

HI-LINES

A NEWSLETTER FOR JO-CARROLL ENERGY MEMBERS

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Elizabeth, Illinois



800-858-5522



www.jocarroll.com



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A look back on the year

Our cooperative strategic objectives developed by your board guide us. As we near the end of the year, I would like to share with you a few of our accomplishments relevant to those objectives.

Cooperative growth

- **Broadband** – Awarded approximately \$19 million in grant funds to provide fiber to unserved and underserved areas. Currently more than 1,000 members are enjoying the benefits of fiber.
- **Natural gas** – Burns Road natural gas expansion project has increased capacity in the area and is providing new services to residential and agricultural members. Reliability to our Erie service area will also be improved.
- **Electric** – We continue to add new members and consider opportunities for beneficial electrification such as electric vehicle charging, geothermal, etc.

Enhance cooperative value

- **Member engagement** – As of print deadline in November, we have had more than 90,000 member contacts through email and direct mail. This year we have reached more than 10,000 members on multiple occasions through emails to provide you information on important programs or announcements. What is spectacular about you, our members, is that the opened percentage ranged as high as



CEO'S REPORT
by Mike Casper

69 percent. You can also follow us on Facebook. If you aren't already, please follow us for important notices that provide outage updates, as well as news on programs that could save you money.

- **Solar** – We have helped our members interconnect 9 megawatts of solar capacity. Jo-Carroll was also successful in benefiting from state incentives to build two new community solar projects. Details on the program can be located at jocarroll.com/communitysolar.

Operational excellence

Our greatest operational accomplishment of the year was transitioning most of our Jo-Carroll team in less than two weeks working from home. And doing so without missing a beat in continuing to effectively serve and engage our members. I am blessed to lead an incredible team who worked together to overcome obstacles and develop solutions.

2021 Calendars available!

Our 2021 Photo Calendar is here. Copies can be picked up from brochure holders located outside our offices.

For your information

Your Board of Directors:

David Senn

Chairman
District 7

Russell Holesinger

Vice Chairman
District 8

Marcia Stanger

Secretary
District 3

Martin Werner

District 1

Joseph Mattingley

District 2

Dan Tindell

District 4

Patricia Smith

District 5

Thomas Lundy

District 6

Larry Carroll

District 9

Robert Kuhns

Treasurer
District 10

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

Jo-Carroll Energy Board Meeting Minutes Summary

Board Meeting Minutes Summary - Sept. 30, 2020

The regular board meeting of Jo-Carroll Energy, Inc. (NFP) was held via video phone conference on Wednesday, September 30, 2020 at 9 a.m.

A Safety Moment was provided by Director Marty Werner.

Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) Report – Chairman Senn discussed the Illinois Commerce Commission's (ICC) announcement regarding the moratorium for disconnections. Senn also highlighted the energy efficiency technologies made possible with fiber internet.

American Public Gas Association (APGA) Report – Director Carroll discussed the latest topics within the gas industry, noting that APGA continues to meet virtually with a series of online member educational events.

Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) – Director Mattingley noted that the DPC Finance Committee approved a recommendation for a 4th quarter rate credit. A recommendation for development of a fiber deployment task force was also made.

Prairie Power Incorporated (PPI) Report – Director Kuhns provided a summary of the most recent generation numbers. President and CEO Mike Casper added that while many Illinois coal plants are closing, PPI continues to be a leader amongst the industry in producing clean and efficient power at the Prairie State campus.

Policy 140 – Policy 140/Fraud was tabled for further review.

Financial Operating Report – CFO Woods provided a summary of the financial operating report. YTD revenue is approximately \$39 million vs. a budgeted amount of \$39.5 million. Total operations and maintenance expenses were approximately \$916,000 over budget of \$34 million due primarily to the cost of purchased power. All other O&M expenses are under budget by \$351,054. YTD margins are approximately (\$986,000) vs a budgeted amount of approximately (\$513,000). In addition to the financial summary report, Woods also provided a summary of the Long-Range Financial Forecast Report.

Board Issues and Action Items

A motion was made, seconded, and carried

unanimously to approve the RC-1 Credit Rider Policy for large loads, which was made available by Dairyland Power.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve the Illinois Bank and Trust extension of the line of credit. Director Mattingley was not present for the discussion or vote.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve new broadband add-on services and the associated rate policies 808,810,811, and 812.

Operations and Regulatory Update

Operations Update – Kyle Buros, Senior Vice President and Assistant General Manager provided an operations update and discussed the progress of the fiber installations, noting that approximately 320 new accounts have been added and approximately 120 have switched from wireless to fiber. Buros also commented on the natural gas expansion project taking place on Burns Road.

Regulatory Update – Chris Allendorf, V.P. of External Relations and General Counsel provided an update on Covid-19 in the area. Allendorf also provided commentary on the Progressive Tax Amendment that Illinois is proposing.

