



Iowa's rural electric cooperatives advocate for regulatory clarity during 2023 "REC Day on the Hill"

More than 200 employees and elected directors from Iowa's locally owned rural electric cooperatives (RECs) convened at the Iowa Capitol on March 15 to advocate for important issues during the annual "REC Day on the Hill" event.

"Our annual advocacy day at the capitol is a valuable opportunity to meet face-to-face with our elected officials and share a local perspective on issues that impact rural Iowa and rural economic development," remarked Roger Solomonson, board president of the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC).

"Each year's REC Day on the Hill event provides us with a great opportunity to showcase what electric cooperatives are doing statewide to enhance the lives of rural Iowans and spur local economies," said Ryan Cornelius, vice president, corporate relations, Corn Belt Power Cooperative. "We thank our legislators for taking the time to speak with us at the annual event."



Rotunda view

Above | During REC Day on the Hill, electric cooperative employees and directors shared the benefits of the cooperative business model with state legislators.



On the Hill

Above | Steve Boedecker, left, director, Corn Belt Power Cooperative and Calhoun County ECA; Jim Miller, director, Calhoun County ECA; Tim Kraayenbrink, state senator; and Keaton Hildreth, CEO, Calhoun County ECA connect during REC Day on the Hill at the Iowa Capitol March 15.

Specifically, advocates asked elected officials to support legislation that clarifies the authority and governance of local electric co-op boards. We believe locally elected co-op boards should have authority to set rates and fees for electric service. Member-consumers approving rates and fees that they themselves would pay is perhaps the most effective "check and balance" possible.

Additionally, co-op representatives discussed the dangers of electric service deregulation and how it would negatively impact rural Iowa businesses and communities. Service territory protections have been in place for more than 40 years in Iowa to ensure that citizens in sparsely populated areas have access to reliable and affordable power. In fact, electric

cooperatives were formed in the 1930s and 40s because the investor-owned utilities at the time refused to serve unprofitable rural areas.

Advocates also educated legislators on the benefits of the cooperative business model, including local ownership, cost-based rates and democratic governance. Several electric cooperatives displayed booths in the rotunda which provided information on topics including economic development, electric vehicles, digital metering advancements, investments in technology, safety innovations, energy efficiency efforts and vegetation management work.

Learn more about the legislative priorities of Iowa's electric cooperatives and Iowa Rural Power grassroots advocacy at www.iaruralpower.org. ■



Wisdom Station, Corn Belt Power Cooperative

Electric co-ops **NEVER GAMBLE** on the reliability or affordability of **YOUR POWER**

Editorial provided by the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives in response to a Des Moines Register article published Feb. 26.

In late February, the Des Moines Register’s Editorial Board published a reckless column calling for MidAmerican Energy and other Iowa electric utilities to abandon coal, “even if doing so also means taking some gambles on brownouts and blackouts, price volatility and newer technology.”

Corn Belt Power believes Iowa’s locally owned electric cooperatives should never gamble on our responsibility to provide reliable and affordable service to member-consumers. Our mission to power lives and empower communities guides the decision-making of our elected co-op boards, not a newspaper’s editorial board.

Electricity has become an essential service in our lives. We are committed to providing power around the clock for your elderly neighbor on a fixed income, to the local ethanol plant and every other member in between. Our communities rely on electricity to power critical services and the local economy. We don’t take that responsibility lightly.

We continue to advocate on a local and national level for a balanced energy approach. The transition to renewable energy will take time. Last summer’s generation shortfall warning from the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) underscored the need for a diversified energy mix to ensure reliable electricity. And we all heard about the devastation that resulted from emergency blackouts during the February 2021 polar

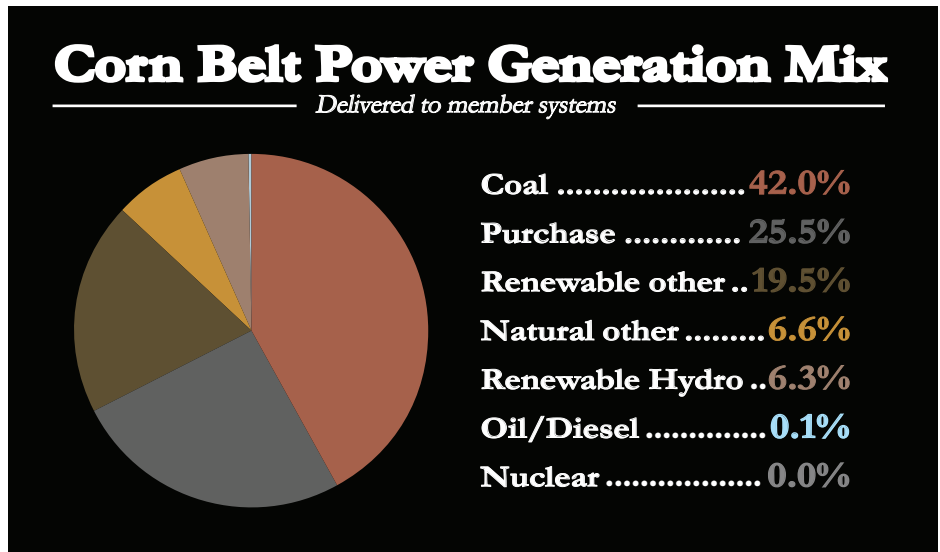
vortex crisis in Texas as demand for electricity greatly exceeded supply.

