



# Resilient response:

## Crews battle May storm damage to restore power

In May, powerful storms repeatedly swept through Iowa, leaving widespread destruction in their wake. Corn Belt Power Cooperatives's transmission system, which had started the year with virtually no outages, was significantly impacted by these severe weather events. After starting the year with virtually no outages, Corn Belt Power's transmission system was not spared during these storms.

On May 21, severe weather impacted much of Corn Belt Power's service territory. Heavy rain and high winds damaged 10 poles on the cooperative's East Calhoun Tap, serving Calhoun County ECA. Fortunately, Corn Belt Power did not experience the level of devastation seen south of Interstate 80, where the Greenfield tornado caused significant damage.

Following repairs to its system on May 21-22, Corn Belt Power sent crews to assist Central Iowa Power Cooperative in the Wilton and Greenfield area, demonstrating cooperative support in restoring transmission service. However,



**All hands on deck**

Above | Peyton Vote, journeyman electrician, center, helps frame a new pole prior to installation northwest of Farnhamville May 22 after storms pummeled line May 21.



**East Calhoun Tap line repair**

Above | Corn Belt Power Cooperative crews repair line northwest of Farnhamville along the East Calhoun Tap May 22 where storms snapped seven poles to the ground the night prior.

this collaborative effort was short-lived as another storm struck the center of Corn Belt Power's service territory in the early morning hours of May 24. With winds exceeding 80 mph, this storm caused extensive damage across several locations:

- **Lyon Tap: 18 poles**
- **Lu Verne: 22 poles**
- **Renwick Tap: 5 poles**
- **Renwick to Boone Valley: 5 poles**
- **Hampton 161-KV Tie: 6 poles**
- **Sweazy to Williams: 1 pole**
- **Klemme to Sheffield: 1 pole**

The damage to Lyon Tap resulted in a transmission structure falling across Interstate 35, just south of Highway 20. Crews departed CIPCO on the morning of May 24 and worked through the weekend to

restore Corn Belt Power's system.

"I'm extremely proud of the responsiveness of everyone involved in the safe restoration of the system," said Mike Finnegan, vice president, engineering and system operations, Corn Belt Power Cooperative. "Crews worked long hours in wet, muddy conditions. Many office staff helped by preparing and delivering meals, which was greatly appreciated and contributed to the successful completion of repairs."

Crews restored all electric service to distribution cooperatives within 24 hours. Corn Belt Power will work with the Iowa Department of Transportation to finish installing its transmission line across Interstate 35 at a later date. ■

# Graduate Spotlight!



## Teaghan Bird

Teaghan Bird is the daughter of Adam and Molly Bird. Adam is a journeyman lineman at Corn Belt Power's Hampton location. Teaghan graduates from Hampton-Dumont-CAL High School. She received the Foster & Evelyn Barkema Charitable Trust Scholarship, Franklin County 4-H Scholarship, HD/CAL Girls Booster Club Scholarship, Heilskov Family Scholarship, Maude Marken/PEO

Scholarship, Paul H. Gerdes Memorial Scholarship and the Zion Reformed Scholarship. During high school she took part in cross country, wrestling, soccer track and softball. She participated in 4-H, RCYF Youth Group, Iowa Junior Gelbvieh Association and coached youth sports. She plans to attend La James to study massage therapy.

## Dylan Connor

Dylan Connor is the son of Patrick and Kristy Connor. Patrick is plant manager at Corn Belt Power's Wisdom Station. Dylan graduated from Spencer High School. During high school, Dylan participated in the Spencer Tiger Marching Band Drumline, concert band, the archery team and National Honors Society. He received the Exemplary Attendance Award, Academic Excellence Award and

lettered in band and archery. He is a member of Hope Church in Spencer, where he plays the drums in the Praise Band and is an usher. He also attended American Legion Boys State last summer. He plans to attend Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon to study diesel technology in the fall.

