

JO-CARROLL

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative  **HI-LINES**



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

by Michael Hastings

Changes for Sand Prairie Wireless

At Jo-Carroll Energy delivering utility solutions safely, efficiently and responsibly to our members is our mission; that's true whether you receive electric, natural gas or internet services from the cooperative.

Effective Jan. 1, we eliminated the "bundled" versus "unbundled" pricing plans in our Sand Prairie Wireless internet rates. Because every Sand Prairie subscriber is a Jo-Carroll Energy member, this new structure offers all of our "co-op family" the same, lower price for each package we offer.

Under the old structure, you paid a slightly higher monthly or annual fee if you received only internet service from the cooperative while members who also received electric or natural gas services from the cooperative received a lower, "bundled" price. This change gives all members the same rate, no matter how many services they receive from the cooperative.

If you received the bundled rate, you will not see a change in how much you pay for your Sand Prairie service. In fact, Sand Prairie's basic rates have not changed since Jo-Carroll Energy started the service seven years ago. And, subscribers who have the Power-Link package will see upload speed increase to 2 Mbps from 1 Mbps.

Our members who formerly received internet from JISP Internet Services will see some changes in their costs as they are now fully integrated into the Sand Prairie rate structure. Depending on their former JISP plan, these members may see a savings or a slight increase in costs. We also require all subscribers who pay monthly to set up an auto payment method.

We've also increased the charge for static IP addresses. This charge is increasing from \$5 to \$10 per month, with the increase helping to cover the administrative costs of management for this service. Globally, the availability of IPv4 addresses has been exhausted. An alternative to a static IP address is a dynamic DNS. Sand Prairie can assist any members interested in this alternative.

These changes are just some we're making in Sand Prairie services in 2016.

Sand Prairie now offers a router lease and management service that helps you stay connected for just \$7 a month. The top of the line home router features dual bands, AC wireless mode, firewall and more. Leased routers are available at the time of install so you can get all your devices connected. The remote management gives you help if you forget your wireless security passphrase, want to change the wireless network name or with troubleshooting a device that is not performing as well as others.

We're also excited to announce we'll be breaking ground on two fiber pilot projects. Two diverse areas were chosen for these projects one in the downtown Galena area and the other in a mostly residential area of Savanna. Approximately 250 premises are included in each pilot project.

Staking for the projects was expected to be completed in January with construction to follow. Watch for more information on these two projects as we bring this technology to our service area.



Always Call Before You Dig.

Safe Digging Is No Accident:
Always Call Before You Dig
One call gets utility lines marked.

Reader prize

Each month we print the name of a Jo-Carroll Energy 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 Jo-Carroll Energy and claim your prize no later than the 10th of the month following publication.

Voluntary and open membership • Voluntary and open membership

For your information

Your Board of Directors:

David Senn
Chairman
District 7

Chris Stadel
Vice Chairman
District 4

Marcia Stanger
Secretary
District 3

Martin Werner
Treasurer
District 1

Joseph Mattingley
District 2

Patricia Smith
District 5

Thomas Lundy
District 6

Russell Holesinger
District 8

Larry Carroll
District 9

Robert Kuhns
District 10

Ronald Hallendorff
District 10

Office Hours: Monday-Friday

Elizabeth
793 U.S. Route 20 West
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Savanna
103 Chicago Ave.
8 a.m. to 1 p.m.
1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

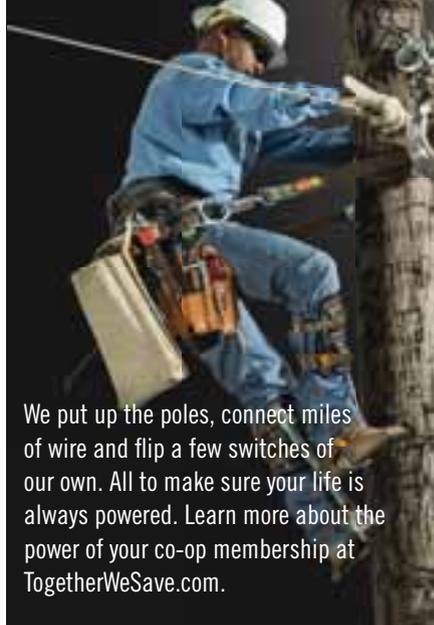
Geneseo
1004 S. Chicago St.
7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.
1:30 - 4 p.m.

