



Corn Belt Power hosts 2026 Midwest Transmission Conference

Corn Belt Power Cooperative welcomed utility professionals and industry partners from across the Midwest to Cedar Falls, Iowa, Sept. 15-18 for the 2026 Midwest Transmission Conference.

The four-day conference combined representatives from generation and transmission cooperatives and other organizations throughout the region for technical education, industry discussion, networking and an opportunity to see the latest products and technologies serving the electric transmission industry. Corn Belt Power served as host this year and welcomed more than 220 attendees and 60 vendors.

The Midwest Transmission Conference has a long history within the cooperative utility community. Its roots date to June 1956, when a “Safety and Job Training Meeting” focused on transmission-line work.

The gathering was officially named the Midwest Transmission Conference several years later. Today, the conference continues



Midwest Transmission Conference

Above from left | Hilary Lane, director of strategic partnerships, Nuclear Energy Institute, discusses new nuclear energy technologies with attendees at the 2026 Midwest Transmission Conference in Cedar Falls September, 17.

its original mission of providing a forum for sharing ideas and best practices in the operation and maintenance of generation and transmission systems.

This year’s program reflected how much the electric utility industry is changing.

Dr. David Gattie of the University of Georgia helped frame energy decisions within the context of energy security, economic security and national security.

Hilary Lane, senior director of strategic partnerships with the Nuclear Energy Institute, provided another perspective on the nation’s changing generation landscape. Lane works with utilities, customers, investors and others exploring nuclear energy and advanced nuclear technologies as demand for reliable, around-the-clock electricity continues to grow.

Jason Davis of Southwest Power Pool brought the regional transmission perspective to the conference. Davis updated the group on new initiatives at SPP

and what the organization believes is coming in the future.

The conference’s keynote presentation came from nationally recognized speaker Garrison Wynn, who delivered “Change is Mandatory...Stress is Optional: What the Most Influential Leaders Do Differently.” Wynn used humor and real-world examples to discuss leadership, communication, workplace safety and culture and the challenge of successfully navigating change.

In addition to speakers, the group took three tours during the week. The group toured A-Line EDS, a transformer recycling and disposal service, Hansen’s Dairy, a Grundy County REC member-business, and the John Deere Engine Works and Tractor Museum.

Corn Belt Power thanks the attendees, speakers, sponsors, exhibitors, participating utilities and attendees who helped make the 2026 Midwest Transmission Conference a success. ■



Hansen’s Dairy

Above | A Hansen’s Dairy Farm kangaroo greets MTC attendees on a group tour Sept. 17. The dairy is a Grundy County REC member and provides milk, butter, ice cream and more to eastern Iowa.

Rohach retires after decades of service — to Iowa cooperatives —

Larry Rohach never set out to spend decades helping guide electric cooperatives. In fact, his journey into cooperative leadership began unexpectedly when a neighbor pulled into his yard one spring day.

“Paul Robertson, who was my predecessor and neighbor, drove up and said, ‘Larry, I want you to run for my board seat on the REC board.’”

Roberts talked with Rohach for a while, but Rohach wasn’t sure he was the right person for the job.

“I told him I hadn’t really ever thought about it and that I didn’t know anything about electric power.” He said, ‘You’ll learn.’

“Yeah, I surely did,” Rohach shared.

That conversation would eventually lead Rohach to serve on four cooperative boards at the same time and, ultimately, to more than 16 years of service on the Corn Belt Power Cooperative board.

Despite the experience he gained along the way, Rohach still remembers feeling overwhelmed at his first Corn Belt Power board meeting.

“Karen Berte got up and started on the financial report,” he said. “I looked at all those numbers and thought, ‘Oh my gosh, Rohach, what the heck did you get yourself into? I’m never going to figure this out.’”

Over the next 16 years, Rohach would help guide Corn Belt Power through numerous challenges, changes and major decisions. Of all the initiatives during his time on the board, none stands out more to him than the sale of the Duane Arnold



Rohach retires

Above | Larry Rohach retires from the Corn Belt Power Cooperative board of directors with 16 years of service and with 33 years on the Grundy County REC board.

Energy Center.

