



Watt's Going On

Greg McFarland,
General Manager/CEO

Thank you to everyone who attended our 76th annual meeting in March. I hope you enjoyed the evening learning about the role your cooperative plays in your communities.

Line Construction and Maintenance

If you recall, last summer we began our four-year construction work plan in which a seven-mile stretch of overhead line was converted to underground cable from Hixton to Humbird. This past February, we continued with the construction. Our line crew began setting poles on Hwy. 121 in the Northfield area in which the overhead line from the Lutheran church to the Garden Valley Town Hall will be replaced. This existing line is from the 1940s.

Jackson Electric will replace 95 poles and 3.7 miles of overhead line with this project. It is projected that approximately 80,000 feet of cable will be strung.

If you see our Jackson Electric line crew and trucks on the road working with this project, as well as other projects, please slow down and allow them room to work. Safety—ours as well as yours—is the utmost priority when our crew is working.

Digging and Landscaping

Speaking of safety, now is the time of year when we get anxious to start digging in our yards. Before you dig, please remember to contact Diggers Hotline at least three working days before you begin your project. Not only is it for your safety, but it is also a law in Wisconsin.

If you dig into an underground line, not only could you harm yourself, but you will be financially responsible for the repair of that line. So, please take the time to do right and contact 8-1-1 or click on the Diggers Hotline link on our website to file a request.

Following approval from Diggers Hotline to put your shovel in the ground, consider that trees and shrubs need space to grow both above and below ground. Properly placed trees and shrubs can lower line clearance costs for your cooperative. Make sure you look up and around before placing your tree or shrub in the ground. We also

ask that you keep aware of the location of our meters and transformer boxes when planning your landscaping and deck projects.

For more information on residential planting, please go to www.jackelec.com/electric_system/right-of-way_maintenance and view the Residential Planting brochure or request a brochure from our office.

Winter Moratorium Ends

On April 15, the winter moratorium will end. As a friendly reminder, if you've fallen behind on your electric bill payments, I encourage you to contact our office to arrange payment to avoid disconnection of your electric service. If you're in need of energy assistance, please contact one of the appropriate agencies found in this issue on the facing page.

We look forward to the spring-like weather and we are optimistic for a prosperous growing season this year. If you should have any questions or concerns regarding your cooperative, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Safety always! ■

Kites and Power Lines Don't Mix

Students in Melrose-Mindoro High School's technology education class saw firsthand what happens to a kite when it comes in contact with a power line during a hot line demonstration. Jackson Electric Cooperative linemen Steve Bucholz and Dan McKeivitt discussed the dangers when contact is made with power lines and electrical equipment, farm electrical hazards, and how to safely emerge from a vehicle following accidental contact causing power lines to fall on or near the vehicle. They also talked about the causes of power outages and blinks and electricity generation, transmission, and distribution lines.

To learn more about Jackson Electric Cooperative's safety demonstrations, go to www.jackelec.com/public_relations/safety_demonstrations. ■



Energy Assistance Available to Qualified Members

Western Dairyland Economic Opportunity Council, Inc. administers Jackson Electric Cooperative's Commitment to Community Funds for electric low-income bill assistance and home weatherization. Contact 800-782-1063 ext. 231 for more information on this program.

Other agencies that may provide assistance:

Jackson County Health & Human Services	715-284-4301
Clark County Social Services	715-743-5233
La Crosse County Human Services	608-785-6050
Monroe County Human Services	608-372-8900
Monroe Community Action Program	608-269-5021
Trempealeau County Social Services	715-538-2311
Consumer Credit Counseling	888-771-4673
Energy Help Hotline	800-522-3014

Purchasing Green Power Made Affordable

\$1.50 Buys You One Green Block

A voluntary renewable energy (green power) program is available to members of Jackson Electric Cooperative. Evergreen is for those who want to support renewable energy and are willing to help pay for the extra costs associated with its production.

