

HI-LINES

A newsletter for members of JCE Co-op

JULY 2025

Elizabeth, IL

800-858-5522

jcecoop.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JULY TOPIC—SENIOR PLANET Staying Safe Online (Workshop)

JULY 1
Senior Planet—Savanna Museum and Cultural Center 10:00–11:00 a.m.

JULY 3
Senior Planet—Mount Carroll District Library 1:00–2:00 p.m.

JULY 4
JCE Co-op offices closed.

JULY 8
Senior Planet—Schmaling Memorial Public Library Fulton 11:00 a.m.–Noon

JULY 10
Senior Planet—Apple Canyon Lake Clubhouse 1:00–2:00 p.m.

JULY 15
Senior Planet—Odell Public Library Morrison 11:00 a.m.–Noon

JULY 17
Senior Planet—Menominee Township Building 1:00–2:00 p.m.

JULY 22
Senior Planet—JCE Co-op Elizabeth West Campus 10:00–11:00 a.m.

JULY 24
Senior Planet—Geneseo Public Library 10:00 a.m.–11:00 a.m.



CEO'S REPORT by Mike Casper

Thank you to all who joined us for JCE Co-op's 86th Annual Meeting of members held in East Dubuque. It was a great gathering where we were able to meet and talk with our members. We appreciate all of you who helped make this a great event celebrating our co-op community.

Highlights of the meeting can be found inside this issue. An important part of our meeting is the questions we hear from members. Following is a summary of some of the more frequently asked questions.

When are we going to get fiber?

Our team is working hard, connecting hundreds of homes and businesses each month. You can track our progress and view expected timelines by visiting the "Fiber Communities Map" on our website. We anticipate having fiber service available to nearly everyone who wants it within the next three years and a majority within the next two years.

How is JCE Co-op improving communities it serves through economic development?

JCE is significantly enhancing the communities it serves in northwest Illinois through fiber broadband deployment, which is the cornerstone of our community development strategy. We are also fostering workforce development through partnerships with institutions like Morrison Tech and Northwest Illinois Economic Development. Through these comprehensive efforts, JCE Co-op is not only improving connectivity, but also fostering sustainable economic growth, enhancing quality of life and building

Thank you for joining us!

a resilient, future-ready community in northwest Illinois.

Why have rate increases been higher in the past few years

As I mentioned in my February column in Illinois Country Living magazine and during my interview on WCCI radio, the Consumer Price Index has increased by over 30% in the past decade, with nearly 20% of that occurring in just the last four years. The electric utility industry has been particularly affected by extreme inflation on essential materials required to deliver electricity. Between 2021 and 2024, the cost of key items—such as transformers, overhead and underground wire and other critical hardware—has surged by a staggering 51%.

Capital credits—what is the process of retiring capital credits?

Each year, after covering operating costs, JCE Co-op allocates any remaining margins to members based on their individual energy usage. These margins, known as capital credits, are retained by the co-op for a period of time and reinvested into the system—such as maintaining power lines, upgrading infrastructure, or expanding services like broadband. Annually, the board of directors reviews the co-op's financial position and determines whether to retire (pay out) a portion of these capital credits and how much to return to members.

Why did JCE Co-op move away from net metering to net billing?

Starting in 2025, utilities across the state transitioned to net billing. JCE Co-op extended this transition period for our

**CEO'S REPORT**
by Mike Casper**Thank you for
joining us!**
(Continued)

members until the end of March. Currently, more than 12% of JCE Co-op's power needs are met through solar energy, one of the highest concentrations in the state. Under net billing, members are compensated for excess energy produced by their solar systems at the value of energy rate, rather than receiving credit at the full retail rate. The value of energy represents the cost the co-op would have paid to generate or purchase that power elsewhere — for example from Dairyland Power. It does not include other components of your bill, such as the costs for maintaining power lines, billing and customer service.

What are you doing to improve reliability?

JCE Co-op is continually working to enhance the reliability of our electric grid. For example, we are making improvements to two substations in East Dubuque. In the Savanna, Chadwick and Mount Carroll areas, we are upgrading or replacing several substations to provide increased reliability for those communities, as well as increased capacity for future growth.

On the fiber side, we are incorporating multiple ring loops into the network design. This means that if an accidental fiber cut occurs, most members will still maintain internet access through alternate pathways—greatly improving service resilience.

