



Corn Belt Power holds annual meeting in Fort Dodge

For the first time in two years, Corn Belt Power held an in-person annual meeting April 6 at the Starlite Best Western in Fort Dodge. Corn Belt Power’s annual meeting theme “Powerfully Present,” was appropriate, as more than 110 attended the event.

“It was great to get back to an event where we could all come together to do the business of Corn Belt Power,” said Ken Kuyper, executive vice president and general manager. “Annual meetings are an important part of the cooperative process and democratic member control.”

Attendees began the day by hearing from Jerry Beck, secretary, Corn Belt Power Cooperative board. Beck highlighted board action throughout the year.

Larry Rohach, treasurer, Corn Belt Power Cooperative board and Karen Berte, senior vice president, finance and administration, then presented the cooperative’s financials. Berte highlighted some of the larger projects Corn Belt Power began and/or completed in 2021. Those included microwave upgrades, line rebuilds, switch upgrades and the cooperative’s battery project. Berte reported Corn Belt Power returned more than \$8.3 million to member-cooperatives over the last year. Following the financial update, Todd Telesz, CEO and general manager, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, presented the annual Basin Electric report.

In his report, David Onken, board president, noted that Corn Belt Power will celebrate its 75th anniversary this year.

“This year, Corn Belt Power Cooperative will celebrate the 75th anniversary of filing the organization’s articles of incorporation,”



Board of Directors

Above | Corn Belt Power Cooperative’s board of directors convene after the co-op’s annual meeting April 6 in Fort Dodge. Photographed back row, from left are Ted Hall, Prairie Energy Cooperative; Rick Thompson, Midland Power Cooperative; Dale Schaefer, vice president, Franklin REC; LaVerne Arndt, Calhoun County ECA; Larry Rohach, Treasurer, Grundy County REC; front row, from left, Brad Honold, North Iowa Municipal Electric Cooperative Association; Gary Poppe, assistant secretary/treasurer, Butler County REC; David Onken, president, Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative; and Jerry Beck, secretary, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative.

he said. “Just like our founders did almost 75 years ago on August 28, 1947, our job is to lay the groundwork for future generations of cooperative members. At the same time, we must also be present for today’s membership.”

Kuyper wrapped up the business portion of the meeting with a speech on Corn Belt Power’s 2021 achievements, the cooperative difference and how the cooperative is positioned well for the future.

“At the end of the day, we all have one goal,” he said. “Enhance quality of life by providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity. We will hold fast to our cooperative structure and our mission to serve those who own our cooperative.”

During the meeting, the following

directors were reelected for three-year terms: LaVerne Arndt, Calhoun County ECA, Dale Schaefer, Franklin REC, Jerry Beck, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, David Onken, Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative, and Gary Poppe, Butler County REC. The membership elected Rick Thompson, Midland Power, for his first three-year term. He replaces Charlie Gilbert who retired from board service.

Following the meeting, during the annual reorganization meeting, officers were elected as follows:

- David Onken, President
- Dale Schaefer, Vice President
- Jerry Beck, Secretary
- Larry Rohach, Treasurer
- Gary Poppe, Asst. Secretary/Treasurer



Above | Corn Belt Power Cooperative and Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative communicators and member service representatives celebrate joining the cooperative-led CHARGE network April 12 in Des Moines. CHARGE is a program driving electric vehicles forward in Iowa and states across the country.

Corn Belt Power, NIPCO drive EV programs forward

Nearly 50 cooperative staff members from Corn Belt Power Cooperative and Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative gathered to learn more about the programs and benefits of affiliation with the CHARGE™ network program. The joint informational meeting was conducted in Des Moines on April 12. It provided a forum to learn more about the electric vehicle (EV) charging program and to ask questions related to affiliation with the cooperative-led network.

