



BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU ASK FOR

By Michael Schaefer, Interim Manager

If you remember back to the middle of last winter, you may recall the major ice storm that hit Texas. This storm hit the state during the week of February 14, 2021, and the electric grid was unable to handle the need for electricity as equipment and systems failed.

Originally, almost an equal share of the blame was placed on the failure of renewable energy systems (primarily wind) as it was on natural gas-fired generation. However, a review published in the April 28, 2021, edition of *The Texas Tribune* reported, “The most significant cause of the low power supply to the grid came from natural gas plants shutting down or reducing electricity production due to cold weather, equipment failures and natural gas shortages.”

In fact, the grid operator in Texas, ERCOT (Electric Reliability Council of Texas), calculated that natural gas power losses were several times that of the wind generation lost during the power crisis. Some observations:

1. The grid in Texas was not prepared

to handle a winter storm like they experienced that week. Since then, they have been putting money into their systems to protect them better from similar future events—time will tell if they’ve done enough.

2. The disruptions of fuel supply to the natural gas generating plants accounted for nearly 20 percent of the outages. On top of that, natural gas providers increased their prices for that week, creating huge profits for some of them, but costing some generating plants more than twice what they spend in an entire year.
3. The wind generation charts provided by ERCOT showed wind generation capacity (nameplate or ability to generate) of around 20 gigawatts (GW). However, at the time of the storm, they only had the ability to generate less than 10 GW, which then was further reduced by the effects of the equipment failures and outages.

What does this all mean? Across the country, including Wisconsin and the upper Midwest, coal-fired generating

plants are closing. We are relying more and more on renewable energy and natural gas-fired generation to provide our electricity.

Most renewable generation is dependent on the weather. For example, you can build a 20-megawatt wind farm or solar project, but based on the weather you may only get half or less of the rated output when you need it most. Also, natural gas generators depend on a continuous supply of fuel. Who controls that when wind chills are 30-40 below zero and natural gas is also needed to heat homes?

I’ve heard your JREC director and Dairyland Power Co-op (DPC) board representative Jane Reich talk about DPC’s plant closures and future plans for power generation. I am concerned, and Jane has also expressed her concern, that we don’t want to be without the generating resources to provide the electricity to run the heating systems in our homes and businesses. We all want to have the best, cleanest, and most reliable electricity, but I don’t believe any of us want to be left out in the cold.



Jump River Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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BALANCE OF POWER

Balance on the power grid rests on the ability of utilities to provide electricity exactly when we need it. What happens if that balance is shifted?

The magic of the electric power grid is the precise balance it must maintain to provide the exact amount of electricity (generation) needed to meet the needs of all consumers connected to the grid (load). Our wholesale power provider, Dairyland Power Cooperative, has employees working 24/7 with the regional system operator (MISO) to ensure this balance. At Jump River Electric Cooperative, there are important programs in place to support these efforts.

One such program is load management, most commonly used to help lower cooperative costs by reducing energy use when the price for electricity is high. Load management can also be used to help maintain balance on the power grid. If there is a severe risk of imbalance, members may be notified of an immediate need to reduce electricity use to help avoid rolling

blackouts. This scenario is a Maximum Generation (Max Gen) Event. While these events are rare, it is important to be prepared to act to keep electricity safely and reliably flowing.

Why does a Maximum Generation Event occur?

Max Gen Events occur due to a shortage of generation resources. In other words, the amount of electricity available on the grid is critical and may not be able to meet the demand for electricity. This could occur for multiple reasons, such as extreme temperatures, severe weather conditions, generation resources (power plants, solar/wind facilities, etc.) are unexpectedly offline or unavailable, higher-than-projected need for electricity, and other circumstances.

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YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

JREC provides opportunities for young members

Over the years JREC has provided scholarships to students, sponsored attendance at the Youth Leadership Congress, provided electrical safety demonstrations to local elementary schools, and employed student workers. JREC offers these opportunities to our young members because we know that our youth are the future of the cooperative.

Scholarships are available for high school seniors, home-school graduates, and *non-traditional students. A lineworker scholarship is also available to students who attend a one-year Electric Power Distribution/ Lineworker post-secondary school program. Members or dependent students of members are eligible.

The scholarship amount has been increased to \$1,000 each this year, with 30 scholarships to be awarded among the five different scholarship categories. This means \$30,000 in scholarships are available to help fund college educations. Go to jrec.com/scholarships for more information on these scholarships, criteria, how to apply, and deadline information.

**A non-traditional student is a student who has received his/her GED or high school diploma for a minimum of one year prior to applying for the scholarship.*



Youth Leadership Congress (YLC) is a three-day leadership retreat on a college campus that focuses on the cooperative business model and leadership building exercises. This year's event will be held July 12–14 on the campus of UW-Stout in Menomonie.

Past YLC students have described this conference as a lot of fun, with activities that provide a great opportunity to meet a lot of cool people and build friendships that will last a lifetime. You can find a short video about this conference at vimeo.com/304450504.

JREC is looking to sponsor this year's sophomore or junior students who live within our service area. All fees for this conference are taken care of by the cooperative. If you are interested in finding out more about the YLC or attending this free conference, please contact your guidance counselor as soon as possible. Deadlines may vary by school.



Stocking Winners As you can see in these pictures, each child was full of joy after realizing all the Christmas presents they were going to be taking home. Thank you to Mark Tamm, who once again donated the moose rocking chairs. A boy's and girl's name was drawn from both Ladysmith and Hayward entries. Winners are, left to right: Carrie K., 3, Gilman; Hunter, 5, Sheldon; Kingston, 2, Hayward; and Nina M., 7, Hayward. Assistant General Manager Kurt Harris is shown with the Ladysmith stocking winners.