JCE CO-OP
OFFICES WILL BE
closed
FRIDAY, JULY 4

REMINDER**AMI meter swaps
are underway**

JCE Co-op has begun upgrading electric meters across our service area as part of a two-year project to install new Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI). Installations started in June in the northern region and will move southward.

Key Information:

- Meter swaps may cause a brief service interruption (15-30 minutes).**
- You do not need to be home during the swap.**
- Contractors from Utility Metering Solutions (UMS) will be clearly identified with branded shirts, ID badges and vehicles displaying UMS and JCE Co-op magnets.**
- Door hangers will be left after installation or if a return visit is needed.**
- If your meter socket/pedestal needs replacement, please address it in advance.**

Stay informed by checking updates at jcecoop.com/projects or follow us on Facebook and Instagram. Members will also receive email or postcard notifications before installation begins in their area.

Thank you for your cooperation as we work to bring improved reliability and efficiency to your electric service.

**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.

Fighting for rural America in D.C.

Electric co-op leaders, including a contingent from JCE Co-op, gathered in Washington, D.C. this spring to advocate for co-op communities. Representing JCE were President and CEO Mike Casper, General Counsel Terry Kurt and board chairman and vice chairman David Senn and Jerry Meyer.

The annual Legislative Conference provides opportunities for co-ops to bring key energy issues and priorities to the political forefront. Electric co-ops are focusing on enhancing reliability, addressing federal permitting and regulatory challenges and ensuring access to federal funding opportunities to foster innovation and support our local communities.

While in Washington, our co-op contingent met with Sens. Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth and Congressmen Darin LaHood and Eric Sorenson's offices.

"We thanked them for their past support, specifically on grant applications that we were successful in being awarded for fiber broadband deployment," Casper said. "We shared with them that economic development leaders in Northwest Illinois are working together with local and federal partners, colleges and others to ensure companies have every reason to set up shop here and across rural America to successfully grow our economy."

The co-op's representatives also shared that the region offers a portfolio of properties, including existing industrial facilities ready for retooling, as well as shovel-ready sites in underutilized industrial parks. These locations represent a powerful opportunity: low acquisition costs, access to growing incentive



Pictured from left to right: John Cox, former congressman for Northwest Illinois, Terry Kurt, Jerry Meyer, Dave Senn and Mike Casper.

programs, and the ability to play a central role in stabilizing and expanding rural economies.

"Our big ask of them was to help establish strategic federal incentives aimed at attracting global companies and revitalizing domestic manufacturing," Casper noted. "Rural communities are ready for transformation, equipped with the critical infrastructure to support both new and established industrial sites.

"We discussed the importance of the many existing facilities, which are the economic backbone of our communities — often the largest employer and a key contributor to economic prosperity and local quality of life," he said. "These are facilities that don't just support jobs; they anchor households and sustain entire towns for generations."

Casper added that retooling and expanding these sites can yield immediate operational benefits and long-term goodwill in the regions they serve.

"Communities like ours are ready. We've built strong workforce pipelines through partnerships with local colleges, aligned state and county development tools, and are prepared to roll out incentives that reduce startup risks and relocation costs," Casper said. Whether the business is in manufacturing, agribusiness, food production, or rural commercial development, Northwest Illinois offers a ready-made home with the infrastructure and workforce to support success. We emphasized that our communities are eager for growth and equipped to deliver — especially when federal incentives help level the playing field and spur investment.





IMPORTANT

REMINDER

Changes to billing cycles coming in August!

We're making important updates at JCE Co-op to improve your member experience! Starting in August, electric and natural gas members will move to new billing cycles as part of a larger system upgrade. These changes will not affect fiber and phone services.



Check your new billing cycle and note any changes to your billing and due dates.



Update auto-pay settings to reflect your new due date.



Watch for more updates about our new online portal and mobile app—designed to make managing your account easier than ever!

Need help or have questions? Our Member Care Team is here for you at 800-858-5522.

Stay tuned for more info in the coming months!

The areas included in the new cycles are shown in the table below:

| | Cycle 1 | Cycle 2 | Cycle 3 |
|---------------------|---|------------------------------|---|
| Billing Date | 7th of the month | 14th of the month | 24th of the month |
| Due Date | 28th of the month | 5th of the month | 15th of the month |
| Territory | Apple River, Hanover, Stockton, Albany, Chadwick, Erie, Fenton, Mount Carroll, Lanark, Morrison, Geneseo, Atkinson, Prophetstown, Annawan, Colona | Fulton Savanna Thomson | East Dubuque Elizabeth Galena Scales Mound |

CONGRATULATIONS

JCE Director's Scholarship Winners!

