

# HIGHLINES

NEWS FOR THE MEMBERS OF PELLA COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC

## Rate Changes Occurring in April

The PCEA Board of Directors have approved rate changes. The purpose of the rate change - which means some rates are increasing, and some are decreasing - is to more accurately recoup the cost of delivering electric service. PCEA has not changed base rates in 11 years, and periodically the co-op should review and adjust rates as needed in order to recover costs more equitably and fairly. PCEA underwent a cost-of-service study last year to evaluate current rates and is adjusting rates accordingly.

Starting in April, the rate changes will go into effect on April bills for March electric use. All rates are being adjusted, which results in an overall average 1% revenue decrease across all rate classes. Here are a few important highlights:

- ▶ Some rates and charges will increase, while others will decrease, depending on the rate class.
- ▶ Most residential members will not see much of a difference.
- ▶ The facility charge for certain rate classes is increasing, but other charges are decreasing. The Distribution Cost Adjustment is decreasing from \$0.01 to \$0.
- ▶ PCEA has not changed base rates in 11 years.
- ▶ PCEA's residential rate is 10¢, which falls below the Iowa average of 12.2¢ and the U.S. average of 12.9¢.

### Residential Rate Change

**Current Average Monthly Bill**  
\$152.31

**New Average Monthly Bill**  
\$149.84

▶ *The average home will see an average \$2.47 savings each month.*

More information about changes to all electric rates will come to each member in the mail, and is posted on our website at [pella-cea.org/2021-rate-changes](http://pella-cea.org/2021-rate-changes).

## Pella Cooperative Electric

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Open weekdays: 7:30 am - 4:30 pm;  
excluding holidays

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*Pella Cooperative Electric is a not-for-profit, member-owned electric cooperative, governed by an elected Board of Directors. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. See [pella-cea.org](http://pella-cea.org) > Nondiscrimination Statement for more information.*

# PCEA Hosts Central College Interns

By Sarah Lindeman | Central College Intern

Pella Cooperative Electric kicked off 2021 hosting interns from Central College. Chloe Howell and Sarah Lindeman participated in Central College's 2021 Career Kickstarter program. The Career Kickstarter includes a micro-internship which they completed with the co-op January 12-14. Here's some insight on who they are and some of their experiences at PCEA.

## What is your major?

**Sarah:** Communications with a minor in Spanish.

**Chloe:** Accounting and Business Management.

## What did you do here at Pella Cooperative Electric?

**Sarah:** I wrote and recorded radio ads, worked on social media posts, went out to watch the linemen replace a pole and learn what they do, wrote this portion of the newsletter, etc.

**Chloe:** I wrote and recorded radio ads, went out to watch the linemen replace a pole, learned more about Accounting from Doug, and updated rate sheets.

## What was your favorite part of your micro-internship?

**Sarah:** My favorite part of this internship was learning so much in general. Whether that be about co-ops, the communications side of things, some of the history of Pella Cooperative Electric, how the linemen do things. I really enjoyed learning about everything Pella Cooperative Electric was doing.

**Chloe:** I thought it was really fun to meet everybody because everybody is really close and very nice. It was exciting to get to learn more about what a future career avenue could look like for me.

## What was something that surprised you about the internship?

**Sarah:** What surprised me the most was how much Pella Cooperative Electric feels like a family. From the CEO to the linemen everyone is so kind and genuinely seems to care about one another.

**Chloe:** I didn't really realize how much I would actually be doing. Everyday I've been busy doing things all the time which I've really enjoyed.



Sarah and Chloe visit the line crews while they replace a pole on January 13.



Chloe and Sarah record radio ads for the co-op at KNIA/KRSL.

## PCEA Returning \$162,000 Back to Members

One of the best benefits of being a co-op member are capital credits. When the co-op makes more money than needed to keep the lights on safely, affordably and reliably, we return it back to you in the form of capital credits.

This year, the PCEA Board of Directors is returning \$162,000 in capital credits to members. The amount of credits you receive is determined by the years you were a member, as well as the amount of energy you purchased during those years. This month, current members during the years 2002 and 2019 will receive their capital credits on their February bill as a credit. Former members who have built up at least \$25 worth of capital credits will receive their money as a check in the mail. To learn more about capital credits and to watch a video on how it works, visit [www.pella-cea.org/capital-credits](http://www.pella-cea.org/capital-credits).

## Thank You for Your Service to the Co-op



**Amber Hall**  
PCEA Accounting and  
Billing Clerk



**Carroll Hoksbergen**  
PCEA Director

PCEA Director Carroll Hoksbergen and PCEA Accounting and Billing Clerk Amber Hall just reached their five year milestone at the co-op. Thank you to both Carroll and Amber for your dedication to the co-op and its membership for the past five years.

# Member Spotlight

## De Jong Greenhouse



By: Central College Intern Sarah Lindeman and  
PCEA Communications Director Amy Blunck

Rows of potted tulips, geraniums, mums, and all other varieties of plants fill up the greenhouses on Fifield Road in Pella. As you walk into De Jong Greenhouse, you are automatically welcomed by the employees as well as the plants.

“We’re digging more happiness,” said Hamza Daour, General Manager for De Jong Greenhouse, with a smile as he explained the business.



