



Iowa's rural electric cooperatives advocate for rural issues during 2025 REC Day on the Hill

More than 100 employees and elected directors from Iowa's locally owned rural electric cooperatives convened at the Iowa Capitol March 19 to advocate for important issues during the annual "REC Day on the Hill" event.

Advocates spoke with elected officials on a variety of topics, including House File 404 (HF404). This bill allows a non-utility third-party to build and own a solar facility sized up to 5MW. Further, HF404 allows the third-party to sell electricity generated by the solar facility directly to retail consumers via subscription.

Corn Belt Power and electric cooperatives from across the state believe HF404 undercuts defined electric service territory by allowing a nonutility to provide retail electric service within a public utility's territory. We believe that HF404 will likely increase rates for nonsubscribers, particularly low-income customers, by shifting system costs from subscribers to nonsubscribers.



REC Day on the Hill

Above | From left, Ryan Cornelius, vice president, corporate relations, Corn Belt Power; Katie Harris, communications specialist, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative; State Representative Christian Hermanson; Jennifer Sievert, vice president of customer and corporate relations, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative; and Jean Shafer, senior legislative representative, Basin Electric; engage in discussions about key issues impacting rural communities during REC Day on the Hill March 19.

"Meeting with legislators is essential to ensuring our voices are heard and our concerns are understood."

- Ryan Cornelius, vice president, corporate relations, Corn Belt Power Cooperative

Also related to reliability, advocates talked with their legislators about the governor's energy omnibus bill. Included in the energy omnibus bill is a provision for right-of-first-refusal (ROFR).

ROFR allows incumbent, established utilities to have the first option to construct, maintain and operate electric transmission projects. Iowa's electric co-ops are best prepared to respond locally to weather-related outages because we have a proven track record of restoring power quickly and safely.

"This a great event that's well attended each year," said Ryan Cornelius, vice president, corporate relations, Corn Belt Power. "We appreciate the time our elected officials take out of their busy schedules to discuss important issues facing rural Iowans and the electric cooperatives that serve them."

During the advocacy event, representatives educated legislators on the benefits of the not-for-profit cooperative business model, which includes local ownership, democratic governance and cost-based rates. Several electric cooperatives displayed booths in the rotunda which provided information on topics including economic development, 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.

Policy Perspective:

Brickhouse provides testimony to United States House of Representatives

***This article was published by Basin Electric Power Cooperative on March 6*

Todd Brickhouse, Basin Electric chief executive officer and general manager, was invited to provide testimony during a hearing held by the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy in Washington, D.C. March 5. The hearing titled, “Scaling for Growth: Meeting the demand for reliable, affordable electricity,” focused on the challenges facing utilities to deliver reliable and affordable electricity to consumers amid the growing demand for power across the United States.

The hearing also provided an opportunity to address reliability issues in the nation’s electric grid and discuss the importance of strengthening and expanding the ability to generate and distribute power to homes, businesses, and emerging data centers.

“American families and businesses expect the lights to stay on at a cost they can afford,” Brickhouse told the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy. “Our nation’s energy policies must meet this fundamental expectation.”

Brickhouse said co-ops are urging policymakers to:

- Support a diverse supply of energy resources to meet skyrocketing demand for

U.S. energy production and manufacturing, especially in rural areas.

- Improve environmental permitting processes and cut costly, burdensome regulations—including the Environmental Protection Agency’s power plant rule—to accelerate deployment and maintenance of electric infrastructure.

- Ensure federal programs and resources that support electric co-op energy projects are run efficiently and effectively as co-ops invest to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

next 10 years is projected to be about 3.3%—significantly higher than the national average of about 2.4%.

Co-ops across the country, including Basin Electric, also participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s New Empowering Rural America (New ERA) program, a voluntary grant and loan program designed specifically for electric co-ops as they deploy new nuclear, carbon capture, batteries, renewables, and other technologies that make sense for local communities.

