

HI-LINES

A newsletter for members of JCE Co-op

OCTOBER 2026

 Elizabeth, IL

 800-858-5522

 jcecoop.com



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

OCTOBER TOPIC— SENIOR PLANET

Streaming and smart TVs

Get comfortable with streaming and learn how to navigate apps, services and features on your smart TV.

OCTOBER 8

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

OCTOBER 27

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

OCTOBER 12

Closed training on
Columbus Day

OCTOBER 15

Blood drive
2:30–5:30 p.m.
Elizabeth Headquarters
793 U.S. Route 20 West



JCE CO-OP
Electric • Gas • Fiber



CEO'S REPORT by Mike Casper

Built for members. Built to evolve.

October is National Co-op Month, a time to recognize what makes cooperatives different. For JCE Co-op, it is also a good time to continue the conversation we began at our Annual Meeting, where our theme was Evolution.

That theme reflected a simple truth: JCE Co-op must continue to adapt as the needs of our members and communities change. At the same time, the purpose behind our work remains the same. We exist to serve members, not outside shareholders.

JCE Co-op was built by local people who saw a need and chose to meet it together. That local foundation still guides our decisions today. Our focus is on providing dependable services, making responsible long-term investments and strengthening the communities we call home.

Local ownership also brings local accountability. JCE Co-op's board of directors is elected by members from across our service territory. They live and work in the communities we serve, and they understand the needs, opportunities and concerns facing our area. Members have a voice through elections, the Annual Meeting, and direct feedback you provide to the co-op.

The cooperative difference shows up in practical ways. It shapes how we plan system improvements, how we communicate during outages and how we put safety first for our crews, members and communities. It means looking beyond today's service request and asking what our communities will need 5, 10 and 20 years from now.

Our services have evolved because our members' needs have evolved. JCE Co-op began with a mission to bring

electric service to rural neighbors when other utilities would not. Today, we provide electric, fiber and natural gas services that support homes, farms, businesses, schools and local governments.

Each service supports quality of life and economic growth in a different way. Reliable electricity keeps homes, farms and local businesses running. Natural gas provides dependable energy for homes and workplaces. Fiber creates opportunities for education, health care, remote work, precision agriculture and business growth.

Evolution does not mean leaving our purpose behind. It means using new tools, stronger systems and thoughtful planning to carry that purpose forward. As JCE Co-op continues to evolve, our commitment remains the same: serving our members and communities safely, reliably and responsibly.

This National Co-op Month, thank you for being part of JCE Co-op. Your membership is the reason we are here and the foundation that prepares us for what comes next.



Reader prize!

Each month, a JCE Co-op member is named for a chance to win a \$25 readership prize. If your name appears in this issue (and not in an article), contact JCE Co-op.



October is **NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH**

.....

Built on yesterday.
Ready for tomorrow.

From the first electric lines in 1939 to the addition of natural gas and fiber internet in the decades that followed, JCE Co-op has continued to evolve with the needs of our members. Through every new service and every new connection, one thing has remained constant: our focus on people. We're proud to power progress, strengthen our communities and grow alongside the members we serve.



JCE CO-OP
Electric • Gas • Fiber

WEDNESDAY SEP 9
3:00 PM 79°F



Generations *connected.*



CONNECTED, NOT CONNED.

A little suspicion goes a long way.

A text says you have an unpaid bill. An email warns that your account will be suspended. A caller claims to be from a trusted company and says you need to act immediately. The caller offers money back, a discounted rate and checks every six months. They also make confusing statements about changes to the your account and billing information. Your first instinct may be to respond quickly. That is exactly what scammers are counting on.

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month

This is a good time to sharpen your digital defenses and learn how to recognize the increasingly convincing tricks criminals use to steal money and personal information.

1. Do not share your account number, billing information, Social Security number or payment details.
2. Do not agree to make account changes over the phone.
3. Hang up if the caller pressures you or cannot clearly verify who they represent.
4. Call JCE Co-op directly using the number printed on your bill or listed on our official website before taking any action.

? Did you know that **\$3.5B** was lost in 2025 due to imposter scams?

