

CORN BELT POWER LINEMAN — RETURNS FROM ACTIVE DUTY —

Howard Henkelvig admits he's not a huge fan of airplanes. There's a big difference between being 30 feet in the air in a bucket truck and descending from 30,000 feet into a war zone that's home to America's longest war. As his Iowa National Guard unit landed in Afghanistan, he realized his next eight months would be a little different.

"I realized we were finally here," he said. "There's no going back. We weren't really sure what to expect. But, we were there."

After spending eight months at Camp Dwyer in the Helmand River Valley in Afghanistan, Corn Belt Power happily welcomed Henkelvig back to the Emmetsburg transmission crew in October.

Henkelvig is a Sergeant in the 1-194th Field Artillery Unit in the U.S. Army National Guard. His active duty rotation with the Iowa National Guard was responsible for counter artillery.

"Our job in Afghanistan dealt with the C-RAM, which stands for counter rocket, artillery, mortar," he said.

During deployment he served as Battle Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) in the Engagement Operations Cell (EOC) and as a BCP Section Leader.

"As a Battle NCO, I had to make sure all my soldiers were doing their jobs and that equipment maintenance was done daily and weekly."

When the Battle Captain was away, Henkelvig stepped in as the engagement authority.

"As section leader, I made sure the



A lineman and a soldier

Above left | Howard Henkelvig, journeyman lineman, returned to work at Corn Belt Power in October after serving eight months of active duty at Camp Dwyer in Afghanistan. Henkelvig is a sergeant in the 1-194th Field Artillery Unit in the U.S. Army National Guard. **Above right** | Henkelvig's unit views the counter rocket, artillery, mortar (C-RAM) for the first time on deployment.

overall health and well-being of the soldiers was good and that they carried themselves to Army standards," he said. "I performed monthly evaluations on overall performance to help them become better future leaders."

Prior to his time in Afghanistan, Henkelvig's unit spent three months in classes, eight to ten hours a day, in Oklahoma. There, the group learned the workings of the C-RAM unit.

"During that time, we didn't have a whole lot of freedom to move around due to COVID," he said.

The simplicity of his time in Oklahoma proved to be a sign of things to come.

"Once we were in Afghanistan, we had simple lifestyles," he said. "We worked seven days a week. I would get up at 6 a.m. to get ready for my shift. We would perform our normal duties until 3 p.m. and head back to our rooms."

Henkelvig says the work schedule helped time pass quickly.

"It would feel like a week went by and it'd been a month."

As for free time, *continued on page 4*



Above | Paul Gardner, Iowa State Trooper, educates Corn Belt Power employees about the importance of defensive driving during the first ever all-employee training day, Oct. 14. Employees listened to updates from each co-op department and learned from guest speakers about NRECA benefits and the Employee Assistance Program. Humorist T. Marni Vos finished the day sharing about the importance that humor and laughter play in every day life.

All-employee day a success

For the first time ever, Corn Belt Power held an all-employee training day on Thursday, October 14.

The event was put on by Corn Belt Power's newly formed Employee Engagement Committee. The committee is tasked with bringing employees across all departments and

locations together to improve communication and information sharing, enhance the cooperative's values, safety and workplace culture.

During the event employees heard department updates focused on current news and information. Guest speakers also

presented to Corn Belt Power employees. Trooper Paul Gardner from the Iowa State Patrol gave a presentation on defensive and distracted driving. T. Marni Vos, humorist and speaker, gave a talk on improving workplace culture. During the presentation, Vos helped employees to rethink their values, attitudes, ethics and sense of humor. These attributes also determine the quality of our leadership, management, and the health, well-being and happiness of both our work environment and personal lives.

NRECA and the Employee Assistance Program also provided service updates during the event. ■



Employee networking

Above | Ice breaker exercises and bingo engage and invite cooperative-wide networking in between learning sessions throughout the day.

Corn Belt Power hosts communicator and member service retreat

On October 5, following a year hiatus, Corn Belt Power held its annual communicator and energy advisor retreat.

In keeping with the cooperative principle of education, training and information, more than Corn Belt Power member-cooperative employees came together for the event.

Eddie McKnight, longtime cooperative employee and owner of McKnight and Associates, gave the keynote session. McKnight focused on the most frequently asked questions from cooperative member-owners. He provided the group with current, real-world scenarios and information. McKnight also spent the first session providing energy auditing training for energy advisors.

Inside Information gave a presentation to the joint group focused on surveying and member communication.

The communicator group heard from Bucket Media, Donnelle Eller of the

Des Moines Register and Ann Thelen of Thelen Public Relations.

