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JO-CARROLL

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



HI-LINES



Jo-Carroll Committed to its Communities

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Michael Hastings

When rural electric cooperatives brought power to areas no one else could or would serve, you could say they were investing in economic development. Farms prospered; businesses thrived; new housing developments sprung up. Co-ops across the country lighted the way for economic vitality.

Through the years Jo-Carroll Energy, its directors and employees, have filled essential roles as community leaders. Community and economic development are not just good business but are an essential part of the cooperative principles – "cooperatives work for the sustained development of their communities." We know that small, rural communities are often dependent on a few employers to keep local economies alive.

In the past two decades our region of northwest Illinois has seen factories close their doors, businesses move off our Main Streets and populations decline as jobs have slipped away. As the recession refused to relinquish its grip on the nation, Carroll and Whiteside counties both saw unemployment figures top 10 percent in September of last year.

The cooperative took a major leadership step last year with the founding of the Tri-County Economic Development Alliance (TCEDA), a regional public/private partnership to promote, encourage and support industrial and economic development in Jo Daviess, Carroll and Whiteside counties. Jo-Carroll Energy

and TCEDA are committed to helping our communities grow and creating new jobs. I am delighted with the recent hiring of Randy Prasse, the new Executive Director of TCEDA. Hired after an extensive search, Prasse plans to hit the ground running to assist with economic development in our region.

Just as Jo-Carroll Energy provided the catalyst for TCEDA, the sale of the under-utilized Thomson Correctional Center to the federal government will provide a much needed boost to our local economy and offer more opportunities to the residents of northwest Illinois. The initiative potentially means an influx of jobs and people, creating a ripple effect throughout the region's economy. An increased need for goods and services will benefit small businesses, the local housing industry and our schools.

Quality of life is dependent on the availability of jobs and good wages. Good jobs will ensure that people will want to live and work in our communities.

Jo-Carroll Energy is firmly rooted in the communities we serve. Growing our communities grows the cooperative and benefits us all. Jo-Carroll Energy is more than just an energy co-op, it is an important component of the economic development efforts in the communities we serve.

While keeping the lights on and the gas flowing is our reason for being, improving the quality of life of our members is our mission — our commitment to you.

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

United States® Census 2010

IT'S IN OUR HANDS

When the 2010 Census form arrives for your household in March 2010, you may wonder why the U.S. Census Bureau counts the number of people in our nation every decade. The answers might surprise you.

First and foremost, the Constitution of the United States mandates that every person living in the United States must be counted every 10 years. This includes people of all ages, races, ethnic groups – citizens and noncitizens. The purpose of the census is primarily to reapportion the U.S. House of Representatives based on population, but census data also are used to determine the locations for schools, housing, child-care and senior centers,

shopping centers, businesses, roads and more. These improvements can have a significant impact on the lives of everyone in the community.

Did you know that every year, the federal government distributes more than \$400 billion to state, local and tribal governments based on census data? That means an accurate count of the population can result in significant improvements in the quality of life in communities all across the country. Jo-Carroll Energy is partnering with the U.S. Census Bureau to raise awareness of the 2010 Census and help achieve a complete and accurate count of the growing and changing U.S. population.

Completing the census form is easy, important and safe, and everyone's participation is vital. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share respondents' answers with anyone, including other federal agencies and law enforcement entities. All Census Bureau employees take an oath of nondisclosure and are sworn for life to protect the confidentiality of the data. The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment of up to five years, or both.

One of the shortest census forms in history, the 2010 Census form asks 10 questions and takes about 10 minutes to complete. Census forms will be delivered or mailed to households in March 2010. Census Day is April 1, 2010, the official day of the population count. All 2010 Census responses should represent the household as it exists on this day. Households should complete and mail back their forms upon receipt. Census workers will visit households that do not return their forms to take a count in person.

We move forward when you send it back.

For more information about the 2010 Census, visit 2010census.gov. To contact your Regional Census Center, visit <http://2010.census.gov/partners/pdf/censusRegionMap.pdf>.

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.

High school students . . . You could win a Trip to D.C.!

- Make new friends from across the nation
- Meet your senators and representatives
- Learn about rural electrification on the local, state and national level
- Tour historical sites and points of interest

Once again Jo-Carroll Energy is offering area high school students the opportunity to get a close look at how their government operates during the annual “Youth to Washington” tour.

Two students will be selected to receive a weeklong, all-expense paid trip. Applicants must be the son or daughter of a cooperative member.

This year marks the 51st trip to the nation’s capital and promises to be as exciting as ever. While in Washington during the week of June 11-18, in addition to meeting with Congressmen from Illinois, students are



treated to tours of historic sites, given the opportunity to make life-long friends and receive information to help determine career paths.

Students learn the principles required to keep cooperative members working together for the cooperative’s success by establishing their own “chip and pop” cooperative while on the bus trip.

