



Celebrating 75 years of empowering rural Iowa communities

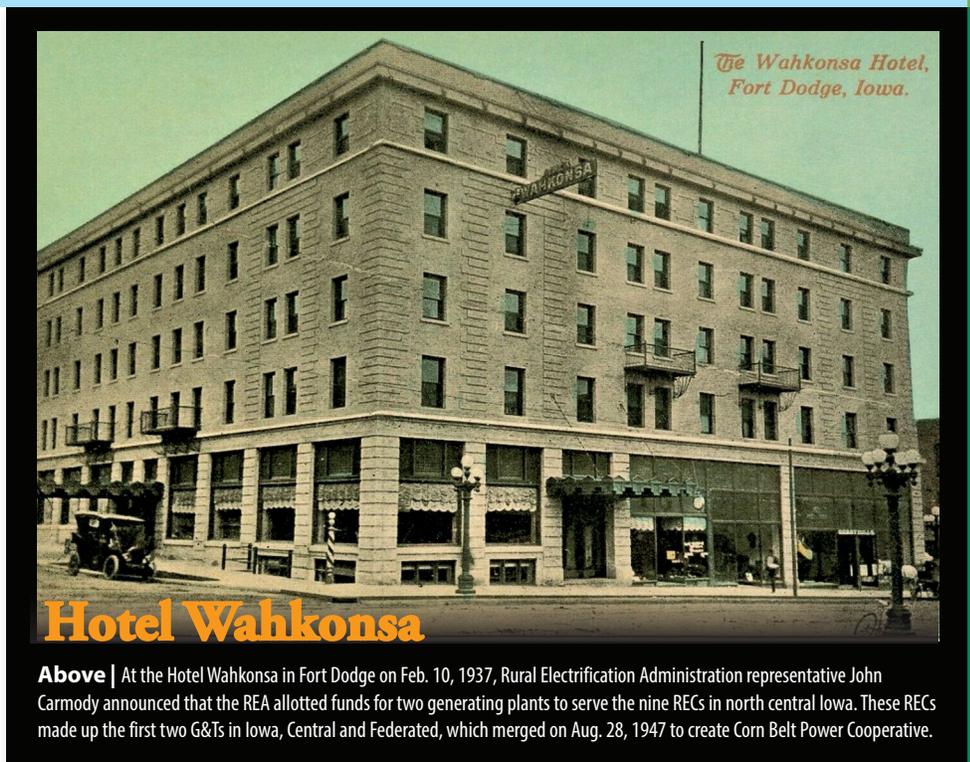
On August 28, Corn Belt Power Cooperative will celebrate the 75th anniversary of its articles of incorporation. This month and in coming months we will be looking back at Corn Belt Power's history.

At the Hotel Waukansa in Fort Dodge on Feb. 10, 1937, Rural Electrification Administration representative John Carmody announced that the REA had allotted funds for two generating plants to serve the nine RECs in north central Iowa.

With Carmody's announcement, two generation and transmission cooperatives were the first in the nation to receive REA funds for electric generation. Central Electric Federated Cooperative Association — more commonly called Central — was formed by the partnership of four western cooperatives that decided to locate their headquarters and generating plant at Pocahontas. Those co-ops were Calhoun County Electrical Cooperative Association, Pocahontas REC, Humboldt County REC and Buena Vista County REC. Sac County REC joined Central in 1939.

The five cooperatives from the eastern area formed Federated Cooperative Power Association — known as Federated — with its generating plant near Hampton. It was made up of Hardin County REC, Franklin REC, Butler County REC, Grundy County REC and Wright County REC. Hancock County REC became a member in November of 1937.

Next, a steam-powered generating plant needed to be built. A location on the banks of the Des Moines River three and a half miles south of Humboldt seemed a perfect choice. In October of 1948, construction of Humboldt Station began, and the plant



came online in 1950.

While Corn Belt's capacity was growing, so was its membership. On Jan. 10, 1950, D.E.K. Rural Electric Cooperative joined Corn Belt Power.

A few months later, Boone Valley Electric Cooperative, Iowa's first REA-financed distribution cooperative, was granted membership.

Changes were coming fast and furious in 1954. In June, Corn Belt's board decided to build a \$7 million plant in northwestern Iowa near Spencer. The plant was named in tribute to the late Earl F. Wisdom, Corn Belt Power's long-time attorney. Wisdom Station came online in 1960.

Corn Belt Power's office facilities also

grew. On March 28, 1958, groundbreaking took place for the headquarters building just north of the Humboldt County REC.

Glidden REC, which had been purchasing power from Corn Belt for more than seven years, officially became a Corn Belt Power member on Jan. 1, 1961.

As our first 75 years come to a close, Corn Belt Power Cooperative stands strong as a power supplier and committed partner to more than 34,000 homes, farms and industries plus 20,000 municipal customers. This achievement can be attributed to individuals with far-reaching vision who created the cooperative 75 years ago and to the dedicated people since that time who have worked to make it strong. ■



Above | Cody Montgomery, control operator, Corn Belt Power, monitors performance of Wisdom Station's generating units. Due to prolonged warm weather, Southwest Power Pool (SPP) called on both Wisdom Station units to run several times in July to help meet generation needs across its footprint.

