Question: With the proposal of auto makers going with more and more electric vehicles, how does that impact the future of our electrical grid having enough capacity to charge those vehicles?

Answer: We will be more than fine when it comes to capacity. All of our Clean Energy Blueprint studies factored in that there will be more electric vehicles on the road – and that includes Alliant Energy vehicles. Last September, we announced our plans to electrify all of our light-duty fleet vehicles by 2030. We will also do simple things to help manage capacity like encouraging customers to charge their EVs during off-peak hours and do the same for our company vehicles as much as possible.

Question: If you factor out the unreliable power sources such as wind and solar/batteries, how much reliable base generation capacity is left to power our customers under severe conditions such as were experienced by Texas earlier this year? How reliable is natural gas supplies given the above as it can’t be stored with sufficient quantities on site for long term outages?

Answer: Our Clean Energy Blueprint factors in weather extremes. We know that our customers will see at least one long, hot spell every summer. There are times when the wind doesn’t blow, but on a hot day when energy demand is at its absolute peak – the sun is about the most reliable source of energy there is.

And everybody knows we have cold winters in the Midwest --- so we build our systems to handle it, which they did very well during the cold snap earlier this year thanks to great work by our dedicated and skilled employees.

In 2020, our generation mix was 34% renewables, 25% coal and 41% gas. We’ve always worked to have a balanced generation mix – that’s why we’ve been so successful and reliable for our customers. As technology and customer needs change, that balance is naturally going to change. In the past, you might have had coal, natural gas and nuclear … and that was balanced. In the future, it’s going to look more like wind, solar, natural gas, battery storage … and likely several other technologies being developed. The key thing is that it’s balanced today, and our blueprint is carefully guiding the way to being balanced in a different way while still being very reliable and affordable for our customers.

Note that that the balance isn’t always one for one megawatt. When we’re talking about solar taking the place of coal-fired generation … it’s more like two solar megawatts being installed for every one megawatt of coal. That’s the balance that’s going to maintain reliability while moving us forward. We’ve studied this extensively and are confident in our blueprint.

Question: As a regulated business, customers do not have a choice in their provider. So why does the company invest shareowner dollars in promoting the company through community activities and sponsorships?

Answer: We are proud – and hope our shareowners are, too – of our efforts to create positive change in Iowa and Wisconsin through our giving programs – which are designed to bring our purpose of serving customers and building stronger communities to life.

We provided substantial funding during the pandemic to nonprofits to help our customers with basic needs, especially food.
After the derecho windstorm in Iowa last summer, we launched a program called “Project ReConnect” to assist vulnerable customers who needed electrical repairs before power could be fully restored to their homes. The final phase of that program will replant trees across Iowa.

Our employees and retirees also gave to their communities – providing over $1.25 million in personal donations to United Way and other community causes. They also recorded nearly 64,000 volunteer hours, which resulted in nearly $75,000 in volunteer grants from our Foundation.

When you combine our corporate sponsorship contributions, Foundation support and other company programs – and then add in the generosity of our employees and retirees – we provided $8.7 million to our communities across our service area last year. This demonstrates our Values to Make things better and Do the right thing.

We are very proud of the ways our company provides significant support for communities through our Giving for Good sponsorships, Impact Grants, scholarship programs, Matching Gifts and Volunteer Program. And we are particularly thankful for the role our employees and retirees play in giving back to our communities through our programs as well.

Question: In the most recent available report, Alliant Energy PAC contributed more than 4X more to Republican candidates than Democrats. It is clear post January 6th that the Republican Party is not supportive of voting rights or representative democracy. What is Alliant Energy doing to ensure that political campaign contributions do not support the anti-democracy urges of the GOP?

Answer: It is important that candidates and elected officials understand the complexities and realities of our industry and recognize the impact their decisions can have on our ability to provide reliable and affordable service to our customers. And we do support candidates that support our issues and are willing to engage with us.

We have political action committees that are overseen by boards comprised of employee volunteers. These PACs make contributions based on a set of factors that advance the interests of our customers and shareowners – and are made without regard for the private political preferences of company executives. Contributions to candidates are made on a case-by-case basis. We look at many factors, including past voting records and their public statements.

The political environment is constantly changing these days, and we believe that our transparency and robust oversight serves us well.

Post-meeting question

Question: The recent issues with the Colonial Pipeline ransomware attack could potentially be used on other industries, including Alliant Energy, MISO, etc. How vulnerable is the utility industry, and what steps are being taken to limit our exposure to cybersecurity attacks?

Answer: Security (both physical and cyber) has been and continues to be a key priority at Alliant Energy. We have teams of employees, specialized monitoring and detection systems and other protective services all of which are dedicated to the security of the company’s employees and assets. Alliant Energy engages in continuous training of our employees on topics of security and phishing to drive a culture of strong security awareness, and we actively engage with third parties to test our perimeters for vulnerabilities. We practice routinely on myriad threats and design our systems following industry best practices. We also work closely with government agencies, industry groups and consultants to learn about and address emerging security threats. These are some of the steps we undertake to mitigate exposure to physical and cybersecurity threats.