Representatives from CHARGE provided information on marketing assets and programs and how affiliates may access them. Dairyland Power Cooperative's

Communications & Marketing Specialist Dana Bolwerk and Innovation & Efficient Electrification Manager Jeff Springer are contacts for cooperative affiliates and the CHARGE program. Their presentations covered valuable information regarding available marketing resources and an overview of EV residential and commercial charger options, including best practices for developing a visible network of cooperative-powered public-facing chargers throughout the upper Midwest.

John Diem, utility sales and account manager, ZEF Energy provided an overview of ZEF Energy chargers and the systems

that support them. ZEF Energy is a charging system vendor for the CHARGE network. ZEF Energy products have the ability to integrate with cooperative load management programs and billing systems.

CHARGE was created in 2020 by 31 electric cooperatives to help educate and raise awareness of EVs among member consumers and those who sell and support EVs. "CHARGE affiliates discuss best practices with each other," explains Jeff Springer.

"There is no cookie-cutter solution for an EV program. Conducting regular meetings such as this one helps co-ops understand what works at other cooperatives and to create a program that best fits their members' needs."

Corn Belt Power Cooperative and NIPCO hope to continue informational meetings on an annual basis or as need necessitates. ■



Springer talks chargers

Above | Jeff Springer, innovation and efficient electrification manager, Dairyland Power Cooperative shares level 2 residential electric vehicle chargers.

Substations and switching stations dedicated in Butler County REC service territory

Corn Belt Power Cooperative and Butler County REC honored three long-time cooperative leaders at the Waverly Area Veterans Post April 11.

Donald Feldman, former Corn Belt Power board president, now has a switching station in his name. Feldman dedicated 29 years-of-service to Corn Belt Power's board of directors.

"Don left behind a great legacy, working with industry partners to further enhance the quality of life of those in Corn Belt Power's footprint and beyond," said Ken Kuyper, executive vice president and general manager, Corn Belt Power. "Don is just the kind of person who makes everyone around him better. And that is a true testament to his leadership

abilities. He was supportive of our employees and his fellow directors and always a positive influence."

Butler County REC chose to name two new substations after Robert Bauman, former CEO/general manager, and Rick Whalen, former economic development director. Bauman worked at the cooperative for 41 years, while Whalen spent 25 years helping to develop the rural economy in Butler County REC's footprint.

The substations and switching station are located inside the Butler County Logistics Park. The new infrastructure serves load which includes Trinity Rail Maintenance's expansion and the new Shell Rock Soy Processing facility. ■



Stations dedicated

Above | Butler County REC and Corn Belt Power Cooperative honored from left, Bob Bauman, Don Feldman and Rick Whalen for their years of dedicated cooperative service with substations and switching station namesake dedications April 11 in Waverly.



Sam Jacobson

New right-of-way technician starts

Sam Jacobson began his Corn Belt Power Cooperative career April 5 as a right-of-way technician. Sam has a bachelor's degree in agricultural systems technology from Iowa State University. He worked for KC Nielsen for the past 8 years. Sam and his wife, Alannah, have two children and reside in Ottosen. Welcome, Sam!

News in brief

Gilbert retires, cooperative welcomes Thompson

Corn Belt Power Cooperative honored Charlie Gilbert, longtime Midland Power Cooperative and Corn Belt Power Cooperative director, following its April 6 annual meeting.

Gilbert served as a Corn Belt Power director for 22 years. In addition, he served as the cooperative's Basin Electric board representative since 2009.



Gilbert retires from board

"He's been steadfast in his support for not only Midland Power and Corn Belt Power, but also spent countless hours representing Corn Belt Power as a Basin board director," said Ken Kuyper, executive vice president and general manager, Corn Belt Power Cooperative. "I want to thank Charlie for his years of service and wish him the best in his retirement."

Corn Belt Power's membership elected Rick Thompson to replace Gilbert on the co-op's board of directors. Thompson lives in LuVerne in Kossuth County. He farms soybeans and corn and is a hog and cow-calf producer. He was elected to Midland Power Cooperative's board of directors in 2008.

