

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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Season's Greetings from Jo-Carroll Energy

The holiday season is often a time of reflection. I'm grateful for my own family as well as our co-op family. At Jo-Carroll Energy, we are driven by a sense of mission and purpose.

Our team feels a strong connection to our communities and our members because most of us have been raised and/or live in the communities that we serve. We volunteer, are members of community organizations, sit on school boards, and the list goes on. Point being, we are active members of our communities and play an integral role in their success.

"Enhance Cooperative Value" is one of three Jo-Carroll Energy strategic objectives that provides us direction. Everything we do or contemplate, we ask ourselves are we providing value to our members and the communities that we serve?

The Webster dictionary defines value as "a fair return in goods, services or money for something exchanged." So how do we evaluate if we are providing a fair return through our services?

One way is through the use of a third party to evaluate the actual cost to provide those services and adjusting our rates accordingly. Another way is proactively seeking programs that will stabilize or reduce the cost to our members. For instance, we were the only electric cooperative in Illinois to successfully submit a



CEO'S REPORT

by Mike Casper

community solar project under the Illinois Shines program that is estimated to reduce the cost of wholesale power to our members by \$1.5 million over 25 years.

In addition, we must consider our other two strategic objectives, "Growth" and "Operational Excellence."

Growth provides us an opportunity to spread our fixed costs across more members, which in turn helps stabilize rates and improve value. For instance, we proactively sought and successfully were awarded \$23 million in fiber broadband grant funding to connect more than 1,600 new subscribers in addition to the more than 2,000 who we have already connected.

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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.

For your information

Your Board of Directors:

David Senn
Chairman
District 7

Russell Holesinger
Vice Chairman
District 8

Marcia Stanger
Secretary
District 3

Jerry Meyer
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

Resume of Minutes

September 29, 2021 - Regular Board Meeting

The regular board meeting of Jo-Carroll Energy, Inc. (NFP) was held on Wednesday, September 29, 2021, at 9 a.m.

A Safety Moment was provided by Director Russ Holesinger.

Presentation – Jesse Shekleton, Director of Broadband Operations, presented on Fiber Grant funding opportunities that Jo-Carroll Energy (JCE) has applied for and is considering in the future. Shekleton also noted that JCE recently added our 2,000 fiber member subscription.

CEO Report – President and CEO Casper provided an overview of JCE's 2021 achievements and highlighted JCE's Strategic Objectives. Casper also provided a membership engagement overview. In addition, Casper shared information from the American Public Gas Association (APGA) Strategic Planning Meeting he recently attended.

Financial Operating Report – Chuck Woods, Chief Financial Officer provided a summary of the financial operating report for August. Year to date (YTD) revenue is approximately \$44 million vs. a budgeted amount of \$42.8 million. Total operations and maintenance expenses were approximately \$555,650 under budget. YTD margins are approximately \$3.8 million vs. a budgeted amount of approximately \$1.5 million. By general consent, the board moved to file the financial operating report with the auditor. In addition to the financial operating report, Woods provided a summary on JCE's Key Ratio Trend Analysis (KRTA's) as well as the status of the Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) preliminary working fiber capital facility.

Operations and Regulatory Update

Operations Update – Kyle Buros, Senior V.P. and Chief Operating Officer provided an update on a recently completed pipeline inspection. Buros commented that the results came back favorable. Buros also noted that a portion of the ITC Midwest transmission upgrade was completed, which will improve reliability to the area. In addition, Buros remarked that JCE has been focusing on enterprise risk management in preparing for possible material shortages.

COVID-19/Employee Update – Merri Sevey, V.P. of Human Resources, provided information on covid mandates and an update on newly hired JCE employees.

External Affairs/Legislative Update – Outside General Counsel, Terry Kurt provided an update on external affairs and legislative issues that are happening locally and statewide. In addition, Kurt discussed a recent broadband legal seminar that he attended.

