



# 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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High-speed internet connects your smart home

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### Questions from the annual meeting

Thank you to everyone who attended our 2022 Annual Meeting of Members, watched the livestream or listened on the radio. It was great to be able to visit with many of you who attended the June 2 event in Fulton.

We received some great questions from those in attendance and in advance of the meeting. The majority of the questions could be placed in four categories (incentives, fiber, energy prices and renewables).

Below are general responses to your questions. For individuals who submitted specific questions, we will provide you responses directly via email or mail.

### Any rebates for upgrading appliances?

Jo-Carroll Energy offers incentives for ENERGY STAR rated appliances. A full list of incentives, available through Jo-Carroll Energy, can be found on our website. I strongly suggest that you contact John Scott, Jo-Carroll Energy's Energy Detective, to discuss other ways you may be able to reduce consumption through energy conservation and energy efficiency measures.

### How soon before we receive fiber?

I would first like to thank you for your patience. For those of you in awarded grant areas, within 4 years. Our goal is to provide fiber to everyone who wants it within 7 years. This timeline is



### CEO'S REPORT

by Mike Casper

possible as long as certain grants qualify and we are successfully awarded those grants.

Currently, the largest grant opportunities are releasing final rules and other details as we speak. We are engaged, watching closely, and prepared to apply for any feasible opportunities.

Timing will depend on grant schedules and you submitting interest via our website at connectsp.com where you can also follow our progress in your area.

### I'm hearing on the news that energy prices are going up. How is that going to affect my bill?

Our goal is to curb rate increases at or below inflation. Just like you, we are facing increasing inflationary pressure on our materials and energy costs. We are committed to containing costs as much as possible while maintaining your safety and providing the reliability that you expect.

To maintain fair and equitable rates between rate classes, we use a third-party consultant to assess the cost of service (COS) for the Jo-Carroll electric service territory. Fixed and demand charges cover expenses such as power

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## For your information

### Your Board of Directors:

**David Senn**  
Chairman  
District 7

**Russell Holesinger**  
Vice Chairman  
District 8

**Marcia Stanger**  
Secretary  
District 3

**Robert Kuhns**  
Treasurer  
District 10

**Jerry Meyer**  
District 1

**Joseph Mattingley**  
District 2

**Dan Tindell**  
District 4

**Patricia Smith**  
District 5

**Thomas Lundy**  
District 6

**Larry Carroll**  
District 9

### 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

April 27, 2022

The regular board meeting of Jo-Carroll Energy, Inc. (NFP) was held on Wednesday, April 27, 2022.

A Safety Moment was provided by Director Russ Holesinger on how to live in the moment by slowing down, look at your surroundings and don't be in a rush.

**Approval of Agenda** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve the agenda.

**Consent Agenda** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve the consent agenda.

**Presentation** – None.

**Governance Topics & Board Policy Review** – None.

### Board Issues and Action Items

**2021 Margin Allocations** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve the 2021 Margin Allocations.

**Policy 815 Online Backup** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve Policy 815 Online Backup.

**Select Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) Annual Meeting Attendees (note that all director attendees will be considered as voting delegates)** – Attendees were selected to attend the DPC Annual Meeting.

**Certification of Director and Alternate Director to Serve on the DPC Board of Directors** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to nominate Director Joe Mattingley as the Director and Director Dan Tindell as the Alternate Director to serve on the DPC board of directors.

**Certification of Candidates for Director/Alternate Director to Serve on the Prairie Power, Inc. (PPI) Board of Directors** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to nominate Mike Casper and Bob Kuhns as Directors, and Marcy Stanger as the Alternate Director to serve on the PPI board of Directors.

**Designation of Voting Delegate and Alternate Delegate for PPI Annual Meeting** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to designate Bob Kuhns as the Voting Delegate and Marcy Stanger

to serve as the Alternate voting delegate for the PPI Annual Meeting.

**Certification of Voting Delegate/Alternate for CFC 2022 Annual Meeting (June 20)** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to designate Marcy Stanger to serve as the voting delegate and Dan Tindell to serve as the alternate voting delegate for the Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) Annual Meeting.

**Designation of Voting Delegate/Alternate for Cooperative Response Center, Inc. (CRC) 2022 Board of Directors Election (held in conjunction with CFC Annual Meeting)** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to designate Dan Tindell to serve as the voting delegate and Marcy Stanger to serve as the alternate voting delegate for the CRC 2022 Board of Directors Election.