With your consent, you pay a small, additional monthly charge to offset the additional cost it takes to support renewable energy generation. You can purchase one block of Evergreen renewable energy or several blocks, if you desire. One Evergreen block costs \$1.50 per month and represents about 10 percent of the average residential monthly electric usage, which is 1,000 kWh.



Evergreen helps our power supplier in the purchase of energy from renewable energy sources, such as wind, landfill gas, biomass, solar, hydro, and manure digesters.

For more information on Evergreen, go to www.jackelec.com/energy_conservation/evergreen or contact our office. ■

Winter Moratorium Ends Past Electric Bills Due April 15

Please contact Jackson Electric Cooperative **BEFORE** April 15 to make payment arrangements for past due electric accounts. All past due accounts need to be reconciled before April 15 in order to avoid any disconnection of your service. Failure to contact us about your past due account could result in service fees along with disconnection of your electric service. ■

Electronics and White Goods Recycling Drive

Monday, April 22 • 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Jackson Electric Cooperative,
N6868 County Road F, Black River Falls

Jackson Electric Cooperative, along with 5R Processors, is once again sponsoring the Electronics and White Goods Recycling Drive in celebration of Earth Day. For more information regarding the Electronics and White Goods Recycling Drive, please contact Dana Duzy at 5R Processors at 715-322-4480 or dduzy@5rltd.com.

No charge for the following:

Scanners	Copy machines	Phones
Wire/Cabling	Printer cartridges	Computer hard drives
Fax machines	Typewriters	Cash registers
Uninterrupted power supplies	Laptops	Printers
Docking stations	Calculators	Keyboards/mice
Stereo equipment	VCR/DVD players	Circuit boards
Audio visual equipment (cameras, video recorders, etc.)	Batteries & car batteries	Residential bulbs

Charges (per unit):

Broken glass on monitors or TVs – \$10
CRT tubes – \$10
Wooden console TVs – \$10
Projection TVs – \$10
Computer monitors – \$5
Microwaves – \$5
Plastic TVs – \$10

White goods include ovens, washers, dryers, refrigerators and freezers. There will be a \$5 charge per unit for white goods. Those units with Freon will be charged \$25.

In effort to handle all recyclables, we ask that you please bring them to the recycling area before 3 p.m.

Make the Call Before You Start Digging



As sunshine and warm temperatures finally return, many of us are turning our sights to outdoor projects. April is Safe Digging Month, and Jackson Electric Cooperative encourages you to contact Diggers Hotline before you begin your digging project.

Electricity is not the only thing that lies underground. Gas, water,

cable, and telephone lines are buried beneath the earth. Not only are these utilities dangerous to make contact with, but people and businesses rely on these services.

Even if you had utilities located last year, it is best to have them located again. Underground utilities can shift, and it is important to be certain of where they are before putting a shovel in the ground. If you accidentally contact an underground utility, do not bury the

problem. Your first priority should be evacuating the area for safety, if necessary. If you nick an underground utility, notify your utility provider. Do not attempt to fix the problem yourself.

Please remember that Wisconsin law requires you to call Diggers Hotline at least three days before beginning your digging project. ■

Statement of Nondiscrimination

Jackson Electric Cooperative is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political belief, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Jackson Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer. ■

Electric Heat Spotlight—Geothermal Heat Pump

Using the earth's constant year-round ground temperature, a geothermal heat pump will provide comfortable and affordable heating and cooling to your home or business.

A geothermal heat pump is the highest efficiency heating and cooling system available because it uses a renewable energy source — the earth. Geothermal heat pumps use the constant temperature of the earth to heat and cool, thus allowing the system to reach high efficiencies, more than 400 percent, even on the coldest winter nights.

How Does It Work?

Water circulates through a network of durable plastic loop pipe buried in the ground that

absorbs the earth's energy. A heat pump, connected to the coils, extracts that energy and converts it into heat. At the flip of a switch on your thermostat, the process can be reversed to cool your home in the summer heat.

