



Building momentum for energy-efficiency housing

Almost 200 building industry professionals and Iowa electric co-op staff attended the 2023 Momentum is Building conference in Altoona, Iowa Feb. 16 and 17.

Sponsored by the Iowa Cooperatives for Energy Efficiency, the annual conference promotes residential energy efficiency building concepts and construction best practices. It also provides valuable CEU training for electricians, plumbers, and HVAC professionals. This year, 13 vendors and exhibitors attended the conference to share new trends and products related to residential energy efficiency. The conference also serves to educate the next generation of professionals, as several construction students from Indian Hills Community College attended.

“This is a fantastic way for Iowa’s contractors and cooperative energy



Momentum is Building

Above | Jeff Reichart, Specified Systems, Inc., teaches a class on heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration, at Momentum is Building Thursday, Feb. 16. This year’s conference drew almost 200 contractors, cooperative employees and vendors.



From the coach

Above | Acclaimed wrestling coach Jim Miller gave the closing keynote speech at Momentum is Building. As wrestling coach at Wartburg College, Miller and his teams won 10 NCAA national championships.

professionals to come together to learn and network,” said Ryan Cornelius, vice president, corporate relations, Corn Belt Power Cooperative. “We take each year’s feedback from attendees and put together a great list of speakers. We look forward to hosting next year’s event at Prairie Meadows again on February 8-9.”

Attendees heard from Tolu Omotoso, director of energy solutions at NRECA, who talked about emerging smart home technologies that improve energy efficiency. Other general session speakers included Shannon Stendel, Slipstream; Robin LeBaron, Pearl Certification; and Pamela Brookstein, Elevate.

Acclaimed Wartburg College wrestling coach Jim Miller closed the conference with an inspiring message about going the extra mile for yourself and your team.

The annual Momentum is Building Conference connects Iowa’s construction industry with the local services and resources available from Iowa’s electric cooperatives. Next year’s conference is scheduled for Feb. 8-9. The annual conference is managed and organized by Iowa’s generation and transmission cooperatives, including Corn Belt Power. Be sure to watch www.momentumisbuilding.com for updates about next year’s event. ■



DAN MEERS

SUPERBOWL CHAMPION MASCOT

TO KEYNOTE CORN BELT POWER'S APRIL ANNUAL MEETING

Corn Belt Power will host its 75th annual meeting Wednesday, April 5 at the Starlite Best Western in Fort Dodge.

This year's keynote speaker is Dan Meers.

Meers is widely known as KC Wolf, the official mascot of the 2023 NFL Superbowl winning Kansas City Chiefs football team.

He travels throughout the United States and the world entertaining thousands of people both in and out of costume. Dan is in high demand not only as a mascot but also as a humorous and motivational speaker to audiences of all ages. His enthusiasm, optimism and love for life are contagious and make Dan an

inspiration to all he meets.

Meers authored *Living A Life of Influence* which became available Dec. 1, 2019. The book includes stories from KC Wolf's 30-year career and specifically the international trips he has taken to Honduras, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Philippines, India and Tanzania over the past five years.

In addition to regular reports given by Corn Belt Power's board president, secretary, treasurer and general manager, this year, attendees will also hear an update from Basin Electric's Todd Telesz, chief executive officer.

Annual Meeting invitations will go out in the first two weeks of March. ■



Above | KC Wolf, mascot, Kansas City Chiefs, shows off the sparkle in his wolf-sized NFL Superbowl Championship ring.

Construction progresses on vehicle storage facility



New construction taking shape internally

Above | Construction continues on Corn Belt Power Cooperative's new vehicle storage facility across the parking lot to the north of G&T headquarters. The floors and mezzanine are poured, walls framed and construction crews recently began installing the heating and cooling systems.

Construction on Corn Belt Power's new vehicle storage facility continues to progress.

The floors and the mezzanine are poured on the inside of the building, walls are framed and crews began heating and cooling system installation. On the outside, crews poured the concrete for most of the vehicle approaches.

"We are pleased with construction progress," said Ken Kuyper, executive vice president and general manager, Corn Belt Power. "We are anxiously awaiting the spring completion date, so our Humboldt transmission crew can start moving in. The new facility will enable us to keep more of our assets under one roof and out of the elements."

The 14,000 square-foot building

features eight overhead doors and a truck wash bay. It will also have offices for the Humboldt transmission crew, a breakroom, locker room and shower room. A concrete parking lot will connect the new facility and Corn Belt Power's existing headquarters building. Among other critical materials, the building will house the Humboldt transmission crew's 19 vehicles, trailers and line tensioners. ■

Corn Belt Power and co-ops nationwide continue to see supply chain issues

Recently, NRECA and a broad coalition of power industry stakeholders told Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm that a mandate to replace traditional steel cores in electric distribution transformers with less readily available amorphous steel will threaten national security and grid reliability and raise costs in an already stressed critical infrastructure market.

