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Elizabeth, Illinois



800-858-5522



jcecoop.com



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## How we grow community

At our annual meeting and throughout this year, we've talked about how JCE Co-op is growing for you and the positive impact that has on the lives of our members and the communities we serve. As we celebrate October Co-op Month, I'd like to focus on how we grow community.

Concern for Community is one of our seven co-op principles. Being community-focused is essential to everything we do, including advocacy on behalf of our members. That's why we participate in events held by our state and national trade associations to meet with our senators and representatives and why we host our elected representatives at the co-op.

Co-ops help communities grow by fostering community engagement and supporting the unique needs of our co-op members. It's essential for the co-op community's voice to be heard on the national and state issues that have a local impact.

That's why we are once again joining with America's other electric cooperatives to help get out the vote in our communities. Co-ops Vote is a nonpartisan program developed by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) that works to inform both co-op members and candidates about issues important to co-ops.



### CEO'S REPORT

by Mike Casper

This collaborative effort provides us the opportunity to educate lawmakers, build awareness about issues that impact us and to advocate for policies that are important to the co-op, our members and the communities we serve.

As a co-op with deep roots here in northwestern Illinois, we want to be sure our co-op voices are heard on Election Day. Participating in Co-ops Vote will send the message to those seeking office that the issues and concerns facing our community — and all of rural America — cannot be ignored.

With national elections approaching, now is the perfect time to confirm that you are registered to vote and encourage new voters to get registered. The Co-ops Vote website, [Vote.coop](http://Vote.coop), provides a wealth of voter resources, including five simple steps to becoming a Co-op Voter:

- Ensure your voter registration is current;
- Learn your state's voter details;
- Understand key electricity issues;
- Know the candidates' energy policies;

**Continued on page 18C ►**

## For your information

### Your Board of Directors:

#### David Senn

Chairman

District 7

#### Jerry Meyer

Vice Chairman

District 1

#### Robert Kuhns

Treasurer

District 10

#### Dan Tindell

Secretary

District 4

### Joseph Mattingley

District 2

### Allen Hendren

District 3

### Patricia Smith

District 5

### Thomas Lundy

District 6

#### Ted James

District 8

#### 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  
jcecoop.com

### For emergencies and outages call:

(800) 858-5522

# Resume of Minutes

July 23, 2024

The regular board meeting of Jo-Carroll Energy, Inc. (NFP) was held on Tuesday, July 23, 2024.

**Safety Moment** – Director Lundy shared the importance of your surroundings while operating a tractor.

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

**Consent Agenda** – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda items, including the June 26, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes/Summary, Discounted Estate Retirements, and the board expense summary.

### Presentation –

**a. VP and Chief Financial Officer** Chuck Woods provided results from the 2023 Key Ratio Trend Analysis (KRTA) Report. The report included financial and operational ratios across five peer groups, which included: State, Consumer Size, Power Supplier, Consumer Growth and Cooperative (Plant) Growth.

**b. President and CEO** Brent Ridge provided educational information on the Wholesale Power Contract, including the history of the generation and transmission (G&T).

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

### Governance Talk Video – None.

### Board Policy Review – None.

### CEO/Financial Operating Report

**CEO Report** – President and CEO Mike Casper shared with the board and senior staff that Congressman Darin LaHood will be visiting the cooperative for a tour. This will provide Congressman LaHood an opportunity to visit the cooperative and learn about upcoming projects that are underway and discuss important legislative issues facing the industry,

such as grid modernization, workforce development, natural gas and fiber.

**Financial Operating Report** – Chuck Woods, Chief Financial Officer, provided a summary of the June financial operating report. Revenue year-to-date (YTD) is approximately \$34.2 million. Total operations and maintenance expenses are approximately \$27 million, which is (\$1,249,199) under the budget of \$28.3 million. Margins are approximately \$1.8 million. By general consent, the board moved to file the financial operating report with the auditor.

### Operations and Regulatory/Legislative Update

**Operations Update** – Kyle Buros, Senior VP & Chief Operating Officer, provided an update on the most recent storm that affected some services in the JCE Co-op territory. Buros noted that 2,000 members were affected, five broken poles were replaced, and power was restored in a safe and timely manner. In addition, Buros provided an update on new fiber services taking place in Lake Carroll, Thomson and on the east side of Savanna.