Services and Billing Questions:

(800) 858-5522
www.jocarroll.com

**For emergencies
and outages call:**
(800) 858-5522

YOUR ELECTRICITY ISN'T SOMETHING WE TAKE LIGHTLY.



We put up the poles, connect miles of wire and flip a few switches of our own. All to make sure your life is always powered. Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at TogetherWeSave.com.

Jo-Carroll Energy plans open board meeting

The Jo-Carroll Energy Board of Directors will hold an open board meeting at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 24 at the cooperative's Elizabeth headquarters.

The meeting is the regular February meeting of the board. Members present may speak during the "Member Comment" period or if requested by the chair. The member comment period will be limited to a total of 30 minutes; each member may speak for a period of time not to exceed three minutes.

Members are encouraged to speak on issues raised by the agenda, however they are free to comment on any subject.

A second open meeting is set for Oct. 26. The board has held open board meetings two to three times a year since 2013.

EVEN THREE IS A CROWD.



NEVER OVERLOAD OUTLETS.

Helping members use electricity safely, that's the power of your co-op membership. Learn more from the experts themselves at TogetherWeSave.com.

DANGER! Outlet Overload

Every year, U.S. fire departments respond to an estimated 25,900 home electrical fires. These fires cause an estimated 280 deaths, 1,125 injuries and \$1.1 billion in property loss.

Thirty-nine percent of home electrical fires involve outlets and receptacles, and other electrical wiring.

To ensure safety, you should only use about 80 percent of the available current for each electrical outlet in your home.

Are you overloading outlets? Use this formula to find out:

$$\text{wattage/volts}=\text{amps}$$

Example:

Let's say you are using 2,000 watts of power (for one outlet). Divide the watts by the volts in your home (typically 120), and you come up with 16.6 amps of current being used.

With a 20 amp electrical outlet, you are using about 80 percent of the available current.

Source: U.S. Fire Administration, Home & Garden

Celebrating years of service...



Eleven Jo-Carroll Energy employees and one director donated years of service awards to charity in 2015. Each year Jo-Carroll Energy recognizes employees for years of service in increments of five years. Directors are recognized for every two, three-year term. A total of \$625 was donated to charities and organizations on behalf of the employees and director. Recognized for years of service were (from left): Dan Marcure, five years; John Scott, five years; Laurel LeSage, 30 years; Jennifer Skien, five years; Russell Holesinger, six year – two terms; Merri Sevey, five years; Kurt Krohmer, five years; Michael Hastings, 10 years; and Jesse Shekleton, 10 years. Not pictured are Tina DeGarmo, 10 years; Jeremy Werner, 15 years; and Tim Grau, 10 years. In 2013, the cooperative established a program that allows employees to donate service awards to an area charity.

Jo-Carroll Energy accepting director nominations

Eligible Jo-Carroll Energy members residing in Districts 1, 2 and 4 interested in running for a position on the cooperative's board of directors may obtain and file the petition forms needed for nomination.

Petition forms along with the cooperative's bylaws that include information director qualifications and the nomination process are posted on Jo-Carroll Energy's website at jocarroll.com/board-directors. Anyone without internet access may request a copy by calling 800-858-5522. Petitions also can be obtained at one of the cooperative's offices.

Petitions must be signed by at least 25 Jo-Carroll Energy members residing in the district for which the director is to be elected. Petitions must be filed at Jo-Carroll Energy's headquarters no later than March 24.

In order to qualify to have their

names placed on the ballot, all nominees must participate in an orientation process provided by the attorney for the cooperative, assuring that all nominees fully understand the expectations and responsibilities of directors. These include but are not limited to: time demands, education expectations and fiduciary duties.

All eligible candidates will be announced in the 2016 Annual Meeting Book, on the cooperative's website and in Hi-Lines.

Board directors whose terms are up for election include Martin Werner of East Dubuque, District 1; Joe Mattingley of Scales Mound, District 2; and Chris Stadel of Hanover, District 4.

