



# HI-LINES

A NEWSLETTER FOR JO-CARROLL ENERGY MEMBERS

CONTENTS | Elizabeth, Illinois | 800-858-5522 | www.jocarroll.com



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#ThankALineworker



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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.

## Sustaining a reliable electric system

We've all heard the phrase, "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." This strategy is how I would describe electric cooperative's approach to the current energy transition.

Jo-Carroll Energy supports a diverse mix of resources, which includes renewables. I have no doubt that the United States will continue to transition to a lower carbon future. We know that consumer interest in renewable energy continues to grow. We've seen this trend here in Illinois.

Recent innovations, advances in renewable energy technologies and appealing incentives have made renewables more feasible. Over the last decade, Jo-Carroll Energy's generation and transmission cooperatives have adjusted their fuel mix by utilizing more renewables, and today, approximately 25% of our fuel mix is comprised of renewable energy with a strategy to reach 35% by 2032 and a goal of 50% reduction in carbon dioxide intensity rate.

There is an increasing reliance on renewable energy sources while we're seeing a reduction in nonrenewables-generating facilities. Additionally, we're seeing more pressure on the electric grid and natural gas pipeline system due to the increasing frequency and intensity of severe weather events and a rising demand for energy.

### Competing Pressures

So how do we reconcile these challenges? Renewables that rely on little or no combustion are beneficial for the environment, but they are limited resources because the sun does not always shine, and the wind does not



**CEO'S REPORT**  
by Mike Casper

always blow. Our primary responsibility is to provide energy 24/7 to you and our community. To do this, we need reliable sources of energy that will meet all the peaks and valleys of when you demand it. For example, on any one day when I view the Mid-Continent Independent System Operator's (MISO) fuel mix, I note that more than 60 percent of the needed electric generation is from natural gas and coal generation, between 15 and 20 percent from nuclear and approximately 20 percent from renewables.

So where are we netting out? That's where our familiar adage comes into play. While utilization of renewables is increasing, we still need to incorporate other forms of energy in the mix to ensure reliable service. That's why we spread our eggs into multiple baskets. There is great value in maintaining a diverse mix of fuel sources to ensure reliability, resiliency and the ability to meet the growing demand.

### The Bottom Line

In today's ever-connected world, people need power around the clock. As our nation increasingly depends on electricity to power the economy, Jo-Carroll Energy is working to anticipate, plan and respond to market trends and policy shifts. That's how we can power your home and our economy, while continuing to serve as your local energy and broadband provider.

## 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

Jan. 25, 2023

The regular board meeting of Jo-Carroll Energy, Inc. (NFP) was held on Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2022.

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

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

**Presentation One** – Inside Information: Keith Kaderly reviewed the results of the Jo-Carroll Energy Member Satisfaction Survey. Directors and key staff asked questions to better understand the data and results presented and gain insight on approaches to improve member satisfaction.

**Safety Moment** – A Safety Moment was provided by Director Bob Kuhns on the use of back-up generators during inclement weather and the importance of having a professional complete the installation of the generator.

**Presentation Two** – Jesse Shekleton, Director of Broadband Operations, presented an overview of the fiber grant buildout workplan, which includes current projects, grant buildout areas and plans to fill in the gaps.

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

### CEO/Financial Operating Report

**CEO Report** – President and CEO Mike Casper commented on ending the year in a positive financial position, which would provide the opportunity to defer revenue from 2022 to 2023 and 2024. Casper added that the cooperative continues to experience volatility in prices for materials and supplies needed for growth and to maintain reliable services. Expectations are that inflation and price volatility impacting our industry will ease between two and three years. The deferred revenue will help stabilize rates during this volatile period.

**Financial Operating Report** – Chuck Woods, Chief Financial Officer, provided a summary of the financial operating report for December. Revenue year-to-date (YTD) is approximately \$67 million. Deferred revenue from 2021 was used YTD December and was booked according to budget. Total operations and maintenance expenses are approximately \$53.3 million, which is approximately \$1.9 million under budget of \$55.2 million. Margins are approximately \$5.4 million vs. a budgeted amount of approximately \$2.1 million and amounts to \$3.3 million over budget. By

general consent, the board moved to file the financial operating report with the auditor.

