

HI-LINES

A newsletter for members of JCE Co-op

NOVEMBER 2026

Elizabeth, IL

800-858-5522

jcecoop.com



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

NOVEMBER TOPIC— SENIOR PLANET

Chatting with AI

Learn how to use AI to draft messages, brainstorm ideas, get recommendations and simplify unfamiliar topics.

You'll also learn about popular AI tools, tips for asking clear questions and ways to protect your privacy.

We'll discuss AI's limitations, including why you should double-check answers and ask for sources.

NOVEMBER 5

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

NOVEMBER 24

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

NOVEMBER 11

Closed for Veterans Day

NOVEMBER 26 - 27

Closed for Thanksgiving


JCE CO-OP
Electric • Gas • Fiber



CEO'S REPORT by Mike Casper

The people behind the services you count on.

During November, many of us take time to think about what we are thankful for. At JCE Co-op, one thing I am especially grateful for is the team of employees who serve our members every day.

Members count on JCE Co-op for power, connection and comfort. They expect electricity when they turn on a light, reliable fiber service for work and school and natural gas when temperatures fall. Delivering those services takes much more than what members see during a service call or an installation.

Before a line crew responds to an outage, dispatchers have received the call and helped direct the work. Before a new service can be built, staking and engineering employees have planned the route and designed the job. Before materials reach a construction site, warehouse employees have prepared the equipment our crews need. Before a fiber installation or gas response takes place, many people have coordinated work behind the scenes.

Our field crews are often the most visible part of JCE Co-op, especially during storms and outages. Their work is demanding and sometimes requires long hours away from home. They work safely and steadily to restore service because they know our members are counting on them, the neighbors and families who make up the communities they call home.

Just as essential are the employees who support members by phone, in person and behind the scenes. Member Services, billing, finance, information technology, communications, safety and administration each play a role in making JCE Co-op

dependable and responsive. Their work helps ensure that questions are answered, bills are accurate, systems are secure and members have timely information when it matters most.

This teamwork is especially evident when severe weather moves through our service area. While crews assess damage and make repairs, employees across JCE Co-op coordinate restoration efforts, communicate updates and help members find answers. Every role matters.

What makes this work meaningful is that our employees serve communities they know. They serve neighbors, local businesses, farms, schools, churches and families throughout our area. They understand the importance of keeping the lights on, expanding access to high-speed internet and providing safe, dependable natural gas service.

This Thanksgiving season, I hope you will join me in recognizing the people behind the services you count on. To every JCE Co-op employee: thank you for your skill, professionalism and commitment to serving our members each day.



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.



EVOLVING TOGETHER

A look back at 2025.

JCE Co-op members gathered for the 2026 Annual Meeting to reflect on another year of progress and look ahead to the future of their cooperative. This year we combined this event with our Member Appreciation Days. It's our favorite time of year to gather, catch up and say thank you to the folks who power our co-op.

Throughout the meeting, one theme connected nearly every update: evolving to better serve our members. From investments in infrastructure and technology to financial planning, safety and communication, the work completed in 2025 focused on keeping JCE Co-op strong, reliable and prepared for what comes next.

Members heard about several significant accomplishments, including cost-of-service studies across electric, natural gas and broadband, along with efforts to provide greater natural gas price stability. JCE Co-op also completed a clean financial audit and audits associated with broadband grant funding.

Technology continued to change the way members interact with their cooperative. JCE Co-op replaced its enterprise software, streamlined billing processes and introduced SmartHub, which is now used by approximately 55% of members.

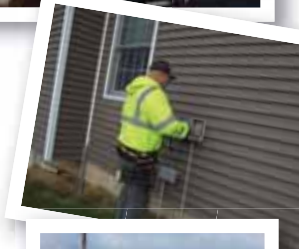
Investments continued in the systems that serve members every day. Electric infrastructure improvements, natural gas system upgrades and Advanced Metering Infrastructure are helping improve capacity, safety and reliability. Broadband also continued its rapid growth, with approximately 500 miles of fiber installed and 2,400 additional members connected during 2025.

Behind the scenes, JCE Co-op also strengthened cybersecurity, expanded broadband capacity and continued investing in employee and Board education. These efforts help ensure the cooperative is prepared to meet changing technology, industry and member needs.

Most importantly, the Annual Meeting was an opportunity to recognize the people at the center of it all: our members.

Thank you to everyone who attended, participated and continues to help shape the future of JCE Co-op. We're proud of where we've been, excited about where we're going and grateful to be evolving together.

Watch our Year in Review video on



Students!

SPARK your future!