Reliability needs to be at forefront of energy transition

The energy industry is undergoing a dramatic transformation as more renewable energy comes online and innovation and technology continue to advance. We recently reported on the North American Electric Reliability Assessment and the need for an All-of-the-Above energy approach. This month, we'll delve deeper into what an All-of-the-Above energy strategy means and how renewable energy growth contributes to the shuttering of many baseload power plants across the country, potentially impacting the reliability of electric service.

Green energy is certainly not new. Solar and wind power have been around for decades. Thanks to government tax incentives that make renewable generation sources affordable, we have seen growth in renewable energy across the country, including in our state.

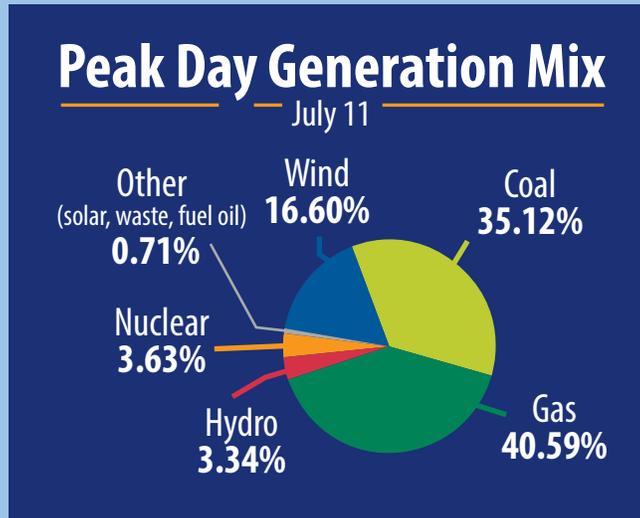
Recent innovations and advances in renewable technology have led to sharp decreases in cost, making it more feasible and accessible. In recent years, Corn Belt Power has adjusted our fuel mix by utilizing more renewables in our generation portfolio. Last year, 25.8 percent of the energy delivered to Corn Belt Power's member cooperatives comprised of renewable energy resources such as wind and hydropower, up from 12 percent in 2010. This is a transition to a cleaner and greener generation mix when you consider the national average electricity cost has only increased a little over two percent over the same time period.

An All-of-the-Above energy approach

favors the incorporation of renewable resources like wind and solar to work alongside traditional reliable sources of energy like oil and natural gas. For us, adopting a strategy incorporating renewable energy sources must be done in a way that protects our members financially and does not impede power supply.

It takes a slow and logical approach to transition electric generation away from fossil fuels in a way as to maintain the affordability and reliability of your power supply.

While renewable generation such as



wind and solar remains an affordable supplemental generation resource to an overall energy mix, these resources are considered "intermittent" power since the sun does not always shine, and the wind does not always blow. Often, there is minimal wind or solar generation on the coldest or hottest days of the year. Proponents of these resources are

correct in their position that renewable energy will provide a path forward to an energy future that will be more carbon-constrained. However, the intermittency of these resources alone will not sustain the increasing energy demands of our growing economy. Battery storage remains costly, and its long-term storage capacity has not kept up with the growth of renewable energy across the country nor the increasing demands for energy to power our economy. Unless battery storage technology advances, we must rely on dependable baseload, fossil fuel power plants to keep the lights on all the time.

At the same time, the economics behind tax-subsidized green energy has contributed to the closure of many fossil fuel, baseload power plants. Reliance on a generation mix that depends heavily on renewables will impact the overall affordability of your power. When the wind is blowing and the sun is shining, energy generation is abundant, and power is inexpensive. However, severe weather events can also negatively impact renewable generation resources, inhibiting their operation, thus driving up costs to purchase energy from the markets at a premium.

That was evident at 4:44 p.m. on July 11, when the Southwest Power Pool, reached a new all-time peak load of 51,377 megawatts (MW). This was the peak at the time this newsletter went to press. During that time, almost 80 percent of power generated to meet the load was made up of either coal, natural gas or nuclear (see chart).

This demonstrates the value of our abundant baseload generation sources in an All-of-the-Above energy mix. If not for reliable baseload generation, predominately made up of fossil fuels, many of us would be in the dark during times of peak electric demand. Our goal is to provide our members with safe, affordable, reliable, and sustainable forms of energy in a way that moves us toward a cleaner energy future.

It all boils down to having reliable baseload generation for when renewables aren't available. It's why we call it "All-of-the-Above." We will continue to advocate on behalf of our members for that energy strategy on a state and federal level. ■

Prairie Energy and Corn Belt Power partner to help rural hospital handle record births

As more and more rural health care systems close down, one north central Iowa hospital is experiencing an unprecedented baby boom—and local electric cooperatives have stepped in to help finance a much-needed maternity center expansion.