Jennifer Meyer, V.P. of Member Services, discussed the voluntary extension of the moratorium on disconnects by some regulated utilities due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Meyer stated that Jo-Carroll Energy was reinstating disconnects for non-payment if those members did not set up a payment arrangement or were in default. The cooperative will continue to voluntarily suspend disconnects for extreme temperatures in line with the ICC Code for regulated utilities.

Action Resulting from Executive Session – None.

Other Business – None.

Adjournment – Chairman Senn adjourned the meeting at 12:07 p.m.



Warm someone's heart this holiday season.

Give them the gift of energy.

HOLIDAY ENERGY CREDITS

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.

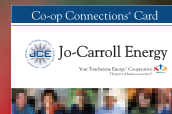
Ask any member service representative for more information 800-858-5522.

MORE SAVINGS, MORE DECORATING.

Remember to shop local this holiday season.

The one card that does it all.

Connections.coop



JCE receives \$14 million grant for rural high-speed broadband

A \$14 million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture will accelerate buildout of high-speed fiber internet to rural areas by Jo-Carroll Energy's broadband division, Sand Prairie.

USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Bette Brand was in Elizabeth on Monday, Oct. 19 to announce the investment to provide broadband service in unserved and underserved

rural areas in Illinois. The grant is part of the \$550 million Congress allocated to the second round of the ReConnect program.

"In this day and age, all of America needs robust, modern infrastructure to thrive. This is a necessity and not an amenity," Brand said. "This pandemic has only highlighted the digital divide even more."

"If you have access to high-speed broadband internet, you can incorporate precision agriculture technology into your agribusiness. You can participate in distance learning, both for you and your children or grandchildren. You can access life-saving medical services remotely using telemedicine.



Mike Casper, JCE president and CEO, says the award of a \$14 million ReConnect grant means "the future" to the cooperative's members. Announcement of the grant award was made during a media event at JCE's Elizabeth headquarters on Oct. 19.

And you can continue to run your business and keep your staff employed all from your home," she continued. "The USDA is fully committed to deploying high-speed internet e-connectivity to the nation's rural communities for all of those reasons."

Jo-Carroll Energy and Sand Prairie will use the \$14 million grant to bring high-speed fiber broadband access to an area covering approximately 250 square miles in portions of Jo Daviess, Stephenson, Carroll and Whiteside counties.

Mike Casper, JCE president and CEO, thanked the USDA for recognizing the importance of high-speed broadband in rural America.

Asked the question what the grant means to members, Casper said, "Two simple words, the future. Successful growth in rural America and economic development depends on a robust infrastructure, fiber being an essential component."

Echoing Brand's earlier comments, Casper noted the impact fiber will have on agriculture, education and telemedicine.

"With rural high-speed broadband, our farming community can, more broadly, utilize advanced technologies to improve efficiencies," Casper continued. "Our commercial and industrial members will be on a level playing field with their urban and global competitors. More of our members can

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.

successfully work, improve their education and receive medical care from home while enjoying the beauty and safety of rural America.”

Brand said the USDA is committed to leveraging all available resources and being a strong partner to rural communities in deploying high-speed broadband e-connectivity to the people, businesses and community facilities that don't yet have access.

“Jo-Carroll is setting a great example for the rest of the country right here in Illinois,” Brand said. “They are showing

that no household, no business, no person should be left behind in this critical infrastructure deployment.”

Sand Prairie anticipates construction in the grant project area to begin sometime in 2021 after necessary environmental studies and paperwork have been completed. Information about the multi-year construction build-out schedule and milestones for the project will be updated on the Fiber Communities map on connectsp.com as plans are finalized.

The ReConnect grant is the third award for Sand Prairie fiber


that Jo-Carroll has received in 2020. In March, the co-op was awarded a \$2 million Community Connect grant. That grant is being used to bring fiber access to 300 homes in an area encompassing a substantial portion of the northern side of The Galena Territory in rural Jo Daviess County. In June, the cooperative was awarded a \$3 million Connect Illinois grant. Details of that grant are still under review.



A reporter interviews USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Rural Development Bette Brand (center) following an announcement of a \$14 million ReConnect grant for rural broadband. JCE's Sand Prairie broadband division will use the grant to bring fiber internet to rural areas.



To view a map of the grant areas, visit connectsp.com/fiber/communities/usda2020



Holiday Closings

Jo-Carroll Energy will be closed
Christmas Eve and Christmas, Dec. 24-25
New Year's Day, Jan. 1

Please remember that our offices continue to be closed to walk-in traffic

Four ways Santa saves energy in his workshop



The holiday season is finally upon us, and Santa and his elves have been especially busy as they gear up for their biggest night of the year. It's no secret that Santa is known for running an efficient workshop – how else could he make all those toys in time for Christmas? Rumor has it, one way Santa ensures an efficient workspace is through energy-saving measures.

Here are four ways Santa saves energy in his workshop.

