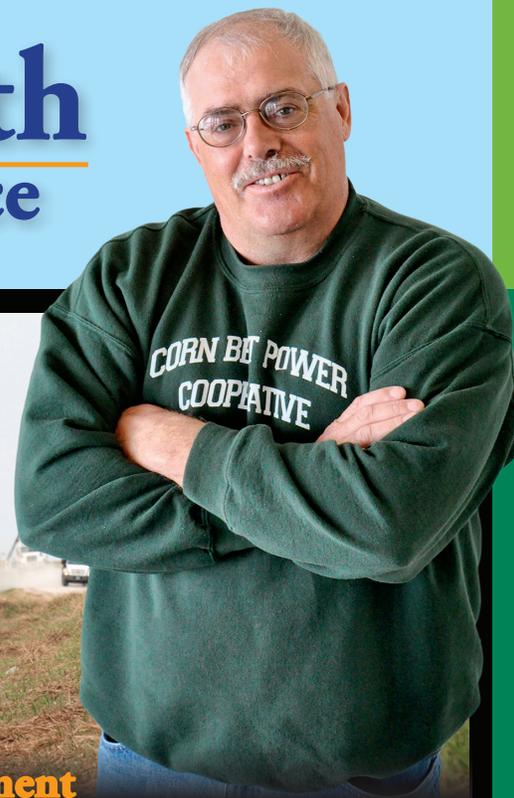




# Evans retires with nearly 34 years of service



**D**enny Evans remembers one conversation clearly from back in the summer of 1988. It was a discussion he had with his brother-in-law, a Corn Belt Power Cooperative employee at the old Humboldt generation station. His brother-in-law informed Evans that a job had opened up at Wisdom Station, the cooperative's generation facility in Spencer.

That was all Evans needed to hear. He knew Corn Belt Power was where he wanted to work and for the next 34 years, he did.

Evans began his career at Wisdom Station on August 22, 1988 as a general plant worker, however that is far from the only job he would hold at Corn Belt Power.

"I remember my first day" he says. "Just seeing all that huge equipment. I thought, 'what the heck am I doing here?' There were all these tubes, pipes and equipment."

For the next two-and-a-half years, Evans worked as a general plant worker and control operator. It wasn't until a crew from Corn Belt Power's Emmetsburg location came that he thought he might try something else.

"The Emmetsburg crew brought their basket truck over to put some screws in the siding of the main building at Wisdom," he said. "They asked me to go up with them and I did. Being in that bucket, I really decided that's what I wanted to do."

For the next 17 years, Evans worked on linecrews at Emmetsburg and Humboldt.

After more than three decades, Evans has seen his fair share of change.

"We have a lot better equipment today," he says. "When I started, we didn't have a skid loader or a rock truck. It makes for less manual labor and we're able to complete



**A well-deserved retirement**

**Above** | Denny Evans, foreman, field engineering, retired in February with nearly 34 years of service at Corn Belt Power Cooperative. During his career, Evans worked at Wisdom Station and on the Emmetsburg and Humboldt line crews, before finally settling in field engineering.

jobs faster and safer."

Evans retired in February of this year as Corn Belt Power's field engineering foreman. His retirement comes just after the December storms led to prolonged outages. Evans gets a laugh at how he started his lineman career and ended his Corn Belt Power career.

"I kind of started with a storm and ended with a storm," he said. "The 1991 ice storm was my first major storm. We patrolled line for two days and you couldn't even see the line. Then, this past December we had the severe storms. It's just kind of crazy."

Looking back, Evans says he wouldn't have it any other way. He says a job at an electric cooperative is a great opportunity.

"It's an excellent career," he said. "I have a friend who has a son going through

line school now and I'm excited for him. I remember being out on those storms when the countryside was black. We would close the switch in, and it would light up again. That was all worth it for me."

For now, Evans says he looks forward to more hunting, gardening and watching St. Louis Cardinal baseball. But, he won't be too far from Corn Belt Power. He now inspects line with Stanley Consultants.

As for words of advice for current and future electric cooperative employees, Evans is quick to reply. Safety. After all, you don't make it three plus decades in the electric utility industry without doing it safely.

"I preach safety to some of these young guys," he said. "Safety is better now than it was a long time ago, but you still have to be aware of it. If you see something, say something." ■



**Above** | Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Association representatives from left, Steve Boedecker, Keaton Hildreth and Jim Miller, far right, speak with Mike Sexton, state representative, second from right, at the annual REC Day on the Hill event. Legislators mingled with cooperative employees throughout the day and enjoyed a dessert social to cap off the event.

