



Jan. 7, 2023

Vol. 39, No. 1

### **Mike Jerke, CEO of SIRE**



Mike Jerke, CEO of SIRE (Southwest Iowa Renewable Energy) spoke. He was accompanied by Ben Parsley, Innovation Manager for SIRE. Mike has worked in the ethanol business for 20 years, having come from

Minnesota four years ago.

Mike conveyed the changes from his grandfather's day to now – from farming with horses to a computer in your pocket. Now, Mike stated, John Deere is breaking ground with a self-driving tractor controlled from your phone.

In 1940 the corn yields nationally were 42 bu./acre and in 2007 151 bu./acre. Farmers recognized as production was increasing we were doing a great job feeding the world, so what else can we do with corn? People came to realize it could be valued in our own neighborhoods which would create an economic engine that would benefit communities.

SIRE began production in 2009 and has approximately 65 employees. It is designed to produce ethanol at 110 million gallons per year, but is now at 130 million. It sits on 225 acres of land and has access to railroad service and has a relationship with MidAmerican Energy (which is just north) to utilize steam to drive processes. It also captures CO<sub>2</sub> and sends it to Air Products (across the fence) for use in the beverage and food industry. SIRE operates 24/7. The quick math for ethanol is 1 bushel of corn is 56 lbs. and 1/3 produces ethanol, 1/3 produces protein for cattle (distillers grain) and 1/3 produces CO<sub>2</sub>.

SIRE was one of the first ethanol plants to utilize Syngenta's proprietary Enogen corn and developed relationships with area farmers to grow and deliver it to SIRE. They also enticed farmers to grow corn that contained a higher oil content. SIRE also installed a dryer exhaust energy

recover system to increase energy efficiency and allow for significant natural gas reduction.

Much changed when President George W. Bush signed legislation supporting farmers and stated in his State of the Union address that ethanol is the future of America. Now carbon reduction is important, driven also by huge tax incentives for companies to think about carbon differently. Sequestering CO<sub>2</sub> through an ethanol plant is the cleanest it can be. The desire is to drive CO<sub>2</sub> to another use and end up with a value proposition.

SIRE stats include: 1) 44 million bu. Corn ground each year (130,000 bu./day) which is approximately 220,000 acres of production. 2) 360,000 gallons of ethanol produced per day. 3) \$10.5 million per year for natural gas (fiscal 2022) 4) \$4.8 million per year on electricity (fiscal 2022) 5) \$57.8 million net income (fiscal 2022).

Looking ahead, Renewable Fuels Association has committed to reduce the Carbon Index (CI) of ethanol by 70% as compared to gasoline by 2030 and reach net zero by 2050, but SIRE expects to beat that timeline. They expect to be sequestering CO<sub>2</sub> by 2024 and will continue to explore alternative uses for CO<sub>2</sub> through un-denatured sales and sustainable aviation fuel.

Other points of discussion: use of pipelines, the mountain of drainage soil near SIRE, virtual tours on the website, bringing in grain from other states, the history of the purchase of the land.

Jerke was asked, "How will ethanol be effected by the push for E-Vehicles?" He stated that the common sense of Midwesterners would be that auto manufacturers will need to be diverse. He stated that the fuel supply is declining. Ethanol's portion of the gas tank is increasing – E-10 is ubiquitous, E15 in Iowa is well known.

---

**January 14th speaker will be:**  
**Shelly Bailey, JOI Club Sponsor**  
**8-9 AM Sat. Treynor Community Building**

---

**Famous Quote:**

**“One man with courage makes a majority.”**

**Andrew Jackson**

---

**Meeting Minutes**

Jordan Campbell called the meeting to order. Present were 22 members. Guests were Mike Jerke, Ben Parsley, and Lynell Vorthmann.

Jordan led the Pledge of Allegiance and gave the opening prayer.

Jokes were shared by Steve Chambers, Keith Denton, and Bill Vorthmann.

On this day in 1785 was the first balloon flight across the English Channel, which led to some discussions about those taking balloon flights, including Ransom Jones who took a ride in a balloon in Treynor and his foot was caught in the rope and flew upside down until pulled in.

In 1927 the Harlem Globetrotters played their first game.

**50/50** was won by Lynell Vorthmann. The **Attendance Award** was won by Shelly Bailey, but she was unable to claim.

**Birthdays/Anniversaries:**

Gary and Dee Guttau celebrated their 56<sup>th</sup> anniversary on Dec. 27 and Glenrose Meier (and Bob) celebrated their 53<sup>rd</sup> anniversary. She told a bit about getting to go to Jamaica on Christmas Day this year.

**Bragging Rights: (\$ are used for youth activities)**

- Dale Willenborg stated he won the football bowl pool and hadn't even followed football this year.

**Auction Items: None**

**Business:**

- Can Kennel sorting helpers were Steve Chambers, Steve Irvin, Bill Vorthmann, John Klein, Gary Funkhouser, Gary Gutttau, and Chad Gutttau. It was recommended by Steve C. that it would be helpful if we could take a bit of time after the meeting before sorting dates

to double up the thin bags. The consensus was agreeable. Dale Willenborg also will make another stand to hold two bags.

- A sympathy card was circulated to send to the family of Linda Frink, our new member last year, whose battle with cancer ended this past week. She believed in the Optimist cause and wanted to continue as a member.

**Community:**

- A brief update about Zach Dickerson was given, who suffered critical injuries in a car/semi accident.
- Grand View Christian is playing Treynor today at 3 for JV boys and 4:30 for Varsity.
- Jerry Hempel stated that PEO nuts are still available for \$10 for one bag, \$20 for two bags!

The meeting was closed with reciting of the Optimist Creed.

---

**HUMOR**

**New year new resolution**



---

**Calendar**

**Events**

??      Can Kennel Sorting

**Birthdays**

Jan 19      Dennis White  
Jan 23      Doug Dillivan

**Anniversaries**

**Programs:**

Jan Mick and Judy Guttau  
 Feb John Klein  
 Mar Dee Guttau (first two weeks)  
 Linda Danker (last two weeks)  
 Apr Keith Denton  
 May Dale Willenborg  
 June Steve Irvin (first two weeks)  
 Jeff Jorgensen (last two weeks)  
 July Chad Guttau  
 Aug Jim Clausen (first two weeks)  
 Bill Vorthmann (last two weeks)

Sept Glenrose Meier (first two weeks)  
 Steve Chambers (last two weeks)  
 Oct Gary Guttau  
 Nov Jordan Campbell (first two weeks)  
 Jerry Hempel (last two weeks)  
 Dec Kirk Vorthmann (first two weeks)  
 ??? (last three weeks)

**Speakers**

Jan 14 Shelly Bailey, JOI Club  
 Jan 21 Wendy Andersen, Treynor Days and  
 Splash Pad update  
 Jan 28 Jona Kuenstler, German Exchange Student

Editor: Judy Guttau, [judy.guttau@tsbg.com](mailto:judy.guttau@tsbg.com), 402-670-4330. Contributors: Dee Guttau  
 Dues/Donations/Flag Money: Mail to Optimist Club of Treynor, PO Box 354, Treynor, IA 51575