As energy demand grows, federal regulatory policies must be addressed to allow Basin Electric and other cooperatives to build and maintain critical infrastructure. “We are in an era of energy expansion, not just a transition, and every available electron will be needed to meet growing demands of our membership and power rural America,” Brickhouse said. “Congress should support USDA and co-ops as they deploy these projects and oppose any cuts to the New ERA program.”

In closing, Brickhouse said, “Our nation is at an energy crossroads. Basin Electric stands

ready to support efforts by Congress, the Administration, and federal agencies to enhance affordability and reliability for American consumers as we meet the growing energy needs of our country.” ■



Brickhouse shares testimony

Above | Todd Brickhouse, chief executive officer and general manager, Basin Electric Power Cooperative provides a testimony to the House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee in Washington, D.C. March 5.

Basin Electric plans to invest \$12 billion in capital expenditures—more than doubling its balance sheet of assets—over the next decade. Those investments are being made because the co-op’s load growth over the



Downed NIPCO line

Above | Following restoration efforts on its own system, Corn Belt Power sent linemen and electricians to assist Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative.

Winter storm wreaks

An active weather day unfolded across the Corn Belt Power transmission system March 19 as blizzard conditions persisted, creating challenges for system reliability and safety. Corn Belt Power system operators worked diligently throughout the day, responding to numerous line trips and maintaining power where possible.

The day featured sporadic outages caused by galloping lines. By the next morning, power had been restored to all Corn Belt

Power substations. The following highlights a few of the trouble spots on March 19:

MEC Sac County to MEC Sac City: This line remained inoperable for most of the day, leading to outages at the Schroeder and Lake View substations.

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative crews transferred load from these affected substations, as road and weather conditions permitted.

Snell to Webster City Junction: This line segment became inoperable

Celebrating lineworkers this month

During April, electric cooperatives and utilities pause to recognize a hard-working group of individuals who dedicate their lives to ensuring you have the power you need when you need it. In good weather and bad, lineworkers have your back and are always ready to answer the call.

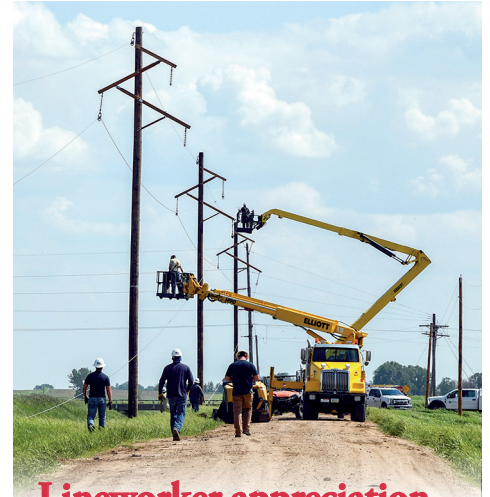
As we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 14, this is a timely moment to reflect on the essential role lineworkers play in our daily lives.

Amid towering utility poles and power lines, lineworkers exhibit a strength that goes far beyond the physical. Whether battling inclement weather, troubleshooting technical problems, or navigating treacherous heights, lineworkers demonstrate resilience and a

quiet determination to keep our lights on, our homes comfortable, and our communities connected.

In moments of crisis, when the lights go out, and we find ourselves in the dark, lineworkers emerge as beacons of hope. Their swift response restores normalcy, offering reassurance and hope in times of uncertainty. Whether repairing storm-ravaged power lines or ensuring continuity during emergencies, their unwavering commitment illuminates life when we need it most.

Lineworkers also answer the call beyond the boundaries of home service territories. When widespread outages occur, our crews travel to assist fellow co-ops, near



Lineworker appreciation

Above | Corn Belt Power Cooperative crews rebuild downed line near Farnhamville after tornados tore through the area in May 2024.