Reports/Updates –

Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) Report – Chairman Senn noted that there was no AIEC meeting this month due to the Region 5&6 meeting. Senn commented that the presentations given during the Region 5&6 Meeting were very informative on cooperative issues and governance.

American Public Gas Association (APGA) Report – Director Carroll discussed the latest topics within the natural gas (NG) industry that included pipeline regulations and various other topics relevant to the industry.

Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) – Director Mattingley provided a summary of Dairyland's ongoing strategic planning, commenting on their CEO's role in the planning process; sharing that DPC is leveraging their resources to increase revenue to assist in stabilizing the cost of wholesale power. Mattingley also discussed organizational change, financial operations, and communications, noting the DPC staff is continuing to maximize efficiencies within the organization.

Prairie Power Incorporated (PPI) Report – Director Kuhns provided a summary of the most recent generation numbers. In addition, Kuhns commented on a tentative power purchase agreement that PPI made with a solar developer.

Governance Topics and Board Policy Review – None Board Issues and Action Items –

A discussion was had to move the October board meeting to October 29.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to authorize President and CEO Mike Casper and Chief Financial Officer, Chuck Woods to execute loan documents from Illinois Bank and Trust (IB&T), with previous notice duly given to the Board of Directors of such action, and carried by a vote of 9-0. Director Joe Mattingley excused himself from the discussion and abstained from voting.

A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to approve Rate Policy 808/VOIP.

Directors were selected to attend the NRECA 2022 Power Exchange Meeting.

Jennifer Meyer, V.P. of Member Services offered a presentation on the FirstCall Medical Monitoring Service that JCE provides. A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve the sale of equipment and dissolution of FirstCall Medical Monitoring as a Jo-Carroll provided service by May 2023.

Executive Session – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to go into executive session at 11:57 a.m.

Out of Executive Session – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to come out of executive session at 11:59 a.m.

Action resulting from Executive Session – None.

Other Business – None.

Adjournment

Chairman Senn adjourned the meeting at 12 p.m.

Season's Greetings from Jo-Carroll Energy (Continued from page 20A)

Operational excellence means bringing our "A" game to work every day. By working more efficiently, overall costs are reduced, which also improves value. One example is our recent reorganization. Using the results of an employee survey, we obtained a better understanding of our team members' interests and

strengths, which provided them an opportunity to grow and be greater contributors.

Our strategic objectives provide us direction; being an integral part of our communities provides us our passion; and the members we proudly serve are at the heart of everything we do.

Looking back, I'm grateful

for so many wonderful community partners and for the positive impact we can continue to make.

This holiday season, I wish you and your loved ones peace, joy and prosperity. Speaking on behalf of our team at Jo-Carroll Energy and Sand Prairie, I know the future will be bright because of you.

Shop Local and Save with Co-op Connections this Holiday Season!



Fourteen scholarships up for grabs

Illinois electric cooperatives will award 14 scholarships in 2022 to financially assist students in the electric cooperative family. The scholarships, \$2,000 each, will be awarded through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

8 scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric co-op member.

1 scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, will be awarded to a student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative employee or director.

4 additional scholarships are reserved for students enrolling full time at a two-year Illinois community college who are the sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative members, employees or directors.

1 scholarship, the LaVern and Nola McEntire Memorial Lineworker's Scholarship, will help pay for costs to attend lineworker school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield, Ill. Sons and daughters of co-op members, relatives of co-op employees or directors, and individuals who have served or are

serving in the armed forces or National Guard are all eligible for this scholarship.

Deadline to apply for the first 13 scholarships is Dec. 31, 2021. The lineworker scholarship deadline is April 30, 2022. For more information regarding the scholarships, contact Peggy Francomb, director of communications at 800-858-5522, ext. 1218 or pfrancomb@jocarroll.com. Information has also been shared with area high school guidance counselors and is available online at jocarroll.com/scholarship-program.



