



## Momentum is Building Conference brings co-ops and contractors together

**M**ore than 150 electric cooperative representatives and their partner contractors gathered in West Des Moines for the 2026 Momentum Is Building Conference, a two day event focused on advancing energy efficiency, strengthening industry relationships, and supporting Iowa's building and trades professionals.

Held February 19–20 at the Sheraton West Des Moines, the annual conference once again served as a collaborative forum connecting Iowa's building trades professionals with the local electric cooperatives that serve nearly 650,000 Iowans across all 99 counties. Sponsored by the Iowa Cooperatives for Energy Efficiency (ICEE), the conference emphasized practical education, professional development, and cooperative commitment to helping member-consumers use energy wisely.

Throughout the event, attendees participated in continuing education

**"Momentum Is Building has now united contractors and energy efficiency experts for collaboration and education for more than 30 years strong - all to better serve members at the end of the line."**

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

sessions approved for Iowa plumbing/mechanical, HVAC, and electrical codes, allowing contractors to earn CEUs while staying current on evolving technologies, regulations, and energy efficiency incentives.



**MIB unites contractors and co-ops**

**Above |** Jeff Reichart, Specified Systems, teaches an HVAC/Plumbing session at Momentum Is Building Feb. 19. Reichart provided four continuing education unit hours in this discipline.

Educational sessions were paired with networking opportunities designed to strengthen relationships between cooperatives and the contractors who serve their communities.

The conference opened with a keynote from Justin Wilson of Construction Instruction, who shared insights on current policies, emerging technologies, and consumer trends shaping the home building and remodeling industries. His return to the Momentum Is Building stage reinforced the conference's long-standing focus on relevant, realworld training for industry professionals.

Popular industry voices and longtime conference partners also returned, including Bill McAnnally of Iowa Public Radio's "Talk of Iowa – Home Improvement Day," along with CEU providers Dave Sullivan (Electrical), Terry Moorman (Safety), and Jeff Reichart (PMSB). Their sessions offered

specialized, code-focused training valued by contractors across the state.

The conference concluded with a closing session from Kenyon Murray, CEO of Murray Legacy Management and Certified Professional Life Coach. Kenyon Murray is a former University of Iowa basketball player and his twin sons Kris and Keegan both play in the NBA. Kenyon Murray, in his address, encouraged attendees to think beyond technical skills, sharing tools for personal growth and routines that support long-term success both professionally and personally.

For nearly 35 years, the Momentum Is Building Conference has provided a trusted space for electric cooperatives and contractors to collaborate in delivering safe, efficient, and cost-effective home comfort solutions. The strong turnout in 2026 underscores the conference's ongoing tradition and mission to powering Iowa communities now and into the future. ■

# Corn Belt Power hosts Orientation Day

Corn Belt Power Cooperative welcomed close to 30 new directors and employees to its annual Orientation Day event, held Feb. 26 at the cooperative's Humboldt headquarters.

The event is designed to build understanding and strengthen connections across the Corn Belt Power system. The day provides foundational knowledge about Corn Belt Power's generation and transmission role and how departments work together to serve member cooperatives across Iowa.

Throughout the sessions participants learned about Corn Belt Power's relationship with Basin Electric Power Cooperative, as well as key areas including power supply, engineering and system operations, corporate relations, finance and administration, business development and information technology.

Attendees also toured the cooperative's server room and control center. Tours offer a behind-the-scenes look at the technology and personnel responsible for maintaining reliability across the transmission network.

"By hosting Orientation Day, we're able to personally meet and interact with our new employees and directors from across the system," said Jacob Olberding, executive vice



## Orientation day tour

**Above** | Jon Behounek, chief system operator, introduces Orientation Day participants to the Corn Belt Power control center and its functions Feb. 26.

president and general manager of Corn Belt Power. "It's an opportunity to share how all the pieces of our organization fit together and to explain the important role Corn Belt Power plays in supporting our member cooperatives."

Participants learned about the

cooperative's long and proud history of service to rural Iowa. From its founding principles rooted in the cooperative model to its continued investment in infrastructure and innovation, Corn Belt Power's story reflects decades of commitment to reliability, affordability and local control. ■

## Update: Initial Corn Belt Power survey process complete

At Corn Belt Power Cooperative, long-term success doesn't happen by accident — it happens by design. That's why we've launched a comprehensive strategic planning initiative to help guide our organization through the opportunities and challenges ahead.



To support this effort, Corn Belt Power Cooperative is partnering with the Paulsen Agency to develop a forward-looking strategic plan that will shape our direction for years to come. This process is more than a document or a checklist — it is an effort to clarify priorities, strengthen alignment,

and ensure we are positioned to serve our member cooperatives with excellence in a rapidly evolving energy environment.

The electric industry is changing at an unprecedented pace. Market dynamics, regulatory pressures, technological advancements, reliability standards, and member expectations continue to evolve.

