



Momentum is Building deemed big success

More than 200 building industry professionals and Iowa electric co-op staff attended the 2020 Momentum is Building conference, held Feb. 6-7 in West Des Moines.

Sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, the annual conference promotes residential energy efficiency, building concepts and provides valuable CEU training for electricians, plumbers and HVAC professionals. This year, 20 vendors and exhibitors attended the conference to share new trends and products related to residential energy efficiency. Attendees also learned about digital marketing, safety and other business related topics.

The conference also serves to educate the next generation of professionals as several construction students from Indian Hills Community College and Iowa Central Community College attended.

“This year’s conference was very well attended,” said Ryan Cornelius, vice president, corporate relations, Corn Belt Power. “We were thrilled to see the high turnout. It’s a good way for cooperative employees from across the state to meet with not only industry professionals but also the contractors that are doing work inside cooperative member-owner homes. The more we align, the better service we are all able to offer rural Iowans.”

Sandra Adomatis of Adomatis Appraisal Services stressed the importance of properly marketing energy efficient homes in her general session keynote to the group. “Promoting energy efficiency housing is a group effort that requires support from utilities, builders, lenders, appraisers and realtors,” she noted.



Building relationships

Above | Scott Siepker, “Iowa Nice Guy,” speaks to the crowd during his closing keynote address at Momentum Is Building in Des Moines, Feb 7. Siepker joined an impressive cast of speakers at this year’s conference that also included Sandra Adomatis of Adomatis Appraisal Services.

Looking at the Iowa housing industry as an industry insider, Adomatis saw several opportunities for improvement.

“We need resources in Iowa for people to look for and buy energy efficient homes. Consumers need help in finding what they’re looking for,” she noted.

Energy efficiency is becoming more of a priority and home buyers are willing to pay more up front to achieve long-term benefits.

“Energy efficient homes give us many valuable benefits like a healthier environment, lower operating costs and increased comfort. But when people are building a new home, they don’t know what they don’t know. They focus on granite countertops, but energy efficient upgrades

can also increase the value of a home while also saving the homeowners money in the long run. It really is up to us in the home building industry to educate homebuyers and present them with options and accurate information. We can build houses better and we need to tell people about it.”

“Iowa Nice Guy” Scott Siepker closed out the conference as the final keynote. Best known for his work as the Iowa Nice Guy, Scott Siepker is a versatile actor, writer, and producer of both stage and screen.

The annual conference is managed and organized by Iowa’s generation and transmission cooperatives, Corn Belt Power, Central Iowa Power Cooperative and Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative. ■



Above | Brian Gibson, left, chief system operator, explains the Corn Belt Power system map to Orientation Day attendees during a Jan. 30 control center tour in Humboldt.

New employees, directors learn about Corn Belt Power

Corn Belt Power welcomed more than 30 new directors and employees across two days at its Orientation Days event on Jan. 30-31.

Those present learned about Corn Belt Power's power supply, relationship with Basin Electric Power Cooperative, engineering and operations, corporate relations, finance and administration and business development.

Attendees also heard from Corn Belt

Power's information technology department and received a tour of the cooperative's server room and control center. During these tours, those in attendance saw firsthand how the control center works.

"A lot of times these new employees never get a chance to put a face with a name," said Brian Gibson, chief system operator, Corn Belt Power. "Our outage coordinators work with our member-

cooperatives on a daily basis. Anytime we can meet employees from those organizations, we want to take advantage of it."

The goal of Orientation Days is to provide new employees and directors basic information on Corn Belt Power and how its systems across all departments integrate.

"Being new to the cooperative system, Corn Belt's orientation provided me with more knowledge of how the system runs, how the day to day operation runs, as well as how the overall system runs," said Richard Hall, member services representative, Calhoun County REC. "I was able to meet many new faces I communicate with in my role as member services representative. It also showed me how important our members are to all of our cooperatives throughout the system."

Corn Belt Power hosts its orientation event once every two years. Typically, the event is held in January.

"By hosting the event, we're able to meet and interact with our new employees and directors from across the system," said Ken Kuyper, executive vice president, Corn Belt Power. "We're able to share a little bit about Corn Belt Power's overall operations. Those who come also learn about our long, impressive history and what it means to rural Iowans in our service territories." ■

Co-ops close on J&J Custom Meats loan

Corn Belt Power, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative and Midland Power Cooperative partnered together with Farmer's State Bank in Whittemore to loan funds to J&J Custom Meats, a new Whittemore meat locker.

The loan closing was held on Friday, January 24. Corn Belt and Midland each loaned \$150,000 and Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative loaned \$250,000. All loans came from the organizations' revolving loan funds. The funds were used to construct the new 4,000-square-foot facility and purchase of new equipment.

J&J Custom Meats is owned by Joe and JoAnn Harren and opened up in December 2019. They mainly do custom slaughter of beef, pork and deer and also sell meat through their front retail store. ■



Loan closing

Above | Corn Belt Power Cooperative, Midland Power Cooperative and Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative team up to loan funds to J&J Custom Meats. Pictured from left, Brittany Dickey, Corn Belt Power; Brian Kollasch, Farmers State Bank; Jed Skogerboe, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, Joe and JoAnn Harren, J&J Custom Meat owners; and Norm Fandel, Midland Power Cooperative.