ENERGIZE YOUR FUTURE

with Jo-Carroll Energy's Scholarship
& Youth to Washington programs

26 SCHOLARSHIPS | 2 YOUTH TOUR SPONSORSHIPS

Visit jocarroll.com for more information,
qualifications, applications & deadlines





Help us brighten someone's holiday by taking part in Jo-Carroll Energy's Light Up the Holidays Food Drive.

Donations of nonperishable items are being accepted at all of Jo-Carroll Energy's offices (Elizabeth, Savanna and Geneseo) through Dec. 17. Make a donation and receive a LED light bulb.

Co-op employees will distribute the donated items to the 10 food pantries in the cooperative's service area. We're working to eclipse our 2019 donations of 850 pounds of foods, paper goods and other items.

Donations will benefit the following food pantries:

- East Dubuque Food Pantry
- United Churches of Galena Food Pantry
- Elizabeth Food Basket
- Hanover Food Bank
- Savanna/Mount Carroll Food Pantry
- Helping Hands Food Pantry (Chadwick/Milledgeville)
- Thomson/Fulton Food Pantry
- Albany Food Pantry
- Erie Food Pantry
- Geneseo Food Pantry

Celebrating Co-op Month with some new friends

Jo-Carroll Energy's communications and marketing team celebrated Co-op Month in October with a community service project. The group spent a Friday afternoon volunteering at Safe Haven, an animal shelter in Elizabeth. Safe Haven employees provided a tour of the facility, and introduced our team to several new furry friends. Volunteer work is one way the co-op and its employees give back to our communities. Members of the team include: Derek Bradt, broadband marketing and sales administrator; Peggy Francomb, director of marketing and communications; Jennifer Meyer, vice president of member care; Brooke Michael, communications and marketing coordinator; and Sara Lechowicz, communications and marketing coordinator.



Holiday Closings

Jo-Carroll Energy will be closed Thursday and Friday, Dec. 23-24 for the Christmas holiday and Friday, Dec. 31 for New Year's.



Benefits of Fiber-To-The-Home

Speeds you need to enjoy your online experience at home



Provides more reliability and fewer interruptions

Nothing can alter a fiber optic network connection, except a physical cut to the fiber or the destruction of the building it's in. With fiber, you can expect a consistent, true speed, even between the "rush hours". So, don't worry, no dropped connections while you're binge watching your favorite show.



Gives you the capability to connect multiple devices at once

Households now have an average of 10 devices connected to the internet at once. All of these devices have to share the available bandwidth. The higher your Mbps, the more devices you can have connected at one time. No more asking someone to stop using the connection in order for you to be able to surf or stream.



Gives you the speeds you need

Fiber gives you speeds you need to enhance your online experience whether you are streaming the latest episode of your favorite show, sharing photos or uploading an assignment for an online class. If speeds become 1,000 times faster in 20 years, fiber connections will still be able to support them.



Increases your home's value

Access to fiber internet may increase a home's value by up to 3.1% as stated in a study done by the Fiber to the Home Council in 2015. This is comparable to adding a half bath, fireplace or a quarter of a swimming pool to a home. Investing in fiber internet improves the economic performance of a community as well as its quality of life.

Track Our Progress

Visit connectSP.com/fiber/communities to find your neighborhood and see if service is available in your area.
Get connected or express your interest at:

connectSP.com/iwantfiber



📞 800-858-5522 🌐 connectSP.com 📍 793 US 20 West, Elizabeth, IL 61028

A \$300 Federal tax credit is about to expire

Qualifying air-source heat pumps can efficiently heat and cool your home with one unit

Time is running out on a long-standing federal tax credit for air source heat pumps (ASHPs). The current \$300 tax credit is due to expire on Dec. 31, 2021. The tax credit also retroactively applies to new ASHPs installed in the 2018-20 tax years.

Upgrading an HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) system is no small feat. In addition to the federal tax credit, Jo-Carroll Energy offers a \$200 per ton incentive for qualifying ASHPs with ratings of:

- SEER 14 or greater
- HSPF 8.2 or greater OR
- EER 11 or greater

Air source heat pumps could qualify for JCE's electric heat rate, also.