## Trevor Stalzer

Trevor Stalzer is the son of Andy and Cathy Stalzer. Andy is Corn Belt Power's system electrical superintendent. Trevor recently graduated from West Bend Mallard High School. He received the Iowa FFA Degree, Hy-Capacity Scholarship, Gary Stuva Memorial Scholarship, Cody Fortune Memorial Scholarship and the Robert Cast Award. Trevor served as the 2022-2023 Hawkeye FFA Vice President

and the 2023-2024 Hawkeye FFA President. He played on the basketball team and worked at Red Power in West Bend. He plans to attend the Northwest Community College Powerline Program in the fall. He likes to spend time with family and friends, farm, work in the shop and spend time at the lake.



## Andrew Arndorfer

Andrew Arndorfer is the son of Jennifer and Michael Arndorfer. Jennifer is Corn Belt Power's human resources specialist. Andrew recently graduated with a double major in business and sports management from Briar Cliff University. During his time in college, he was on the men's golf team.



## Abby Bruening

Abby Bruening is the daughter of Chris and Sara Bruening. Chris is Corn Belt Power's outage coordinator. Bruening graduated from Humboldt High School in May. She plans to attend Iowa State University and major in Human Development and Family Studies. She is an A-Honor Roll student, won three academic excellence awards and received the Howard and Ruth Louthan Scholarship. She is involved in her church youth group, as well as cross country, Friends Club, Spanish Club, track and field, basketball, cheerleading, golf and the prom planning committee. She works at the Caribbean Café in Humboldt, lifeguards at the community pool and loves to spend time with friends and family.



## Kaycee Rubel

Kaycee Rubel is the daughter of Kari Rubel and Troy Rubel. Kari is an accountant II at Corn Belt Power. Kaycee graduated from Humboldt High School. During high school, she participated on the Wildcat Dance Team for four years. She plans to attend Iowa Central Community College in the fall and participate on the Triton Dance Team. Her goal is to obtain her coaching license, finish her associate degree and pursue a career in the healthcare industry. She received the Evelyn Griffen Scholarship, the VFW 5240 and Iowa Central Academic Scholarships.

## Molly Wittrock

Molly Wittrock is the daughter of Matt and Ann Wittrock. Matt is a journeyman field technician at Corn Belt Power. Molly recently graduated from Iowa Central Community College with a degree as a medical lab technician. At Iowa Central, she won the Triton Excellence Award, the Military Recognition Award and was on the President's List. She serves in the Air National Guard. She received the Airman of the Year award at the 185th Wing in Sioux City. She plans to continue working as a laboratory technician at Iowa Specialty Hospital in Clarion. Molly also manages the 185th Air Wing's laboratory in Sioux City.

# Corn Belt Power's LEAD program prepares new generation for leadership

Corn Belt Power, like many cooperatives nationwide, faces the imminent challenge of losing hundreds of years of collective experience as seasoned employees have retired or approach retirement in the next five to ten years. Recognizing the critical need to train the next generation of cooperative leaders, Corn Belt Power has emphasized leadership development through its Leadership Exploration And Development program.

Following the success of the 2018-19 and 2020-21 LEAD programs, Corn Belt Power's third LEAD class commenced course work in April 2023 and celebrated graduation May 7, 2024.

LEAD aims to cultivate leadership skills among existing employees, preparing them for future leadership roles. In partnership with Kathy Peterson of PeopleWorks, Inc., the program covers a broad range of topics, including goal setting, leading change, stress management, and handling difficult conversations. Participants also gain insights into cooperative financials, power generation sources, electric rates, and the cooperative business model, alongside engaging in self and peer 360 evaluations.

This year's LEAD graduates are Travis Kampen, communication technician; Kari Rubel, accountant II; Jon Behounek, chief system operator; Collin Weber, energy services engineer; Andrew Hansen, accountant III; Justin Hesnard, electrical maintenance foreman; and Tyler Baxter, engineer III.