Stop when you spot these red flags

Be suspicious when someone unexpectedly:

- Creates urgency: "Act now!"
- Threatens to disconnect a service, close an account or have you arrested.
- Asks for payment using gift cards, cryptocurrency or an unusual payment method.
- Sends a link and tells you to "verify" your password or financial information.
- Claims you've won something but says you must pay first.
- Tells you not to discuss the situation with family, your bank or anyone else.
- Asks for a verification code that was sent to your phone.

JCE Co-op wants members to feel confident about their cooperative service and accounts. If you have received a suspicious call, please contact us so our team can help you verify the information and document the report.



Did you know that in 2025 **\$7.7B** was lost by adults over the age of 60?

When in doubt, don't use the information they give you

This simple habit can stop many scams.

- If an unexpected caller says they're from your bank, hang up and call the number printed on your bank card.
- If a message claims to be from a company you do business with, don't click the link in the message. Instead, use the company's official app, type its known website into your browser or call a number you already know is legitimate.
- And if someone contacts you claiming to represent your utility provider, don't rely solely on the phone number, link or contact information provided in the unexpected message. Contact your utility directly using a trusted number or website.



Did you know that **\$38,000** was the average reported loss of people age 60+?

The best cybersecurity tool? A pause.

Scammers manufacture urgency because urgency short-circuits caution. Before clicking, paying or sharing information, give yourself permission to stop.

STOP. CHECK. VERIFY.

Those three words may be one of the most effective cybersecurity tools you have.

We're CONNECTED!

100% fiber internet



Connected Communities: More than miles of fiber

A room filled with community leaders, partners and friends of JCE Co-op gathered at Chestnut Mountain Resort on August 26 to celebrate something years in the making: a more connected northwest Illinois.

During our Connected Communities Celebration, JCE Co-op recognized 19 Connected Communities, including 13 municipalities, 3 lake associations and 3 counties. It was an opportunity to celebrate how far we've come with fiber internet and, more importantly, what this technology can mean for the future of the communities we call home. JCE Co-op joined local leaders and partners for a ceremonial ribbon cutting during the event.

Over the past decade, JCE Co-op's fiber initiative has grown to more than 3,000 route miles, serves over 11,000 fiber internet members and is expected to pass nearly 30,000 homes, farms, businesses and community institutions across rural northwest Illinois over the next several years.

Those are impressive numbers, but the real impact is about people.

For students, reliable fiber can mean completing homework and accessing educational opportunities from home. For farmers, it can support the latest precision agriculture technology. For local businesses, it provides the connectivity needed to reach customers, compete and grow. And for families, it can make remote work, telehealth and staying connected with loved ones possible.

"Connecting communities is about much more than internet access. It is about helping people participate fully in modern life," said Mike Casper, president and CEO of JCE Co-op. "Students can learn, businesses can grow, families can connect to work, healthcare and one another, and every community gains a stronger foundation for the future. We are grateful to the local leaders and partners who believed in their communities and worked alongside us to make this possible."





JCE Co-op joined local leaders and partners for a ceremonial ribbon cutting during the Connected Communities Celebration.

The cooperative model at work

More than 80 years ago, rural residents came together through the cooperative model to bring electricity to places others would not serve. Today, JCE Co-op is carrying that same mission forward with fiber internet.

The technology has changed, but the purpose remains much the same: serving members, strengthening communities and investing for the long term.

Reaching this milestone took plenty of teamwork. JCE Co-op has secured 14 broadband grants, including 11 Connect Illinois grants, two USDA Community Connect awards and one USDA ReConnect award. Community leaders, local and county governments, state and federal partners, employees, contractors, vendors and many others have worked alongside the co-op to make these projects possible.

"These communities did not wait for someone else to solve the problem," said Jesse Shekleton, director of operations and general manager of broadband at JCE Co-op. "They organized, invested local resources, supported complex grant applications and stayed committed through multiple construction seasons. This celebration recognizes their leadership, and it also marks the beginning of the next chapter: driving adoption, utilization and long-term prosperity on top of this world-class fiber infrastructure."