**Select Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) Annual Meeting Attendees (July 28-30)** – Attendees were selected for the AIEC Annual Meeting.

**Certification of Delegate/Alternate Delegate to serve on the AIEC Board of Directors** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to nominate Director Senn as the Director and Pat Smith as the Alternate Director to serve on the AIEC board of directors.

**Select Attendees for National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) BLC Course 971/Coop Governance** – Attendees were selected to attend the NRECA BLC Course 971/Coop Governance.

### CEO/Financial Operating Report

**CEO Report** – President and CEO Casper reported that he recently participated on a NRECA CEO panel and provided highlights from the discussion. Casper also reported that the financial team is developing a natural gas procurement dashboard.

### Financial Operating Report –

Chuck Woods, Chief Financial Officer provided a summary of the financial operating report for March. Revenue for March is approximately \$18 million vs. a budgeted amount of approximately \$17.6 million. Total operations and maintenance expenses were approximately \$662,669 under budget. Margins are approximately \$2.4 million vs. a budgeted amount of approximately \$972,167. By general consent, the board moved to file the financial operating report with the auditor.

### Operations and Regulatory/Legislative Update

**Operations Update** – Chief Operating Officer, Kyle Buros, commented on the progress of broadband/fiber expansion. Buros also provided an update on material lead times.

### Grant and Employee Update –

V.P. of Human Resources, Merri Sevey, provided information on the Co-Bank Matching Grant Program that Jo-Carroll Energy partners with. In addition, Sevey introduced Alex Peebles, Manager of Safety and Loss Control to the board, noting that he is doing an excellent job keeping the employees up to date with training and managing day to day safety policies and procedures.

**Strategic Plan** – V.P. of Member Services, Jennifer Meyer, provided an update on the 2022 Strategic Plan, which included its current progress and metrics.

### External Affairs/Legislative

**Update** – Terry Kurt, Outside General Counsel, shared that he will be working from Jo-Carroll's Elizabeth office on Wednesday's. He also announced that he has been elected as President of the Jo Daviess County Bar Association.

**Governance Topics and Board Policy Review** – None.

### Reports/Updates

#### Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) Report –

Director Senn commented on the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) trailer bill, which included six components as Amendment 4. Casper added that none of the six components will directly impact Jo-Carroll members or other Illinois electric cooperative members.

#### American Public Gas Association (APGA) Report –

Director Carroll discussed the various topics within the natural gas (NG) industry including factors affecting NG prices. Carroll noted that the APGA recently met with the United States Department of Transportation to discuss enhanced cyber security efforts. Casper added that internally, Jo-Carroll has performed tabletop exercises to prepare for possible cyber security threats.

### Dairyland Power Cooperative

(DPC) – Director Mattingley provided highlights from the April DPC board meeting and noted that they approved elimination of the flat rate wholesale power option, which will not impact Jo-Carroll members. Mattingley also noted that DPC will be bringing an in-house attorney to the cooperative.

### Prairie Power Incorporated (PPI)

**Report** – Director Kuhns provided a summary of the PPI Special Board Meeting and generation report.

**Executive Session** – None.

**Out of Executive Session** – None.

**Action Resulting from Executive Session** – None.

**Other Business** – None.

**Adjournment** – Chairman Senn adjourned the meeting at 11:10 a.m.

(Continued from page 18A)

lines, transformers, trucks, labor and other expenses the cooperative incurs ensuring energy is available when you need it, no matter how much energy is used.

We continue to encourage you to reach out to us if you are concerned about being able to pay your energy bills.

### Are alternative means of consumer energy (i.e. solar and wind) still eligible for credit?

Renewable Energy Federal Tax Credits are available for geothermal heat pump systems, solar energy systems, and small wind turbines. The renewable energy tax credit is 26 percent through the end of the year (12/31/2022) and then lowers to 22 percent through 12/31/2023.

More information about federal tax credits for renewable energy can be found at [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov) or by contacting your tax advisor.

We are also working closely with you and solar contractors with the interconnection of solar.

## 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.

## JCE awards 2022 scholarships

Jo-Carroll Energy has awarded scholarships in 2022 to seven high school seniors who live in the cooperative's service area.

Scholarships are based on the applicant's scholastic achievements, school and community involvement and personal essays. Six of the students are receiving \$1,000 JCE Scholarships while the seventh is receiving a \$2,000 lineworker scholarship.