Lineworker appreciation

Above | Corn Belt Power Cooperative lineworkers install new line at the Dakota City Switching Station in November 2023. In April we celebrate National Lineworker Day as we show our appreciation for what they do at home and nationwide.

or far, where additional support is needed. Cooperation among cooperatives is one of our seven guiding principles; no one embodies this core commitment better than lineworkers.

This month, as we celebrate the remarkable men and women who ensure reliable power, let's recognize their unwavering dedication to the local communities they serve.

The next time you flip a switch, please take a moment to remember those who make it possible—lineworkers, who are wired for service and dedicated to illuminating life. ■

Power crews bring power back to members in havoc across northern Iowa

the afternoon of March 19 due to high winds and galloping line. Corn Belt Power operators coordinated with Prairie Energy Cooperative to re-energize the Snell to Duncombe line, restoring service to the Duncombe substation between Fort Dodge and Webster City.

Other trouble spots included Burt to Algona East, Pioneer to Humboldt, Sherwood to Manson, Snell to Webster and Sweazy to Snell.

Following storm cleanup, Corn Belt

Power crews traveled west to provide mutual aid to Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative. NIPCO sustained significant damage in parts of the service territory as the blizzard conditions traversed across the state.

"We always prioritize the health and safety of our crews, our members, and their communities when responding to outages," said Jacob Olberding, executive vice president and general manager of Corn Belt Power. "We're grateful for the patience and understanding shown by

our member systems and the public as we worked diligently to troubleshoot issues on our transmission system. The combination of high winds and heavy snow placed significant strain on the grid, but we're pleased to report that we avoided major damage. This outcome underscores the value of proactive system maintenance and ongoing improvements. We're now seeing the benefits of our commitment to an aggressive system rebuild." ■

Thank you to these Corn Belt Power Cooperative employees that answered the call and offered mutual aid to neighboring G&T, North Iowa Power Cooperative, Le Mars, Iowa following the March 19 blizzard. Pictured from top left are: Jack Arndt, Jeff Codner, John Capesius, Ryan Conlon, Dean Jensen, Justin Hesnard, Adam Bird and Ethan Petersen. From bottom left: Reed Dreyer, Travis Hefty, Ethan Miller, Mark Saxton, Connor Almond, Petyon Vote and Devin Chesler.

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March Touchstone Energy Volunteer Challenge winner | Madison Alert, communications specialist and key accounts representative, Franklin REC, donated her \$100 prize to Friends of Beeds Lake.

Corn Belt Power earns 'A' rating

S&P Global Ratings recently affirmed its 'A' issuer credit rating for Corn Belt Power Cooperative. The rating reflects S&P's view of the general credit worthiness of Corn Belt Power under criteria for rating U.S. Cooperative Utilities.

S&P's view of Corn Belt Power's strengths, include:

- A strong membership base with nine RECs that have long-term contracts through 2075 that match Corn Belt's contract with Basin;
- Broad service area economy across 41 counties in northern Iowa with income levels at about 95% of the nation's, historically low unemployment rate in Iowa compared to the nation, and member co-op base serving farms and rural residents;
- Rate-setting autonomy, annual review of member rates, and a discretionary power cost adjustment (PCA) mechanism, which offers timely cost recovery; and
- Robust unrestricted cash including undrawn balances under Corn Belt's lines of credit at \$103 million, equivalent to about 290 days of operating expenses for fiscal 2024, which we project will decline but stay above 230 days through fiscal 2029.

Partly offsetting strengths, in S&P's view, are Corn Belt Power's:

- High reliance on coal-fired generation for 40% of total power supply in 2023;
- Projected lower margins in future years absent use of deferred revenue in fiscal 2025 and future rate increases not yet adopted; and
- Concentrated customer base, with about 30% of energy sales in 2023 attributable to the REC's top 10 customers, six of which are ethanol refineries, which have more volatile operations and revenue due to the price nature of ethanol and corn in addition to price variations in grains and energy sources.

Corn Belt Power Cooperative **Watts Watt**

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