CHARGING AHEAD

Cooperatives are meeting the future head on

Acceptance and availability of electric vehicles (EVs) is increasing at a rapid pace. For example, General Motors pledges to offer 30 EVs globally by 2025; Ford is offering both hybrid and all-electric vehicles and projects that fully electric vehicles will account for 40-50 percent of their U.S. sales by 2030; and in October 21, Hertz announced it was purchasing 100,000 Tesla cars to add to its rental fleet. With the federal infrastructure bill that was signed into law in November, there will be even more emphasis on adding EVs to the nation's transportation mix.

Electric cooperatives recognized the emerging trend with EVs and, in 2020, JREC along with 31 other electric cooperatives throughout Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin created CHARGE EV, LLC, to help promote



Image from the CHARGE EV website showing station locations (www.charge.coop).

electric vehicle (EV) adoption. In early December 2021, CHARGE announced several new affiliates, bringing the total to 49 electric cooperatives. The goal of CHARGE EV, LLC, is to build a national EV charging network throughout rural America to alleviate concerns over range anxiety and encourage exploration of local communities and other points of interest.

Most CHARGE EV network chargers are

located at cooperatives' offices. In fact, JREC has one at both the Ladysmith and Hayward office. However, you will also find these chargers at highway exchanges, grocery stores, restaurants, resorts and spas, car dealerships, and the starting line for the Birkebeiner ski race located in Hayward. You can read more about CHARGE on page 10 of this issue.

Should your next car be an electric vehicle?

Late last year, JREC added a Tesla EV to our fleet of vehicles. We use this vehicle almost daily and never have to worry about fueling up. The electric motor makes little to no noise and produces instant torque at any speed. Very little maintenance is expected; no oil changes are needed and only the windshield washer fluid needs changing. If you are interested in finding out if an electric vehicle is right for you call our office to schedule a test drive.



CHANGE IN BILLING DATES AND PAYMENT DEADLINES



Beginning with your April 2022 billing statement, your Jump River Electric Cooperative bill will be mailed on the 5th and due on the 20th of each month. If these dates happen to fall on a weekend or holiday, the mail/due date will be on the next business day.

One other change is which dates you are billed for each month. Starting in April, all members will now be billed for the previous month's usage (1st to 31st).

Members who are utilizing the autopay program will also be affected as their credit card will now be charged or payment withdrawn on the 20th of the month. Members who make their monthly payment directly with their banks may also need to change the check issue date so it arrives by or before the 20th of each month.

This change will not only streamline our billing process, but it will also keep the number of days billed each month consistent. If you have any questions on these changes, please feel free to give our office a call at 715-532-5524.

Balance of Power

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What Should Members Do?

If notified of a Max Gen Event, JREC's load management program may be activated outside of normal program hours. This could happen with minimal advance notice.

Members who do not participate in a load management program can still help:

- Turn off lights, televisions, electronics, and other appliances
- Cook food in a microwave instead of a stovetop or oven

- Adjust your thermostat up or down, depending on the season
- Shift laundry, vacuuming and running the dishwasher until after the Max Gen Event has ended

A Max Gen Event does not mean the load management program will be activated. The event may be cancelled before MISO reaches that stage. However, if energy prices are high after the Max Gen Event ends, load management may still be used to help control costs.

Thank you, in advance, for joining your cooperative as we all do our part to ensure safe, reliable, and affordable electricity for all members and the region.



PUT MONEY IN YOUR POCKET WITH CO-OP REBATES

Improve energy efficiency and comfort in your home while lowering your electric bill

Members wanting to save energy and money should review JREC's rebate opportunities available through our Energy Sense program for your home, farm, or business.

Get co-op rebates for:

- Appliances and Lighting
- Commercial and Ag Incentives
- Home Performance Tests and Upgrades
- HVAC and Geothermal Systems
- Renewable Energy Systems and E-Vehicle Chargers

Rebates range from \$1 to \$2,000. Here is a sample of rebates available for electric appliances that are Energy Star rated. You can find all rebate forms and program details at jrec.com/energy-sense-rebates.

Clothes Dryer	\$25
Heat Pump Clothes Dryer	\$50
Clothes Washer	\$100
Dehumidifier	\$25
Dishwasher	\$50
Freezer	\$25
Inductive Range	\$25
Refrigerator	\$100



To receive a rebate, the member must purchase a qualifying item, fill out the rebate form, and return the form and any required documentation to the cooperative within three months of purchase or installation. Equipment must be installed within the co-op's service territory and, in most cases, be ENERGY STAR® rated.



If your primary residence is in Districts 2, 7, and 8, you can become a JREC director candidate. A Petition for Director Nomination was mailed to each member in these districts. The deadline for submitting petitions is March 1, 2022. Petitions can be dropped off at either office.

March 1 is also the deadline for submitting any proposed resolutions to be considered at the annual meeting. Director elections and voting on any proposed resolutions will take place at JREC's 84th annual meeting, held April 30, 2022. More information can be found on jrec.com.

Voting for directors and any proposed resolutions can be done through one of three ways: mail-in ballot, electronic voting, and at the annual meeting. More information will follow in next month's issue.

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JREC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Denise Zimmer, Editor



Jump River Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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NEW OFFICE HOURS FOR HAYWARD OUTPOST –
9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday – Friday.