## Corn Belt Power and member co-ops advocate for REC issues at state capitol

More than 200 rural electric cooperative employees and directors, representing 36 co-ops, traveled to the Iowa State Capitol Tuesday, March 22 to advocate on behalf of their member-owners during the annual REC Day on the Hill event.

“This annual visit to the Iowa Capitol is an excellent opportunity to personally visit with our elected officials and provide them with a co-op perspective on issues that are important to rural Iowa and rural economic development,” said Ryan Cornelius, vice president, corporate relations, Corn Belt Power.

Co-op representatives advocated on behalf

of cooperative members on topics ranging from rural tax equity to energy efficiency and economic development.

“This event gives us the opportunity to meet face-to-face with many of our elected officials,” said Cornelius. “We want our local policy makers to know that we’re dedicated to economic development, an all-of-the-above energy approach, energy efficiency and many other issues that enhance the life of rural Iowans. By working together, we can achieve our goals.”

Specifically, advocates talked to legislators about a digital sales tax inequity that Iowa’s electric cooperatives hope to resolve before

the 2022 Legislative Session ends. The inequity stems from an unintentional error made in 2018 legislation that requires Iowa electric co-ops to pay a new 6% sales and use tax on digital goods and services, even though investor-owned utilities are exempt. Since the law went into effect in 2019, the IAEC estimates that Iowa electric co-ops have collectively paid \$300,000 or more annually in taxes, resulting in roughly \$1 million of unintentional taxes paid by rural Iowans through their energy bills.

Advocates also educated legislators on the benefits of the cooperative business model, including local ownership and democratic governance.

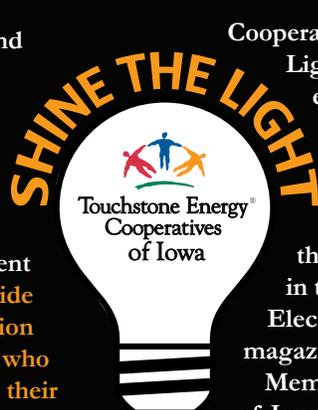
The electric co-op advocates first gathered for a briefing on state legislative issues, then met with their local elected officials during a dessert social on the first-floor rotunda of the Capitol. Legislators and visitors were able to view dozens of booths which were on display around the rotunda, sharing various ways Iowa’s electric co-ops work to keep electricity safe, reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible for the member-owners they serve.

Legislative and grassroots activities are in full swing. Corn Belt Power representatives will be attending the NRECA Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. in May. There, cooperative managers, directors and employees will meet with federal legislators. For more on that event, see an upcoming issue of this newsletter. ■

## Shine the Light returns for second year

Corn Belt Power and its member cooperatives are pleased to announce details for the second annual Shine the Light contest, which celebrates our cooperative commitment to community. The statewide contest will award a donation of \$2,000 to three winners who make a positive impact on their community. Donations will be given to the winners local charity or community organization of choice.

Sponsored by the Touchstone Energy



Cooperatives of Iowa, the Shine the Light contest will accept online entries during the month of June with winners announced in September. In addition to receiving a \$2,000 donation for their charity or nonprofit, the winners will also be featured in the September issue of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine.

Member-consumers and employees of Iowa’s electric cooperatives are eligible to nominate local volunteers. If you receive electricity from an Iowa electric cooperative, you’re a co-op

member-consumer and invited to nominate someone who is making a positive impact in the community. The volunteer being nominated does not need to be a co-op member-consumer. Minors may be nominated with consent from their parents or legal guardians.

Go to [www.IowaShineTheLight.com](http://www.IowaShineTheLight.com) from June 1-30 to make a nomination and to review the contest rules. Nominators will need to provide contact information and answer this question in 500 words or less: How has your nominee made a positive difference in the community and why do they deserve to be recognized? ■



Heather Kennebeck

## Kennebeck to receive electric co-op scholarship

Congratulations are in order for Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative member Heather Kennebeck. She has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship from Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Corn Belt Power Cooperative.

Kennebeck, a Carroll High School senior, plans to attend the University of Iowa and major in speech and hearing science. She holds a 4.0 grade point average.