Prairie Energy Cooperative in Clarion and power supplier Corn Belt Power Cooperative in Humboldt recently passed through \$2.36 million in federal loans to help Iowa Specialty Hospital boost services for Labor, Delivery, Recovery and Postpartum (LDRP) care. Through the REDL&G program, Corn Belt Power sponsored a pass through loan for \$1,000,000. Corn Belt Power also sponsored a grant for \$300,000 with a \$60,000 match from Corn Belt Power to loan a total of \$1,360,000 to the hospital for the renovation of its existing footprint to make room for three new LDRP rooms. Prairie Energy also sponsored a loan of \$1,000,000 toward this project.

The loans and grant come as a record number of births strain an already-busy hospital system, where five of 25 beds are dedicated for labor, delivery, recovery and postpartum care. In 2021, doctors delivered a record 568 babies, compared to 485 in 2020. And the hospital is projecting 600 births this year.

“We consistently fill these rooms and overflow into medical and surgery rooms daily,” said Jenn Mewes, Iowa Specialty Hospital’s OB Leader, adding that doctors and nurses have been paying extra attention to “bed management” to keep pace with deliveries.

Throughout the state, 10 labor and delivery units closed in the past three years.

“As birthing facilities continue to decrease, patients are more likely to have to drive for this care,” said Mewes, noting that in some cases, expectant families travel as far as 100 miles roundtrip.

The expansion, estimated right now at \$5.5 million, will result in three added LDRP rooms and additional specialty clinic space. It’s all part of improving the lives of members, said Corn Belt Power Cooperative’s Brittany Dickey.

“Our members and staff use this hospital and it’s part of our community,” said Dickey, vice president of business development at the G&T. ■



Baby boom

Above | Prairie Energy Cooperative and Corn Belt Power Cooperative present loan and grant funds totalling more than \$2 million to representatives from the Iowa Specialty Hospital in Clarion June 27. These funds help finance a much-needed maternity center expansion. Pictured from left at the check presentation are Steve Simonin, President & CEO, Iowa Specialty Hospitals & Clinics; Todd Foss and Sarah Olson, Prairie Energy; Cindy Hunter, chief quality officer, Iowa Specialty Hospitals & Clinics; Brittany Dickey, vice president, business development, and Stacy Cirks, development finance director, Corn Belt Power Cooperative; and Greg Polzin, chief financial officer, Iowa Specialty Hospitals & Clinics.

Shine the Light contest receives nearly 70 nominations

The 2nd annual Shine the Light contest received 68 volunteer nominations in June. Sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, this statewide contest is an opportunity for Iowa’s electric cooperatives to celebrate commitment to community.

This year’s contest entries represent 26 Iowa distribution co-ops. Corn Belt Power’s service territory entries are as follows:

- Butler County REC:** 3
- Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Assn:** 3
- Franklin REC:** 2
- Grundy County REC:** 1
- Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative:** 6
- Midland Power Cooperative:** 6
- Prairie Energy Cooperative:** 4
- Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative:** 4

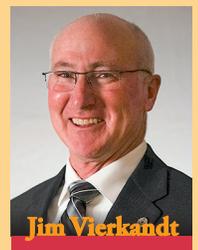


Three winners will each receive a \$2,000 donation to their local charity and be announced in this newsletter and featured in the September issue of Iowa Electric Cooperative Living magazine. ■

Midland Power members elect new director

The retirement of Charlie Gilbert left a vacancy on Midland Power Cooperative’s board of directors. At the Midland Power annual meeting on Wednesday, June 29, members elected Jim Vierkandt to fill the spot left by Gilbert.

Vierkandt lives in Buckeye township in Hardin County. He is a grain and livestock farmer and vice president of the Hardin County Pork Producers.



Jim Vierkandt

Following the annual meeting, the board voted to keep officers the same. They are as follows:

- Mike Coleman, President
- Rick Thompson, Vice President
- Randy Christensen, Secretary
- Kim Rinker, Treasurer
- Joel Skow, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer ■



July Touchstone Energy Volunteer Challenge winner | Mat Kilgore, foreman, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, donated his \$100 prize drawing to the Emmetsburg Baseball Academy. Congratulations, Mat!



Luke Nostrom

The power of human connections

Luke Nostrom, apprentice electrician, Corn Belt Power, demonstrates the Touchstone Energy value of commitment to community by volunteering to coach youth T-Ball games.

Nostrom is no stranger to coaching, he says he loves to help out with his kids' activities. Here he's coaching one of his daughter Paisley's t-ball teammates on how to hit the ball.



Visit us at the State Fair!

Above | The Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa sponsor the Bruce Rastetter 4-H Exhibits Building at the Iowa State Fair August 11-21. Stop by and see us in the newly renovated 4-H Exhibits Building on the southwest corner of the fairgrounds. Come into the air-conditioned facility for a break from the heat and look for us near the new concession area.

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.

Copyright 2022

- Kenneth H. Kuyper, Executive Vice President and General Manager
- Ryan Cornelius, Editor; Vice President, Corporate Relations; CCC
- Marena V. Fritzier, Marketing Director; CCC

f facebook.com/cornbeltpower
YouTube youtube.com/cornbeltpower

@CornBeltPower
 www.cbpower.coop