“That sale was the biggest feather in the Corn Belt Power cap in my entire 16 years,” he said. “There were other things — whether that was advocating for change at Basin Electric in North Dakota or something more local — but the biggest thing was the DAEC sale.”

Jacob Olberding, executive vice president and general manager, Corn Belt Power, said Rohach never lost sight of what was best for the member at the end of the line.

“Larry helped navigate Corn Belt Power through many crucial milestones, always keeping our mission and the members we serve at the center of every decision,” he said. **“He leaves a legacy of steady leadership, lasting impact, and an unwavering focus on those we serve. Thank you, Larry, for over 16 years of dedicated service to the Corn Belt Power Cooperative membership.”**

For Rohach, those 16 years of decisions and challenges come back to one thing: the cooperative business model and the members it serves.

“I’ve always been an advocate that the membership has a say even though they don’t think they really do. They elect us as board members and are trusting us to run the co-op in the best way we know how.” he

said. “Before I left the Grundy County REC board, I reminded them, ‘Do not forget, while you’re sitting around this table, that there’s 1,800 co-op members out there who elected us to do the right thing for them, to keep their lives powered.’”

As his time in the boardroom comes to an end, Rohach hopes the next generation of electric cooperative leaders will find their way to the local cooperative and learn some of the same lessons and take on some of the same challenges he did.

“When you’re a member, sometimes you don’t have the foggiest idea of what’s really going on,” he said. “If a young member really wants to know what’s going on, learn how the power industry works, and have a say, I’d encourage them to run for the board of directors at their local electric cooperative. Start there. I did, and the more I knew, the more I wanted to know and keep serving on different boards.”

From a 1990’s front-yard conversation to 33 years on the Grundy County REC board and 16 years helping guide Corn Belt Power, Rohach’s cooperative journey took him much further than he expected.

Corn Belt Power Cooperative thanks Larry for his decades of service to our organization, Grundy County REC and the cooperative community beyond. ■



Rohach recognized

Above | Jacob Olberding, executive vice president and general manager, and Dave Onken, board president, Corn Belt Power, recognize Larry Rohach for his years of service at an employee picnic August 27.

Shine the Light winners announced

The Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa are pleased to announce our 2026 Shine the Light contest winners, including a local volunteer who received a \$3,000 donation to their local charity:

Ellen Campbell of Panora was nominated by Luann Waldo, a member-consumer of Guthrie County Rural Electric Cooperative. Ellen was selected as a 2026 Shine the Light winner for her work with Stitch and Chatter, a quilting club that meets regularly at First Christian Church in Panora. After retiring from Panora Schools in 2015, Ellen volunteered with Stitch and Chatter as a way to bring people together to help others. And the quilting club is working to stitch together a stronger community, one square at a time. Learn more at www.panorafcc.org/stitch-and-chatter.

Megan Gleeson of West Burlington was nominated by Kathy Wunderlich, a member-consumer and board director of Eastern Iowa Light & Power Cooperative. Megan was selected as a 2026 Shine the Light

winner for her efforts with the Rally for Reid Foundation, which she and her husband Bill founded after the tragic death of their son to childhood cancer in 2020. Rally for Reid aims to support other families impacted by childhood cancer while also raising funds for pediatric cancer research. Learn more at www.rallyforreid.org.

Belinda Seay of Moravia was nominated by 3 member-consumers of Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative: Sharon Cunningham, Pat Merrick and Marnie Starr. Belinda was selected as a 2026 Shine the Light winner for her work with Monroe County Helping Hands, which operates a thrift shop and food bank in Albia. Belinda has volunteered with Helping Hands for 10 years and serves as the clothing supervisor in the thrift store. She was nominated because she cares for others with deep compassion. Learn more about this organization at www.facebook.com/p/Monroe-County-Helping-Hands-Inc-100068774418404/.

Watch video interviews of our winners at www.iowashinethelight.com/past-winners.

83 nominations were submitted from across the state, highlighting the work of many incredible Iowans. 3 winners were selected and are featured in the September issue of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine and on the contest website at www.IowaShineTheLight.com; all of the 2026 nominators and nominees were recognized in the August issue of the magazine.

