Every day we wake up, turn off the alarm, make a pot of coffee and turn on the morning news. We don’t give it much thought, but each of these tasks require electricity. As we go through the day, we mindlessly tap into this invisible, ubiquitous resource that transforms our lives. Electricity pumps water to keep us clean and healthy. It keeps us cool, charges our cell phones and makes night life possible. Without electricity, life-saving equipment for hospitals would be useless. Commutes to and from work without traffic lights would be dangerous. Our business community would be crippled without the use of computers and systems that rely on electricity.

The roots of rural electrification can be traced back to the 1930s. Nine out of 10 rural homes were without electric service, and investor-owned utilities would not construct power lines to rural America because it wasn’t economically feasible or profitable. Rural residents at that time came together and began working toward a common goal: to bring affordable, reliable electricity to rural America. As electricity gained attention, so did the importance of providing it to rural America. On May 11, 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Rural Electrification Administration by signing Executive Order 7037. “That necessity [electricity] ought to be found in every village, in every home and on every farm in every part of the wide United States,” said Roosevelt in 1938. This turning point of Roosevelt’s administration provided loans and other assistance to rural cooperatives — basically groups of farmers — so that they could fund their own distribution systems as we know them today.

One of those groups of farmers was right here in the lower valley. If they were going to get electricity, hometown service was their only option. Thanks to the foresight and cooperative spirit of these pioneers, Grand Valley Power celebrates 81 years of service this month, on August 12. This anniversary serves as a great reminder of the importance of our mission. Our humble beginnings also provide an important guide for our future.

For more than eight decades, our cooperative found success because of its focus on hometown service. In everything we do, the employees and directors continue to build on Grand Valley Power’s history and tradition of great service.

**COMMENTS TO THE CEO**

You are a member of a cooperative and your opinion does count. If you have any questions, concerns or comments, please let CEO Tom Walch know by writing to Ask the CEO, PO. Box 190, Grand Junction, CO 81502, or send an email to twalch@gvp.org. Check out our website at gvp.org.
August 11 is “Call 811 Before You Dig” Day

There are nearly 20 million miles of underground utility lines in the United States. These buried facilities, including gas, water, sewer, cable television, high-speed internet, landline telephone and electric, provide the services Americans depend on for their basic everyday needs.

If you are planning a job that requires digging, even if you plan to hire a professional, a call to 811 is required before you begin working. The 811 call is free, and the call center will then alert the appropriate underground facility owners so they can dispatch locators to mark the approximate location of their lines with paint or flags.

Every 6 minutes an underground utility line is damaged because someone decided to dig without first calling 811. Also, according to a recent Common Ground Alliance survey, 45 percent of people who plan to dig this year will not call 811 first, despite there being 100 billion feet of utility lines buried underground in the United States.

Unintentionally striking a line can result in inconvenient outages for entire neighborhoods, harm to yourself or your neighbors and repair costs.

Every digging project, no matter how large or small, warrants a call to 811. Installing a mailbox, building a deck and planting a tree or garden are all examples of digging projects that should only begin a few days after making a call to 811.

Here’s how it works:
1. One free, simple phone call to 811 makes it easy for your local one-call center to notify all appropriate utility companies of your intent to dig.
2. Call two days prior to digging to ensure enough time for utility lines to be properly marked (not including the day of notice).
3. When you call 811, a representative from your local 811 center will ask for the location and description of your digging project.
4. Your local 811 center will notify affected utility companies, which will then each send a professional locator to the proposed dig site to mark the approximate location of your lines.
5. Once lines are properly marked, roll up those sleeves and carefully dig around the marked areas.

To find out more information about Call 811 in your area, visit www.call811.com.

Watch Clearances With Large Equipment

When working with large equipment, there are hazards that come with the job. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, of the 4,379 work fatalities in 2015, 8.6 percent were electrocutions. Safe Electricity encourages large equipment operators to look up, look out and follow all safety procedures around overhead power lines.

In September 2016, two construction workers were injured in an electrical accident. The workers were touching a crane’s cable when the crane made contact with an overhead line. The two men received electrical shocks, leaving one man in critical condition and the other in serious condition.

While most large equipment requires a 10-foot clearance from overhead power lines, cranes and derricks require an even greater distance for safe operation where overhead power lines are present. In such situations, OSHA requires that individuals, their tools and their equipment stay a minimum 20-foot distance away from power lines. The total distance increases as the voltage of the power line increases. Visit OSHA.gov for a full list of regulations, voltages and distances.

When working with large equipment, it is important to follow all OSHA regulations. Conduct a site survey to identify the location of overhead power lines, and take measures to prevent incidents with lines. Make sure you know the maximum height of your machinery’s extensions.

Never work with large equipment without first having the proper training. Even experienced large equipment operators must always take protective measures against electrical hazards. Before using large machinery, also make sure that the equipment is mechanically sound. Always use the equipment as intended.

Remember to lower extensions while moving large equipment. When possible, use a spotter. To help reduce the likelihood of an accident, never store machinery directly under a power line.

If your equipment makes contact with an overhead power line, the safest option is almost always to stay in the cab. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away and wait for utility crews to arrive on the scene and de-energize the lines. Never assume a line is de-energized. The only time you should leave the cab is in the rare case that the equipment is on fire. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without coming into contact with the equipment and the ground at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, bunny hop away.

