



Southwest Power Pool to study February event to better prepare for future

We're several weeks removed from Southwest Power Pool's (SPP) first-ever energy emergency alert level three event. That doesn't mean cooperatives and utilities across SPP's footprint aren't working to mitigate the impact of such an event, should it happen again.

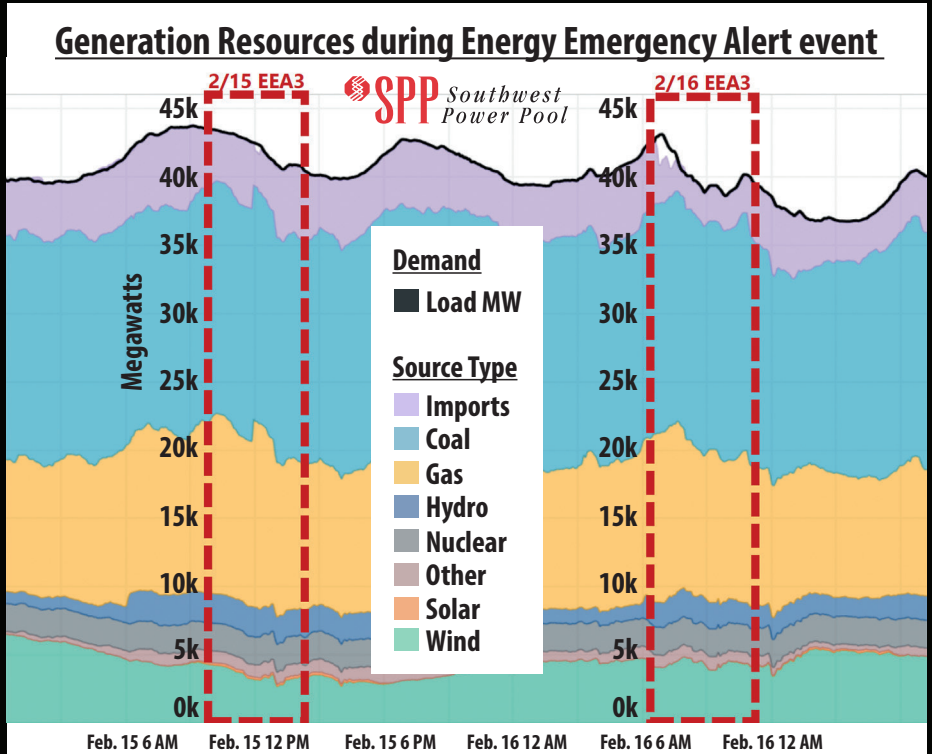
In March, SPP announced it will look into all aspects of the event.

During a special meeting March 2, SPP's board of directors approved a plan to assess SPP's performance, and that of its member utilities, during the February 2021 winter weather event that impacted SPP's operations.

"We're very proud of our ability to minimize the impacts of this historic winter storm, but not so proud that we don't think we can learn from the event," said Barbara Sugg, SPP president and chief executive officer, in the press release. "We will learn, adapt and be better prepared for the future. Continuous improvement is part of our culture and it extends beyond operations."

The newly formed Comprehensive Review Steering Committee will oversee five teams comprising representatives of SPP staff, stakeholders, the independent SPP Market Monitoring Unit and the SPP Regional State Committee. Lanny Nickell, SPP executive vice president and chief operating officer, will serve as chair of the steering committee. The five teams will evaluate operational, financial, communications and other factors related to the events of the February winter storm.

The Feb. 2021 winter storm produced extremely cold temperatures across the entire SPP service territory. During the event, 73-percent of the U.S. mainland was covered in snow, 3,000 daily and 79 all-time



Above | Fossil fuel resources in the Southwest Power Pool generation mix were at the forefront during February's Energy Emergency Alert situation. Coal and natural gas made up the majority of the energy mix during the week.