If more than one candidate files for election in a district, ballots will be mailed to each member residing in that district. Members may vote for one director for the district

in which they reside. All balloting concludes on May 24, the day prior to the annual meeting. Ballots are counted by the Credentials and Election Committee.

Results of any elections are reported at the annual meeting of members. If only one candidate files in a district, election is by acclamation at the annual meeting; ballots are not mailed.

Running for the board of directors and voting in the elections is a benefit of being a co-op member. Directors are democratically elected by the membership. The cooperative has one director from each of its 10 board districts. (An exception is District 10 which is currently served by two directors as part of the merger with Farmers Mutual Electric Company; that number will become one in 2018.)



Jo-Carroll Energy employees, members help area food pantries

Jo-Carroll Energy employees and members collected nonperishable groceries during Jo-Carroll Energy's annual "Light Up the Holidays" food drive. The food was divided equally and donated to each of 10 food pantries within the cooperative's service territory.

The Jo-Carroll Energy Board of Directors also approved a cash donation of \$500 to each of the 10 pantries,

including the following: East Dubuque Food Pantry, Elizabeth Food Basket, Hanover Food Bank, United Churches of Galena Food Pantry, Helping Hands Food Pantry (Chadwick/Milledgeville), Savanna/Mt. Carroll Food Pantry, Thomson/Fulton Food Pantry, Albany Food Pantry, Erie Food Pantry and Geneseo Food Pantry.

"Commitment to Community is a core value of Jo-Carroll Energy. When communities work together everyone benefits. As an organization whose mission is to enhance the quality of life for its members, we are proud to support local causes with a similar goal," stated Michael Hastings, Jo-Carroll Energy President and CEO.



Lyle Gregory, director of the Helping Hands Food Pantry serving Chadwick and Milledgeville residents, accepts a \$500 check and nonperishable food items from Jamie Lockwood of Jo-Carroll Energy.



Harlan Wiebenga of the Thomson/Fulton Food Pantry accepts a \$500 donation along with nonperishable food items from Jamie Lockwood (left) and Peggy Francomb (right) of Jo-Carroll Energy.



Barry Ebby, director, and Liz Clouse, treasurer, of the Savanna/Mt. Carroll Food Pantry accept a \$500 donation and several sacks of groceries from Jo-Carroll Energy operations coordinator Holly Haring, center. Food donations were collected from cooperative employees and members in November and December.



Jolynn Kitterman, director of the Geneseo Food Pantry, accepts a \$500 donation and several sacks of non-perishable food from Jo-Carroll Energy member service representative, Heather Seei. Food donations were collected from cooperative employees and members in November and December.



Claudia Johnson and Norma Schwirtz of the Elizabeth Food Basket accept a \$500 donation and non-perishable food items from Jamie Lockwood (left) and Merri Sevey (right) of Jo-Carroll Energy.



Lori MaHas and Howard McCarty, volunteers with the United Churches of Galena Food Pantry, accept a donation of \$500 and nonperishable food items from Cindy Maeder of Jo-Carroll Energy.



Bill and Loraine Stuzman, directors of the Hanover Food Pantry, accept a \$500 donation and non-perishable food items from Ashley Spahn (left) and Jamie Lockwood (right) of Jo-Carroll Energy.



Dave Leckner of the East Dubuque Food Pantry accepts a \$500 donation with nonperishable food items from Cindy Maeder of Jo-Carroll Energy.



Mary Okrasinski, director of the Albany Food Pantry, center, accepts a \$500 donation and non-perishable food items from Jamie Lockwood of Jo-Carroll Energy.



Erie Food Pantry volunteers Louise Wildt and Jean Spaid accept a \$500 donation and non-perishable food items from Jamie Lockwood of Jo-Carroll Energy.

Inspired Life Yoga, Atkinson

Jennifer Douglas, owner and yoga instructor, opened her yoga studio in 2015. Shortly after opening, she found a larger space in Atkinson to teach yoga. Atkinson Wellness Center became the new location for the studio.

Inspired Life Yoga offers several different classes ranging from beginner to more advanced depending on the client's needs and interest.

"The special themes class is somewhat different each week; we focus a lot on energy release in order to exercise your body and mind," she said.

