019. Applications and further details can be found online at [www.cornbeltenergy.com](http://www.cornbeltenergy.com).

For more information, please contact Hillary Cherry, Director of Communications & Marketing at 1-800-879-0339 x250 or via email at [hillary.cherry@cornbeltenergy.com](mailto:hillary.cherry@cornbeltenergy.com).

## Levelized billing



Levelized Billing gives you a way to guard against large fluctuations in your monthly electric bill, without ever having to play "catch-up" at the end of the year. With Levelized Billing, your monthly electric bill becomes a "rolling average" of your electric usage for the most recent 12 months. By averaging your changes in usage over a 12-month

period, your bill will remain fairly consistent every month, even in very cold or hot months when usage may be significantly higher.

Our Levelized Billing program is completely free for members with accounts in good standing and with at least 12 months of service history.

Members can deactivate the Levelized Billing program at any time by contacting our Billing Department. If a member on Levelized Billing becomes delinquent or enters into a delayed payment agreement, they will be removed from the program.

### CONTACT US

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