Tyler Mortenson

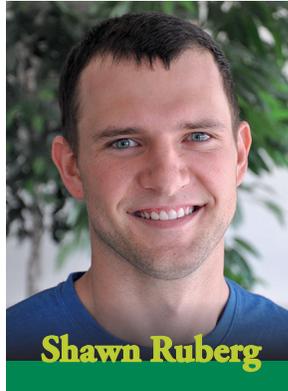
New control operator at Wisdom Station

Tyler Mortenson started his career at Corn Belt Power as a control operator at the Wisdom Station on February 5. Mortenson previously worked for Poet Ethanol in Emmetsburg as a shift supervisor for the past five years. He is well versed in safety and plant maintenance. Mortenson is a graduate of Emmetsburg High School and has a four-year-old daughter, Alaina. Please welcome Tyler to Corn Belt Power. ■

News in brief

Ruberg to metering department

Shawn Ruberg has accepted the meter technician position. Ruberg has been an apprentice electrician on the Humboldt electrical maintenance crew since starting in May of 2018. Ruberg will begin his new duties as of March 1. Congratulations, Shawn.



Shawn Ruberg

Corn Belt Power to hold annual meeting

“Forging Future Generations” is this year’s Corn Belt Power annual meeting theme.

The cooperative will meet on Wednesday, April 8 at the Starlite Best Western in Fort Dodge. Attendees will hear updates from the cooperative’s board of directors and executive vice president and general manager.

This year’s keynote speaker is retired Navy Seal Jason Redman.

Lieutenant Redman joined the Navy on September 11, 1992 and spent eight years as an enlisted SEAL. As an enlisted SEAL Redman completed three deployments throughout Central and South America and spent two years as a training instructor before being selected for the Seaman to Admiral Commissioning program in 2000.

He attended Old Dominion University graduating Summa Cum Laude in May 2004 completing his time with the Hampton Roads Naval ROTC as Student Battalion Commanding Officer before he was commissioned as a Naval SEAL Officer.

Over the next four years, Lieutenant Redman completed combat deployments in both Afghanistan and Iraq. On September 13, 2007, outside of Fallujah, Iraq, Lieutenant Redman’s Assault Team came under heavy machine gun and small arms fire and he was severely wounded in the ensuing firefight. While recovering at Bethesda Naval Medical Center, Redman authored and hung a bright orange sign on his door, which became a statement and symbol for wounded warriors everywhere.

Invitations will be sent later this month/early March.

**** An earlier annual meeting story had the date incorrect. This year’s annual meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 8.**



Jason Redman



Steve DePauw

Above | Steve DePauw, control operator, Wisdom Station, passed away Jan. 30. DePauw played the bugle at military funerals as well as participated in the American Legion flag detail and 21-gun salute.

DePauw passes away

We were saddened to learn of long-time control operator Steve DePauw’s passing. DePauw worked at Corn Belt Power for 13 years. He passed away on Thursday, January 30 at St. Luke Lutheran Home in Spencer.

DePauw was born on July 28, 1958 in Slayton, MN. He was raised and received his early education there, graduating from Slayton High School. Following graduation, he entered into the military on June 15, 1977, serving an 18-year career in the U.S. Army.

“Steve DePauw was one of those people that gets along with everyone,” said Patrick Conner, plant manager, Wisdom Station. “He was a people person. If you had a question about who someone in Spencer was, Steve was your go to guy. He seemed to know everyone. He was active in the American Legion and always kept an eye on the condition of our flag at Wisdom. His positive attitude during his battle with cancer and his faith were inspiring.”

DePauw is survived by his wife: Rebecca of Spencer, IA; six children, six grandchildren, one great grandchild, two sisters, three brothers and several other relatives and friends. ■

Corn Belt Power office employees share the cooperative's training room as a makeshift office location while contractors renovate the lobby and install new flooring. Renovation is slated for spring completion.

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February Touchstone Energy Volunteer Challenge winner | Mike Wiegmann, lineman, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, donated his \$100 prize drawing to the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation.



Mike Devers

The power of human connections

Mike Devers, journeyman field technician, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, demonstrates the Touchstone Energy value of commitment to community by volunteering as a wrestling coach.

Devers helps coach the Humboldt Wildcat Wrestling Club and his two sons' teams. The club will be wrestling at the state competition in early March.

Devers says he likes to help the kids improve at an activity they love to take part in.

Corn Belt Power conducts annual audit

Each year Corn Belt Power completes a financial audit. Auditors from KPMG of Omaha, Neb. conducted the audit during the first two weeks of February. Each year's audit is just one facet of maintaining the cooperative's strong financial condition and "A" ratings with its ratings agencies. Full audited financials will be available in Corn Belt Power's annual report at its April 8 annual meeting.

KPMG audit associates pictured from left, Jenna Garrett and Abbie Meyer.



Corn Belt Power Cooperative

Watts Watt

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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