Geothermal heat pump coils can be installed vertically or horizontally and some can utilize ponds or groundwater. Geothermal systems are recognized by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as the most environmentally friendly heating and cooling technology available.



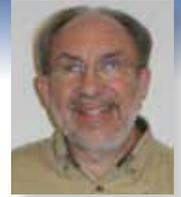
Cost Comparison: Geothermal vs. Fossil Fuels

Geothermal System	Propane Furnace	Fuel Oil Furnace	Natural Gas Furnace
(400% efficient)	(92% efficient)	(80% efficient)	(92% efficient)
\$0.06/kwh	\$0.37/gallon	\$0.49/gallon	\$0.40/therm

For example: By participating in Jackson Electric Cooperative's dual fuel program, the dual fuel rate is \$0.06 per kWh. That is comparable to paying \$0.37/gallon for a 92% efficient propane heating system, \$0.49/gallon for a 80% efficient fuel oil furnace, and \$0.40/therm for a 92% efficient natural gas furnace.

Ask Your Cooperative

Steve Meyer, Member Services Director



Q: My meter used to be read by a meter reader every month. I've been told that the meters are now read remotely. How does that system work?

A: We are using an automated meter reading system (AMR), also called AMI (automated metering infrastructure), manufactured by a company called Cannon Technologies. The conversion to this system required that all of our electro-mechanical meters be replaced with electronic AMR meters. Electro-mechanical meters have internal mechanisms with moving parts; the AMR meters are fully electronic with no moving parts.

We have our AMR system programmed to provide daily meter readings. The metering data is stored in the memory of the meter and a daily com-

mand (signal) is sent, usually at night, to retrieve the metering data from each meter. The data and commands travel over our power lines from the meters to the substations and via radio signal from the substations to our office.

The obvious advantage of an automated meter reading system is the ability to obtain timely and accurate meter readings without the effort required to manually read the meters. However, other advantages exist. Meters can be "pinged" at any time. That process yields a near immediate response reporting a current meter reading, a voltage reading and other data. The lack of a voltage reading indicates a power outage at that location. Anytime we receive an outage-related call, we ping the meter to determine if there is power at the meter. If proper voltage

is detected, then the caller is advised to call an electrician to correct an on-site electrical problem. This process saves Jackson Electric from making needless service calls.

Our AMR system has proven to be very helpful in diagnosing the causes of high bills. We are able to zero in on daily electrical usage trends and pinpoint to the day when electrical usage increased and by how much. That information is usually enough to jog a person's memory as to what may have been added to the load or what may have changed to cause the increase.

As we move forward, we will incorporate more of the data we obtain from our AMR system to enhance our billing system, outage management system and improve power quality.

If you have a question to ask Jackson Electric Cooperative, please submit to our office at P.O. Box 546, Black River Falls, WI 54615 or e-mail cblaken@jackelec.com, and put in the subject line "Magazine Question." ■

Convenient Electric Bill Paying Options Available

There are several options available to Jackson Electric Cooperative members to pay your monthly electric bill.

- Go to www.jackelec.com and click on the Bill4U icon to pay online using your bank account or credit/debit card. This is a free and secure service offered to our members. You can make a one-time payment, sign-up for monthly automatic payment withdrawals, request paperless statements, and view your electric usage.
- Mail your payment to Jackson Electric Cooperative. Please include your signed check and payment stub. Please be mindful of federal holidays when there is no mail delivery. Your payment is posted to your account when we receive your

payment — not on the postmarked date.

- Pay in person at Jackson Electric Cooperative. Be prepared to show your current electric bill or confirm your mailing address and the last four digits of your social security number. We ask for this information to protect your identity.
- A secure 24-hour drop box, located at Jackson Electric Cooperative's headquarters, is available to our members who are unable to make their payments during office hours.

You may make special arrangements to pay your electric bill depending on your account history. To learn more about the payment options available to members, go to www.jackelec.com/billing/payment_options. ■



Jackson
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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