**Member Services Update** – Jennifer Meyer, VP of Member Services, shared the most recent Strategic Planning Roadmap.

**External Affairs/Legislative Update** – General Counsel Terry Kurt discussed a recent United Supreme Court case that reversed the Chevron Doctrine that allowed governmental agencies additional leeway when there was uncertainty in the interpretation of written law.

### Board Issues and Action Items

#### Rescind Rate Policy 701C & Approve

**Rate Policy 730** – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously

to rescind Policy 701c and Approve Rate Policy 730. Automated Metering Integration (AMI) opt out language was included into Rate Policy 730, deleting the need for Rate Policy 701c.

**Select Attendees for the National Rural Electric Cooperatives (NRECA) class 2600/Director Duties and Liabilities and NRECA class 921/Risk Oversight, the Board's Role in Risk Management –** Attendees were selected to attend NRECA classes 2600/Director Duties and Liabilities and 921/Risk Oversight, the Board's Role in Risk Management.

**Commitment to support the NRECA International Program –** A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to approve \$1,500 to be contributed to the NRECA International Program. The fund will support electric co-op line workers from six states who will assist in building electric infrastructure to remote communities in Guatemala.

**Into Executive Session –** None.

#### Out of Executive Session

– None.

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

#### Reports/Updates

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

No report was provided due to the timing of the AIEC Annual Meeting scheduled for Aug. 2.

**Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) –** Director Mattingley had nothing to add outside of the DPC Highlights that were included in the Board Report.

**American Public Gas Association (APGA) Report –** No report was provided due to the upcoming APGA Annual Meeting. A report will be provided during the August Board Meeting.

**Prairie Power Incorporated (PPI) Report –** Director Kuhns had nothing to add outside of the PPI Highlights that were included in the Board Report.

**Other Business –** None.

**Adjournment –** Chairman Senn adjourned the meeting at 12:08 p.m.

#### CEO's report continued from page 18A

- Share your story to encourage others to vote.

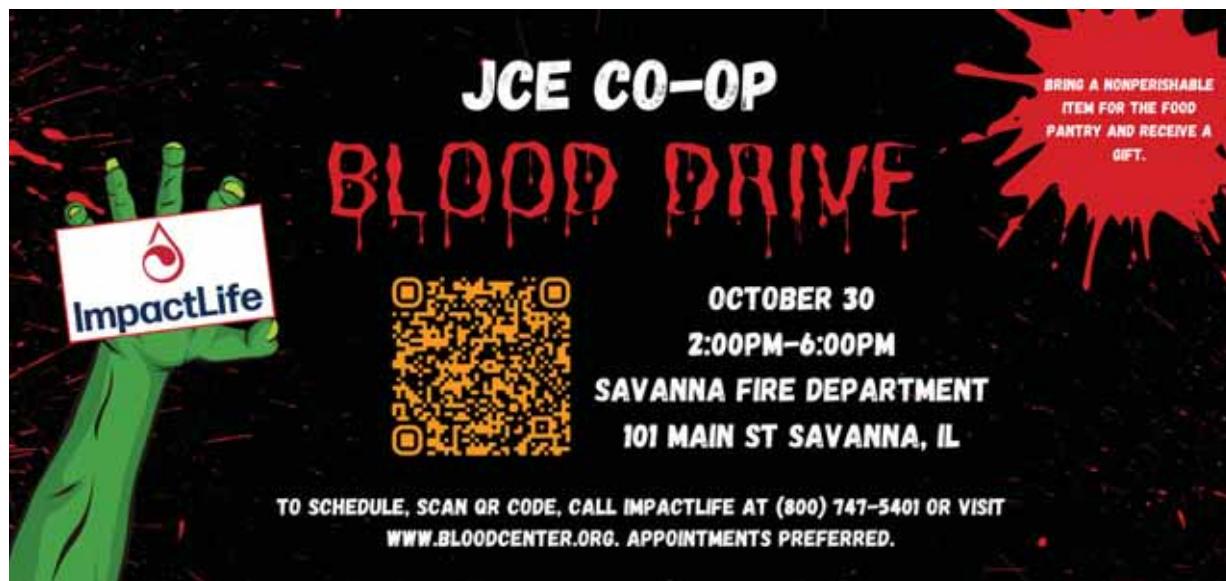
Co-ops are a trusted voice in Washington, D.C. The more our community members turn out to vote, the greater the opportunity we have to elect leaders who understand co-ops and the issues we face.