### Board Issues and Action Items

**2023 Proposed Electric and Natural Gas Rates** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve the 2023 proposed electric and natural gas rates.

**Proposed Deferred Revenue Resolution** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to approve the proposed Deferred Revenue Resolution, deferral of revenue from 2022 to 2023 and 2024.

**Select Dairyland District Meeting Attendees** – Attendees were selected to attend the Dairyland District Meeting.

**Choose Voting Delegate/Alternate Voting Delegate for the NRECA Annual Member Business Meeting** – Directors Russ Holesinger and Marcy Stanger were selected as the voting delegate/alternate for the NRECA Annual Member Business Meeting.

**Choose Voting Delegate/Alternate Voting Delegate for the NRTC Business Meeting (in conjunction with the NRECA Annual Member Business Meeting)** – Directors Bob Kuhns and Marcy Stanger were selected as the voting delegate/alternate for the NRTC Business Meeting.

### Operations Update

Senior V.P. and Chief Operating Officer Kyle Buros provided an update on natural gas and advised the board of an upcoming regulatory audit.

**Into Executive Session** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to go into executive session at 12 p.m.

**Out of Executive Session** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to come out of Executive Session at 12:01 p.m.

**Action Resulting from Executive Session** – None

### Operations and Regulatory/Legislative Update

**Member Services Update** – V.P. of Member Services Jennifer Meyer discussed the upcoming strategic initiatives meeting that is scheduled in February with Senior Staff.

**External Affairs/Legislative Update** – Terry

Continued on page 18C ►

# Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 10

Electric lineworkers provide an essential service: They install and maintain the overhead and underground power lines that keep electricity flowing. These specialized workers are on call 24/7 in case severe storms or other circumstances cause the power to go out.

Lineworkers work with high-voltage electricity, often at great heights, in all kinds of weather conditions. Maintaining the power grid is physically demanding. To become proficient, most lineworkers go through a technical training program and first learn on the job as apprentices under the careful eye of seasoned lineworkers who have earned journeyman status.

Electric power line installers and repairers held approximately 126,600 jobs in 2021, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Nearly half of these employees worked for electric power generation, transmission and distribution utilities.

## Safety comes first

Lineworkers spend numerous hours in safety training each year and must understand and apply crucial safety regulations.

Protective clothing is required to shield lineworkers since they

work around high voltages. Collectively, gear components can weigh up to 45 pounds.

According to the U.S. BLS, electric power line installers and repairers typically:

- Install, maintain or repair the power lines that move electricity.
- Identify defective devices, voltage regulators, transformers and switches.
- Inspect and test power lines and auxiliary equipment.
- String (install) power lines between poles, towers and buildings.
- Climb poles and transmission towers and use truck-mounted buckets to access equipment.
- Operate power equipment when installing and repairing poles, towers and lines.
- Know and implement safety standards and procedures.

When a problem is reported, lineworkers must identify the cause and fix it. This usually involves diagnostic testing using specialized equipment and

repair work. To work on poles, they usually use bucket trucks to raise themselves to the top of the structure, although all lineworkers must be adept at climbing poles and towers when necessary. Workers use specialized safety equipment to keep them from falling when climbing utility poles and towers.

Storms and other natural disasters can cause extensive damage to power lines. When power is lost, line repairers must work safely and efficiently to restore service. We salute our lineworkers who work around the clock to keep the power on. Their safety, as well as yours, is our top priority.



## Minutes continued from page 18B

Kurt, Outside General Counsel, had nothing to add outside of the staff report.

## Reports/Updates

**Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) Report** – Senn noted that the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has increased funding, which assists eligible low-income households with their heating and cooling energy costs.

**American Public Gas Association (APGA) Report** – Director Carroll discussed various new and proposed regulations affecting the natural gas (NG) industry, and noted that meetings are being scheduled with legislators and regulators for the upcoming APGA Legislative Summit being held in Washington, D.C.

**Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) –** There were no board highlights due to the timing of the DPC Board

Meeting; they will be provided at the February board meeting.

**Prairie Power Incorporated (PPI) Report** – Director Kuhns had nothing to report outside of his written report.

**Other Business** – None.

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



## Americold receives energy efficiency incentive

Jo-Carroll Energy recently worked with Americold in East Dubuque to upgrade their facility lighting through the co-op's energy efficiency incentives program.

Americold is a temperature-controlled storage and distribution facility that helps connect producers to retailers, food service providers and consumers.

Americold received an incentive of about \$5,960 to upgrade lights to LEDs at their cold-storage facility in East Dubuque. John Scott, JCE's energy advisor, and Ken Sivertsen, director of member services, presented the check Feb. 28.

"The new lights have made a huge difference in brightening up the entire space," said Wes Hartford, Americold operations manager. "The best feature for us is the motion-sensing capabilities in the storage rack area. This allows us to conserve a lot of energy, because we do not have to have those lights on all day; they come on automatically as the forklifts travel down the aisles."

Hartford noted the time and manpower alone that this saves is a substantial benefit



and savings because they will not have to constantly change out old fluorescent bulbs. The average life span of an LED light is 50,000 hours vs. a fluorescent bulb which has an average life span of 6,000-15,000 hours.

"We really look forward to seeing the difference this makes in the future electric bills," Hartford said. "We are very pleased with the change and the smoothness of the project."

He noted that a couple areas of the facility were not included in the project scope, and Americold plans to convert those areas to LEDs on

their own because they are so impressed with the difference the lights make.

JCE's incentive program is designed to help members save money and promote energy efficiency. Commercial and nonresidential members are encouraged to contact John Scott at 800-858-5522 ext. 1339 for more information about available incentives, an incentive quote and/or an energy analysis.

Information about energy efficiency programs for residential members can be found on the JCE website at [jocarroll.com/energy-efficiency-incentives](http://jocarroll.com/energy-efficiency-incentives).



## Director's scholarships

High school seniors still have time to apply for Jo-Carroll Energy's Director's Scholarships that are awarded at the co-op's Annual Meeting of Members.

Up to 10 Director's Scholarships are awarded, one in each of the cooperative's 10 director districts. (If no applications are received from a district, that scholarship will become an at-large scholarship.)

Current high school seniors, whose parents or guardians are JCE members and who have

not won another JCE scholarship, are eligible to receive a Director's Scholarship. Deadline to apply is May 1.

The applicant and at least one of their parents or guardians must attend the annual meeting scheduled for Monday, June 5 at West Carroll High School in Savanna.

Application forms and details are found under the Community tab of our website.

## Director nomination petitions due April 6

Nomination petitions for the 2023 Jo-Carroll Energy board of director elections are due to the cooperative by April 6.

Director districts up for election in 2023 are Districts 3, 6 and 9. Any JCE member residing in a district up for election may petition for nomination in the district. Petitions must be signed by at least 25 JCE members residing in the district for which the director is to be elected.

Nomination forms are available on [jocarroll.com/director-elections](http://jocarroll.com/director-elections).

Petitions must be filed at co-op headquarters in Elizabeth no later than April 6.

Details on director qualifications and nomination procedures can be found in the cooperative's bylaws posted on [jocarroll.com](http://jocarroll.com).

**Dig Smart.  
Dig Safe.**

Before you dig, call 811 or visit [call811.com](http://call811.com) to mark underground utility lines. 811 is a free service that helps keep our community safe.

**April is National Safe Digging Month.**

# Work Zone Awareness Week sheds light on safety

National Work Zone Awareness Week, April 17-21, 2023, is a good time to learn more about work zone safety; however, work zone safety should be observed 365 days a year to save lives.

Cars or trucks that speed through a work zone endanger workers on the ground. Driving too fast or too close to a work truck can also put an elevated worker in danger by causing their raised bucket to move or sway.

Streets and highways are lined with power poles and electrical equipment, and narrow roadways often require crews like ours to place their equipment in or near traffic lanes. Be alert to utility and other work zone crews for their safety and yours. Besides our crews, you might encounter road workers, other utility crews, tree trimmers or first responders

working in or on the side of the road.