**Above** | Corn Belt Power Cooperative's 2023-24 LEAD graduates celebrate completing the eighteen month Leadership Exploration And Development program, May 7. LEAD graduates displaying certificates of completion are top row, from left: Collin Weber, energy services engineer; Andrew Hansen, accountant III; Justin Hesnard, electrical maintenance foreman; Tyler Baxter, engineer III; and front row, from left, Travis Kampen, communication technician; Kari Rubel, accountant II; and Jon Behounek, chief system operator.

"I learned more ways on how to be a good leader, reminders on how to be a better and how to improve myself through the LEAD program and the 360 assessments," Rubel said.

"I think all employees should take the LEAD class as it is not only a great way to become a better leader at work and home, but you get to learn more about the cooperative world at large. I also enjoyed getting to know my coworkers that I took the class with."

Weber echoed those sentiments.

"The LEAD program has helped me realize some aspects of being a leader," he said. "Anyone can be a leader, not just upper management. In fact, leadership is entirely different than management. Someone can be a good manager, but may not be a good

leader. Parts of being a good leader include fulfilling the needs of the people you are in contact with. People have different personalities, and a good leader will understand those personalities and know how to approach different people, especially if there is some sort of controversy involved that needs to be resolved."

Jacob Olberding, executive vice president and general manager of Corn Belt Power, expressed confidence in the program's impact on the cooperative's future.

"This is a great program that's now graduated three separate classes," he said. "Corn Belt Power is committed to succession planning and preparing the next generation of leaders. With this group of graduates and our previous LEAD cohorts, the future looks very bright." ■

## Girres joins meter department

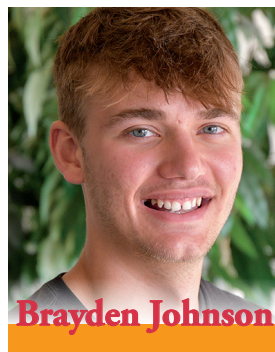


Jon Girres is Corn Belt Power's newest meter technician.

Girres moved into the new position effective June 17.

He began his Corn Belt Power career in March 1999. Girres has served Corn Belt Power member-cooperatives on both the Humboldt and Hampton electrical maintenance crews. ■