IEC Memorial Scholarship Program is open for applications

The electric cooperatives of Illinois will award 20 scholarships, each worth \$3,000. Nineteen scholarships will go outstanding students from the electric co-op family through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program. One scholarship will awarded through the LaVern and Nola McEntire Memorial Lineworker's Scholarship.

Don't miss out on this opportunity! The general scholarship application deadline is Dec. 31, 2026. For more information, visit jcecoop.com. Information has also been shared with area high school guidance counselors. Winners will be announced by the end of April 2027.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

12

Twelve scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors enrolling full-time at a 2-year or 4-year college, university, or vocational/technical school whose parent(s)/guardian(s) are an Illinois electric cooperative consumer-member, giving these students a bright start on their educational journey.

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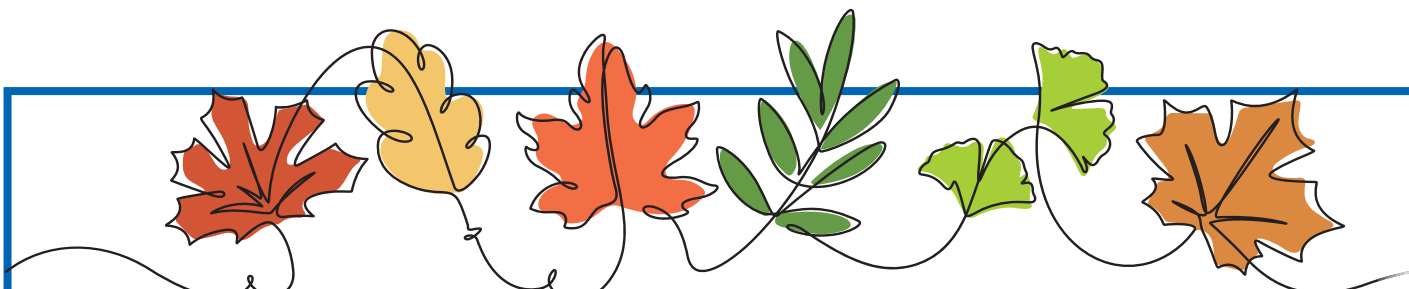
Six scholarships scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college whose parent(s)/guardian(s) are an Illinois electric cooperative consumer-member, employee or director.

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The LaVern and Nola McEntire Memorial Lineworker's Scholarship is designed for those ready to pursue a career in linework and are enrolled or plan to enroll at Lincoln Land Community College's lineworker program. This scholarship supports students of co-op members, relatives of employees or directors, and those who have served or are currently serving in the armed forces or National Guard.

**Kenneth/Crystal
Pollock**



A DASH OF HOLIDAY SAVINGS

During the holiday season, you may spend more time prepping, cooking and baking for family and friends. A few small changes can help you save energy, lower utility costs and keep your kitchen running efficiently.

Saving energy in the kitchen starts with using the right appliance for the job, keeping equipment in good condition and making simple changes to everyday cooking habits.

Cooking and prep

- Use small appliances when possible. Choose an air fryer, microwave, slow cooker or toaster oven for small meals or side dishes. They often use less energy than a full-size oven.
- Keep the stovetop clean. Clean burners and surfaces help heat transfer evenly.
- Match the pan to the burner. Using a small pan on a large burner wastes heat. Choose a burner that closely matches the size of the pan.
- Cover pots and pans. Lids keep heat inside, help water boil faster and allow food to cook evenly at lower settings.
- Keep the oven door closed. Use the oven light instead of opening the door to check on food. Opening the door lets heat escape and makes the oven work harder.
- Thaw frozen foods ahead of time. Move frozen foods to the refrigerator in advance to avoid microwave defrosting.
- Cook more at once. Bake multiple dishes together when possible and make larger portions to freeze for later.
- Cut food into small pieces. Small pieces of vegetables and meat cook faster and more evenly than large ones.
- Skip the self-cleaning cycle. Use it sparingly, since it requires very high heat and uses extra energy.
- Turn down the thermostat while cooking. Cooking and baking can warm your home quickly, especially when guests are gathered.

Refrigeration

- Let leftovers cool slightly. Allow hot foods to cool before refrigerating (but do not leave them out too long). This keeps your refrigerator from working harder to cool warm food.
- Check the door seal. Make sure the refrigerator door closes tightly. Test the seal by closing the door on a dollar bill. If it slides out easily, the gasket may need to be replaced.
- Prevent frost buildup. Too much frost can make the freezer work harder to maintain the right temperature.
- Keep it full but not crowded. Refrigerators work best when cold air can circulate.

Small changes in how you cook, cool and clean up can help save energy, no matter the season.



WHISK, STIR & GIVE THANKS



Thanksgiving is the perfect time to slow down, gather together and make a few memories in the kitchen.

