

# HI-LINES

A newsletter for members of JCE Co-op

SEPTEMBER 2025



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### SEPTEMBER 1

Offices closed for Labor Day

### SEPTEMBER TOPIC—SENIOR PLANET

Streaming & Smart TVs (workshop)

### SEPTEMBER 2

Senior Planet—Savanna Museum & Cultural Center  
10:00–11:00 a.m.

### SEPTEMBER 4

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

### SEPTEMBER 9

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

### SEPTEMBER 11

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

### SEPTEMBER 16

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

### SEPTEMBER 18

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

### SEPTEMBER 23

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

### SEPTEMBER 25

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



**JCE CO-OP**  
Electric • Gas • Fiber

Elizabeth, IL

800-858-5522

[jcecoop.com](http://jcecoop.com)



### CEO'S REPORT

by Mike Casper

## Preparing for the future

### Preparing for the future

September marks National Preparedness Month, providing an ideal opportunity to discuss how JCE Co-op is helping prepare JCE and northwest Illinois for the future. In today's rapidly changing energy landscape, strategic foresight and adaptability are crucial for ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of your cooperative. Central to our strategy are three core objectives: growth, operational excellence and enhancing cooperative value. These objectives form the foundation for our initiatives, which will help prepare us for the future. I'll share how these objectives are intricately linked to our key initiatives: fiber, NISC conversion, AMI, expansion of transmission, economic growth, workforce development, business and community development and vegetation management.

### Fiber

Investing in fiber infrastructure supports all three strategic objectives. By enhancing connectivity and communication capabilities, fiber supports operational excellence and growth. Fiber enables smart grid technologies, improves system reliability and creates opportunities for new service offerings. Additionally, it enhances cooperative value by providing members with access to high-speed internet, thereby fostering community development and economic growth.

### NISC conversion

Our transition to the National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC) platform exemplifies our commitment to operational excellence. This conversion streamlines operations and improves member service

capabilities. By adopting cutting-edge technology, we position ourselves for growth, ensuring we meet the evolving needs of our members and deliver greater cooperative value through improved service.

### Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)

Upgrading AMI is a crucial step toward achieving operational excellence. By providing real-time data and insights, AMI enhances our ability to manage energy distribution efficiently and improve service. This initiative supports growth by enabling innovative services and optimizing energy use, ultimately enhancing the value we provide you.

### Future-ready transmission and distribution

We are dedicated to maintaining and upgrading our energy transmission and distribution systems to ensure they are prepared for future growth. As energy demand continues to increase, it's essential that our infrastructure remains reliable and adaptable. By focusing on system upkeep and improvements, we can attract new businesses to the area and ensure that your homes and businesses receive consistent, high-quality energy now and in the years ahead.

### Economic growth, workforce and business and community development

Fostering economic growth and workforce development is a key component of our growth strategy. By investing in training and apprenticeship programs through partnerships with educational institutions, we

**CEO'S REPORT**  
by Mike Casper

## Preparing for the future

(Continued)

help cultivate a skilled workforce. This initiative boosts cooperative value by creating jobs, stimulating local economies and ensuring our communities prosper alongside our cooperative.

Our dedication to business and community development underscores our commitment to enhancing cooperative value. By supporting local businesses and nurturing community initiatives, we strengthen the fabric of our communities. This effort drives economic growth and reinforces our role as a trusted community partner.

### Vegetation management

In our beautiful, heavily wooded area, effective vegetation management is crucial for protecting our infrastructure from storm-related damage. By proactively managing vegetation, we minimize potential damage and system outages. This initiative is vital for safeguarding our assets and enhancing the value we provide to our members through consistent and reliable service, even in adverse weather conditions.

In conclusion, our strategic objectives of growth, operational excellence and enhancing cooperative value are deeply interconnected with our initiatives. By focusing on these objectives, we are not only preparing for the future but also ensuring your cooperative continues to thrive and provide exceptional value to our members. As we move forward, we remain committed to these objectives, confident they will guide us in navigating the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

**JCE CO-OP**  
**OFFICES WILL BE**  
*closed*

**MONDAY, SEPT. 1**

## Dairyland Power Cooperative supports Tyler's Justice Center for Children

### Cooperative Principle #7: Concern for Community

Dairyland Power Cooperative has donated \$10,000 to Tyler's Justice Center for Children (TJCC), a non-profit dedicated to reducing trauma for child victims of sexual and physical abuse. They do this by providing a coordinated, multi-disciplinary response to the investigation, prosecution and treatment of abuse cases for children and their families. As a Children's Advocacy Center, TJCC provides free services to children up to 18 years of age.

Headquartered in Stockton, Ill., and serving Carroll, Jo Daviess and Stephenson counties, TJCC brings together professionals including legal, medical and child protective and social services – to ensure every child's best interests are prioritized. They also work closely with law enforcement, the Department of Children and Families, the State's Attorney and other advocates.