Interested students can download an application by visiting our website at www.jocarroll.com. The completed application, along with a letter of recommendation, must be returned to Jo-Carroll Energy by March 31, 2010. For more information, contact Heidi Weber, member relations and marketing manager, at 800-858-5522.

Keeping Warm with Window Treatments

Window treatments and coverings aren’t just for decoration — they can also go a long way in saving energy. Carefully selected window treatments, such as draperies and insulating panels, can keep heat from escaping through window panes in winter.

A drapery’s ability to reduce heat loss and gain depends on several factors, including fabric type and color. Although it’s difficult to generalize about energy performance, when drawn during cold weather most conventional draperies can reduce heat loss from a warm room up to 10 percent. In winter, keep draperies that don’t receive direct sunlight closed during the day, and close all draperies at night.

Draperies should be hung as close to windows as possible to reduce heat exchange and should fall onto a windowsill or floor. For maximum effective-

ness, install a cornice at the top of a drapery or place the drapery against the ceiling. Then seal the drapery at both sides with Velcro or magnetic tape, and overlap it in the center. Such snug window treatments can reduce heat loss by up to 25 percent.

For more information, visit eere.energy.gov



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

To trim high heating costs, open draperies and shades on south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to enter your home. Close them at night to reduce the chill of cold windows.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Curves in Savanna, Ill.

Angela Neis was first introduced to Curves in Savanna as a member. She soon was hired on as an employee and now owns and operates this local women's fitness center with her husband, Chris.

Throughout her three years of managing Curves, Angela has grown to know and connect with the ladies who work out there while Chris focuses on the business side of things. They both work hard to help women in this community live healthy and actively.

Curves is designed just for women by providing a comfortable place to get a complete workout. Their hydraulic resistance machines do not use weights making it easier than a regular gym. Every membership includes a personal training program that you can access through any of over 10,000 Curves gyms around the world. Each member has access to CurvesSmart, an online workout program based on each individual's body and exercise needs. This program is linked to each piece of workout equipment to log personal progress. Members will soon be able to access their personal information at home. The goal is to "go for green" and meet the goals the Success Coach has set. Each full workout lasts about thirty minutes but can be altered to fit each

member's needs.

Physical training is not the only program offered at Curves. To balance an active lifestyle you must eat healthy. Curves offers a remedy to unhealthy eating through its weight management program. The program allows members to log their eating and exercise activities online while it tracks the results of weight loss.

Curves believes that healthy eating does not have to be strictly homemade. Members of Curves can search online for restaurants in their area which serve meals complementary to their weight-loss goals. Many food producers are now getting on board with Curves to offer healthy snacks and meals. Look for the Curves brand at the local grocery store. Curvatiuous clothing, vitamins, and shakes are available for purchase at the Savanna location.

Health is too important to

neglect because of cost. This is why Curves Memberships and monthly fees may be included in personal health insurance packages. To confirm this, bring your insurance card to Angela at Curves.

If you are not sure if Curves is right for you, the Neises allow two-week trials on all of their machines. Call for an appointment or walk-in because you are always welcome.

Normal business hours are Monday through Thursday 6 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. – 6 p.m.; Friday 6 a.m. – 1 pm; and Saturday 7 a.m. – 10 a.m. All Jo-Carroll Energy Members who exercise their Co-op Connections Card will receive 66 percent off membership fees and get the first month free with a new 12-month agreement.



Go Paperless!

E-Billing Makes Paying Your Bill Easier

Sign up and win a Garmin nuvi 4.3 inch widescreen portable GPS navigator

Save time, save paper and save money by going paperless with your Jo-Carroll Energy bill.

“Jo-Carroll Energy is pleased and excited to offer you the next step in bill paying convenience,” said Amanda Russ, member services manager. “Now you can elect to receive your billing statement electronically via e-mail.”

E-billing offers some advantages over paper billing statements. You’ll have less paper to keep up with and e-billing eliminates misplaced billing statements. Your information is always just a click away.

With e-billing you can view your billing statement online, anytime. The e-bill will look



exactly like your current paper bill. Each month you’ll receive an e-mail telling you when your billing statement is ready to view online. The e-mail will include a direct link to Jo-Carroll Energy’s secure online payment feature, also available by clicking on the “My Bill” button on our website’s home page.

To sign up for e-billing go

online and click on the “Go Paperless” button, complete the e-bill sign up form and submit it to info@jocarroll.com. You can also complete the form below and mail it to Jo-Carroll Energy at P.O. Box 390, Elizabeth, IL 61028-0390.

Every member who signs up for our new e-billing feature will be entered into a drawing to win a Garmin nuvi 255W 4.3 inch widescreen portable GPS navigator. You can sign up for e-billing anytime, but deadline for the drawing is Feb. 28, 2010.

If you have any questions regarding e-billing or any of our programs and services, please contact us at info@jocarroll.com or (800) 858-5522.