The co-op voice is powerful — and it starts with you!



#### Reader prize

Each month we print the name of a JCE Co-op 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 JCE Co-op.





## Representative Darin LaHood visits JCE Co-op

JCE Co-op hosted Rep. Darin LaHood at its headquarters in Elizabeth as part of his visit to northwestern Illinois on Wednesday, Aug. 21.

LaHood met with members of the co-op board and staff to discuss issues and concerns. Mike Casper, JCE president & CEO, provided the congressman and members of his staff with an overview of the co-op, the territory it serves and services provided.

"We're pleased to be here today," LaHood said. "I always look forward to hearing from you, Mike, and hearing about some of the challenges and concerns you have. Obviously, the work you do here for the community and what you give back is important, but also how public policy and the issues we deal with in Washington, D.C. affect what you do here on the ground, whether it is energy policy, whether it is tax policy, whether it is regulatory burdens. This is a great opportunity to be here and listen to you."

Kyle Buros, JCE Co-op chief operating officer, followed up with a summary of what the co-op is doing locally to utilize programs provided by the federal and state governments.

"Our mission is to improve the quality of life of our members — that is the sole reason we even exist," Buros said. "We want to utilize every opportunity that is available to us that we can sustainably do. We are constantly working on community engagement with our local Farm Bureaus and in our communities."

"When we are looking at programs, what is really relevant to members, what do they really

need," Buros said. "And fiber internet was one of those things that became extremely relevant, especially during the pandemic."

He highlighted several programs that were available to help increase rural connectivity, noting the co-op has been a successful recipient of ReConnect grants, Community Connect grants and Illinois Connect Round 3 grants. In total, the co-op has received approximately \$100 million in grants — which is about \$160-\$170 million in total infrastructure.

Buros outlined three areas of importance to co-ops across the country, including funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), support for symmetrical internet speeds and national broadband mapping.

Co-op representatives stressed the importance of ACP, stating the program had relieved some economic stress on rural households by making broadband available and affordable. In the long term, the co-op is hoping to see a program that will help ensure households are able to afford the internet they need. **Dillon Popkin**

"Having a program similar to LIHEAP (Low-Income Energy Assistance Program) to help keep those members connected is incredibly important," said Jennifer Meyer, vice president of cooperative services.

During a tour of the headquarters, LaHood heard more from employees about the programs and services the co-op provides to the members and communities it serves.

## Cybersecurity tips for a safer digital world

**D**id you know the average household with internet access owns about 17 connected devices? That figure covers a wide range of electronics, including smart phones, computers, streaming devices, smart speakers, home assistants and more. Given our increasing reliance on internet-connected technologies, the likelihood of new cyber threats is ever-present.

JCE Co-op is deeply committed to ensuring our local system is safe and secure. We routinely monitor and manage cyber risks, and we work together with other co-ops to share the latest advancements in cybersecurity measures that make us stronger. You can help, too.

When we all work together to stay safe online, we lower the risk of cyber threats to our systems, online accounts and sensitive data.

October is National Cybersecurity Month, and while good cyber hygiene should be practiced year-round, we'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips to help you bolster your online safety.

- **Learn how to spot and report phishing attempts.** Phishing occurs when criminals use phony emails, direct messages or other types of digital communications that lure you to click a bad link or download a malicious attachment. If you receive a suspicious email or message that includes urgent language, offers that seem too good to be true, generic greetings, poor grammar or an unusual sender address, it could be a phishing attempt. If you spot one, report it as

soon as possible — and don't forget to block the sender. (If you receive a suspicious work email, report it to the appropriate IT contact. Suspicious messages that are delivered to your personal email or social media accounts can also be reported.)

- **Create strong, unique passwords.** When it comes to passwords, remember that length trumps complexity. Strong passwords contain at least 12 characters and include a mix of letters, numbers and symbols. Create unique passwords for each online account you manage and use phrases you can easily remember.