Pictured from left:
Tierney Miller
Ava Hahn
Rachel Anger
Kyle Haas
Casey Kettering

2025 Annual meeting recap

A grassroots movement by area farmers in Jo Daviess and Carroll counties was the foundation of JCE Co-op 86 years ago. Those rural roots and co-op values were highlighted throughout the co-op's annual meeting of members. Attended by almost 300 co-op members and guests, the event was held May 28 at the East Dubuque High School.

Board chairman Dave Senn reminded members that they are the grassroots of the co-op "who ensure that our rural lifestyle stays intact."

"We, the board and the management, continue working to keep your way of country life a reality. We know our communities – their needs, resources and challenges," Senn said. "This organization prides itself on reliability and moving forward to meet the needs of rural America."

He continued that the strength of co-ops is not just from the local co-op members, but all co-op members across the country whose voice of 42 million strong is heard when expressed together.

"Advocating on behalf of members is a critical part of our commitment to you," Senn said. "We work with other co-ops across the country to stress the need for high-speed internet and advocate for smart energy policies that ensure energy security for our communities in the future.

"No matter the challenges we face, our focus is the best interest of the local communities we serve," he stated. "Your voice, the grassroots, adds strength to communicate our needs to both state and federally elected representatives. Together we can achieve our goals to keep control of this organization locally. Your voice counts. We listen. Be sure your elected officials hear from you also."

Continuing the theme of "Rural Roots. Co-op Value", JCE Co-op President and CEO Mike Casper's comments reflected on those roots and investing in the future. Alluding to the graphic on the co-op's annual report—a photo of a young boy and a emerging corn stalk set against a rising sun—Casper said the deep roots "symbolize the cooperative's founders, area farmers, who 86 years ago laid a strong foundation that we continue to build upon today.

"They were visionary entrepreneurs who came together to bring electricity to rural farms, improving the quality of life for future generations."

"The young child featured on this year's annual report cover represents our future," Casper noted. "It is our children, our grandchildren and even great-grandchildren who fuel our drive to keep improving our communities. What greater motivation could we ask for?"

Casper observed that the boy and the corn stalk represent "the continuous improvements and new services JCE is bringing to the area, like fiber internet . . . bringing fiber to rural America is necessary to maintain our economy. Just like electricity was 86 years old."

Casper noted that research indicates that rural areas that utilize fiber experience a 213 percent higher rate of business growth and up to a 44 percent increase in gross domestic product. "That translates into jobs, stronger communities and more tax revenue for our schools and public services," he said.

Following his presentation, Casper introduced guest speaker Jason Herbert, vice president of external affairs at Dairyland Power Cooperative. Herbert provided an overview of how Dairyland is actively working to stabilize wholesale power rates and strengthen sustainability through investments in renewable energy, infrastructure and energy efficiency and load management programs.

Business session

During the business session, members elected three board directors by a vote of acclamation. Board directors Jerry Meyer, District 1; Joe Mattingley, District 2; and Dan Tindell, District 4 were all unopposed in their bids for re-election. All directors serve three-year terms.

Members also approved a bylaw amendment to clearly define Class B members as those who receive services other than retail services. The co-op's general counsel Terry Kurt explained the amendment allows the co-op to better track Class B members and allocate capital credits based on the use of co-op services by each member class.

Displays and demonstrations

Prior to the meeting, members mingled with co-op employees and directors and browsed several co-op displays. At the displays, members could learn about co-op programs and services including the fiber service and technology courses for older adults through the Senior Planet from AARP program. Also popular was the virtual reality bucket truck demonstration.

A special feature was a historical electrical display by co-op member George Petitgout, who is also a member of the JCE Co-op Member Advisory Council.





Summer heats up with major fiber expansion efforts

Summer is sizzling with activity as our teams push forward with extensive fiber construction across multiple neighborhoods. Significant progress is being made in East Dubuque, Galena, Savanna, Lake Carroll, Lena, Schapville, Mount Carroll, Hanover, Nora, Thomson and Woodbine—each advancing steadily through their respective buildout phases.

In addition, fiber construction is set to begin this summer in many areas covered by the Connect Illinois Rd. 3 Broadband Grant, bringing high-speed fiber internet to rural communities throughout Whiteside, Carroll, and Jo Daviess Counties.

