



Congressman Randy Feenstra visits Emmetsburg service center

NRECA may not be holding an in-person legislative conference in 2021, but that doesn't mean Corn Belt Power stopped visiting with its legislators.

On Tuesday, April 6, first-term U.S. Representative Randy Feenstra visited Corn Belt Power's Emmetsburg service center. The stop was part of Feenstra's promised 39 county tour. Feenstra says he will visit all 39 counties in Iowa's Fourth Congressional District twice each year. As he puts it, "When I was sworn in as a member of Congress, I promised 4th District Iowans that I would work tirelessly to bring their voices to Washington. It has always been a top priority to ensure my constituents have a seat at the table when decisions are being made that affect our farmers, families, and rural Main Street businesses."

At his Emmetsburg stop, Rep. Feenstra visited with employees from Corn Belt Power, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative and the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. The group spoke to Rep. Feenstra on issues ranging from Rural Utilities Service (RUS) loan refinancing to biofuels and the 2023 Farm Bill.

On RUS loan refinancing, Cooperatives across the country are lobbying Congress to allow for the refinancing of existing loans. Unlike most other private debt, RUS borrowing utilities cannot refinance loans at lower rates. This bill would allow electric cooperatives to refinance these loans, giving those organizations significant interest savings to help meet the immediate needs of the Iowa communities cooperatives serve and to be a part of the nation's COVID-19 recovery in the long run.

Those in attendance also spoke with Rep.



Congressional visit

Above | U.S. Representative Randy Feenstra (IA-04) visited Corn Belt Power's Emmetsburg service center on Tuesday, April 6. Corn Belt Power, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative and Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives employees spoke to Rep. Feenstra on issues ranging from Rural Utilities Services loan refinancing to rural economy issues.

Feenstra on the 2023 Farm Bill and the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program (REDLG). Every 5 years, Iowa's electric cooperatives' central focus is on the provisions debated by federal lawmakers and USDA agency officials. Many co-ops in Iowa and across the country still rely on RUS funding programs to provide the foundations needed in order to provide electricity to our most rural citizens. Further, and perhaps as important, are the USDA programs that help electric co-ops provide support and sustainability to the communities they serve. The REDLG program is Iowa electric co-ops' marquee economic support program that has yielded over a billion dollars in investments,

created or retained tens of thousands of jobs, and helped prop up several hundred communities in our state. Corn Belt Power and its member-cooperatives have a combined \$20 million in REDLG funds.

"We thank Rep. Feenstra for visiting our Emmetsburg location," said Ryan Cornelius, vice president, corporate relations, Corn Belt Power. "It was a great first meeting with the new Congressman and we look forward to working with him to advance cooperative initiatives for years to come."

Feenstra ended his visit by thanking line workers and other employees in attendance for continuing to enhance the quality of life in the areas they serve. ■



Above | Scott Greene, custodian and groundskeeper, will retire on May 14. Greene worked at Corn Belt for six years.

Scott Greene to retire in May

Scott Greene, custodian and groundskeeper, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, will enjoy his last day of full-time employment on May 14. He will retire from the cooperative after more than six years of service.

Greene, who joined Corn Belt Power in February 2015 after a long and rewarding 41-year career at CenturyLink, says he's ready for retirement.

"We'll probably spend a week out in Colorado with our son," he said. "I just plan

to sit and enjoy my time."

As a custodian and groundskeeper, Greene's job is always important. However, it was critical in 2020 as the country fought the COVID-19 pandemic. Greene's enhanced cleaning measures helped to keep Corn Belt Power employees safe.

"We got a lot done," he said. "In the back of my mind, I knew we were trying our best to keep people safe."

Karen Berte, senior vice president finance and administration, Corn Belt Power, says Greene will be missed.

"Scott is such a positive person," she said. "He never complains about coming to work, including when we put even more on his plate when we enhanced our cleaning measures in 2020. I'm thankful that Scott was here. His shoes will be hard to fill."

Greene and his wife, Tricia, have two children and four granddaughters. He plans to spend more time with them.

"Softball season is starting," he said. "Our granddaughters in Iowa City will keep us busy with that. When the grandkids aren't right here in town, it's hard to get to all of their events. I'm sure we'll spend plenty of time getting to those events now." ■

Safety at core of Corn Belt Power's mission

May is the month when we raise electrical safety awareness. Corn Belt Power's safety awareness doesn't center around just one month. Instead, it's an everyday approach and at the forefront of everything the organization does.

"A company's most valuable asset – its employees – must be protected and sent home safely to their families every day," said Carla Hofmaster, safety and environmental coordinator, Corn Belt Power. "Our program creates a more productive work environment by setting a higher standard for working each day. A safe environment produces happier employees, especially when safety improvements are considered, encouraged and implemented."

Corn Belt Power's safety program covers a wide scope of training as every job position and location has its own unique subjects to cover. All locations

receive first aid and CPR every two years and hearing tests are conducted yearly. Specific training for the linemen includes climbing competency and pole top rescue. Bucket rescue is provided for all outside crews and covers the big and little bucket trucks. Corn Belt Power contracts with the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives to provide training every other month for the Hampton, Humboldt and Emmetsburg outside crews. They also include training for fire extinguishers, blood-borne pathogens and communication.