- **Enable multifactor authentication when available.** Multifactor authentication (also known as two-factor authentication) adds an extra layer of security to your online accounts. These extra security steps can include facial recognition, fingerprint access or one-time codes sent to your email or phone.

- **Update software regularly.** Software and internet-connected devices, including personal computers, smartphones and tablets, should always be current on updates to reduce the risk of infection from ransomware and malware. When possible, configure devices to automatically update or notify you when an update is available.

Let's all do our part to stay cyber smart and create a safer digital world for all. Visit [staysafeonline.org](http://staysafeonline.org) to learn about additional cybersecurity tips.



# PUBLIC NATURAL GAS WEEK

OCTOBER 6-12, 2024

## Why public natural gas matters to our community

This year, Oct. 6-12 is Public Natural Gas Week, a time when communities such as ours give recognition to one of their most valuable community assets — their publicly owned natural gas utility. We are dedicating this week to educating our community about the benefits of having a public natural gas utility, in addition to promoting the overall benefits of natural gas for your fueling and heating needs. There are approximately 1,000 public natural gas utilities in the United States. Most are small and comprised of a few hundred to a few thousand customers. Despite their size, they have a huge impact on the communities they serve, by providing an irreplaceable function of offering low-carbon, affordable and efficient natural gas.

Our customers recognize the need to access reliable energy; having a local public natural gas utility is the best way to do that. There are many other benefits of having a public natural gas utility, for example:

1. Public natural gas utilities are directly accountable to the citizens they serve, and decisions regarding your energy needs are made locally through citizen participation instead of being made outside of the community.
2. Public natural gas utilities are locally controlled operations, which ensures that rates remain competitive and affordable. This is especially reassuring as energy and

fuel prices continue to rise and affect your family's bottom line.

3. Lastly, public natural gas can play a valuable role in helping broaden our tax base and helps local dollars stay at home. We also work with local financial institutions and make purchases from local businesses. This, in turn, improves the local economy and creates jobs.

We're here for our community and invite you to join us on Oct. 7 at Heritage Park in Erie, Ill., for an appreciation picnic from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. If you have any questions regarding your public natural gas utility or your upcoming energy needs, please feel free to reach out to JCE Co-op at 800-858-5522.



# THANK YOU members! *Please join us!* Member Appreciation Day

Erie | Heritage Park  
11 a.m.-1 p.m.  
Monday | October 7

*Pork chop sandwiches | hot dogs | chips  
cookies | drinks | games & prizes*

## TRICK OR TREAT

*Don't Let an Electrical Mishap Be Your Halloween Trick*

As you ready your yard and porch for Halloween, make sure the decorations you plug in do not become hazardous. **To avoid a Halloween scare, take these safety precautions:**

- Discard any decorations that have **cracked or frayed cords** or damaged plugs.
- Do not** put any decorations on power poles, padmount transformers or any other electrical equipment.
- Use decorations that are endorsed by a reputable testing laboratory such as **Underwriters Laboratories (UL)**.
- If you are using extension cords outdoors, make sure they are **rated for outdoor use**.
- Secure all cords** so they do not become tripping hazards.

- Plug all cords into circuits protected by **GFCIs** to prevent electrical shock.
- Do not use nails or tacks** to hang lights or other electrical decor.
- Keep decorations **away from flammable items** like bales of hay, cornstalks or witch's brew.

Have a safe and festive Halloween complete with safe tricks and tasty treats.

Learn more at:

 **Safe Electricity.org**

# 6000

## THANK YOU!

### FIBER INTERNET MEMBERS

**JCE Co-op connects  
our 6000<sup>th</sup> fiber  
internet member!**

We are very excited to announce our 6,000th fiber internet member! Amanda Swiecha from the Savanna Park District has been installed and connected to our amazing fiber internet and phone service!

We have remarkable crews that are working day after day to bring fiber internet to our members. THANK YOU to the line crews, engineers, installers, broadband technicians, operations, marketing, and sales teams here at JCE Co-op! We are proud to serve as your local fiber co-op!



### Want to be our 7000<sup>th</sup> fiber internet member?

Check availability, submit  
your interest or sign-up at:

[JCECOOP.COM/FIBER](http://JCECOOP.COM/FIBER)



 **JCE CO-OP**  
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