

News & Views

We give thanks

As we approach the end of 2019, we here at JCREMC want to extend our thanks to you for being our consumer.

JCREMC was established 84 years ago to bring electric service to the rural communities that investor-owned utilities didn't see as profitable enough to serve. As a non-profit electric utility locally governed by our consumers, we are invested in our community and the people we serve.

We extended that investment in 2019 through the JCREMC Community Fund, established as part of the Operation Round-Up® Community Grants program. We want to express our gratitude to all of our consumers who have contributed and enabled the community fund to give financial assistance to worthwhile non-profits who are making a difference in Johnson County and beyond.

We are thankful to have again this year been able to provide academic scholarships to two very deserving area high school seniors who have now entered into post-

secondary education at two prestigious Indiana institutions. We also had the honor of sponsoring two area high school juniors on this summer's Indiana Electric Cooperatives Youth Tour in Washington D.C.

Our employees have led free electrical safety demonstrations for local schools, first responders, and community organizations; participated in Touch-A-Truck events; and sponsored a host of community events and initiatives, including the Johnson County 4-H and Agricultural Fair.

None of this would be possible without you.

So again, we say thank you. Thank you for entrusting us to be good stewards of our resources. Thank you for allowing us to serve our community. Thank you for the acts of kindness you bestow upon our crews when you see them out working in often-harsh weather conditions. Thank you for the kind words you share with us on the phone, via email, and on social media. Most of all, thank you for allowing us to serve you.





For great

The new underground training field at Hoosier Energy's Franklin Training Center is important and so is the journey that turned the dream into a reality. Just ask Chris Thompson.

Thompson, JCREMC Journeyman Lineman turned Regulatory Compliance/Safety and Training Coordinator, has had a front row seat for the project's evolution.

TRAINING FOR SAFETY

Hoosier Energy, an electricity generation and transmission cooperative, supplies power to its 18 member cooperatives, including JCREMC—but that's not the whole story. They also provide in-depth training and continuing education that prepares line workers for their careers and teaches them how to stay safe on the job. It's the kind of training that makes sure

everybody goes home to their families at the end of each day.

That's what Thompson is passionate about.

The Training Center, nestled on a quiet wooded road in JCREMC's service territory in rural Johnson County, is home to poles, lines, transformers, a substation, and other electrical equipment line crews encounter out in the field. But until very recently, any training on underground electric lines had to be done via a mobile unit.

Fortunately, in the cooperative world, needs don't tend to stay unmet for too long.

A TEAM EFFORT

Thompson, who frequently teaches at the Training Center and has for the last 14 years, remembers Bob Richhart's vision. Richhart, Hoosier Energy's Chief Technology Officer and a former JCREMC Journeyman Lineman, envisioned an expansion of the Training Center property by developing an advanced underground training field. Thompson knew right away it was a project he wanted to be part of.

Given the explosive industrial and residential growth in the northern half of JCREMC's service territory, the cooperative's line workers regularly install, troubleshoot, and work on



Chris Thompson (L) oversees JCREMC Journeyman Lineman Skylar Smith as he checks voltage on a secondary pedestal at Hoosier Energy's inaugural Underground School October 29, 2019.



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underground lines.

During his apprenticeship, Thompson experienced that growth firsthand. As a journeyman lineman, he knew how important it was to make sure new classes of apprentices had access to facilities that mirror what they will encounter in the field.

As Hoosier Energy's vision for the underground field evolved, JCREMC's leadership jumped at the chance to support the project by donating time for visioning and construction, and providing the necessary poles to connect overhead electric service to the new underground equipment.

By the time construction started, several other Hoosier Energy member cooperatives had joined in the project by donating time and materials. It was that cooperation among cooperatives—one of the *Seven Cooperative Principles*—that brought the vision to life.

"I remember sitting in a meeting early on where we were trying to figure out how we might make this all work," Thompson said. "I had a lot of experience with underground lines, so as everyone talked, I jumped up and started drawing a potential layout on the whiteboard. It evolved from there."

Cell phone pictures of those whiteboard drawings gave way to schematics. On October 18, 2019, those schematics gave way to reality.

Linemen from several Indiana Cooperatives, including JCREMC, volunteered their time to construct a new state-of-the-art underground training field at Hoosier Energy's Training Center in rural Franklin.

The Training Center hosted its first Underground School—a training program Thompson helped organize and teach—October 29-30.

"Line work is unique because you can't make a mistake," Thompson said. "I want to instill the confidence in these people to do things right. That's what the linemen before me taught me when I was in school and now I'm passionate about using my experience to teach others. Having access to these facilities is a game changer in terms of how we're able to prepare our line workers."

COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

Hoosier Energy's underground training field is an exciting example of how cooperation among cooperatives makes an impact. In working together on this project, not only did they improve the training facilities, but the line workers who volunteered their time on construction have enhanced the safety and expertise of line workers for years to come.

That's not only good news for the line workers themselves but for consumers of Indiana's rural electric cooperatives, including JCREMC. Access to state-of-the-art training environments means line workers are as prepared as possible to efficiently perform the construction, maintenance, and repairs that keep the lights on for our consumers. ■

Scholarship applications available

JCREMC is accepting applications for the 2020 Academic Scholarship Program. Now in its 26th year, the program encourages graduating high school seniors to further their education while also promoting awareness and the importance of the cooperative business model. Senior students who will attend an Indiana college or University in the fall of 2020 are eligible to apply. Two students will each be awarded a \$2,000 scholarship. Applications are due February 3. Awardees will be notified in March and recognized at the JCREMC Annual Meeting on April 4, 2020 at the Franklin Performing Arts Center. The application and full rules and requirements are available at jcremc.com/scholarship.



Pay the easy way

One of our goals at JCREMC is to make paying for your electric service as easy and convenient as possible. While we're always happy to accept payment in person at our office M-F 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., we also offer a variety of other 24/7 payment options.

- **SmartHub** - Pay your bill, monitor usage, and report outages 24/7.
- **Phone** - Pay your bill and report outages 24/7 at 317-736-6174.
- **Kiosk** - Pay your bill 24/7 at the kiosk on the south side of the JCREMC office.

Correction: In the Summer 2019 issue of *News & Views*, we incorrectly denoted District 3 (Steve Shaul) as being up for board director election in 2020. Districts 1 (Glenn McAlpin) and 4 (James Meredith) are the districts up for election in 2020.

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JCREMC publishes *News & Views* as a service to our members. Past issues are available at jcremc.com.

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