1. Santa leaves his decorations up year-round, so by using LED holiday light strands, he's able to save on his monthly energy bills. LED holiday strands can last up to 40 seasons, which make them a great option for any festive home.
2. Santa requires several power tools to make a year's worth of new toys. That's why he insists on using cordless power tools with the ENERGY STAR rating. According to energystar.gov, if all power tools in the U.S. used ENERGY STAR-rated battery chargers, 2 billion kWh hours of electricity could be saved – that's equivalent to

reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 1.7 million tons!

3. Mrs. Claus loves to keep warm by the fire in the evenings, and Santa knows one of the best tricks to ensure fireplace efficiency. While a fireplace can keep a small area of your home cozy and warm, it can also pull heated air from the room through the chimney. That's why Santa always closes the fireplace flue when a fire isn't burning. *John Thiltgen*
4. Santa saves energy by using power strips. Power strips are ideal for workshops, craft nooks, game rooms and throughout your home. With one simple switch, you can control several devices and electronics plugged into the power strip.

This holiday season, let's take a page from Santa's book and remember to save energy when possible. With these tips, you'll be on your way to savings and Santa's "nice" list!



Holiday Efficiency Tips





Scholarship opportunities!





Jo-Carroll Energy will award up to \$25,000 to students from its service territory through its scholarship program. In addition, Illinois electric co-ops in 2021 will award 12 academic scholarships to high school seniors from across Illinois through a memorial scholarship fund.


The Jo-Carroll Energy Scholarship Program:

 Jo-Carroll Energy Scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 (two awarded in both Jo Daviess and Carroll counties and one in both Whiteside and Henry counties) to current high school seniors whose parents or guardians are members of Jo-Carroll Energy.

 \$1,000 scholarships (one awarded in each county of the cooperative's service territory) for students who will attend two-year, technical or trade schools.

 lineworker scholarships in the amount of \$2,000 each to students who plan to attend lineworker school.

 \$1,500 scholarships (one awarded in each county of the cooperative's service territory) for adult or "non-traditional" students, cooperative members who are returning to school or will attend a post-secondary or accredited training program for the first time.

 "Director's Scholarships" of \$500 each to be awarded to students from the cooperative's 10 director districts. Current high school seniors, whose parents are members of Jo-Carroll Energy, are eligible for these scholarships. Attendance at the cooperative's annual meeting is required; award is by drawing. (If we are unable to hold an "in person" annual meeting in 2021, drawings will be conducted during a virtual meeting.)


Application deadline for all scholarships except Director's is March 1, 2021; Director's Scholarship


deadline is May 1, 2021. Complete requirements and applications are on jocarroll.com/scholarship-program


All Jo-Carroll Energy scholarships are funded by unclaimed and donated capital credits. Applications must be submitted online at jocarroll.com.


IEC Memorial Scholarships available

Twelve \$2,000 scholarships will be awarded in 2021 through the Thomas H. Moore IEC Memorial Scholarship Program.

 6 scholarships awarded to high school seniors who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members.

 4 scholarships for high school seniors enrolling full time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric co-op members, employees or directors.

 1 Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship awarded to a high school senior who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric co-op employee or director.

 1 LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship awarded to a student attending lineworker school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, Ill.

Deadline to apply is Dec. 31, 2020. The lineworker scholarship deadline is April 30, 2021. For more information, go to aiec.coop/iec-scholarship or jocarroll.com.

For more information regarding any of the Jo-Carroll or IEC scholarships, contact Peggy Francomb, Jo-Carroll Energy manager of communications and marketing, at pfrancomb@jocarroll.com.

money back to YOU!

Jo-Carroll Energy to retire capital credits



As a cooperative, Jo-Carroll Energy belongs to the members we serve. We work hard to safely and efficiently deliver affordable, reliable energy and broadband to our members.

And being a co-op member has benefits. We share excess revenue back with the people we serve over time. It's one of the things that sets co-ops apart.

We return that revenue in the form of capital credits, which represent your ownership in the cooperative. This December, Jo-Carroll Energy will retire capital credits totaling approximately \$883,000. The JCE Board of Directors approved the retirement at its October meeting.

Approximately 22,000 members and former members will receive a check or bill credit in December for their capital credits.

Receiving capital credits is a unique aspect of being a cooperative member and owner. Capital credits represent your investment in Jo-Carroll

Energy. Your retirement is based on energy purchased in 1994 and/or through 2018, and is a direct benefit of your cooperative membership in Jo-Carroll Energy.

This amount is for the total credits you earned in 1995 plus 5% of all remaining credits earned from 1996 through 2019, at a discounted rate. Capital credits are based on how much energy you purchased during those years.

Active members who receive capital credits up to \$599.99 will see this as a bill credit on their December statement.

Active members with retirements of \$600 or more and all inactive members receive checks. (The minimum check amount is \$10, any less than \$10 are carried over until the minimum is reached.)

Jo-Carroll Energy is proud to support our members and communities by putting money back into the pockets of those we serve.