Wisdom Station, Corn Belt Power's natural gas and fuel oil power plant, has more than 100 confined spaces. Crews cover confined space entry and rescue as part of the cooperative's safety program. This includes a respirator fit test and training as crews occasionally use the apparatus when going into dusty environments. *Continued on page 4.*



Safety training

Above | Reed Dreyer, journeyman lineman, Corn Belt Power, secures and lowers a 150-pound life-size practice dummy by rope to the ground in an unlikely event where a lineworker would need immediate emergency assistance. This drill is part of an annual pole top safety rescue drill.



Devin Chesler

Chesler becomes journeyman

Effective April 1, Devin Chesler of Corn Belt Power's Humboldt transmission crew became a journeyman lineman. Chesler completed the apprentice program which includes on-the-job training and testing modules through the Northwest Lineman College's Transmission Technician Certification Program. Congratulations, Devin!

News in briefs

Board, officers remain the same for Butler County REC

Butler County REC held its annual meeting on Saturday, March 27. The annual meeting was held at the cooperative and attended by directors, employees and the cooperative's attorney.

Duane Rieckenberg, Ionia; Troy Feldman, Greene; and Share Brandt, Allison were each reelected to another term on the board.

Board officers are as follows:

- Duane Rieckenberg, President
- Gary Poppe, Vice President
- Tim Schrage, Secretary
- Leland Boyd, Treasurer

Franklin REC hosts drive-thru annual meeting

More than 260 ballots were cast on Tuesday, April 6, at Franklin REC's annual meeting of members.

Seventy-two vehicles participated in the drive-thru event. Attendees drove through the line, handed in their ballots and received kitchen utensils with a potholder as a gift.

Annual reports were mailed to members prior to the meeting.

Matthew Roelfs, Ackley, was elected for his first term as director.



Matthew Roelfs

Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative hosts virtual annual meeting

Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative hosted its 2021 annual meeting virtually using the Whova app on Saturday, April 10.

Attendees heard from Rick Olesen, president and CEO, who gave his final annual meeting address. Olesen will retire in early 2022.

Mat Kilgore, line foreman, presented on the NRECA International program. Ed Hearn, former World Series champion, was the keynote speaker.

In lieu of its regular annual meeting breakfast, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative sent members pancake mix, syrup, a whisk and a coffee mug as a gift.

Directors Elected during the meeting included:

- District One: Jerry Beck
- District Two: Bruce Amundson
- District Three: Gary Rouse
- District Four: Alan Madden

Following the meeting, the board elected officers. They are as follows:

- Board Chairman: Jerry Beck
- Board Vice Chairman: Craig Deim
- Board Secretary: Trent Will
- Board Treasurer: Dan Winterhof



Scholarship winner

Above | Lauren Erickson, daughter of Kathy and Corie Erickson, assistant right-of-way and land supervisor, Corn Belt Power, won one of 20 Basin Electric Power Cooperative employee-dependent scholarships. Lauren will be a sophomore at Iowa State University.

Erickson awarded scholarship

L Lauren Erickson, daughter of Kathy and Corie Erickson, assistant right-of-way and land supervisor, won one of Basin Electric Cooperative's employee-dependent scholarships.

Erickson, a soon-to-be sophomore at Iowa State University, is majoring in animal science. She hopes to attend veterinary school in the future.

"I aspire to become not only a veterinarian, but someone who has a truly meaningful and positive impact on those around me," she said. "I want to lead by example and volunteer time to give back to my community."

Erickson completed a summer internship last summer at the Humboldt Veterinary Clinic. At Iowa State she is involved in the Gamma Phi Beta sorority, Block and Bridle Club, the Pre-Veterinary Club and many other student organizations.

Congratulations, Lauren! ■



September Touchstone Energy Volunteer Challenge winner | Dale Schaefer, director, Franklin REC, donated his \$100 prize drawing to Franklin County Relay for Life.



Jon Myer

The power of human connections

Jon Myer, IT administrator, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, demonstrates the Touchstone Energy value of commitment to community by helping with the Humboldt youth soccer league. Myer volunteers his time at other youth sports and initiatives in Humboldt.

“Humboldt has an active youth sports program,” Myer said. “I enjoy helping my two sons learn the basic fundamentals of sports and sportsmanship as well as being an active member of the Humboldt Community.”

Cooperative Safety *continued from page 2*

“Every safety meeting has one goal,” said Hofmaster. “That is to provide an open dialogue of what safety improvements could be made and finding a way to make that happen.”

Hofmaster says it’s a group effort at Corn Belt Power.

“No one part being more important than the other,” she said.

“You must have the leadership, implementation of policies, effective communication and the desire to work safely. I am also extremely proud to tell them I work with the best and most hard-working group of co-workers in the business.” ■

Corn Belt Power Cooperative Watts Watt

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