



REC Day on the Hill a success

Green was the dominant color at the Iowa State Capitol on March 17, but it wasn't only for St. Patrick's Day. Nearly 200 advocates were wearing green in support of Iowa's rural electric cooperatives during their 2026 "REC Day on the Hill" advocacy event.

"Our annual advocacy day at the state house is a powerful opportunity to meet face-to-face with our state legislators and share a local perspective on issues that impact the members and communities we serve," remarked Leslie Kaufman, executive vice president and general manager for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives.

The advocates were in full force on the rotunda floor to discuss utility worker protections as outlined in SF 2400. Through this legislation, those who harass, threaten or assault utility workers out on the job would face stronger penalties. Lineworkers are required by law to enter dangerous situations and work in hazardous conditions and should be protected to the fullest extent of the law.

Additionally, electric co-op representatives



Advocating for Cooperatives

Above | Prairie Energy's Kate Garner, Chad Chapman and Marion Denger speak with Rep. Mark Thompson and Sen. Dennis Guth at REC Day on the Hill March 17.

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

talked with their legislators about concerns with third-party solar provisions outlined in HF 2672. Iowa's electric cooperatives

support solar development when it makes sense locally, but allowing third-party programs sets a concerning precedent statewide. Additionally, third-party solar developers would not be held to the same consumer protection standards or regulatory oversight as Iowa's public utilities.

Expanding renewable energy across the state can certainly play a positive role in our energy mix. At the same time, we must ensure that we are not undermining the baseload generation that keeps the grid reliable, safe and cost-effective. Across the country — including here in Iowa — rapid renewable expansion has coincided with the early retirement of dispatchable plants. In many cases, that lost capacity has not been fully replaced with equally reliable resources. This has caused growing concerns about grid capacity during the hottest summer days and the coldest winter nights.

"We appreciate our elected officials taking the time to listen and engage with

us on a range of important legislative issues," said Ryan Cornelius, vice president, corporate relations at Corn Belt Power. "REC Day on the Hill provides a valuable opportunity for open dialogue, allowing us to share the cooperative perspective, exchange ideas, and work collaboratively toward solutions that benefit the communities we all serve."

During the event, co-op advocates educated legislators on the benefits of the not-for-profit co-op business model including local ownership, member governance and cost-based rates. Several electric cooperatives displayed booths in the rotunda which provided information on topics including economic development, investments in technology, electric safety, reliable power generation and student programs.

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

Celebrating lineworker appreciation day

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 13, 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 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. ■



Corn Belt Power to return money to member cooperatives

Corn Belt Power delivered another year of strong financial performance in 2025, reinforcing its commitment to returning value to the members it serves. The cooperative reported net margins of approximately \$17.29 million, including more than \$6.2 million in patronage allocations from Basin Electric.

Because of this solid financial position, Corn Belt Power's Board of Directors approved several actions to return funds to members. These included a patronage retirement totaling \$1,236,664 from 2011 and 2012 margins, along with an additional \$900,060 retirement of Basin allocations from 2009. The board also approved a quick roll retirement of \$6.44 million from 2025 margins, continuing the cooperative's long-standing focus on timely returns.

These actions build on a consistent track record. **Since 2016, Corn Belt Power has returned more than \$54.4 million in quick roll payments to members. In addition, the board has approved over \$11.9 million in patronage retirements during that same period.**

"This demonstrates a sustained commitment to financial stewardship and member benefit," said Jacob Olberding, executive president and general manager,



Corn Belt Power Cooperative. "Our board policy has proved effective in maintaining financial metrics at Corn Belt Power, while also returning money directly back to members in a timely fashion."

Operationally, Corn Belt Power continues to create value through its load management program. In 2025 alone, the program generated more than \$3.4 million in savings by reducing demand during peak usage periods—helping avoid higher wholesale power costs and easing strain on the electric

grid. **Since 2015, the load management program has delivered over \$20.3 million in total savings, averaging approximately \$1.8 million annually.**

"Together, these results highlight our priorities of strong financial management, strategic operations, and a continued focus on delivering meaningful value back to the members and communities Corn Belt Power serves," said Olberding.

Checks will be dispersed to member-cooperatives at April's annual meeting. ■

Driving down costs, power efficiency: A strong year for rebates and technical services programs

In 2025, commercial, industrial, and agricultural rebates generated nearly 5 million kWh in deemed energy savings, while residential rebate programs contributed an additional 830,000 kWh.

Together, these efforts highlight the continued value of investing in energy efficiency—helping members reduce costs while supporting a more reliable and efficient energy system.

"We saw a large increase in variable frequency drive motor rebate applications in 2025 due to several commercial expansions," said Ross Welterlen, director of energy services engineering, Corn Belt Power.

On the residential side, air source heat pumps, residential lighting and geothermal heat pumps made up the top three most

popular rebate applications.

"We continue to see air source heat pumps and lighting as our most popular rebate programs on the residential side," said Welterlen. "We have good penetration in our water heater program, and we still see many geothermal heat pump applications come through."

In total, Corn Belt Power rebated just more than \$700,000 in 2025.

How does the cooperative derive its rebate program?

Every five years, Corn Belt Power takes part in an energy efficiency program study. Corn Belt Power, NIPCO and L&O conduct the study as a group.

The study is a statistical look at how each component of the energy efficiency

program impacts not only the cooperative utility but also its rate payers. Results are quantified by test ratios. These ratios include:

- Participant test or impact on the rebate recipient.
- Rate-Payer impact measure (RIM test). The RIM test studies impact on utility, all members and society.
- Societal test, which is a blend of the participant test and RIM test.
- Program administrator test, which tests the impact on the utility.

In addition to rebates, Corn Belt Power's technical services program remained busy in 2025. In total, Corn Belt Power performed 29 thermography inspections and energy audits in 2025 at key and commercial and industrial accounts. ■

More than 200 electric cooperative employees and directors visited the Iowa State Capitol March 17 for the annual REC Day on the Hill. This event is an opportunity to meet with our elected officials face-to-face to share local perspective on issues facing co-op members.

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March Touchstone Energy Volunteer Challenge winner | Doug Vlasman, manager of business and community development, Iowa Lakes Electric Co-op, won this month's Volunteer Challenge. He donated his \$100 prize to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.

Help us Shine The Light on community volunteers in June

It's time to shine the light on our community volunteers! Guided by our cooperative commitment to community, Corn Belt Power and its member-cooperatives encourages our members to participate in the statewide Shine the Light contest this summer by nominating local volunteers. Sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, the contest will accept nominations during the month of June and select three winners who will each receive a \$3,000 donation to their local charity or nonprofit.

"We've been truly inspired by the people who have been nominated over the years," remarked Erin Campbell, director of communications for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. "We're excited to make three charity donations of \$3,000 each this year to recognize local volunteer efforts across the state."

Member-consumers and employees of Iowa's electric cooperatives are eligible to nominate local volunteers from June 1 to June 30. The volunteer being nominated does not need to be a co-op member-consumer. Minors maybe nominated with consent from their parents or legal guardians. Non-winning nominees from previous years can be nominated again for another chance to win.

Our 2026 winners will be announced in September and featured in Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine and on social media.

Go to www.IowaShineTheLight.com to review the contest rules and submission guidelines. Contest entries will be accepted at this website starting on June 1. Help us shine the light on community volunteers this summer and consider honoring a local volunteer by making a nomination! ■



Corn Belt Power Cooperative **Watts Watt**

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