Annual meeting season hits fever pitch in April

Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative: More than 200 members attended Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative's annual meeting Saturday, April 9 at the Clay Regional Events Center in Spencer.

During the meeting, 17 scholarships were awarded to local students, totaling \$11,250. Members heard reports from Jerry Beck, board chair, Dan Winterhof, treasurer, Janet Deim, Operation Round Up, and Tim McCollough, president/CEO. Jason Schechterle provided the keynote address.

Members elected Marc Rush, Dan Winterhof, Chad Boysen and Craig Deim to three-year terms. As an attendance prize, members received a Pyrex bowl.

Franklin REC: Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative held its annual meeting on Tuesday, April 5 at the Franklin County Fairgrounds. Members were mailed meal vouchers and could use those at either a drive-thru pickup location or the traditional annual meeting dinner.

During the meeting Dave Keninger, John Snyder and Gordon Greimann were each reelected for three-year terms.

Prior to this year's annual meeting, the cooperative produced a year-in-review video for members who weren't able to attend:

bit.ly/FranklinREC2022AnnualMeeting



Redman keynotes meeting

Above | Jason Redman, author and speaker, points to where he was shot twice in his arm while sustaining a bullet to his skull under active fire in Iraq. Redman keynoted Corn Belt Power Cooperative's April 6 annual meeting.

Redman delivers riveting Corn Belt Power annual meeting keynote

"Get off the X" was the message to end this year's Corn Belt Power annual meeting. Author, speaker and former Navy SEAL Jason Redman provided the keynote address that focused on overcoming life's worst days.

Redman spent 11 years as an enlisted Navy SEAL working as a navigator, intelligence specialist, communicator, and SEAL instructor for marksmanship, reconnaissance and survival, completing multiple platoons and deployments to Central and South America. Jason was commissioned as a SEAL officer in 2004 and spent ten years as a SEAL Officer leading SEAL teams in combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan as an Assault Force Commander, Mobility Force Commander and Sensitive Site Exploitation and Analysis leader.

After being wounded in Iraq, Redman authored and hung a bright orange sign on his door, which is now known as the "Sign on the Door" which became a statement and symbol for wounded warriors and overcomers everywhere.

At Corn Belt Power's annual meeting, Redman spoke on leadership, a relentless belief in mission and overcoming obstacles. He highlighted the need to shift perspective from adversity and claiming a sense of personal power. Redman urged attendees to maintain hope even in the most difficult of circumstances, that there is a solution if you're willing to find it. ■



April Touchstone Energy Volunteer Challenge winner | Keaton Hildreth, chief executive officer, Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Association, donated his \$100 prize drawing to the South Central Calhoun Elementary Career Day.



Sean Connor

Connor awarded scholarship

Corn Belt Power Cooperative congratulates Sean Connor on earning a \$1,000 scholarship from Electric Cooperative. Each year Basin Electric Cooperative gives 20 scholarships to employee-dependents across its system. Sean is the son of Kristy and Patrick Connor, plant manager, Wisdom Station, Corn Belt Power Cooperative. Sean is a senior at Spencer High School. He's involved in choir, band, speech and drama, tennis, archery, student council, Boys State, Hope Church Youth Group and 4-H. Sean plans to attend South Dakota State University to pursue a double major in business economics and agriculture business. Congratulations, Sean!



April storm breaks 24 poles

Above | Tornadoic activity and strong winds broke 24 poles in the Corn Belt Power Cooperative service territory the evening of April 12. The heaviest damage occurred on the Renwick Tap, impacting Boone Valley Electric Cooperative. Iowa Electric Cooperative Association's statewide outage map recorded 2,781 outages at the April 13 1 a.m. peak. The Iowa distribution cooperatives most impacted included Heartland Power, Midland Power Cooperative, MiEnergy Cooperative and Prairie Energy Cooperative. Co-ops handled outages locally with no mutual aid requested. Most outages were restored by 6 a.m., April 13.

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