"As a cooperative committed to improving lives in the communities we serve, we are proud to support Tyler's Justice Center for Children in their efforts to ensure that the voices of vulnerable children are heard and their needs are met with care and dignity," said Dairyland President and CEO Brent Ridge.

This donation includes a \$5,000 match from CoBank, a national cooperative bank, through CoBank's Sharing Success Program. The total donation will be used to help fund the Program Coordinator/Family Advocate Program and offset related expenses for families, such as transportation.

"Supporting our communities is not just a responsibility—it's a fundamental principle of the cooperative business model," said JCE Co-op President and CEO Mike Casper. "Initiatives like Dairyland's Cooperative Contributions Program helps us expand our positive impact in local communities by providing funds that benefit the people we serve."





## REMINDER



## SmartHub is coming soon!

### Attention debit and credit card Auto Pay members!

**If you are currently registered for Auto Pay with a debit or credit card you will be required to re-register for Auto Pay in our new SmartHub payment system. Take note of the below dates. We will have a grace period regarding late fees.**

### Important dates and information

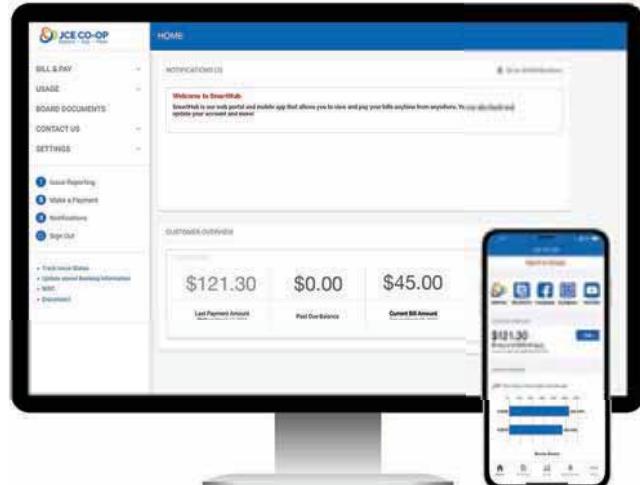


After 4:30 p.m. Central standard Time (CST) on Friday, October 31, no payments will be able to be made via debit or credit card on the website during this transition period.

**Cash and check payments can still be made in our lobby, checks can be mailed or dropped in our night drop box or payments made by phone.**



After we launch on November 3, we will have instructions on how to register your account and re-activate your Auto Pay settings on our SmartHub support [jcecoop.com/smarthub](http://jcecoop.com/smarthub).



#### How can SmartHub help you control your account?

Our SmartHub mobile app and web portal will keep you informed and will show you where to save time and money on your bills.

- Billing & Payments:** No more waiting for your bill to arrive in the mail, access your bill at anytime from anywhere. Save time with easy payment options to avoid late fees and service interruptions.
- Alerts & Notifications:** Stay informed on important account events via email or text messages.
- Paperless Billing:** What if you could save some time and a tree at the same time? Activate SmartHub paperless billing, an eco-friendly way to instantly access your bill



**Have questions? Contact us if you have any questions or concerns, our member care team is here to help and can be reached at 800-858-5522.**



### 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.

# BE PREPARED

## National Preparedness Month tips

As residents of the Midwest, we understand how quickly natural and man-made incidents can occur, underscoring the importance of being prepared. At JCE Co-op, we know that emergencies can strike unexpectedly in the communities we serve. Many of us have seen or experienced tornado outbreaks, river and flash floods, wildfires, smoke, water main breaks and power outages, affecting countless people for days. During these times, police, fire and rescue

services might not be able to reach you quickly. The best way to support local responders is by being ready to care for yourself and those around you.

Taking proactive steps today ensures you're prepared for tomorrow's incidents. Preparedness doesn't have to be costly or happen all at once. It's about using what you have to be ready, and you might be more prepared than you think!

Preparedness involves three key steps:

1

Developing an incident response plan.

2

Staying informed about the risks we face.

3

Knowing how to access information during an emergency.

Here are practical, low-cost actions you can take to prepare for future incidents:

- Make sure you are signed up to receive local emergency alerts.
- Enable FEMA Wireless Emergency Alerts on your mobile phone.
- Familiarize yourself with evacuation routes.
- Create an emergency plan detailing what to do before, during and after an incident—include pets and livestock.
- Practice your emergency plan with everyone in your household including family, friends and neighbors.
- Develop and practice a family communication plan. Keep contact information updated and reviewed.
- Assemble an emergency kit with two weeks' worth of food, water and critical supplies for each person and pet.
- Make copies of important documents needed to recover after an incident. Store them digitally on your phone, in the cloud or on a flash drive in a waterproof container with your emergency kit.
- Check on loved ones and neighbors during severe weather, extreme temperatures, utility outages or other incidents.
- Consider how you would respond to an emergency in unfamiliar places like the county fair, mall or while on vacation.
- Volunteer by joining a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).
- Older adults, people with disabilities and their caregivers should account for individual specific needs when planning for emergencies. Establish a support network of people to assist.

