



# Corn Belt Power Cooperative crews conduct system maintenance and improvements

Summer is synonymous with system improvements and this year is no different. Corn Belt Power Cooperative transmission and electrical maintenance crews are busy across the system upgrading and maintaining its infrastructure.

## Electrical maintenance

Crews began the warm season with the Kesley Substation rebuild. Corn Belt Power is rebuilding the substation due to age and location.

“The substation foundation needed to be replaced and upgraded,” said Mike Finnegan, system electrical superintendent, Corn Belt Power. “We were able to secure land adjacent to the existing substation and build a new one. The new substation will no longer have water issues during times of wet weather.”

In addition to work at the Kesley Substation, crews upgraded the Neal Substation to a 5,000 kilo-volt-ampere (KVA) system. Crews upgraded this substation due to new load on the Butler



## New substation under construction

**Above** | Corn Belt Power electricians prepare to lift the new overhead switch truss into place at the new Kesley Substation June 13. The new substation was built due to deteriorating conditions of the original substation and will improve system reliability. Corn Belt Power anticipates commissioning the substation in September.



## Equipment upgrade

**Above** | Shane Braun, apprentice electrician, installs leads on a newly upgraded regulator at the Neal Substation May 24. This equipment was upgraded to increase substation capacity.

County REC system. Later this summer, due to new load on the Midland Power system, the Eldora Substation will be upgraded to a 7,500 KVA system.

Crews are in the process of replacing substation arresters and insulators at Terril, Spencer Industrial Park, Marathon, Ayrshire and Geneva and have replaced regulator pads at Ayrshire, Laurens and Graettinger.

Electrical Maintenance crews are also in the process of the following work:

- New perimeter fencing and wildlife protection at Conrad
- Meter replacements
- Battery replacements at Drager and Hampton Switching Stations
- Air conditioner replacements at Wallingford, Alden Junction and Radcliffe Switching Stations

## Transmission

Corn Belt Power’s transmission crews are working south of Humboldt on the

Humboldt to Weaver line rebuild. This line stretch includes 14.4 miles of rebuild and just more than 200 pole replacements.

“We’ve dealt with a little bit of wet weather which has slowed us down a bit,” said Jeremy Stattelmann, transmission superintendent, Corn Belt Power. “We intend on having this job complete in the next couple of months.”

Once the Humboldt to Weaver job is complete, crews will move on to the Weaver to Manson line rebuild. The job includes 12 miles of transmission line and 205 pole replacements.

This year, crews have dealt with an uptick of outages caused by farm implement contacts.

“Unfortunately, each year we deal with burnt poles due to farm implements hitting our infrastructure,” Stattelmann said. “I always tell folks to ‘look up and live.’ It’s important to know your surroundings when operating heavy equipment.” ■





# GROWING reliability threats

*Policy perspective from NRECA, Corn Belt Power Cooperative's nationwide trade organization.*

American families and businesses expect the lights to stay on at a cost they can afford. But that's no longer a guarantee. Nine states saw rolling blackouts last December as the demand for electricity exceeded available supply.

This is no longer a theoretical conversation. Unless policymakers change course, it's going to get worse.

In May, the EPA proposed a rule to regulate power plant emissions. This proposal will further strain America's electric grid and undermine decades of work to reliably keep the lights on across the nation. And it is just the latest instance of EPA failing to prioritize reliable electricity as a fundamental expectation of American consumers.

It shouldn't have to be this way. When you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop digging. But instead of putting down the shovel, EPA wants to bring in an excavator.

But don't just take my word for it. Warnings about the threat of reliability challenges have snowballed in recent months. The 2023 NERC summer reliability assessment recently highlighted that more of the country is at risk of blackouts than last

year. NERC says that the EPA proposal will accelerate the reliability challenges facing the nation.

In May, several FERC Commissioners warned the U.S. Senate about threats to reliable electricity. In March, PJM CEO Manu Asthana said that the regional transmission organization needed to slow the pace of generation retirements to avoid reliability problems by the end of the decade.

America has a reliability problem. And with the help of co-op leaders across the nation, NRECA has been a leading voice in sounding the alarm on reliability. Today's energy decisions will determine if there are sufficient resources to keep the lights on tomorrow. First, lawmakers need to acknowledge the problem and identify the threats. Five issues are currently impacting the reliable delivery of electricity across the nation. They include:

- Increasing demand for electricity as other sectors of the economy are electrified.
- Decreasing electricity supply due to the disorderly retirement and insufficient replacement of existing generation.
- Permitting delays that prevent new electric infrastructure from being built and connected to the grid.
- Supply chain challenges.
- Problems with natural gas availability.