This season, JCE Co-op is encouraging families to pull up a stool, gather around the counter and make something delicious together. Whether it's measuring ingredients, stirring the bowl or adding the finishing touches, helping with a Thanksgiving recipe is a fun way for kids to build confidence, share a few laughs and be part of the holiday tradition.



No-Bake Triple-Layer Pumpkin Pie

Ingredients

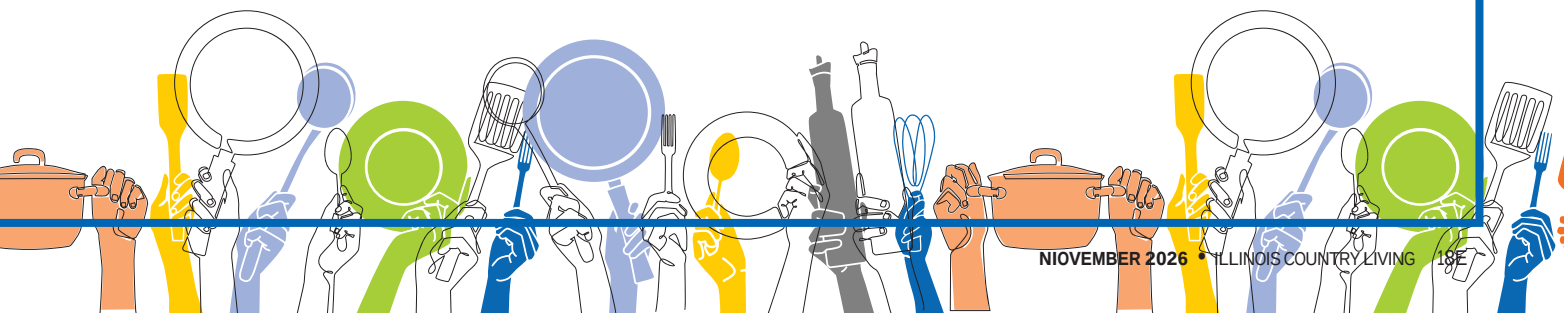
- 1 graham cracker pie crust
- 1 pkg (8oz) cream cheese room temperature
- 1 cup (plus 2 tbsp) half and half
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 5 cups Cool Whip topping thawed
- 2 pkgs Jell-O Vanilla Instant Pudding 4- serving size (3.4 oz)
- 1 can pure pumpkin puree 15 oz size
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

1. Make sure the cream cheese is at room temperature to prevent lumps and the Cool Whip is thawed.
2. Using a hand mixer, beat the cream cheese, sugar and 2 tablespoons half-and-half until smooth.
3. Gently fold in 3 cups Cool Whip until combined. A large whisk works well, but do not beat the mixture.
4. Spread the cream cheese mixture evenly over the graham cracker crust. Adding it in dollops first makes spreading easier.
5. In a large bowl, whisk 1 cup half-and-half with both packages of dry instant vanilla pudding for 1 minute. Let stand 3 minutes. Do not use an electric mixer, as the mixture can become too thick.
6. Stir in the pumpkin puree, cinnamon, ginger and cloves until well combined.
7. Dollop the pumpkin filling over the cream cheese layer, then spread evenly. Chill to set up.

What you'll need:

- **Graham Cracker Crust** – Use a store-bought crust or make your own.
- **Cream Cheese** – Full-fat gives the creamiest texture, but low-fat works too.
- **Half-and-Half** – Or use cream with 10% milk fat.
- **Cool Whip Topping** – Original Cool Whip or any whipped dessert topping works. Do not substitute heavy whipping cream, as the pie may not set properly.
- **Vanilla Instant Pudding** – Mix 2 boxes of dry instant pudding mix into the pumpkin. Do not use cook-and-serve pudding.
- **Pure Pumpkin** – Use pure pumpkin puree without added sugar or spices, not pumpkin pie filling.
- **Pro Tip** – Some pumpkin purees are more watery. If yours looks thin, strain it first to help the pie set properly.

Source: cindyshopper.com



11,000

THANK YOU!

FIBER INTERNET MEMBERS

JCE Co-op connects our 11,000th fiber internet member!

We're excited to celebrate another major milestone of 11,000 active fiber internet members! A big welcome to the Skoog family, who have been connected to our ultra-fast fiber internet service!

This milestone wouldn't be possible without the incredible teamwork behind the scenes. THANK YOU to our construction crews, line crews, engineers, installers, broadband technicians, operations, marketing, and sales teams who continue to grow and support our fiber network. We're proud to serve our communities as your LOCAL fiber co-op, and we're incredibly thankful for all of our loyal JCE Co-op members who continue to support us along the way.