Emergencies can happen anywhere at any time, and it may take days or even weeks for responders to reach everyone affected. By preparing yourself, you reduce the burden on first responders, allowing them to focus on life-threatening situations and vulnerable individuals. Your preparedness can save lives.

***Remember, incidents don't plan ahead, but you can! Stay safe and prepared!***



# Are you ready?

A family activity with  
Inspector Watts & Scout

HOW WOULD WE  
SEE IN THE DARK WITHOUT  
POWER?



## Are you ready for a power emergency?

Help your family build an emergency kit! Collect these items and keep them together in a safe place that you can find easily. Make sure you have enough supplies to last for at least three days. Create a scavenger hunt and make planning fun!

- 3-day supply of non-perishable food (dried fruit, canned meat, peanut butter, etc.)
- Can opener
- First aid kit
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for everyone in your family
- Change of clothes to last 3 days, including shoes; consider the weather where you live
- Matches in a waterproof container (a grown up should handle these)
- Toothbrush, toothpaste, soap
- Paper plates, plastic cups and utensils, paper towels, wipes
- Water – at least a gallon per person, per day
- Battery-powered or hand-cranked radio with extra batteries
- Flashlights with extra batteries
- Cell phone with charger, extra battery and solar charger
- Whistle to signal for help
- Local maps
- Pet supplies
- Baby supplies
- Books, games or puzzles
- A favorite stuffed animal or blanket

*Remember,  
traffic lights will  
not work!*

# 8000

## THANK YOU!

### FIBER INTERNET MEMBERS

#### JCE Co-op connects our 8000th fiber internet member!

We are very excited to announce our 8,000th fiber internet member! Fritz Werhane and Jaki Smith, owners of 815 Precision Diesel Truck & Trailer Repair and Werhane Enterprises in Lena, have been 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 construction crews, 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 9,000th fiber internet member?



*Sign up now to receive  
FREE installation!*

Check availability, submit  
your interest, or sign-up at  
[jcecoop.com/fiber](http://jcecoop.com/fiber)

*Do not miss out on this  
opportunity to have the  
\$129.95 installation  
fee waived!*

Pictured from left to right: Fritz Werhane and Jaki Smith, owners of 815 Precision Diesel Truck & Trailer Repair and Werhane Enterprise, JCE Co-op representatives: Anthony "Jianni" Bain, outside plant technician, Scott Honerbaum, broadband sales representative, and Derek Bradt, broadband marketing and sales manager.

## YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

<b>David Senn</b> <i>Chairman</i> District 7
<b>Jerry Meyer</b> <i>Vice Chairman</i> District 1
<b>Robert Kuhns</b> <i>Treasurer</i> District 10
<b>Dan Tindell</b> <i>Secretary</i> District 4
<b>Joseph Mattingley</b> District 2
<b>Allen Hendren</b> District 3
<b>Vacant</b> District 5
<b>Thomas Lundy</b> District 6
<b>Ted James</b> District 8
<b>Larry Carroll</b> District 9
<b>Office Hours:</b> Monday-Friday
<b>Elizabeth</b> 793 U.S. Route 20 West 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
<b>Savanna</b> 103 Chicago Ave. 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. 1:30 to 4 p.m.
<b>Genesee</b> 1004 S. Chicago St. 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. 1:30 to 4 p.m.
<b>Services and billing questions:</b> (800) 858-5522 jcecoop.com
<b>For emergencies and outages call:</b> (800) 858-5522

# Resume of Minutes

**June 25, 2025**

### Board Meeting Minutes Summary

The regular board meeting of Jo-Carroll Energy, Inc. (NFP) was held on Thursday, June 25, 2025.

**Safety Moment** – Director Al Hendren shared tips on safe boating practices.

**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** – President and CEO Casper delivered a presentation highlighting the significance of economic growth in Northwest Illinois and explained how JCE is contributing to this effort through its strategic objectives and related initiatives.

### Governance Topics and Board Policy Review

A Governance Talk video on maintaining your cooperative's bylaws was shared with the board. The presentation emphasized the importance of regularly reviewing and updating bylaws to ensure alignment with current operations, regulatory requirements, and cooperative principles.

### CEO| Financial Operating Report

**CEO Report** – President and CEO Mike Casper supplemented his presentation by highlighting key points of JCE's financial strategy to the board.