If you're looking for a chance to participate in a relaxing yoga experience, Jennifer makes sure she caters directly to her clients' needs. One special class she offers, called Yoga For What Ails Ya', is new and focuses mainly on physical limitations and stretching different muscles.

"It's important--especially for the older generation--to really stretch different muscles and work on rotation,"

she said. "These classes are designed specifically to help these clients regardless of experience."

Along with yoga classes, Jennifer offers nutrition counseling, spiritual and mental wellness and life counseling.

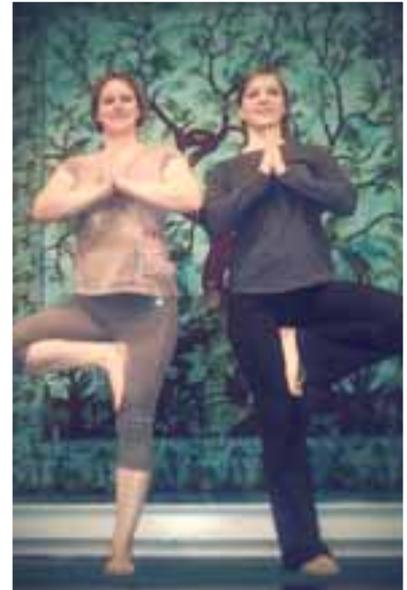
Visit the studio or attend a yoga class to learn more about the different forms of yoga offered at Inspired Life Yoga.



Jo-Carroll Energy members receive their first class free as a new member, excluding special offers, with their co-op connections card. Visit www.inspiredlifecoachingandyoga.com or the studio at 510 N. State St. in Atkinson for more information.



Inspired Life



Make your home more energy efficient and save money

Energy efficiency rebates and incentives keep the savings going

Making your home more energy efficient can improve comfort and reduce energy bills.

Our 2016 energy efficiency incentives are available for our electric and natural gas members.

Insulation and air-sealing

- Home energy audit completed by a Jo-Carroll Energy representative, \$300
- Home insulation, 50% of project costs with \$200 maximum
- Home air-sealing, 50% of project costs with \$200 maximum

Total incentives and rebate cannot

exceed \$700; a home energy audit must be performed by Jo-Carroll Energy prior to starting an insulation and/or air-sealing project. The project must be for an existing home receiving electric and/or natural gas service from the cooperative. Members are eligible to apply for only one insulation and air-sealing incentive program through the cooperative.

Electric incentives Energy Star appliances

Purchase one of the following Energy Star appliances and receive a \$25 incentive:

- Clothes washer

- Clothes dryer
- Dishwasher
- Refrigerator

Purchase a heat pump clothes dryer and receive a \$50 incentive.

Recycle your old refrigerator, freezer or window air conditioning unit and receive \$25.

Electric HVAC

The following HVAC incentives are offered in 2016:

- Install a geothermal heat pump (must meet or exceed energy efficiency requirements Tier 3) and receive \$300/ton.

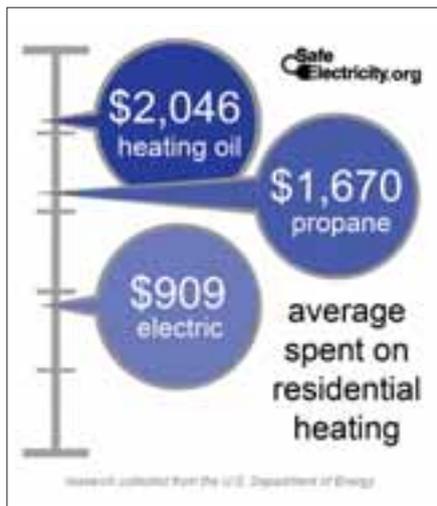
Heating efficiency

Ready your home for winter weather

Using energy more efficiently — especially for heating — during cold months can cut the amount of money you spend on your utility bills. Energy.gov reports that heating and cooling account for about 48 percent of a typical U.S. home's energy use, making it the largest energy expense for most homes. The Energy Education Council has some tips to help you make energy efficient choices to help you decrease your monthly utility bill.