Founded in 1954, De Jong Greenhouse has been growing flowers and plants for customers across the Midwest for decades. Even before the business was founded, the greenhouse business in Pella existed with the De Jong family, back to the 1920s.

The importance of community coupled with a passion for horticulture is very evident, as well as the pride of their history and heritage. Decorating the office walls are pictures of Martin J. De Jong and Bill De Jong. It’s visible throughout the entire operation that keeping their legacy and the founding names part of the company culture is very important.

Today, the greenhouse is owned and operated by Dan & Jerry’s Greenhouses, which is based out of Minnesota but has six locations across the Midwest. The family-owned business bought De Jong Greenhouse four years ago from the De Jong family. Owners Dan and Jerry loved the story of the De Jongs, as well as the community of Pella. The fact that Dan & Jerry are great to work with is what aided the transition between ownership to go very smoothly.

Mark and Mary De Jong stayed on as managers for three years to help see the transition through, and last year De Jong Greenhouse brought Daour on board to manage the greenhouses. Many employees are seasonal – the greenhouses

range from having 30 to 100 employees throughout the year.

“We have a great team. It feels like all of us are one big family. I like the rhythm of how our people work together and the trust we develop working together is great,” Daour stated when asked to explain his favorite part about working at De Jong Greenhouse.

Those statements can be supported by the fact that one employee has been a part of De Jong Greenhouse for 56 years. It’s very evident their mission of being morally operated reigns true.

“We appreciate that we are a part of a great, small community that allows us to always feel safe and protected,” Daour commented.

Selling just in the wholesale market, the greenhouses grow and distribute florals, annuals, vegetables, hanging baskets, garden mums, poinsettias, and patio pots. Their customers consist of big box stores – like Costco and Theisens – and floral stores.

“You bring this plant as a cutting from overseas and you take care of it, give it the right food, the right fertilizers, and environment - then it makes its way into to someone’s home as a hanging basket and puts a smile on their face. This is very enjoyable,” Daour said, “I always enjoy driving through any city and looking for my plants.”

When asked what the future for De Jong Greenhouse looks like, Daour explains, “We are looking to expand our production and distribution and bring more happiness and more variety to our consumers. We also want to keep a good, healthy work environment for our employees.”

So next time you are in your favorite garden center browsing new houseplants, check the tag on the plant you’ve picked up – it just may have been grown in our hometown at De Jong Greenhouse.



De Jong Greenhouse General Manager Hamza Daour holds in his hand a small plant that started as a cutting placed in soil.

# \$1 Million USDA Loan Partnership Secured with Co-Line

Pella Cooperative Electric and its member, Co-Line Welding, Inc. recently secured a \$1 million loan through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Economic Development Loan program (REDLG) to assist with a \$6,675,000 building expansion for Co-Line.

USDA's REDLG program provides zero-interest loans to rural utility providers, such as Pella Cooperative Electric, that in turn re-lend the money at zero interest to businesses within their communities. Co-Line will use the loan as part of their 70,000 square foot building expansion.

"We are happy to partner with Pella Cooperative Electric and the USDA in our next expansion project," said Faye Brand, co-owner. "It's exciting to be part of business growth in rural Iowa by adding employees to our outstanding team as well as new technology, the latest equipment, and another building expansion."

Timeline for the project is to start groundwork spring 2021 with construction beginning in late 2021.



Pictured from left to right: Co-Line CPA Monica Nikkel, Co-Line Founder Tana Brand, Co-Line Founder Dale Brand, Pella Cooperative Electric Chief Executive Officer Jon Miles, Pella Cooperative Electric Assistant Manager Doug Stewart, and Iowa Area Development Group Senior V.P., Finance & Operations Bruce Nuzum.



## PCEA Scholarship Applications Open

**\$1,000 available for each school district**

Grinnell | Knoxville | Lynnville-Sully | Newton | North Mahaska | PCM | Pella Christian High School | Pella High School | Pleasantville | Twin Cedars | Home school student

**Deadline to Apply: April 30 | Pella Dollars for Scholars Deadline: February 28**

[www.pella-cea.org/scholarships](http://www.pella-cea.org/scholarships)

## PCEA Recognized with Economic Development Impact Award

Annually, the Iowa Area Development Group (IADG) presents Impact Awards to utility partners who have been involved in significant economic development initiatives. During the recent PCEA Board Meeting, the Cooperative was recognized for its economic development accomplishments and commitment to the communities it serves.

A notable project to demonstrate their support was providing assistance from their Revolving Loan Fund to assist the start-up company 818 Forward with Faith in realizing their vision of building homes where adults with disabilities can lead lives of dignity as their specialized physical, emotional and social needs are met. Other companies receiving support from PCEA include Sully Community Locker, Pella Regional Health Center, and Co-Line Welding.



IADG President Rand Fisher presents the Impact Award to PCEA Board President Duane Ver Ploeg at the February board meeting on January 28, 2021.

### Board Briefs

- The Nominating Committee report was approved.
- The board approved Member Appreciation Day to be held on September 18, 2021.
- Marion County Supervisor Kisha Jahner and Marion County Development Commission Executive Director Carla Eysink visited the board room.