A comprehensive strategic plan will help Corn Belt Power:

- Define clear priorities and measurable goals
  - Aligns our member-cooperatives, board, leadership team, and staff around a shared vision
  - Allocate resources wisely and responsibly
  - Anticipate risks while capitalizing on opportunities
  - Strengthen the long-term financial and operational health of the cooperative
- "Strategic planning ensures that we

remain proactive rather than reactive," said Jacob Olberding, executive vice president and general manager, Corn Belt Power Cooperative. "The outcome of this process will be more than a strategic document. It will help guide decisions, investments, and initiatives that impact our member cooperatives and the communities they serve."

In late January and early February, member-cooperative managers and boards and the Corn Belt Power board and executive teams finished a stakeholder feedback survey. Strong cooperatives are built on engagement. By gathering perspectives from multiple stakeholder groups, Corn Belt Power hopes to gain a clear understanding of where we are today and where we need to go in the future.

To wrap up the initial phase of the plan, Corn Belt Power will host a strategic planning summit in August. ■

# Slowikowski to speak at annual meeting

Corn Belt Power will host its annual meeting Wednesday, April 8 inside the Briggs Woods Conference Center in Webster City.

At the annual meeting, attendees will hear reports from the board, general manager and Basin Electric Power Cooperative. This year directors from Raccoon Valley, Prairie Energy and Calhoun County ECA are up for election.

In addition, Corn Belt Power will welcome Eddie Slowikowski to the stage as keynote speaker.

Slowikowski is a former world-class runner and gold medal winner for the USA Track & Field team. Slowikowski is the 169th American to run a mile in under four minutes, with a time of 3:58. Eddie was a three-time Division I NCAA All-American and national cross country champion out of Loyola University in Chicago. Slowikowski was a former reporter in training at CNN before launching his own business. Today, Slowikowski is a highly sought-after speaker, consultant and author.

Slowikowski is known throughout the industry as an inspired performance expert. His widely acclaimed “Four Minute



**Eddie Slowikowski**

**Above |** Eddie Slowikowski will keynote Corn Belt Power’s annual meeting at the Briggs Woods Conference Center in Webster City, April 8.

Formula” has been utilized by people from all walks of life. Through years of training as an athlete and running his own successful speaking and consulting

business, he knows what it takes to be elite. Slowikowski has always had the can-do spirit of an entrepreneur in all walks of life. Best of all, Slowikowski can channel that sense of accomplishment through interactive storytelling and raw emotion to audiences everywhere. He can make you laugh, cry, dance and learn — all in one presentation. It’s a rollercoaster journey like no other, and Slowikowski has been doing it for close to three decades.

Slowikowski speaks to tens of thousands of people year in and year out, utilizing a vast array of programs that are always customized to fit the needs of each audience. Whether it’s for Fortune 500 companies, associations, health care, professional athletes and teams, law enforcement or educational institutions across the country, Eddie’s personally devised programs are ever-changing, keeping his message on the cutting edge for audiences.

The one constant through it all remains his high-energy message and interactive style. Slowikowski uses music, sound effects, dancing and audience interaction to bring his memorable presentations to life. ■

## Cooperatives provide loans to purchase new equipment for Iowa Corn Processors

Corn Belt Power Cooperative and Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative partnered together to assist Iowa Corn Processors, L.C. in financing the purchase of new equipment to upgrade their packaging line.

Corn Belt Power and RVEC each sponsored a pass-through loan for one million dollars through USDA’s Rural Economic Development Loan program. The loans totaled \$2 million. ■



**Iowa Corn Processors receives loan**

**Above |** Corn Belt Power Cooperative and Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative close on a pass-through loan with Iowa Corn Processors in late January to purchase new equipment. Photographed at the closing are from left, Keaton Hildreth and Alicia Lohr, Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative; Chris Giguere and Brian Widdel, Iowa Corn Processors; and Stacy Cirks, Corn Belt Power Cooperative.



**February Touchstone Energy Volunteer Challenge winner | Scott Hagenson**, director, Franklin REC, won this month's Volunteer Challenge. He donated his \$100 prize to the Clear Lake Fire Department 911 Memorial.

# Mason wins Basin Electric and Corn Belt Power scholarship

**C**ongratulations to Maddy Mason of Coon Rapids-Bayard High School for earning the \$2,500 Basin Electric and Corn Belt Power scholarship.

An outstanding student and leader, Maddy has been actively involved in volleyball, basketball, track, softball, FFA, student council, speech, choir and numerous other extracurricular activities. She has also dedicated more than 200 hours to serving her local community.

Following graduation, Maddy plans to attend Simpson College to pursue a bachelor's degree in elementary education, with endorsements in math and reading. She will also compete in shot put and discus as a member of the Simpson College track and field team. Her long-term goal is to teach either first grade or middle school math in a small K-12 school district.

This year, Basin Electric's Cooperative Member Consumer Dependent Scholarship amount increased to \$2,500. Applicants must complete an application, provide current grades and transcripts and complete an essay focused on how the quality of life improved in areas where electric cooperatives brought power. Because Corn Belt Power doesn't

serve individuals at the end of the line, each year Corn Belt Power holds a contest amongst applicants from its member-cooperatives.

Congratulations, Maddy, on this well-deserved achievement. ■

## **Corn Belt Power Cooperative** **Watts Watt**

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