Slated to take effect in 2027, the rule would require distribution transformer manufacturers to discontinue use of grain-oriented electrical steel and replace it with amorphous steel, which enhances transformer efficiency, according to the Department of Energy (DOE).

The coalition said it recognized the importance of energy efficiency but noted that the relatively small number of domestic amorphous steel manufacturers would delay the realization of these benefits by worsening supply chain complications already well known to DOE.

Corn Belt Power continues to see long lead times and hard-to-target price points due to current supply chain complications.

For example, it takes up to 80 weeks for wire deliveries. Bolts, nuts and washers have gone from just a few weeks of lead time to 20 weeks. Smaller transformers that Corn Belt Power could originally receive within 18 weeks are now a 45 week wait time. Larger transformers have lead times of more than a year. Wood and ductile iron poles are on a 40 week wait time, as opposed to two to three weeks. It now takes up to five years from order to delivery of larger equipment like bucket trucks and digger derrick trucks.

“Long lead times have become the norm,” said Mike Finnegan, electrical maintenance superintendent, Corn Belt Power Cooperative. “However, what we are starting to see now is varying cost. Nearly all of our contracts now include clauses for price variation. This is something that we didn’t see three or four years ago. It makes it difficult to budget.”

Kevin Bornhoft, vice president, engineering and system operations, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, says the cooperative continues to maintain inventories, while keeping an eye on future reliability enhancement projects.

“We continue to focus on managing our inventories,” he said. “It’s a delicate balance to keep enough emergency supplies on hand, while also continuing with our construction work plan and planning for future system improvement work.”

To read more on NRECA’s report, visit: <https://www.cooperative.com/news/Pages/NRECA-Coalition-Say-DOE-Transformer-Replacement-Rule-Will-Risk-Reliability.aspx>. ■



System improvements

Above | Joe Albright, apprentice electrician, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, adjusts a new switch installed at the Weaver Substation, Nov. 1, 2022. Despite supply chain woes, Corn Belt Power continues to maintain its inventory levels while also moving forward with system improvement projects.

“It’s a delicate balance to keep enough emergency supplies on hand, while also continuing with our construction work plan and planning for future system improvement work.”

- Kevin Bornhoft, vice president, engineering and system operations, Corn Belt Power Cooperative



Staying cyber safe

Above | Zach Thompson, SCADA technician, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, discusses cybersecurity measures during an annual tabletop drill Feb. 10. The exercise allows Corn Belt Power employees to work through the co-op’s cybersecurity incident response plan.

Cooperative drills on cybersecurity incident response

Corn Belt Power facilitated its yearly tabletop exercise dedicated to cybersecurity Friday, Feb. 10.

Scott Meinecke, director of safety, Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), led the event that was part of the Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities Program (RC3).

Corn Belt Power continues to participate in different assessments as they relate to the organization’s preparedness and information technology infrastructure. Staff across all departments at Corn Belt Power participated in this particular tabletop exercise.

RC3 began in 2016 with a \$7.5 million grant from the Department of Energy to develop cybersecurity resources for small utilities. Corn Belt Power and other Iowa cooperatives are working with IAEC to complete the program.

“The tabletop exercise allows us to go through our cybersecurity incident plan,” said Ken Kuyper, executive vice president, Corn Belt Power Cooperative. “As an organization, we are better prepared for any potential nefarious actors because of the RC3 program. We learned a lot and are implementing what we learned to enhance our cyber defense apparatus.” ■



December Touchstone Energy Volunteer Challenge winner | Rosie Harvey, customer care, collections, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, donated her \$100 winnings to the Emmet County Dirtbusters. They groom Emmet County area trails.

2,500+
 employee
 volunteer
 hours in 2022

\$25,000
 given in 2022
 charitable
 donations

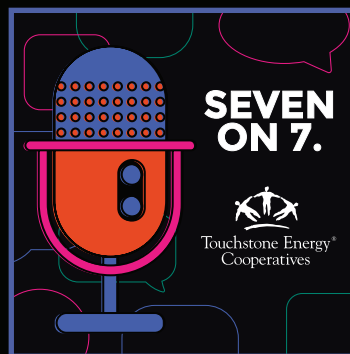
The power of human connections

Commitment to Community is one of Corn Belt Power Cooperative's founding principles and our employees take it to heart. We tallied our 2022 volunteer hours and Corn Belt Power employees volunteered more than 2,500 hours to local community causes in 2022. In addition to volunteer hours, the cooperative donated close to \$25,000 to charitable organizations in our service territory. Those organizations include food pantries, schools, Relay for Life, community building projects and much more. ■

Touchstone Energy releases "Seven on 7" podcast

Touchstone Energy recently introduced a new podcast called "Seven on 7". On the seventh day of each month, this 7-minute podcast features electric cooperative industry experts and communicators as they discuss the current state of the industry.

The podcast is available now on Apple, Spotify, Overcast, Amazon and more. You can also access it on TouchstoneEnergy.com. ■



Corn Belt Power Cooperative

Watts Watt

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