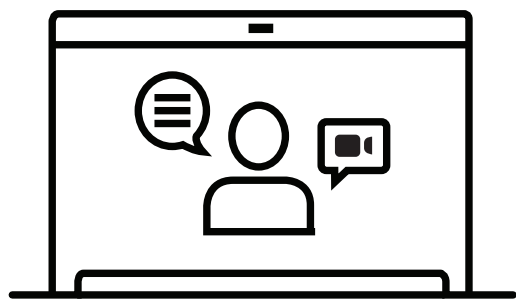
local low temperatures were recorded.

It led to increased electricity use at the same time its generation resources were limited in their capacity to produce energy. In collaboration with its member utilities and neighboring grid operators, SPP limited the storms' reliability impacts to just two periods of controlled outages: one on Feb. 15 for 50 minutes to reduce regional energy use by 1.5-percent and one on Feb. 16 for three hours and 21 minutes to reduce energy use by 6.5-percent. These actions prevented longer, uncontrolled, more widespread and more costly blackouts.

While load curtailments played a

significant role in preventing catastrophic grid implications, so did cooperative members' adhering to public appeals to reduce electric demand. During the event, cooperative members conserved energy when they could, which decreased demand below SPP's forecasted numbers. Decreased demand brought on by conservation helped to minimize service interruptions across the SPP footprint.

SPP plans to collaborate with entities like Corn Belt Power to ensure the region is equipped to manage future crises. SPP will release any findings on February's event later this year. ■



CORN BELT POWER COOPERATIVE Annual Meeting — MOVED TO **VIRTUAL** EVENT

For the second year in a row Corn Belt Power Cooperative moved its April annual meeting to a virtual event.

“We wanted to have an annual meeting in person this year,” said Ken Kuyper, executive vice president/general manager, Corn Belt Power. “We weren’t comfortable having one in person in the middle of the vaccine rollout. However, I can say we will be excited to welcome everyone back to an

in-person event next year.”

Prior to cancelling its annual meeting, Corn Belt Power did have a contingency plan. After it was decided to hold the annual meeting virtually, Corn Belt Power notified its member-cooperatives and voting delegates and scheduled the annual meeting business meeting for **April 30** before its monthly board meeting.

The cooperative’s attorneys will oversee that meeting as normal and the election of

directors will take place at that time. We will report on the results of that meeting in June’s Watts Watt newsletter.

“We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused,” Kuyper said. “We view the annual meeting as a critical aspect of our democratic process. We look forward to hosting a wonderful event in 2022.”

For questions or more information, please contact Corn Belt Power Cooperative. ■

Ubben profiled in local, national news

March marked Women’s History Month. As part of the celebration, NRECA’s RE magazine focused on women who perform male-dominated jobs at electric cooperatives.

The magazine featured Corn Belt Power’s own Josie Ubben, engineering and operations assistant. The feature had this to say about Ubben and her important role at Corn Belt Power:

It was a turning point when Corn Belt Power wanted Josie Ubben to learn AutoCAD, a software application used in transmission line design.

“They were looking for someone to update transmission profiles and modify electrical schematics,” Ubben said. “They sent me to training, and I caught on fast. I love the challenge of AutoCAD, and I knew I’d dig deep to figure it out.”

Shortly afterward, a position opened up.

As one of two women in a department of 52, “my biggest roadblock in the beginning of my career was having the confidence to speak up and give

information without feeling intimidated. I work hard, and I am thankful my co-workers trust me. The best thing about our co-op is I have a very supportive boss and co-workers.”

Later, local media channels KGAN-TV

Cedar Rapids, WOI-TV Des Moines and the Fort Dodge Messenger ran features on Ubben.

A big thank you to Josie and all the women who have a positive impact on rural electric cooperative members. ■



Celebrating women in the utility industry

Above | NRECA featured Josie Ubben, engineering and operations assistant, Corn Belt Power, in its Women in Power spotlight in April’s RE Magazine. Josie is one of two women in a department of 52 at Corn Belt Power.