The next chapter

That next chapter may be the most exciting part. Fiber creates opportunities for remote work, education, healthcare, agriculture, workforce development and stronger local businesses. Through partnerships with Morrison Tech and BEST Inc., broadband investment is already helping create local training opportunities for the people who will build, operate and maintain these networks for years to come.

The Connected Communities Celebration gave us a chance to recognize everything our communities, employees and partners have accomplished together. But it wasn't a finish line.

It was a look toward what comes next. The fiber is here. Now it's time to see where it takes us.

Thank you sponsors!

Thank you Adtran, Core Telecom Systems and Vantage Point Solutions for sponsoring the Connected Communities Celebration and for your support of JCE Co-op throughout the fiber initiative.

Our Connected Communities

- City of Mount Carroll
- Village of Elizabeth
- City of Savanna
- City of Galena
- Village of Stockton
- Village of Scales Mound
- Village of Menominee
- The Galena Territory Association
- Apple Canyon Lake Property Owners Association
- Lake Carroll Association
- Village of Thomson
- City of East Dubuque
- Village of Chadwick
- Village of Nora
- Village of Lena
- Village of Coleta
- Jo Daviess County
- Carroll County
- Whiteside County

Thank you guest speakers.

- **USDA Rural Development**
Shawn Arner, Deputy Assistant Administrator
- **Illinois Office of Broadband**
Devon Braunstein, Executive Director
- **Whiteside County**
Gary Camarano, Economic Development Director & Enterprise Zone Administrator
- **National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Broadband**
Cliff Johnson, Director of Broadband
- **Fiber Broadband Association**
Paul Breakman, Co-Chair of Public Policy Committee
- **Morrison Tech**
Scott Connelly, VP of Academic Affairs
- **Illinois State Senator Andrew Chesney's Office**
Kim Scace, District Director of Legislative Affairs

Thanks for being boo-tiful donors!

A big thank-you to everyone who rolled up their sleeves for JCE Co-op's August blood drive! Together, donors gave 14 units of blood, enough to help save up to 32 lives.

Every donation can make a meaningful difference for patients facing emergencies, surgeries and ongoing treatments. Whether you were a first-time donor or a familiar face at our blood drives, we're grateful you chose to give.

It's another great example of co-op spirit in action. When our members and communities come together, even a small act can have a powerful impact.

Thank you for making our August blood drive a success! Feeling brave enough to roll up your sleeve again? Our October blood drive is creeping closer...



DON'T GHOST US!

THIS OCTOBER...

SHOW SOME SPIRIT- GIVE SOME BLOOD.

Thursday, October 15

2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

Elizabeth Headquarters

793 U.S. Route 20 West



To book appointment, scan QR code, visit bloodcenter.org or call ImpactLife at 800-747-5401. Please eat before donating and bring a photo I.D.



ImpactLife



YOUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jerry Meyer

Vice Chairman
District 1

Dan Tindell

Secretary
District 2

Joseph W. Mattingley

District 3

Allen Hendren

District 4

Thomas Lundy

District 5

David Senn

Chairman
District 6

Larry Carroll

District 7

Ted James

District 8

Robert Kuhns

Treasurer
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

August 4, 2026

Board Meeting Minutes Summary

The regular board meeting of JCE Co-op was held on Tuesday, August 4, 2026, at 9:00 A.M.

Safety Moment – Director Senn and Tom Lundy shared seasonal safety reminders related to wearing bright protective clothing when working outside and being aware of your surroundings.

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, which included the June 30 Minutes/Summary, Board Expense Summary, Discounted Estate Retirements and written reports from staff and the CEO.

Presentation – None.

Governance Topics and Board Policy Review – None.

CEO | CFO Report

President and CEO Mike Casper provided an overview of major technology and metering initiatives, growing broadband service, advancing electric-system capacity and reliability projects, securing outside funding and using new tools to improve member experience and how we make decisions and serve members while continuing to manage costs in a period of rising demand, inflation, infrastructure pressure and increasing member concern about affordability. Casper also noted that JCE has a well-educated and engaged board of directors and encouraged directors to continue asking questions and initiating conversations, particularly during important discussions and meetings.

