

# EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

*Echoes of the Empire*

APRIL 2019



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facebook.com/EEACortez

## THE SOLAR DECISION

BY ANDY CARTER, ENERGY MANAGEMENT ADVISOR

More and more Empire Electric Association consumer-members are opting to generate their own power using solar photovoltaic arrays. Investing in solar generation is not a decision that should be made lightly. As your local community electric cooperative, we are here to help you through the process so you can make the best decision for you.

One of the first things you should do when considering solar generation is evaluate the efficiency of your home. Taking the time to ensure you are minimizing your electricity use can lower the cost of installing solar generation because your energy needs can be met with a smaller system. According to a National Renewable Energy Laboratory cost benchmarking study, the average installed cost for a residential solar generation system is \$2.82 per watt. That equates to an installed cost of \$14,100 for the average size residential member on EEA's system. Every kilowatt hour you eliminate equates



ANDY CARTER

to a lower installation cost.

The next step is to evaluate your property to see if you have the required space and location to install solar panels. Solar panels are most efficient when they face due south. Solar panels can last for 25 years or more, so you want to make sure your roof is in good condition before you mount solar panels on it. Other considerations are the pitch of your roof and shading from trees or other objects.

If you decide to proceed with a solar generation installation, the next step is to contact EEA to begin the application process. Members must submit a

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**Photo Contest Winner for April**



**Spring Morning Ice**  
by Allison Porter



# Co-op Calendar

## April 5-6

Visit EEA's booth at the Four Corners Home and Garden Show

## April 12

Empire's board meeting begins at 8:30 a.m. at its headquarters in Cortez. The agenda is posted 10 days in advance of the meeting at [eea.coop](http://eea.coop). Members are reminded that public comment is heard at the beginning of the meeting.

## April 21

Easter

## April 22

Earth Day

## April 22-27

Annual Refrigerator/Freezer Recycling Event

## In honor of... Earth Day Empire Electric's Annual Refrigerator-Freezer Recycle Event April 22nd to 27th

Recycle up to 2 units for a  
\$60 credit for each unit.

Pick up your recycle certificate at 801 N Broadway, Cortez.

Or download a certificate on our website [www.eea.coop](http://www.eea.coop)

Find out more...

970-565-4444



April 2019

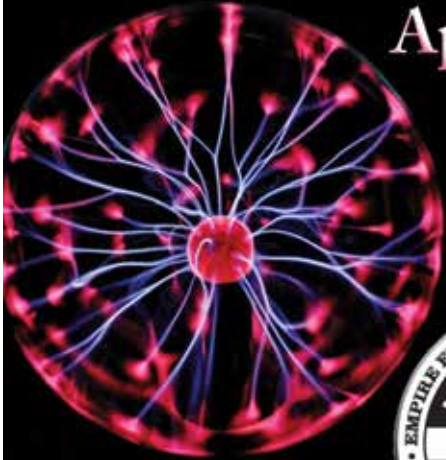
## Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

**Streaming content with electronic equipment that has earned the Energy Star rating will use 25 to 30 percent less energy than standard equipment.**

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

**Visit Our Booth at the  
Home & Garden Show  
April 5 - 6**





Add renewable energy to your EEA account for pocket change.



Empire Electric's Green Power Program is offered to our members at only 9¢ per 100 kWh block. You can sign up to go 100% percent green from renewable sources.

- The average member uses 691 kWhs per month.
- This only costs an additional .63¢ per month.

Please contact us to sign up 970-565-4444.



## BENEFITS OF TREE TRIMMING

Clearing trees and overgrown vegetation is vital to provide safe, reliable power to our consumer-members.

We clear certain areas in our service territory, known as rights of way, to:

- Keep power lines clear of tree limbs
- Restore power outages more quickly
- Keep crews and members of our community safe
- Reduce unexpected costs for repairs

**Vegetation management improves service reliability for you - our members!**

## The Solar Decision

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completed Distributed Energy Resource Interconnection Application and Agreement, including an electrical one-line diagram and a physical site plan showing the location of the major components of your system. The application must be approved by EEA before installation begins. A state electrical inspection is required when installation is complete.

EEA uses net metering for interconnected generation systems. Net meters measure the power delivered from the grid when your system is not generating enough and records excess generation received when your system generates more power than needed. EEA allows net metered consumer-members to “bank” their excess generation. The “banked” power can be used later to offset delivered energy when your solar panels are not generating power. Every April net metered members have the option to sell any excess or “banked” generation back to EEA at the co-op’s average wholesale energy cost.

Being connected to the grid provides electricity to net metered members when their system cannot supply all necessary power. Costs associated with grid power include a monthly grid access charge and kilowatt-hour charges in excess of power generated or “banked” for their solar system. Colorado state statute requires any interconnected generator to have liability insurance to protect the co-op in case of an accident. This requirement is normally met by the member’s existing property insurance policy but may be another cost.

Installing solar generation on your home does have its advantages. As your energy partner, EEA is ready to work with you to help you achieve your energy goals while ensuring the co-op can safely and reliably deliver power to you when you need it.

# Can You Dig It?

**⚡** An underground utility line is **damaged once every 9 minutes** because someone didn't call 811.

**☎️** Call 811, the “Call Before You Dig Number,” at least **2 business days** prior to digging.

**💧** 811 locators **do not detect** underground sprinkler systems, invisible fences, data communication systems, private water systems, or gas piping to a garage.

**🔄** Even if you have previously had underground utilities marked, **utilities can shift**, so it's best to call before starting a new project.

**🚩** Once **all of your utilities** have been located, then you can start your digging project!

Learn more at [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org)

### WEATHER THE STORMS

Assemble an emergency kit with flashlights; battery-powered communication devices; and the food, water and medical needs of your family to survive prolonged power outages. Stay tuned to severe storm information from the National Weather Service, and be aware that lightning presents a danger 10 miles ahead of a storm front.