Here are two realities we must work with in the electric industry today:

1. Many renewable energy sources like wind and solar are intermittent; they don’t generate electricity when the sun doesn’t shine or the wind doesn’t blow. Other generation sources like coal, natural gas and nuclear are dispatchable, which means we can turn them on and ramp up production when needed.

use of air conditioners or electric heat. Battery technology has yet to be developed which can adequately store electricity from intermittent sources on a utility scale for a long range of time.

While we invest in battery technology advancements to make renewable sources more dispatchable for utility scale, Iowa’s electric cooperatives continue to maintain a variety of generation sources to protect the reliability and affordability of your power. Electric co-ops are transitioning to more



2. Generally speaking, electricity must be simultaneously generated as it is consumed. This requires supply to be in constant balance with electric demand and we must be able to dispatch more electric generation quickly when needed, usually on very hot or very cold days as people increase the

renewable sources of generation when it is feasible to do so.

And we will continue to advocate for an “all-of-the-above” energy strategy with state and federal policymakers because we refuse to gamble reliability, affordability or the trust you place in us. ■

News in brief

Daughter of Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative member wins scholarship

Congratulations are in order for Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative member Sydney Hurd. She has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Corn Belt Power Cooperative.

Hurd, a senior at Storm Lake St. Mary's High School, plans to attend Iowa State University in the fall. She will major in animal science and agricultural communications and minor in ag business. Her career plans are to be successful in the field of agriculture.

She is a captain on the volleyball and basketball teams. She's also involved in golf, National Honor Society, FFA, 4-H, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and serves as a volunteer teacher aide.

One of her teachers referred to her as a bright young woman, with an even brighter future and she will undoubtedly excel at Iowa State and her future endeavors.

Congratulations, Sydney!



Scholarship recipient

Above | Congratulations to Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative member Sydney Hurd. In March, Hurd was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from Basin Electric and Corn Belt Power.



Training, education and info

Above | John von Harz, instructor, conducts a training session for local contractors at Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative's headquarters March 20. Contractors who attended earned continuing education units for their heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration license program. Attendees also heard from cooperative employees on the benefits of local rebate programs.

Directors re-elected at Boone Valley Electric Cooperative annual meeting

More than 30 members of Boone Valley Electric Cooperative attended the organization's annual meeting in Renwick Saturday, March 18.

Attendees enjoyed a lunch and heard a report from Curtis Meinke, general manager, Boone Valley Electric Cooperative. Attendees also heard from Ryan Cornelius, vice president, corporate relations, Corn Belt Power Cooperative and Tim McCartan, TP Anderson and Company.

David Odland, Tom Huntley and Curtis Meinke were re-elected to the board of directors.



The democratic process

Above | Curtis Meinke, Boone Valley Electric Cooperative, provides an update on the cooperative's operation at the organization's annual meeting at the Renwick Community Center March 18.

Corn Belt Power and member co-ops partner to train contractors

Corn Belt Power Cooperative is partnering with its distribution cooperatives to bring heating and cooling continuing education unit (CEU) classes to local contractors.

The first of these events took place on Tuesday, Feb. 21 in Greene. There, contractors in the Butler County REC, Grundy County REC, Franklin REC and Prairie Energy Cooperative service territories earned two CEU hours. Corn Belt Power and its member-cooperatives also held events at Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative March 20 and Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative March 21.

"The training focused primarily on replacing a traditional gas (propane or natural gas) furnace and central air conditioning system with an air source heat pump with gas back-up system," said Ross Welterlen, director of energy services engineering, Corn Belt Power Cooperative. "The selling points for this type of system were highlighted, including its positive impact on the environment. This type of system provides cost, demand, and energy savings, both from the customer and the utility perspective."

During the training, contractors also learned about each cooperative's rebate program. ■

Construction at the new Corn Belt Power Cooperative vehicle storage facility north of G&T headquarters continues as Sande Construction and a cement subcontractor pour a fresh section of concrete in front of the new wash bay March 2.

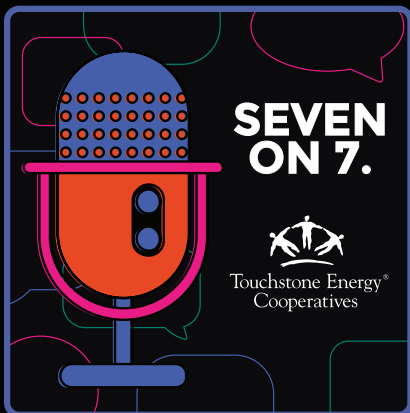
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March Touchstone Energy Volunteer Challenge winner | Jed Skogerboe, manager business/community development, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, donated his \$100 prize drawing to the Bedell Family YMCA in Spirit Lake.



Corn Belt Power Cooperative offices will be closed in observance of Good Friday, April 7.



SEVEN ON 7:
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CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY



Corn Belt Power Cooperative
Watts Watt

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