None of these challenges will be easy

to address, but we can start by asking ourselves this question: Is this what America is supposed to be? Should the threat of rolling blackouts be a permanent facet of U.S. energy policy? The answer to both of those questions is an obvious and resounding no for electric co-ops and the communities we serve.

The long-term solution requires policymakers and regulators to recognize the need for time, technology development and new transmission infrastructure. These are the essential ingredients for an energy future that prioritizes reliable electricity for all consumers, including the 42 million Americans served by electric cooperatives. ■





# News in brief

## Prairie Energy Cooperative holds annual meeting

Prairie Energy held its annual meeting on Tuesday, June 6. The meeting was held inside the cooperative's board room and was made available via video on the cooperative's Facebook page.

Members cast ballots by mail and re-elected Marion Denger and Ryan Eekhoff. After the meeting the board elected the following officers:

- President: Marion Denger
- VP: Josh Amonson
- Secretary/Treasurer: Donald Christopherson
- Assistant Sec/Treasurer: Allyn Waddingham

Instead of the traditional, in-person annual meeting, Prairie Energy will hold a member appreciation event on July 19 at The Red Shed in Clarion. View the annual meeting video at: <https://www.facebook.com/PrairieEnergyCooperative/>.

## Corn Belt Power Cooperative hosts Touchstone Energy golf outing

On June 6, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, its member-cooperatives and key account personnel enjoyed a day of golf at Spring Valley Golf Course in Livermore. More than 85 golfers participated in the event which represented 30 key accounts and seven distribution member co-ops.

Member cooperatives invited businesses to participate that enhance our local economies and rural communities. The event encourages cooperative employees to network with key personnel from large businesses on the Corn Belt Power system.



### Touchstone Energy Golf Outing

Above | Area business representatives participate in the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa Golf Outing at Spring Valley Golf Course, Livermore, June 6.

# Corn Belt Power finishes MRO audit recommendations

Midwest Reliability Organization (MRO) staffers visited Corn Belt Power Cooperative the week of June 12. Their on-site presence helped Corn Belt Power compliance staff conclude its Open Enforcement Actions (OEAs) from the 2018 and 2020 Audits.

This included discussing what evidence is needed to check and verify that Corn Belt Power has taken the necessary steps in correct these OEAs. Corn Belt Power compliance staff continues to upload documents/diagrams to the MRO for final review. Corn Belt Power anticipates that all information will be transferred to the MRO by the end of June.

### What is the MRO?

MRO operates as a cross-border Regional Entity headquartered in Saint Paul, Minnesota. The MRO region spans the provinces of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and all or parts of the states of Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wisconsin. The region includes approximately 225 organizations that are involved in the production and delivery of electric power, including municipal utilities, cooperatives, investor-owned utilities, transmission system operators, federal power marketing agencies, Canadian Crown Corporations, and independent power producers.

MRO's primary responsibilities are to: ensure compliance with mandatory reliability standards by entities who use, own or operate the North American bulk power system; conduct assessments of the grid's ability to meet electric power demand in the region; and analyze regional system events. Additionally, MRO creates an open forum for stakeholder experts in the region to discuss important topics related to addressing risk and improving reliable operations of the grid. MRO serves as a vital link between grid owners, users, operators, and other stakeholders who share common reliability interests in the region. ■





**June Touchstone Energy Volunteer Challenge winner | Luke Schmidt**, apprentice lineman, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, donated his \$100 prize drawing to People for Pets in Spencer, Iowa.



## Empowering rural economies one loan at a time

**C**orn Belt Power Cooperative and Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative teamed up to complete four Rural Economic Development loans totaling \$7 million to Western Iowa Energy in Wall Lake. The first set of loans totaled \$3 million and closed December 14, 2022. The funds financed an expansion and new specialized equipment. The second set of loans totaled \$4 million and closed April 21, 2023. The company used that round of funding for new equipment for their FFA (Fatty Free Acids) Esterification project. ■



## SEVEN ON 7: Episode 6

**ENGAGING YOUR  
 CO-OP'S EMPLOYEES  
 THROUGH PROFESSIONAL  
 DEVELOPMENT**



## Corn Belt Power Cooperative Watts Watt

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