JCE presents scholarships annually as part of its commitment to community, one of the seven cooperative principles.



**Savannah Reisner**

**Geneseo**

*High School: Geneseo*

College & planned course of study: Carthage College, majoring in engineering



**Alyssa Mertz**

**Chadwick**

*High School: Milledgeville*

College & planned course of study: Sauk Valley Community College, then transferring to Middle Tennessee State University, majoring in forensic science



**Aspen Eisenga**

**Savanna**

*High School: West Carroll*

College & planned course of study: Clinton Community College, majoring in nursing



**Ashley Carroll**  
**Elizabeth**

*High School: River Ridge*  
College & planned course of study:  
Iowa State University, majoring in  
animal science on the pre-veterinary  
track



**Jovian Pham**  
**Galena**

*High School: Galena*  
College & planned course of study:  
Macalester College, St. Paul, Minn.,  
majoring in statistics & economics  
and minoring in Asian studies



**Cailyn Piercy**  
**Fulton**

*High School: Fulton*  
College & planned course of study:  
University of Iowa, majoring in  
nuclear medicine interest



**Jarrett Basten**  
**Galena**

*High School: Galena*  
College & planned course of study:  
Minnesota West Community &  
Technical College, lineman program

# Local agencies receive Sharing Success grants

Jo-Carroll Energy recently awarded grants totaling \$20,000 to four recipients through the CoBank Sharing Success program.

The cooperative has participated in the CoBank program for several years and received more than 40 applications in 2022.

The Sharing Success program reflects two key principles that guide all co-ops, "Cooperation Among Cooperatives" and "Concern for Community." Last year, the bank increased the annual matching fund and raised the maximum match.

CoBank is a cooperative bank that assists rural America with financial services to agribusiness and rural electricity, water and communication providers in all 50 states. CoBank matches contributions by its cooperative members to the charitable organizations, schools and government organizations that serve a public purpose and are consistent with the program's purpose and guidelines.

Selected to receive Sharing Success grants in the JCE service territory were the following agencies and organizations. The amount noted is the total of the JCE grant plus the CoBank match.

## Inspire Continuing Care, Geneseo: \$10,000



Inspire Continued Care provides a daytime community program that allows post-high school young adults with complete special needs to be involved in their local community, answering an unmet need in Geneseo and Henry County.

"ICC is the only local continuing education option for post-high school young adults with multiple diagnosed disabilities and complex social needs," stated Jennifer Johnson in the grant application. "Families have to make difficult decisions about how to ensure their dependent young adults remain socially and emotionally engaged in their communities, rather than confined to their homes ... ICC exists to provide affordable, quality care for these 'uniquely qualified' young adults, facilitating learning opportunities through community-centered programming."

"ICC believes in the right of young adults with unique and complex needs to continue being life-long learners and contributing adult members of their community through experiencing a wide variety of activities that introduce and reinforce essential life skills."

ICC is a private, nonprofit organization that does not receive any state or federal funding. The program opened its doors in August 2021. The goal is to increase participation to include all young adults in need of ICC's services, regardless of their ability to pay.

ICC participants become contributing members in the community as they visit the local grocery store, bank, post office and engage in community service activities such as delivering a newspaper route, pet walking service, delivering coffee or soft drinks on "Thirsty Thursday" to schoolteachers and staff, hosting a donation site for the food pantry and delivering collected items weekly.

The matching grant funds will be used to provide supervised daytime community opportunities for uniquely qualified young adults in Geneseo and the surrounding Henry County area.

## Camp Benson, Mount Carroll: \$5,000



Located on 113 acres outside of Mount Carroll, YMCA Camp Benson's 113-acre campus has been home to countless friendships, life lessons and summertime memories for generations of campers earning the camp a reputation as one of the premier overnight summer camps in Illinois.

"For more than 90 summers, YMCA Camp Benson has provided engaging, positive and life changing overnight summer camp programs for boys and girls ages 6-17. **Cherie L. Newton** This has been accomplished through innovative, value-based programming supervised by experienced and caring staff members in a wonderful natural setting," stated camp director Gwyn Bemis in the grant application. "Summer camp is what we do, and summer camp is who we are."

Sharing Success grant funds will be utilized to purchase programming materials for campers including helmets and harnesses for rope activities, as well as supplies and equipment for arts and crafts, sports and games and water activities.