According to the National Work Zone Safety Information Clearinghouse, 774 fatal crashes and 857 deaths occurred in work zone crashes



in 2020 (at the writing of this article, data was not available for 2021). Many other work zone crashes result in injuries. In 2020, 102,000 work zone crashes occurred.

To help keep roadside crews safe:

- Keep a safe distance between your vehicle and traffic barriers, trucks, construction equipment and workers.
- Be patient. Traffic delays are sometimes unavoidable, so allow time for unexpected setbacks.
- Obey all signs and road crew flag instructions.
- Merge early and be courteous to other drivers.
- Use your headlights at dusk and during inclement weather.
- Minimize distractions. Avoid activities such as texting, operating a radio, applying makeup and eating.

Remember, slow down when approaching a work zone and move over for first responders and work crews. Do your part to help everyone return home safely at the end of the day.

## Enter JCE's photo contest

Jo-Carroll Energy is accepting entries for its 2023 photo contest through June 30.

Winning entries will be featured in the 2024 Jo-Carroll Energy photo calendar.

Send us your favorite photos that represent life in our area.

Entrants must be JCE members. All photos must be the work of the entrant and be taken within the co-op's service territory.

We will choose 12 photos to appear on the calendar pages and two photos to be featured on the front and back covers. Several other photos are selected each year as honorable mentions.

Complete rules and entry information can be found at [jocarroll.com/photo-contest](http://jocarroll.com/photo-contest).



**DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE TO SEE YOUR PHOTOS IN PRINT!**



### Helping households connect.

Jo-Carroll Energy, with its Sand Prairie internet service, has been approved by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) as a provider for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) a new longer-term program that replaced the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program on December 31, 2021 to help lower the cost of high-speed internet to eligible households in our area.

The program will continue to help households struggling to pay for internet service during the pandemic. This new benefit will connect eligible households to jobs, critical healthcare services, and virtual classrooms. The Affordable Connectivity Program will provide an on-bill credit of \$30 per month towards broadband service for qualifying households.

### Who is eligible?

A household is eligible if one member of the household meets one of the following criteria:

- Has an income that is at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines
- Participates in certain assistance programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, SSI, WIC, or Lifeline
- Receives benefits under the free or reduced-price school breakfast or lunch program
- Received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year
- Meets the eligibility criteria for a participating provider's existing low-income program

### How do members apply?

Members interested in applying for assistance must:

- First, apply for the Affordable Connectivity Program and be approved by the Universal Service Administration Co. (USAC). More information can be found here: [www.fcc.gov/acp](http://www.fcc.gov/acp).
- Once eligibility is approved, complete a benefit enrollment request application with Jo-Carroll Energy. A webpage including the application form and additional information is available at [www.connectsp.com/acp](http://www.connectsp.com/acp).



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



# Jo-Carroll Energy

## 2023 Annual Meeting of Members



# TOGETHER

toward tomorrow

**Monday, June 5, 2023**

**West Carroll High School**

500 Cragmoor Street  
Savanna, IL 61074

**4:30 p.m. Member registration**

**6:00 p.m. Meeting**

**7:00 p.m. Dinner** (details to come)

*Check [jocarroll.com/annual-meeting](http://jocarroll.com/annual-meeting) for updates.*

**Please RSVP**

**by May 5, 2023 via one of the following methods**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Member#: \_\_\_\_\_ *located on your bill*

# attending: Meeting \_\_\_\_\_ Dinner \_\_\_\_\_

*Appreciated but not required*

- Return this form to any Jo-Carroll Energy office dropbox located in Elizabeth, Savanna or Geneseo
- Mail this form to PO Box 390, Elizabeth, IL 61028
- Call 800-858-5522 ext. 1208
- To RSVP, scan the QR code or go to [jocarroll.com/annual-meeting](http://jocarroll.com/annual-meeting)



**793 U.S. Route 20 West, P.O. Box 390 | Elizabeth, IL 61028 | [jocarroll.com](http://jocarroll.com)**