The Shine the Light contest will return next summer to celebrate our cooperative commitment to community; electric cooperative member-consumers and employees are invited to nominate a local volunteer during the month of June at www.IowaShineTheLight.com.



Industry experts and Iowa icon Chuck Long — headline 2027 Momentum is Building —

Iowa builders and contractors are invited to discover the latest advancements in energy efficiency technologies at the 2027 Momentum is Building Conference, set for February 18-19, 2027, at the Sheraton in West Des Moines, IA.

The annual conference offers opportunities for contractors to earn Continuing Education Units in Iowa's plumbing/mechanical, HVAC, and electrical codes. Attendees will also have the chance to network with industry peers, learn from leading experts in energy efficiency and the building trades, and gain insights into current energy efficiency regulations and incentives.

"Electric cooperatives have a long history of promoting energy efficiency and helping our members make smart, informed energy choices," said Angela Catton, vice president of communications and development

at Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative. "This conference gives us an important opportunity to connect with the contractors who work directly with our members and to strengthen the partnerships that help us deliver safe, efficient and affordable energy solutions across Iowa."

"We're thrilled with the speaker lineup we've assembled for 2027," said Ryan Cornelius, vice president, corporate relations, Corn Belt Power Cooperative. "We're excited to welcome back longtime CEU instructors Dave

Sullivan and Terry Moorman while also adding Scott Meinecke and instructors from Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 33. It gives attendees a strong mix of familiar expertise and fresh perspectives."

This year's opening keynote is Randy Dean, "The E-Mail Sanity Expert." Dean is a nationally recognized expert in time and email management who has helped

thousands improve productivity at work and in life. Randy makes practical productivity strategies both useful and engaging.

He will be followed by Jeff Ralston, Ralston Eco Homes, and Dan McGuire, Heartland Energy Consultants, who will discuss HVAC for new residential homes.

The conference will close with keynote Chuck Long. As an Iowa Hawkeye, Chuck threw for 10,461 yards, becoming the first Big Ten player and second player in college football history to surpass 10,000 passing yards. In 1985, he led Iowa to the Rose Bowl, finished second in the Heisman Trophy race and earned Big Ten Player of the Year, the Davey O'Brien Award, the Maxwell Award and first-team Consensus All-American honors. He was selected in the first round of the 1986 NFL Draft and played eight seasons with the Detroit Lions and Los Angeles Rams.

To register for the 2027 Momentum is Building Conference, visit

www.MomentumIsBuilding.com. ■





August Touchstone Energy Volunteer Challenge winner | Jason Glienke, board member, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, won this month's Volunteer Challenge. Congratulations Jason!

High temperatures, humidity lead to peak

In July, Corn Belt Power saw one of its highest summer peaks ever. On July 27 at 4:30 p.m., Corn Belt Power reached a peak demand of 346.319 MW, just shy of the cooperative's all-time recorded peak of 346.711 MW set in November 2009. However, the two figures are not directly comparable.

In 2009, Corn Belt Power calculated line losses at 6-percent, compared with just 0.75-percent in 2026. When adjusted to account for that difference, the July 2026 peak represents the highest demand in Corn Belt Power's history.

"The main drivers for the high peaks in July were ambient conditions, high temperature coupled with high humidity," said Michael Thatcher, vice president, power supply, Corn Belt Power. "We had minimal wind speeds that week and temperatures above 90-degrees, with heat indexes more than 110-degrees. Three consecutive days of hot,

"We had minimal wind speeds that week and temperatures above 90-degrees, with heat indexes more than 110-degrees. Three consecutive days of hot, humid weather is a formula for a high peak."

- Mike Thatcher, vice president, power supply, Corn Belt Power Cooperative

humid weather is a formula for a high peak."

The record-setting demand highlights the continued growth of Corn Belt Power's system and the importance of maintaining reliable generation and transmission resources during weather extremes. The July peak is a reminder of how quickly electricity demand can rise when prolonged heat and humidity settle across the region. ■

Corn Belt Power Cooperative **WattsWatt**

Watts Watt is published monthly for employees and associates of Corn Belt Power Cooperative, 1300 13th St. North, Humboldt, Iowa 50548-0508. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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