Corn Belt Power hosted the event at

the Hilton Rewind Hotel in West Des Moines, just ahead of the annual IAEC Service Excellence Conference. ■



Retreat attendees hear from Inside Information

Above | Julie Crook, chief services officer, Inside Information, presents to cooperative communicators and member service representatives about the process behind using data for strategic cooperative communications.



Brittany Dickey

Long-time development finance director promoted

Brittany Dickey has been promoted to manager, business development, Corn Belt Power. She will work closely with Jim Vermeer, vice president, business development, prior to his December retirement. Brittany has been the development finance director in the business development department since 2007. Congratulations, Brittany!

News in brief

Momentum is Building set for February 2022

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa are happy to announce Momentum is Building 2022 will be Feb. 3 and 4 at Prairie Meadows Conference Center in Altoona. MIB is an annual conference to promote energy efficiency, gain better building skills and tips of the trade, network with exhibitors and attendees, learn new ways to improve business, and earn CEUs. CEUs are available for plumbing, HVAC, electrical, mechanical and safety.



Registration for the event begins on Nov. 1 at www.momentumisbuilding.com.

Iowa Cooperatives make trek to Washington, D.C.

After a year and a half of virtual Washington, D.C. advocacy meetings, nearly two dozen representatives from Iowa's electric cooperatives participated in an in-person voyage to Capitol Hill Sept. 27-29.

Even with meeting limitations and federal building restrictions, the Iowa electric cooperative advocacy group still engaged with Congressional delegates, federally elected lawmakers and their staff.

The group discussed a variety of issues with policymakers including: direct pay for cooperative-owned renewable generation; Rural Utility Service loan refinancing; ethanol and electric vehicle support; and the ongoing reconciliation and federal budget debate.

Co-op representatives asked Iowa lawmakers to include electric cooperative key priorities while also considering the cooperative perspective on clean energy and carbon reduction provisions.

Lawmakers were asked to include realistic and reasonable timelines in any clean energy program, while also not hindering electric cooperatives' ability to provide affordable and reliable electricity to member-owners.



Keeping lines of communication open in D.C.

Above | Iowa electric cooperative representatives engage with Iowa delegates on issues ranging from RUS loan refinancing to ethanol and electric vehicle support during the Fall Fly-In, Sept. 27-29.



Staying Cyber Safe

Above | On Oct. 15, Scott Meinecke, far right, director of safety, Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, facilitated a tabletop exercise regarding a cyber-attack. The tabletop exercise is part of the Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities Program (RC3).

Corn Belt Power prepares for cyber event with tabletop exercise

Corn Belt Power facilitated its first-ever tabletop exercise dedicated to cybersecurity Friday, Oct. 15.

Scott Meinecke, director of safety, Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives (IAEC), led the event that was part of the Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities Program (RC3). Corn Belt Power previously took part in different assessments as it relates to the organization's preparedness and information technology infrastructure. Staff across all departments at Corn Belt Power participated in the tabletop exercise.

RC3 began in 2016 with a \$7.5 million grant from the Department of Energy to develop cybersecurity resources for small utilities. Corn Belt Power and other Iowa cooperatives are working with IAEC to complete the program.

"The tabletop exercise was beneficial," said Ken Kuyper, executive vice president, Corn Belt Power. "As an organization, we are better prepared for any potential nefarious actors because of the program as a whole. We learned a lot and are implementing what we learned to enhance our cyber defense apparatus." ■



October Touchstone Energy Volunteer Challenge winner | Kay Dahl, operations assistant, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, donated her \$100 prize drawing to the Calvary Gospel Assembly in Estherville. Congratulations, Kay!

Henkelvig returns from active duty

continued from page 1 Henkelvig says it's not much different from home.

"We'd hang out as guys, read or watch some Netflix," he said. "Friday nights we'd get our crew together and play cards or board games which helped keep soldiers' minds off home or staying in their room with no interaction."

As their time in Afghanistan gradually came to an end, Henkelvig's unit began to realize they were going to be some of the last U.S. military personnel to leave Afghanistan.

"If you think about it, we were making history," he said. "The U.S. had been there for 20 years."

Following Henkelvig's unit's exit from Camp Dwyer – a camp that was built in 2007 - the base was shut down.

Henkelvig is in his 11th year in the Iowa National Guard with his service ending in January 2023.

"The Army as a whole has helped me become a better leader and teacher," he says. "I hope to apply what I learned to my job here at Corn Belt Power." ■



U.S. Army, 1-194th field artillery unit

Above | Following Henkelvig's unit's departure, Camp Dwyer was shut down as the United States military left Afghanistan.

Corn Belt Power Cooperative Watts Watt

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