

Rachel Johnson (00:15):

Welcome back to Co-Op Energy Talk. I'm your host, Rachel Johnson, and you are listening to the board meeting brief for our board meeting on Monday, February 23rd. A couple of items that the board discussed this month that I wanted to share with you. First of all, our power supplier, Wolverine Power Cooperative, joined us to give us an update on both our power supply portfolio, but also specifically on the restart of the Palisades Nuclear power plant down in southwest Michigan. I've talked a lot about that project over the last few years, so I won't go back over that. But we are finally at the point where they're the beginning, the process of restarting the plant that will take several months, but we will have that plant online likely this year. And so we're really excited about that, about that progress, not just for our co-ops. You will remember that one of the things that gives you is carbon free power.

Rachel Johnson (00:55):

In addition to that, it gives you a tremendous amount of price stability because we've locked in a long-term contract for that power. But just as importantly, this is necessary for electric reliability in the state of Michigan. Which brings me to the second thing we talked about with Wolverine, which is how our power supply performed during winter Storm Fern. So you may remember that was a particularly cold time that that cold snap stretched from Michigan all the way down to Georgia across most of the United States. So significant pressure on the electric grid. But the good news is that Wolverine's fleet of peaking generation performed very well and very reliably on your behalf throughout that entire event. We were a net exporter to the grid, meaning we were producing more power than what we needed to serve our members, which meant we were supporting electric reliability, not just for our members, not just for Michigan, but across that regional grid.

Rachel Johnson (01:42):

So a lot to be proud of in that story. The, um, second thing I wanted to update you on, which is also related to Wolverine. For those of you who like to follow along with how co-ops work, you will know that you as our members elect people to represent you on the Cherry Land Board of Directors. What you might not know is that your board of directors then elects people to represent you on the Wolverine Power Board of Directors. So two of our Cherry Land directors serve on the Wolverine board on your behalf. Currently, those two directors are Melinda Launer and Dave Schweitzer. Uh, Dave's relatively new to that board, but his seat was up for reappointment and the board made the decision to reappoint him to that seat, so he'll continue to serve you on the Wolverine Power Board. The second thing, the second big thing that we talked about was related to our headquarters.

Rachel Johnson (02:24):

Again, a project we've been talking about for quite a while now. Uh, you know, we've outgrown our current facility. It's impossible for us to serve the growth in our community safely and efficiently from our current facility. We, um, have an open purchase agreement for property over on Reny School Road, and we're excited to report that we will be closing on that property between now and our next board meeting if everything goes well. So we're excited to, to get that property secured. The future home of Cherry Land Electric Cooperative. It is a a 40 acre parcel, so four times the size of our current space. In addition to that, we are moving through the site plan approval process with Garfield Township. They have our full site plan in hand. We're waiting for their feedback on it and are hopeful that they will give us approval to move that forward to the Planning Commission.

Rachel Johnson (03:05):

And once we get approval from the planning commission, we will then be able to move forward with a construction contract and hopefully still be on track to break ground maybe as early as this fall. But, um, certainly a lot of things, a lot of work to do between now and then, but we'll keep you in the loop. And

then the last thing we talked about at this board meeting that I wanted to make sure to share with you is kind of some behind the scenes work that we're doing as an organization to ensure that we are prepared for any storm, no matter how big that might hit this cooperative. There's been a lot of, uh, big storms, big outages in the news over the last few years. Um, certainly we saw a lot of, of, of extended outages and re as a result of winter storm fern.

Rachel Johnson ([03:41](#)):

So it was just a good time for us to step back, regroup, make sure we have the right processes in place, that we have a plan for how we would scale up, should we need to go from being a, a scrappy little team of 65 to say a scrappy little team of 65 with 500 mutual aid contractors, uh, on, on our, on our campus. So just making sure we had all the plans in place to do that. The other work we're doing behind the scenes is working with our internal team at Cherryland here on setting up some playbooks and, and just really ensuring that we have the right procedures in place and looking at the mutual aid network that we already rely on and we've relied on for decades, uh, if we have a big storm, but making sure we have all of the right mutual aid agreements in place to bring in crews, not just from inside the state, but also from outside the state.

Rachel Johnson ([04:23](#)):

And to potentially expand our staffing capacity in other areas beyond just line crews. 'cause we could need more warehouse people in a big storm like that, or more metering people, or more engineering, um, staff, or more communication staff. So just making sure we have the right partnerships in place to scale up and handle any storm that comes our way, updated the board on all of those important initiatives. Some of those are things that I, I think you'll hear more from me on in the coming months as we continue these board meeting brief podcast, uh, if you are interested in this. Just a reminder, our next board meeting is Monday, March 23rd. As always, we start with member input at 9:00 AM You're welcome to swing by if you have any feedback for the board. Join us next time for more co-op Energy Talk.