Want to be our 12,000th fiber internet member?



**Sign up now to receive
FREE installation!**

Check availability, submit
your interest, or sign-up at
jcecoop.com/fiber

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

Pictured from left to right (front row): Caleb and Laura Skoog
(back row) Noah Liebenstein, Broadband Technician, Larry Carroll, Board Director, Mike Casper,
President & CEO, Derek Bradt, Broadband Marketing Strategist

 **JCE CO-OP**
Electric • Gas • Fiber



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 26, 2026

Board Meeting Minutes Summary

The regular board meeting of JCE Co-op was held on Wednesday, August 26, 2026, at 9:00 A.M.

Safety Moment – Director Bob Kuhns emphasized the importance of taking an active role in your own health care.

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 August 4th 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 shared that on August 26, JCE Co-op hosted its Connected Communities Celebration at Chestnut Mountain Resort, recognizing 19 communities that are now fully or substantially built out with fiber broadband. More than 100 government officials, community leaders, employees and partners attended the event, which highlighted the expansion of reliable high-speed fiber throughout rural northwest Illinois. JCE Co-op's fiber network now spans more than 3,000 miles and serves over 11,000 subscribers.

The celebration also recognized the strong partnerships and grant funding that made this investment possible. As construction is nearing completion in many areas, focus will shift to broadband adoption, utilization and ensuring this infrastructure creates lasting value and opportunity for the communities we serve.

Financial Operating Report – Emily Doland, Chief Financial Officer, noted that July Revenue is approximately \$46 million. Total operations and maintenance

expenses are approximately \$35 million. Margins are approximately \$2.5 million. By general consent, the board moved to file the financial operating report with the auditor.

In addition to the Financial Operating Report, Doland provided a Capital Credits overview for the reporting period of December 2025 through July 2026.

Operations and Regulatory| Legislative Update

Operations Update – Kyle Buros, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, provided an update on reliability upgrades in JCE's Chadwick and Mt. Carroll area. He also shared information on existing and potential growth opportunities.

Cooperative Services Update – Jennifer Meyer, Vice President of Cooperative Services, had no additional report outside of the written report provided in the board packet.

Human Resources and Marketing Update – Merri Sevey, Executive Vice President of Human Resources, had no additional report outside of the written report provided in the board packet.

IT Technology Report – Dan Marcure, Vice President and Chief Technology Officer, had no additional report outside of the written report provided in the board packet.

Executive Assistant Update – Amy Johnston, Executive Assistant, provided an overview of Call to Order, including where board policies and other important documents pertaining to board business can be accessed.

External Affairs| Legislative Update – Terry Kurt, General Counsel, discussed possible actions being considered by state legislatures in the upcoming veto session.

Resume of minutes *(Continued)*

Board Issues and Action Items

Select CFC Delegate & Alternate for the Proposed 2027 Nominating Committee – The JCE Board reviewed & selected the CFC Delegates for the Proposed Nominating Committee.

Select CFC Voting Delegate for RESCO Annual Meeting – The board selected Dave Senn and Mike Casper as the alternate voting delegate for the RESCO Annual Meeting.

Reports| Updates

Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) Report – Chairman Senn shared highlights from the most recent AIEC Board meeting, including an increase in the number and value of scholarships. He encouraged outreach to eligible high school seniors regarding the availability of nineteen \$3,000 scholarships.

American Public Gas Association (APGA) Report – Director Carroll reported on recent APGA activities and issues affecting the natural gas industry. Mike Casper reported that JCE Co-op has secured sufficient natural gas supply for the upcoming winter heating season, which includes storage to supply the majority of JCE Co-op member's typical winter natural gas usage.

Dairyland Power Cooperative (DPC Report) – In Dan Tindell's absence, Ted James, Dairyland Power

alternate director and Mike Casper shared highlights from the most recent DPC meetings. Dairyland recorded a July peak demand of 1,438 megawatts, establishing a new record. Dairyland also held its strategic planning session with the Board of Directors, distribution managers, and staff. The President and CEO of PJM Interconnection, the nation's largest wholesale electricity market and grid operator, participated as a speaker.

Prairie Power (PPI) Report – Director Kuhns provided generation data from PPI's generating units and commented on the high performance of the generating units. In addition, Kuhns shared that PPI's upcoming Strategic Planning session will be held in September.

Into Executive Session – None.

Out of Executive Session – None.

Action resulting from Executive Session – None.

Other Business – None.

Adjournment – Chairman Senn adjourned the meeting at 11:50 AM.



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

**VETERAN'S DAY
WEDNESDAY, NOV 11**

**THANKSGIVING
THURSDAY, NOV 26
FRIDAY, NOV 27**

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**