Financial Operating Report – Emily Doland, Chief Financial Officer, noted that June Revenue is approximately \$38 million. Total operations and maintenance expenses are approximately \$30 million. Margins are approximately \$1.4 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 Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, provided an update on design improvement on portions of its natural gas facilities that will allow increased capacity. The work was undertaken as part of JCE's ongoing natural gas system integrity, safety and reliability efforts. The project also supports JCE's compliance with applicable federal and state pipeline safety requirements and helps ensure the continued reliability of natural gas service to JCE members.

Cooperative Services Update – Jennifer Meyer, Vice President of Cooperative Services, provided an overview of the new data metrics being utilized through NISC, as well as the integration of the new interactive fiber map. The integration allows JCE to more efficiently track broadband availability, sign-ups and member information, improving the overall management and monitoring of fiber services.

Human Resources and Marketing Update

– Merri Sevey, Executive Vice President of Human Resources, provided an update on fiber subscriber installation metrics, noting that June and July were the strongest months for installations. Sevey also discussed employee development planning and provided talking points to assist directors, and employees in addressing member questions related to energy and broadband.

IT Technology Report – Dan Marcure, Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, provided an update on physical and cybersecurity testing conducted at the Cooperative. The assessment was designed to identify potential vulnerabilities and evaluate existing controls to help strengthen overall security.

Resume of minutes *(Continued)*

Executive Assistant Update – Amy Johnston, Executive Assistant, shared information on NISC's secure meeting management application that provides Board members with access to meeting agendas, documents and reference materials

External Affairs| Legislative Update – Terry Kurt, General Counsel, shared highlights from the NRECA Legal Seminar he recently participated in. The two-day seminar provided electric cooperative legal professionals, CEOs, and other co-op leaders with updates on complex legal matters affecting electric cooperatives, including issues arising in the workplace, boardroom and community.

Board Issues and Action Items

Review Previously Tabled Administrative Policies 403a & 403b – The JCE Board reviewed Administrative Policies 403a and 403b, which had previously been tabled. No action was taken.

Review Previously Tabled Administrative Policies 403 & 405 – The JCE Board reviewed Administrative Policies 403 and 405, which had previously been tabled. No action was taken.

Approve Co-Bank Resolution – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to approve the CoBank Resolution. The Resolution was updated to reflect new authorized signatories on banking documents due to personnel changes resulting from a retirement and new hire.

Executive Session

Into Executive Session – None.

Reports| Updates

Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) Report – Chairman Senn shared information and highlights from the AIEC Annual Meeting and invited other Board members to provide their input. It was noted that the meeting went well and that the speakers, location, and overall organization of the event were excellent.

American Public Gas Association (APGA) Report – Director Carroll reported on APGA's recent meetings and provided an update on the latest activities and issues affecting the natural gas industry. Director Carroll also shared with the Board that President and CEO Mike Casper received the APGA Distinguished Service Award. The award recognizes individuals in management positions with APGA public gas system members who have demonstrated significant contributions to the public gas industry, exceptional dedication to their profession, and a commitment

to the betterment of their communities. The Board congratulated Casper on this well-deserved recognition.

Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC Report)

– Director Tindell provided highlights from the most recent Dairyland Board meeting. In addition, commented on a recent public meeting that he attended.

Prairie Power (PPI) Report – Director Kuhns provided generation data from PPI's generating units and commented on the high performance of the generating units.

Into Executive Session – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to go into Executive Session at 11:35 AM.

Out of Executive Session – A motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously to come out of Executive Session at 12:22 PM.

Action resulting from Executive Session – None.

Other Business – None

Adjournment – Chairman Senn adjourned the meeting at 12:25 PM.

Sara Oliver

JCE Co-op Insight Committee



Help shape the future
of your co-op

We're looking for members to
share feedback, ideas and
insights to improve services in
our communities.

Connect with your co-op!



Contact: Taylor Smith at 815-591-0091
or tsmith@jcecoop.com