“After completing my undergraduate degree, I will enroll in a graduate program either at the University of Iowa or the University of Nebraska-Omaha,” Kennebeck wrote in her application. “I have always loved working with kids and have spent some time shadowing this career. I am confident that this will be the right fit for me.”

Kennebeck is involved in various activities at her high school including volleyball, track and field, Kids Into Not Smoking, Silver Cord and National Honors Society. Congratulations, Heather.

# News in brief

### Des Moines Register features Boone Valley Electric Cooperative

The Des Moines Register recently featured two organizations in Corn Belt Power’s footprint and what they do to enhance the quality of life for members in their service territory.

Boone Valley Electric Cooperative and Pleasant Hill Community Line are the two smallest electric cooperatives in Iowa. The feature article delved into how each organization keeps cost low and how their small staffs work to keep the lights on.

“Boone Valley’s Curtis Meinke fills several roles at the cooperative in rural Humboldt County, about 40 miles north of the Pleasant Hill cooperative’s service area. Meinke and his wife, Karla, read meters in 20-below-zero snowstorms and 100-degree heat. They’ve fielded outage calls during a funeral and while on vacation and occasionally get angry stares from unhappy customers at the grocery store,” the article read.

Boone Valley Electric Cooperative, Corn Belt Power’s smallest at just around 130 members, became the first cooperative in Iowa to receive funds under the Rural Electrification Act.

You can read the full March 14 article in the Des Moines Register.

### Boone Valley Electric Cooperative holds annual meeting

More than 30 members of Boone Valley Electric Cooperative attended the organization’s annual meeting on Saturday, March 19.

Saturday marked the first time since 2019 that Boone Valley was able to host an annual meeting. Attendees enjoyed a lunch and heard a report from Curtis Meinke, BVEC manager. Attendees also heard from Marion Denger, NRECA and Prairie Energy board member; Ryan Cornelius, vice president, corporate relations, Corn Belt Power; and Steve Hutchinson, TP Anderson and Company.



Boone Valley Electric Cooperative annual meeting

You can take action against human trafficking.

Join Iowa Businesses Against Human Trafficking.



A Program by the Iowa Secretary of State

## Corn Belt Power joins statewide Iowa Businesses Against Trafficking Initiative

Corn Belt Power is pleased to announce it has joined a statewide coalition to end human trafficking in Iowa. The Iowa Secretary of State’s office launched the Iowa Businesses Against Trafficking (IBAT) initiative in January 2022, with the goal to have Iowa’s business community raise awareness and help prevent human trafficking.

IBAT membership is open to any business or nonprofit organization that operates in the State of Iowa and shares a commitment to taking steps to promote awareness of human trafficking and the Iowa Safe at Home program. Safe at Home is an address confidentiality program for survivors of human trafficking and other violent crimes.

Businesses that join IBAT *Continued on page 4...*

For the first time in more than two years electric cooperative employees and directors descended on the Iowa State capitol for REC Day on the Hill March 22. Attendees spoke to legislators on various topics including rural tax equity. See the story on page 2 for more.

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**February Touchstone Energy Volunteer Challenge winner | Dave Grothaus**, lead lineman, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, donated his \$100 prize drawing to the Pocahontas County Shooting Sports.



**Sam Moore**

## The power of human connections

Sam Moore, accountant, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, demonstrates the Touchstone Energy value of commitment to community volunteering at the annual Clarion Ruritan Stag Night. Moore is a five-year Ruritan member who hosted a game table and dealt cards March 18 during this chapter's annual fundraiser. He says the majority of this year's fundraiser goes to support renovating the Clarion Kids Korner Daycare Center.

The name "Ruritan" is a combination of Latin words for open country (ruri) and small town (tan) interpreted as pertaining to rural and small town life. The Ruritans are a national civic service organization that donates time and money to various community betterment projects.

## Corn Belt Power helps battle human trafficking

Continued from page 3 are asked to complete two tasks each year: "Learn Something," and "Do Something." Businesses will commit to "Learn Something" by educating employees, customers and industry partners on the signs and impact of human trafficking in Iowa. Businesses can "Do Something" by empowering more people to take action to prevent human trafficking in Iowa.

"IBAT is a noteworthy cause," said Ken Kuyper, executive vice president and general manager, Corn Belt Power. "We realize that this is a problem across our country, not just in urban areas but also right here in Iowa. We want to be part of the solution, ending human trafficking once and for all, and help promote awareness across our service territory." ■

## 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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