Bill Authorization

Please complete the following information:

Date: _____

Account Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Member Number: _____

Email Address 1: _____

Email Address 2: _____ (optional)

By submitting this form, I hereby agree to no longer receive a monthly bill statement via the USPS. I will receive a notification by e-mail that a new bill has been created and is viewable at www.jocarroll.com. If my e-mail addresses change, it will be my responsibility to notify Jo-Carroll Energy of the change so I can continue to receive notifications. This will remain in effect until I notify Jo-Carroll Energy to discontinue. All other policies, collections, penalties or fees of Jo-Carroll Energy will remain the same as if a paper bill has been mailed.

Keep Your Valentine Safe this Year

Mylar Balloons create electrical hazards on Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is a special day for sweethearts and families to celebrate love each year. People flock to their local grocery and party stores to buy candy and balloons for the people they care about. However, the cute heart-shaped metallic balloons that are so popular every year could have costly and even deadly side effects. As part of the "Teach Learn Care" TLC campaign, Safe Electricity urges consumers to understand the proper safety steps that must be taken.

"Many people are unaware that metallic balloons, called Mylar balloons, are actually powerful conductors of electricity," Kyle Finley, owner of Live Line Demo Inc. said. "In fact each Mylar balloon carries a warning label which states that it can conduct electricity, it should not be released outdoors, near overhead power lines, and misuse may cause personal injury. Buying Mylar balloons is so commonplace, people just completely overlook the warning and never realize that they're creating an electrical hazard for themselves and their loved ones."

Metallic balloons that are not secured properly can float up into power lines or come down into electrical substations. The consequences can lead to substantial impacts ranging from power outages to extensive equipment damage. The cost of these impacts can cost thousands



and even millions of dollars.

Finley states another risk could actually lead to injury or even death.

"As parents, we often tie balloons to our children's wrists to keep them from floating away,"

Finley said. "If we tie a metallic ribbon to a Mylar balloon and then attach it to our child, we have actually created a potential path to ground for electricity. The results can be deadly."

For example, if the balloon is carried outside near equipment like the electrical service connection or if it happens to touch

an exposed wire indoors, it could potentially cause electric shock injury or kill the person holding

it.

Safe Electricity wants everyone to enjoy their Valentine's Day with their special someone. However, when the celebration is over please remember to puncture the balloons and throw them away to keep them safely away from power lines and electrical equipment.

To see a live line power demonstration and to learn more about the risks posed by Mylar balloons and other electrical safety hazards, visit www.SafeElectricity.org.

Keeping you safe all year is the goal of the Safe Electricity "Teach Learn Care" TLC campaign, an electrical safety public awareness program created and supported by a coalition of hundreds of organizations, including electric utilities, educators and other entities committed to promoting electrical safety.

"Many people are unaware that metallic balloons, called Mylar balloons, are actually powerful conductors of electricity,"

A few days remain to file nomination petitions

Jo-Carroll Energy members have until Feb. 16 to file petitions to compete for a seat on the cooperative's board of directors.

Board directors up for reelection in 2010 include Martin H. Werner, District 1; Joseph W. Mattingley, District 2; and Chris A. Stadel, District. 4.

Petition forms can be obtained from the Cooperative's headquarters in Elizabeth or on the cooperative's website at www.jocarroll.com. Candidates must obtain at least 25 signatures of cooperative members from the same district in which

they live and are seeking election. Completed petitions must be submitted to the cooperative by Feb. 16. In order to qualify to have their names placed on the ballot, all candidates must participate in an orientation process provided by the cooperative's attorney.

Ballots are mailed to each member residing in a district from which a director is to be elected. Each member may vote for one director for the district in which the member resides or in which the member is entitled to vote. If a member prefers,

instead of using the mail ballot, he or she may cast their vote by ballot in person at the Cooperative office.

All balloting concludes at 4 p.m. of the day prior to the annual meeting. The ballots are counted by the Credentials and Election Committee. Results are reported at Jo-Carroll Energy's 71st Annual Meeting to be held Saturday, April 17, at Highland Community College West in Elizabeth. A hot meal at the Elizabeth Community Building will precede the meeting.



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Contact our Member Services Department for more information.



Jo-Carroll Energy

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Light Up the Holidays Food Drive

Commitment to Community: Holiday food drive a success



Jo-Carroll Energy employees and members demonstrated their “commitment to community”, one of the seven cooperative principles, as they participated in the Light Up the Holidays food drive sponsored by the cooperative.

Due to the generosity of employees and members, donations of 550 pounds of nonperishable food, paper goods and other items were distributed to nine food pantries within the cooperative’s service territory.

Food pantries receiving the donations were: United Churches of Galena Food Pantry, East Dubuque Food Pantry, Elizabeth Food Basket, Hanover Food Pantry, Albany Food Pantry, Chadwick/Milledgeville Food Pantry, Mt. Carroll/Savanna



Food Pantry, Thomson/Fulton Food Pantry and the Erie Food Pantry.

In addition to the food collected, Jo-Carroll Energy’s board of directors also approved

donations of \$550 to each pantry. Coincidentally, the nine pantries serve a combined total of approximately 550 families per month.