**Financial Operating Report** – Chuck Woods, Chief Financial Officer noted that May Revenue is approximately \$29.7 million. Total operations and maintenance expenses are \$23.7 million, which is \$285,807 under the budget of \$23,993.726 million. Margins are approximately \$835,582. By general consent, the board moved to file the financial operating report with the auditor.

### Operations and Regulatory/ Legislative Update

**Operations Update** – Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Kyle Buros provided an update on the cooperative's fiber installations, reporting that the project remains on track and within budget. He highlighted several key developments:

- The fiber outage map project is nearly complete with full deployment anticipated soon. This will enable members to view the locations and timings of any outages.
- The cooperative is on pace to reach its 8,000th fiber subscriber, marking a major milestone in broadband expansion efforts.
- Buros provided an update on infrastructure planning, highlighting that one of the electric substation transformers will need to be replaced, but will not impact member service. Additional updates and planning measures for this replacement will be shared as they progress.

**IT Technology Report** – Vice President and Chief Technology Officer Dan Marcure provided an update on technology initiatives; detailing projects aimed at increasing fiber bandwidth capacity.

**Cooperative Services Update** – Jennifer Meyer, V.P. of Cooperative Services, updated the board on the Member Satisfaction Survey and mentioned that she will be sending out a survey to gather input for next year's JCE Co-op Annual Meeting.

**External Affairs/Legislative Update** – General Counsel Terry Kurt informed the board that SB 2493 has been unanimously approved by both the House and the Senate and is now awaiting the Governor's signature.

**Executive Assistant Update** – Amy Johnston had nothing additional to report.

### Board Issues and Action Items

#### NRECA International Fund Donation Request

**NRECA International Fund Donation Request** – NRECA International Fund Donation Request – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to approve a \$1,000 donation to the NRECA International Fund. This fund supports efforts to bring electricity to underserved communities in developing countries that



## Resume of minutes (Continued)

otherwise would not have access to reliable power or the opportunity for electrification.

### Certify| Designate Badger Annual Meeting

**Attendees** – Directors Ted James, Al Hendren, Dave Senn and President and CEO Mike Casper will attend the Badger Group Annual Meeting.

**Select NRECA Regional 5&6 Meeting Attendees** – Attendees were selected for the NRECA Regional 5&6 Meeting.

### NRECA Regional 5&6 Meeting Voting Delegate|

**Alternate Voting Delegate** – The Voting Delegate and Alternate Voting Delegates were selected for the NRECA Region 5&6 Meeting.

### Executive Session

**Into Executive Session** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to go into Executive Session at 11:21 A.M.

**Out of Executive Session** – A motion was made, seconded, and carried unanimously to come out of Executive Session at 11:40 P.M.

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

### Reports/Updates

**Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC)** – Director Senn shared highlights from the most recent AIEC Board of Directors meeting.

### American Public Gas Association (APGA) –

Director Carroll shared that the American Public Gas Association (APGA) emphasized the vulnerability of aging plastic piping, particularly when exposed to external heat sources. The association is urging natural gas system operators to re-evaluate these environments as part of their Distribution Integrity Management Programs (DIMP).

These efforts are part of a broader push to strengthen pipeline safety, minimize cross-system risks, and promote early detection and mitigation strategies across utility systems.

### Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC) Report –

Highlights from the DPC Annual Meeting were shared by Casper and those directors who participated. In summary DPC is growing and maintaining financial health. DPC currently has an A+ rating and projects stable rates over the next couple of years.

### Prairie Power Inc. (PPI) Report –

Director Kuhns and Casper shared highlights from the June Prairie Power Annual Meeting. In summary PPI is growing and maintaining financial health.

**Other Business** – None.

**Adjournment** – Chairman Senn adjourned the meeting at 12:15 PM.

Mark Barkowski

## Reporting outages: A key step in keeping the lights on

Our linemen play an essential role in ensuring that homes and businesses receive reliable power. These dedicated professionals work tirelessly to keep electricity flowing smoothly, even in the face of unpredictable weather and unforeseen challenges. However, their ability to restore power quickly and efficiently hinges on one crucial element: timely and accurate outage reporting.

When an outage occurs, it might be tempting to assume that someone else has already reported it or to post about it on social media. However, the most effective way to ensure your outage is logged and addressed promptly is to call JCE Co-op at 800-858-5522. .

### Here's why calling is so important:

- You help our team pinpoint the affected

areas quickly, allowing for a faster response and resolution.

- Our team can gather essential information for diagnosing the problem.
- Knowing the extent and location of outages allows us to deploy our linemen where they are needed most.
- You ensure that any potential risks are assessed and addressed promptly, keeping your family and neighbors safe.

As we work together to maintain the reliability of our power supply, remember to "Thank a Lineman" for their hard work and dedication.

Your role in this partnership is vital, so the next time you experience an outage, make the call to 800-858-5522. It's a simple step that makes a big difference.