Start your energy efficiency check with your furnace. Replacing a dirty filter will increase the air flow and make your home more energy efficient (with the added benefit of cleaner air in your home). The money and energy you save each month will practically pay for the cost of a new filter.

If it is time to replace your old furnace, look for energy-efficient models. Furnaces with an Energy Star rating usually exceed federal standards for energy efficiency, and can make choosing the right model that much easier. Installing an energy-efficient furnace



can reduce your energy consumption and the cost of heating your house.

Check your home for air leaks.

Depending on the location of the leak, there are a variety of actions you can take to plug the leak. The U.S. Department of Energy recommends the following steps:

- Caulk and weatherstrip doors and windows that leak air.
- Use foam sealant on larger gaps

around windows, baseboards, and other places where there may be air leaks.

- Replace door bottoms and thresholds with ones that have pliable sealing gaskets.
- Keep the fireplace flue damper tightly closed when not in use.
- Turning the thermostat down a few degrees when you are away from home or sleeping also helps to reduce your monthly utility bill. For an even more hassle-free option, you can install a programmable thermostat that will automatically turn the heat down when you need it to and can begin heating your home before you wake up.
- Other money saving steps include: opening your curtains to naturally heat your home, setting your ceiling fan to spin clockwise to blow hot air down, and adding insulation to your walls.

- Install an air source heat pump and minisplit (SEER 15.0 or greater, HSPF 8.5 or greater or EER 12 or greater) and receive \$150 per ton.
- Install AC and ductless minisplit (SEER 16 or greater and EER 13.5 or greater) and receive \$80 per ton.

Lighting energy credits

- Occupancy sensor, \$5 per sensor
- Minimum 5W LED lamp, 50% of cost up to \$2 per lamp
- Minimum 15W LED security lighting, \$15 per fixture
- LED exit sign, \$5 per sign

Natural gas incentives

Jo-Carroll Energy members served by the cooperative with natural gas are eligible for a variety of incentives in 2016.

Natural gas heating unit

- New natural gas furnace or boiler, must meet efficiency standard of AFUE greater than or equal to 95 percent to be eligible, \$125
- Fuel switch from program, fuel oil or electricity provided by another utility, \$200

Natural gas appliances

Purchase one of the following natural gas appliances and receive a \$50 incentive:

- Water heater with EF greater than .67

- Stove
- Clothes dryer

Switch your fuel source from propane, fuel oil or electricity provided by another utility and receive \$100 per appliance.

All incentives will be issued in the form of a bill credit on the member's account. Equipment must be purchased, installed and/or recycled in 2016. Installed equipment must be on the cooperative's lines. Incentives are in place through Dec. 31 or until funds are depleted.

All energy efficiency incentive forms can be found at jocarroll.com.

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.2016.

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- ★ Visit historic monuments and museums
- ★ Boost your community service and engagement
- ★ Meet with your U.S. Representatives and Senators
- ★ Meet and mingle with students from many states on Rural Electric Youth Day

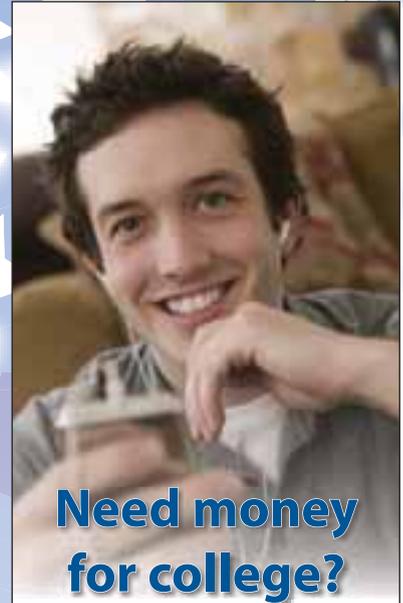
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Visit

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for more information and applications

Application deadline is March 7.



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- 'Nontraditional student' scholarships
- Director's Scholarships

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www.jocarroll.com
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apply now!



Take control, and save

February is traditionally one of the coldest months of the year. By keeping a close eye on your electric use and changing some habits, it doesn't necessarily have to be the costliest. To identify the biggest energy hogs in your home, and for valuable energy-saving tips and resources, visit www.togetherwesave.com.

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