While we're proud of the incredible strides made in transitioning members to fiber at a steady pace, there's still important work ahead. In the coming months, you may notice increased activity in your area—not only from our technicians but also from contracted crews. These contractors support us in key areas including field data collection, framing, engineering, aerial fiber deployment, underground fiber drops, and splicing.

We're committed to delivering fast, reliable fiber internet to your community—and we appreciate your continued patience and support as we build the future of connectivity.

Once the fiber construction is complete, if you're in one of our current buildout areas noted above and have submitted your online fiber signup form, our broadband schedulers will reach out to schedule your interior installation at a time that works best for you.

Thank you for being a valued member. We look forward to providing you with the best possible internet experience! You can view your area's progress and buildout phase with our fiber communities map at forms.jcecoop.com/fiber/communities.

Sign up today!

Do not miss out on this opportunity and sign up now at jcecoop.com/fiber to have the installation fee waived!

\$129.95

Value

Fiber expansion and construction updates in the following neighborhoods

- **Council Hill - CHL1 (Rural Area)**
Estimate construction completion summer 2025
- **East Dubuque - ED4, ED5**
Fiber In-Service
- **Menominee - MEN2, MEN3, & SR1 (Rural Areas)**
Scheduling Installations
- **Galena - G19 (Rural Area)**
Scheduling Installations
- **Hanover - HAN1 & HAN2 (Rural Areas)**
Estimate construction completion Summer 2025
- **Lake Carroll - LCA1 & LCA2**
Fiber In-Service
- **Lena - LNA2**
Fiber In-Service
- **Lena - LNA3**
Estimate construction completion Winter 2025
- **Lena - LNA4**
Signup Phase
- **Mount Carroll - MTC1**
Fiber In-Service
- **Nora - NOR1 (Rural Area)**
Fiber In-Service
- **Savanna - SAV11**
Fiber In-Service
- **Savanna - PAL1 & PAL2 (Rural Areas)**
Estimate construction completion Summer 2025
- **Thomson - York1**
Fiber In-Service
- **Woodbine - WBN1 (Rural Area)**
Scheduling Installations
- **Connect Illinois Rd. 3 Broadband Grant - Whiteside, Jo Daviess and Carroll County rural areas**
Estimate construction starting in Summer 2025
 - SPV1, MOR1, MOR2, FTN2, COL1, COL2, COL3
 - J11A, B, C, D, E
 - CHT3
 - STK7
 - J8
 - J12 A, B
 - J13 A, B
- **GPN1**
Scheduling Installations

YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

| |
|--|
| David Senn <i>Chairman</i> District 7 |
| Jerry Meyer <i>Vice Chairman</i> District 1 |
| Robert Kuhns <i>Treasurer</i> District 10 |
| Dan Tindell <i>Secretary</i> 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. |
| Genesee 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

April 24, 2025

Board Meeting Minutes Summary

The regular board meeting of Jo-Carroll Energy, Inc. (NFP) was held on Thursday, April 24, 2025.

Safety Moment – Director Carroll shared important tips on home safety, emphasizing the need for preparation and awareness. He recommended keeping all emergency contact numbers saved on your phone and posted in a visible location. Your house number should be clearly visible from the street to assist emergency responders. Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers should be installed on every floor of the home. Additionally, seasonal safety inspections of gas lines, water heaters, and furnaces are crucial to prevent potential hazards.

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.

Presentations

Alex Peebles, Manager of Safety and Loss Control, delivered the quarterly safety presentation to the board. He provided updates from the safety committee, discussed initiatives stemming from the recent culture survey, reviewed safety training outcomes, and shared OSHA-related statistics. Additionally, it was announced that Brandon Sebena, Director of Utility Operations, received the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives' "Individual Safety Award," which honors individuals who demonstrate outstanding safety leadership and promote a strong safety culture. JCE Co-op was also recognized with the "Best Incident Rate" award for 2024.

Governance Topics and Board Policy Review – None.

CEO| Financial Operating Report

CEO Report – Mike Casper, President and CEO, shared with the board that over the next couple of years, inflation, higher interest rates, and reduced commercial and industrial (C&I) loads will continue to challenge JCE in meeting our financial

covenants. To proactively address the 2025 requirements, JCE is reprioritizing operations and maintenance (O&M) and capital expenditures, implementing a hiring freeze to manage workforce costs, and pursuing additional cost-reduction strategies.