A heat pump is like an air conditioning (AC) unit

that can operate in reverse. Aesthetically, it even looks like a central AC unit. In cooling mode, the heat pump removes heat from inside the home and transfers it outside. In heating mode, the heat pump removes heat from outdoor air and transfers it into the home, thus providing heat.

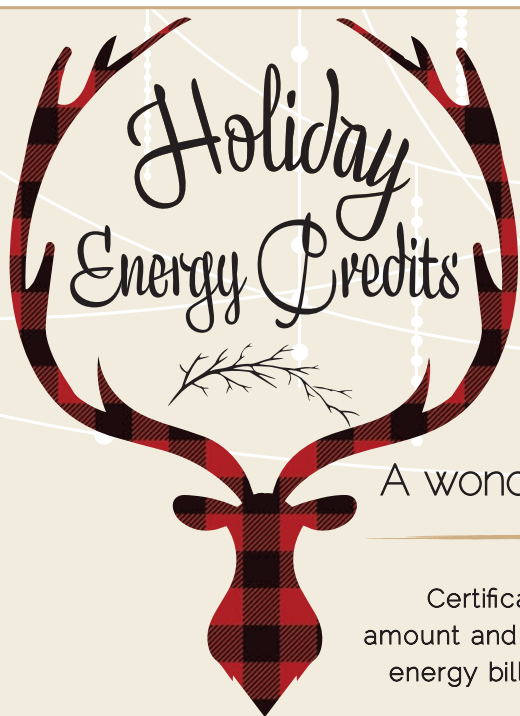
Qualifying Criteria

To learn more about applying for the federal tax credit, go to www.EnergyStar.gov and search for ASHP tax credit in the upper-right hand corner. Federal Tax Credit criteria are::

- \$300 for qualifying units
- Must be ENERGY STAR rated
- Must be installed in an existing home and the taxpayer's principle residence (new construction and rentals do not qualify)

- Complete IRS Form 5695
- Cooperative incentive criteria:
 - Incentive requestor must be a member of the cooperative
 - Equipment must be installed in JCE's service territory
 - Incentive request must be received within three months of installation
 - Contact John Scott, JCE's energy advisor and resident Energy Detective at 800-858-5522, ext. 1339 or jscott@jocarroll.com to ensure your unit qualifies.

Our Energy Detective also can provide you with information about our energy efficiency incentives, energy assessments and more.



Warm someone's heart
this holiday season.

**GIVE THE
GIFT OF ENERGY**

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 of our member service representatives for more information 800.858.5522.



JCE retires \$1.5 million in capital credits

Jo-Carroll Energy is retiring more than \$1,500,000 capital credits to almost 23,000 to members and former members of the cooperative in December.

Megan Garibay

The JCE board of directors voted in October to approve the retirement of capital credits.

The retirements are based on energy purchased in 1996 and/or through 2020. The amount is for the total credits a member earned in 1996 plus 5 percent of all remaining credits earned from 1997 through 2020, at a

discounted rate. Capital credits are based on how much energy a member purchased during those years.

Active JCE 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 will receive paper checks.

All inactive members will be issued paper checks.

The minimum check amount is \$10; any amounts less than \$10 will be held in the

member's name until the minimum is reached.

Receiving capital credits is a benefit of being a co-op member. Capital credits represent a member's investment in the cooperative and are a unique aspect of being a co-op member and owner.

"Jo-Carroll Energy is proud to support our members and communities by putting money back into the pockets of those we serve," noted Mike Casper, JCE president and CEO.



Deck the Halls SAFELY

- Use only lights, cords, animated displays, and decorations **rated for outdoor use**.
- When decorating outside, **look up and around** for power lines. **Never throw lights** or other decorations into trees near power lines.
- Keep ladders, equipment, and yourself **at least ten feet away** from power lines.
- Cords should be plugged into outlets equipped with **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)**.

For more **holiday safety tips** visit:

 Safe
Electricity.org