For more information on electrical safety, go to SafeElectricity.org.
KEEP COOL AND SAVE IN THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

Don’t let the warmer weather turn into summertime blues when the monthly electric bill arrives. Here are some tips on keeping your electric bill in check.

Adjust the thermostat. As TogetherWeSave.com demonstrates, lowering a thermostat in the winter can save as much as $85 a year. During warmer months, raising the thermostat a few degrees can save money, too. Set the temperature between 78-80 degrees Fahrenheit and you could save up to 8 percent on monthly cooling bills.

Consider installing or using your programmable thermostat, which makes it easy to save by offering preprogrammed settings to regulate a home’s temperature throughout the year.

Be a “fan-atic.” While they don’t replace an air conditioner or a heat pump, fans move the air so everyone feels more comfortable. On milder days, fans can save as much as 60 percent on electric bills. Fans cool people, not rooms, so turn them off when you leave.

Regular maintenance is essential. Remember to check your filter every month, especially during heavy use months (winter and summer). If the filter looks dirty after a month, change it. At a minimum, change the filter every three months. A dirty filter will slow airflow and make the system work harder to keep you warm or cool, wasting energy. A clean filter will also prevent dust and dirt from building up in the system, leading to expensive maintenance and/or early system failure.

Look for Energy Star equipment. When it’s time to replace that cooling system, TogetherWeSave.com recommends replacing it with an Energy Star-qualified model. This could reduce energy costs by as much as 30 percent. Tax credits and rebates on qualifying Energy Star models may be available, so check with DSIREUSA.org for more information and current incentives.

Instead of getting burned this summer with high energy bills, check Grand Valley Power’s energy-saving tips page at gvp.org/content/Energy-Saving-Tips.

Cody Littlefield will pursue an Associate of Applied Science degree to become an electric lineworker this fall.

GVP Announces the WCCC Lineworker Scholarship

Grand Valley Power is pleased to announce that Cody Littlefield was selected as the recipient of the $2,000 Western Colorado Community College electric lineworker scholarship.

This scholarship was created to promote the educational pursuits of students in Grand Valley Power’s service territory specifically for the purpose of obtaining an electric lineman certificate from Western Colorado Community College.

Scholarship winners may use the funds to cover tuition costs, on-campus room and board and/or books and fees. All of our scholarship recipients are selected by a committee comprised of members of the board of directors and community, and decisions are based on a number of factors, such as a written essay, past experiences with school and community involvements, letters of recommendation and academics.

Congratulations, Cody. We wish you luck with your endeavors.

Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Setting your thermostat to a colder setting than normal when you turn on your air conditioner will not cool your home any faster and could result in excessive cooling and unnecessary expense.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

Tips to Prevent Wildfires

Play it safe when using fueled lanterns, heaters and stoves. Lighting and heating devices should be cool before refueling. Keep flammable liquids and fuel away from appliances.

Never discard cigarettes, matches and smoking materials from moving vehicles, or anywhere on dry, grassy surfaces. Completely extinguish cigarettes before disposing of them.

When burning yard waste, follow local ordinances. Avoid burning in windy conditions, and keep a shovel, water and fire extinguisher handy to keep fires in check.

Source: National Geographic
SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

For millions of students nationwide, the school day begins and ends with a trip on a school bus. Unfortunately, many children are injured and several are killed each year in school bus incidents.

Although drivers of all vehicles are required to stop for a school bus when it is stopped to load or unload passengers, children should not rely on them to do so. The National Safety Council and SafeElectricity.org encourage parents to teach their children these rules for getting on and off the school bus, and what to do if a bus crosses the path of a downed power line.

Getting on the school bus:
- When waiting for the bus, stay away from traffic.
- Do not stray into streets, alleys or private property.
- Line up away from the street or road as the school bus approaches.
- Wait until the bus stops and the door opens before stepping onto the roadway.
- Use the handrail when stepping onto the bus.

Getting off the school bus:
- If you have to cross the street in front of the bus, walk at least 10 feet ahead of the bus along the side of the road until you can turn around and see the driver.
- Make sure that the driver can see you.
- Wait for a signal from the driver before beginning to cross.
- When the driver signals, walk across the road, keeping an eye out for sudden traffic changes.
- Do not cross the center line of the road until the driver has signals that it is safe for you to begin walking.
- Stay away from the wheels of the bus at all times.

Crossing the street:
- Children should always stop at the curb or the edge of the road and look left, then right and then left again before crossing. They should continue looking in this manner until they are safely across the street.

Safety when a bus crosses paths with a downed powerline:
- Call 911.
- Stay calm and stay inside the vehicle and/or bus.
- Warn others to stay away from the vehicle.
- Stay seated and do not exit the vehicle until utility personnel say it is OK to do so.
- If you must exit the vehicle because it is on fire, jump clear of it with your feet together and without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. Keeping your feet together, shuffle or “bunny hop” to safety.

For more resources, tips, checklists and teaching guides, visit NSC.org or SafeElectricity.org. Have a safe and healthy school year!

KEEP CURIOUS KIDS SAFE

Ensure your children are protected from the electrical service connection to your home. Keep ladders or long poles stowed and away from youngsters who might be tempted to use them to reach the wires connected to your house. If you added a room addition or deck, make sure the service connection remains well out of reach. Contact Grand Valley Power if you are unsure the distance is safe.