## Johnson newest Hampton employee

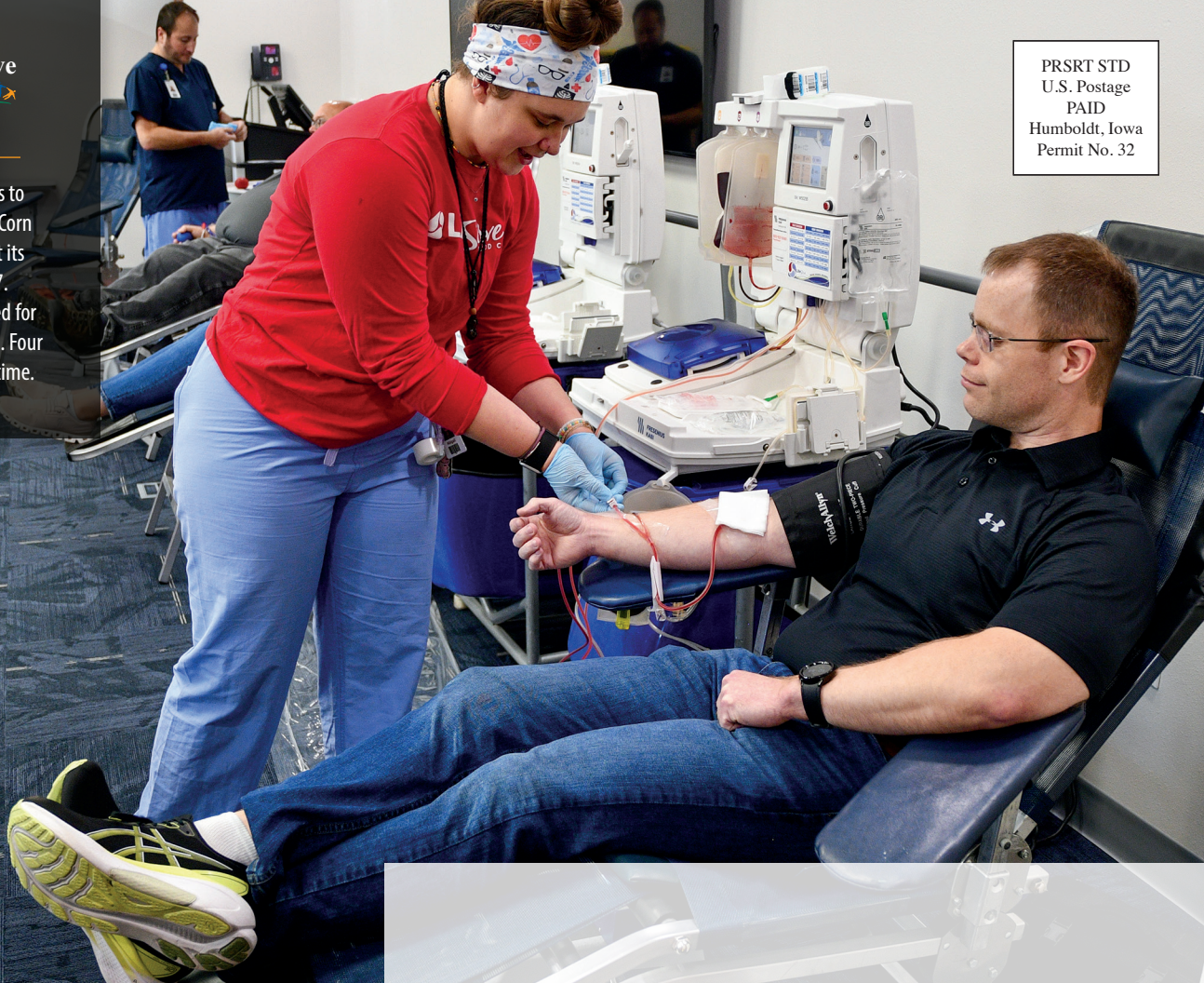


Brayden Johnson started in the Hampton electrical maintenance department May 14 as an apprentice electrician.

Johnson is a recent graduate of the powerline technician program at Marshalltown Community College.

He is a 2023 graduate of Hampton-Dumont High School. ■

Tyler Baxter, engineer III, donates to the community blood drive that Corn Belt Power Cooperative hosted at its headquarters in Humboldt May 7. Seventeen individuals contributed for a total of 51 potential lives saved. Four individuals donated for the first time.



**June Touchstone Energy Volunteer Challenge winner | Gordon Greimann, director, Franklin REC, won this month's Touchstone Energy Volunteer Challenge. Greimann donated his \$100 prize to the West Fork Food Pantry.**

## Brittany Dickey, new National Rural Economic Developers Association President

Brittany Dickey, vice president, business development, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, is the new 2024 National Rural Economic Developers Association Board President. She joined the board in 2019 and has served as Treasurer, 2nd Vice President and 1st Vice President prior to serving her role as President this year.

The National Rural Economic Developers Association is a member organization dedicated to the advancement of rural economic development by providing education and networking opportunities to further the movement of growing and revitalizing rural America.

NREDA is a professional organization dedicated exclusively to the advancement of rural development, the development of member proficiency, and achievement of social and human service objectives in



rural areas. NREDA's membership base is comprised primarily of, but not limited to: Electric Cooperatives; Telephone Cooperatives; Economic Development Organizations; Associations; Government Related Organizations; and Consultants.

As the only organization focusing exclusively on rural economic and community development, NREDA connects professionals in energy, telecommunications, transportation, housing, health care, education and financing. For more information about NREDA, including membership and sponsorship opportunities, visit [www.nreda.org](http://www.nreda.org).

## Corn Belt Power Cooperative Watts Watt

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