Until we can grow margins, these proactive measures are essential. Looking ahead to 2028 and beyond, we forecast strong broadband margins and increased residential and C&I growth, supported by our strategic efforts and collaboration with community and economic development partners. Continued investment in technology and system upgrades will also equip us with tools to operate more efficiently and maintain a leaner, more agile organization.

Financial Operating Report – Chuck Woods, Chief Financial Officer, noted that March YTD Revenue is approximately \$18.7 million. Total operations and maintenance expenses are approximately \$15 million, which is \$246,630 under the budget of \$15,249,287 million, due to multiple factors. Margins are approximately \$713,639 and are \$530,931 greater than budget of \$147,665, primarily due to revenue over budget by \$231,163. By general consent, the board moved to file the financial operating report with the auditor.

Operations and Regulatory/ Legislative Update

Operations Update – Senior V.P. and Chief Operating Officer Kyle Buros provided an update on the Mt. Carroll Substation upgrade, which is expected to be completed by year's end. Additionally, Buros reported that fiber installations are ongoing in East Dubuque, Woodbine Bend, Galena, and Thomson, noting that customer adoption has been strong.

IT Technology Report – Dan Marcure, V.P. and Chief Technology Officer highlighted the measures JCE is taking to help mitigate cyber threats.

Resume of minutes (Continued)

Member Services Update – Jennifer Meyer, V.P. of Cooperative Services reviewed JCE Co-op's Position Statements. She also explained the establishment and operation of the Neighbor-to-Neighbor Care Fund, providing ending balances, pledged contributions, and LIHEAP funds distributed by agency.

External Affairs/Legislative Update – General Counsel Terry Kurt announced he will attend the Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., where he will meet with lawmakers to discuss key energy issues.

Executive Assistant Update – Amy Johnston, Executive Assistant, provided instruction and logistics on the upcoming JCE Annual Meeting.

Board Issues and Action Items

Approve 2024 Margin Allocations – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to approve the 2024 Margin Allocations.

Select Dairyland Power Cooperative (Dairyland) Direction Education – A date of July 22nd was selected for the Directors to attend the Dairyland Director Education opportunity.

Select Dairyland Power Cooperative Annual Meeting Attendees – Attendees were selected to attend the Dairyland Annual Meeting.

Certify | Select DPC Director & Alternate Director to serve on the Dairyland Board representing JCE Co-op – A motion was made to appoint Dan Tindell to serve as Director and Ted James to serve as Alternate Director on the Dairyland Board of Directors, representing JCE Co-op. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved by all members present.

Certify | Select Prairie Power Cooperative Director & Alternate Director to serve on the PPI Board – A motion was made to appoint Bob Kuhns to serve as Director and Jerry Meyer serve as Alternate Director on the PPI Board of Directors, representing JCE Co-op. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved by all members present.

Select Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) Annual Meeting Attendees – Attendees were selected to attend the AIEC Annual Meeting.

Select AIEC Voting Delegate | Alternate Voting Delegate for the AIEC Annual Meeting – A motion was made to select Dave Senn as the Voting Delegate and Bob Kuhns was selected as the alternate voting delegate. The motion was seconded and unanimously approved by all members present.

Select Attendees for the BLC 960 Class (Value of the G&T Distribution Relationship) – Attendees were selected to participate in the BLC 960 Class.

Executive Session

Into Executive Session – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to go into Executive Session at 11:50 AM.

Out of Executive Session – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to come out of Executive Session at 12:21 PM.

Action Resulting from Executive Session – None

Reports/Updates

Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC)

– Director Senn had nothing to report outside of his written report.

Dairyland Power Report – Director Tindell provided a summary of the Dairyland Board Highlights.

Prairie Power Inc. (PPI) Report – Director Kuhns shared highlights and generation statistics from the most recent Prairie Power Board Meeting.

Other Business – None.

Adjournment – Chairman Senn adjourned the meeting, at 12:30 PM

Kimberly S Zissler



Power up your summer with Inspector Watts & Scout!

Get ready for a summer full of fun, learning and energy-packed adventures! Inspector Watts and his trusty sidekick, Scout the dog, are launching a series of exciting activities for kids – from hands-on experiments and puzzles to challenges and educational games, all designed to spark curiosity and creativity.

Starting this summer, follow along on our social media pages for bi-weekly updates, downloadable activity pages and links to new adventures. Each activity is designed to light up young minds and keep kids engaged all season long.

 Stay plugged in—follow us on Facebook and join Watts & Scout on a mission to make this summer shockingly fun!

 Visit jcecoop.com/educational-resources.