#### **Whiteside County Soil and Water District Education Fund, Morrison: \$3,000**



An offshoot of the Whiteside County Soil and Water District, the education fund has a goal to provide both youth and adult conservation/environmental education.

In order to obtain the goal, plans are to develop a conservation education center in the western part of Whiteside County, just south of Fulton. The 501(c)3 has acquired a long-term lease on approximately 30 acres of farm ground that has been planted and seeded to native trees.

The grant will be used to administer education programs on the land; a building will eventually be constructed where education activities will be held. Prior to the pandemic, several dozen adult

and youth education seminars were held annually on a variety of conservation topics for 400-500 participants. The grant will help implement the program again.

#### **American Legion, Galena: \$2,000**



The American Legion is a not-for-profit organization for U.S. war veterans. The legion provides life-changing assistance and guidance for veterans, military personnel, their families and communities every day. Help is in the form of personal assistance, grants donated good and volunteerism.

The Sharing Success grant will be used for transportation to and from medical appointments and procedures for veterans in need.



# Smart thermostats for summer savings

**Summer brings long days of sunlight for outdoor fun, vacations at the beach or lake, and time for afternoon lounging.**

But summer also brings blazing hot temperatures and humidity, which mean increased energy costs. Since inflation is creeping into almost every corner of our lives and prices are staying high with little relief, families need all the savings they can find.

Fortunately, technology can help you save money at home in unexpected ways! For example, “Smart Home” technology uses the power of the internet to help monitor, regulate, and control many features of your home or office. From improved entertainment options to automated, time-based dimmable lighting fixtures, Smart Homes can make your life more efficient and save you money.



However, one of the best ways to save money this summer stands out: lower energy bills. Smart Home technology can create these savings, specifically through “Smart Thermostats.” According to the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Energy Star program, “a smart thermostat is a Wi-Fi-enabled device that automatically adjusts your home’s heating and cooling temperature settings for optimal performance.”

The Energy Star program found that homeowners can save upwards of 30% on their energy bills by utilizing a smart thermostat (significant savings this summer when you need it most!)

Many smart thermostats can be connected to and controlled by voice-activated technology you may already have in your home, such as Apple’s Home Kit (along with Siri, of course), Amazon’s Alexa, and Google Assistant. And with the high-speed fiber internet provided by Sand Prairie Fiber Internet, you can be assured that your smart thermostat and other “Smart Home” devices will stay connected to your Wi-Fi so you can be more in control of your home and your budget.

Below, we highlight three of the best smart thermostats to cool your home this summer and keep money in your bank account!

## 1. Google’s Nest Learning Thermostat

Our first option is one of the original smart thermostats—the Google Nest Learning Thermostat. Note the word ‘Learning’ in its name—that’s because, over time, this smart thermostat learns your temperature preferences in different rooms and at various times of the day. Its large, round LCD screen is elegant (in a retro way) and easy to read. Overall, it may just be the best option on this list.

## 2. Ecobee Smart Thermostat With Voice Control

Known for its versatility, the Ecobee Smart Thermostat is another excellent choice. The Ecobee brims with features to make your home more comfortable and help you better regulate its energy efficiency. For example, its remote room sensors can work with multiple rooms at different temperature and humidity settings to adjust conditions depending on needs and usage. The Ecobee’s touchscreen and smart speaker make it easy to operate and program, and its voice commands sync well with most other smart home devices and brands (e.g., Google, Apple, and Amazon). Note that it can be a bit pricier than Nest, but you may prefer its features.

## 3. Amazon Smart Thermostat

Though it is the least expensive option on this list, the Amazon Smart Thermostat still packs a power-saving punch and makes for an excellent budget selection. You can set your temperature with your voice and receive notifications on your energy usage. As you’d probably expect, it syncs brilliantly with Alexa, though it does not work with Apple’s HomeKit or Google Assistant. While it lacks the broad array of features of both the Nest and Ecobee smart thermostats, you may find that the Amazon Smart Thermostat fits your family’s needs for the price.

You can be confident that any of the smart thermostats outlined above will help break the summer heat in your home and ease the pain in your wallet! It’s just one of the numerous ways Sand Prairie Fiber Internet’s reliable fiber network can make your home more efficient and comfortable through “smart home” technology.

And to learn more information about “smart homes” and how high-speed fiber internet can improve your quality of life and save you money, follow JCE and Sand Prairie Fiber Internet’s social pages!



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