

Rachel Johnson, Cherryland Electric Cooperative ([00:16](#)):

Welcome back to Co-Op Energy Talk. I'm your host, Rachel Johnson, the member relations manager here at Cherry Land Electric Cooperative, and you are listening to our board meeting brief for the board meeting that happened on Monday, February 27th. I wanna talk through just six quick things that happened at that board meeting. Uh, first and, and perhaps maybe one of the more interesting things that happened. We have been working with a local, uh, winery on an application to U S D A for a, uh, a new loan program that Cherry land has never participated in before. Many of you who listen to our podcast or pay attention to, uh, what we're doing know about our revolving loan fund, those are dollars that cherry land lends out that come back to cherry land, and we lend it out to another, uh, company in the community for expansion. This is a different program.

Rachel Johnson, Cherryland Electric Cooperative ([00:58](#)):

It's, it's what we're calling a pass through loan. So essentially U S D A grants the loan, the loan passes through the cooperative, and then it goes to the end recipient. As the end recipient pays the loan back, that money comes back through the cooperative and the cooperative pays U S D A back the way U S D A has structured that loan program. It requires an electric cooperative to be participating. So we've been working with this local winery and, uh, really excited our board approved moving forward with that loan application. So what will happen next is the, um, the end recipient here will be applying for about a 1.3 million loan through U S D A and I think U S D A is likely to approve that. So once they do, we'll be able to pass that through to them and they're expanding their wine production capabilities significantly.

Rachel Johnson, Cherryland Electric Cooperative ([01:38](#)):

It will have a big impact in the community. This is a organization that also supports several other local wineries. So we're really, really excited about it. It's a new program to us. Um, we've never participated in it before, but we think it's gonna have a, a really nice and really big impact. And once we have kind of moved through that U S D A process, we'll update you more on what that looks like. The second item of note from the board meeting, we went through our January financials with our c f and it was all sad news. So we, those of you who live here know this. We've been experiencing fairly mild weather. Mild weather generally impacts our revenue negatively. Um, so we had much lower than expected revenue in January, but the good news for our members is that we also were very aggressive with controlling our expenses in January.

Rachel Johnson, Cherryland Electric Cooperative ([02:19](#)):

So we were well under budget for expenses and our margins were just about \$50,000 under budget for the month. But to give you a comparison, compared to last year, our margins were about 56% lower than the month of January. So I'm definitely feeling the impact of that mild weather. And the opposite side of that, our engineering and operations manager pointed out that the mild weather was good for us in terms of electric reliability. So in January we were able to capture the elusive five nines of reliability. So we had, our members had power 99.999% of the time. That's a, a really hard number to hit, but again, mild weather helped us and certainly our ongoing investment in our system helped us. The other financial thing that the board heard about at the January board meeting was our 2022 property tax impact. So it's very common for people to think that because cherry land is a not-for-profit utility, that we don't pay taxes, but that's not true.

Rachel Johnson, Cherryland Electric Cooperative ([03:12](#)):

We do pay property taxes, a lot of them. So in 2022, cherry land paid 1.45 million in property taxes and those that gets dispersed across all of the municipalities in which we serve. Uh, that's up from our 2021 tax bill by about \$50,000. So, uh, we are seeing a little increase in our property taxes that's not unexpected, but just something we like to make sure our members are aware that we pay. Uh, the fifth item of note from the board meeting, our HR director, Carrie, gave an update to the board and I think it's important to note Carrie is nearing the end of her career here with us at Cherry Land. She retires in March. Uh, she's been really, really busy over the last few months with hiring. And um, we are excited to let our board know we have hired a new journeyman line worker.

Rachel Johnson, Cherryland Electric Cooperative ([03:52](#)):

Uh, we also were able to introduce them to Carrie's replacement. Deidra Karnes who comes to us from Honor Bank, and we'll be our new HR director. We also have a new electrical engineer starting in a few months and are in the process of hiring several other positions. If you are interested in working at Cherry Land or know of anyone who might be, please check out our website for those career postings. And finally, we were able to report to our board that in January our rebate program resulted in the reduction of greenhouse gases by 33 tons. To put that in perspective for you, that's the equivalent of about 7,643 trees, what they would absorb in a year in terms of greenhouse gases. We were able to reduce that greenhouse gas emissions by switching people from fossil fuels to clean electric, driven largely by our 62% carbon-free electric power supply portfolio.

Rachel Johnson, Cherryland Electric Cooperative ([04:38](#)):

So very exciting movement there, and definitely on track to meet some of our greenhouse gas reduction goals this year through our incentive program. So those were the kind of primary big updates from the board meeting. Um, the other thing that happened at this meeting is the board moved their March meeting. It was previously scheduled to be the Monday of spring break, but we're gonna do it a week earlier. So the next board meeting will be Monday, March 20th. As always, we will start with member input at 9:00 AM So you're welcome to come to our office and speak with the board. Join us next time for more co-op Energy Talk.