Carlos Garcia

Garcia starts at Corn Belt Power

Carlos Garcia started on March 15 as a control operator at Corn Belt Power Cooperative's Wisdom Station power plant. Garcia worked for several ethanol plants over the past 14 years: The Andersons, Flint Hills Resources and Valero Energy. Welcome to Corn Belt Power, Carlos! ■

News in brief

REC Day on the Hill held virtually

On Wednesday, March 17 Corn Belt Power Cooperative took part in REC Day on the Hill.

The annual advocacy event is typically held at the Iowa State Capitol during the legislative session. The event provides co-op leaders with a prime opportunity to discuss issues important to co-op members.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, co-op advocates used virtual platforms to discuss important issues with legislators. This year's topics included vegetation management, expanding broadband connectivity and balancing sales tax treatment of utilities.

Additionally, IAEC hosted a Zoom session on Wednesday morning that was attended by more than 120 co-op advocates. Sen. Carrie Koelker (R-Dubuque) and Rep. Dave Deyoe (R-Story) joined the call as guest speakers and provided important updates on key legislation.



Hommel to receive electric co-op scholarship

Ella Hommel, Grundy Center High School, and member of Grundy County Rural Electric Cooperative, won this year's Corn Belt Power member cooperative consumer scholarship.

Hommel is a member of her school's 4-H, FFA, First Tech Challenge, Student Senate, Academic Decathlon, Speech, Band, National Honor Society, Tennis, Soccer and Cross Country programs. She is her class president and maintains fantastic grades.

Next year, she plans to attend Iowa State University and study animal science and minor in economics. In her scholarship application essay, she wrote of her future plans, "If I were to sum up my career goal, it would be to make the world a better place in the area of food security and agriculture. Although I am aware my specific path might change as I go through my educational career, I am very confident in my desire to positively impact the world in the agricultural field."

Congratulations, Ella.



Ella Hommel

Corn Belt Power wraps up MRO compliance audit

In March, Corn Belt Power Cooperative completed its off-site Compliance Audit conducted by the Midwest Reliability Organization (MRO). The audit is part of the North American Reliability Corporation (NERC) compliance program.

The focus of NERC's compliance program is to improve the reliability of the bulk power system in North America by fairly and consistently enforcing compliance with NERC Reliability Standards. Specifically, the program is designed to ensure that the right practices are in place so that the likelihood and severity of future system disturbances are substantially reduced, while recognizing that no standards or enforcement process can fully prevent all such disturbances from occurring. The Regional Entities utilize several methods to carry out their compliance functions, including regularly scheduled compliance audits, spot checks, and self-certifications.

Each year, Larry Brusseau, compliance director, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, oversees audit readiness.

"Corn Belt Power started preparing last August by reviewing our current set of compliance documentation," Brusseau said. "Each month staff reviews a portion of the applicable NERC Standards/Requirements that Corn Belt Power is responsible for. This includes all reference documents that supports our compliance (evidence) to these Standards/Requirements."

Brusseau said Corn Belt Power's preliminary report will come back later in April.

"Corn Belt Power is waiting for the preliminary audit report, that is tentatively due out April 23," he said. "The report will provide us with our findings. Corn Belt Power will have five days to review and provide comments." ■

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March Touchstone Energy Volunteer Challenge winner | Michael Wiegmann, lineman, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, donated his \$100 prize drawing to Palo Alto Pheasants Forever.



Panel discussion

Iowa officials speak in Fort Dodge

Members of Iowa's Republican Party gathered in Fort Dodge on Thursday, March 25 to hear from state and federal officials. U.S. Representative Randy Feenstra and State Senator Tim Kraayenbrink spoke to attendees before (pictured) Former Governor and U.S. Ambassador to China Terry Branstad, Iowa Republican Party Chair Jeff Kaufmann and Governor Kim Reynolds took part in a panel discussions on issues facing Iowans. Corn Belt Power attended representing the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, who helped sponsor the event.

Thompson starts in SCADA department

Zachary Thompson started on March 29 as a supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) technician. Thompson has a degree in cyber security/information assurance from Ivy Tech Community College in Indianapolis. He and his family moved from Indiana where they've lived for the last eight years. Thompson grew up in the Oskaloosa area of Iowa. Welcome, Zachary.



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