

Y-W ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY 2020



MAILING ADDRESS

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Y-W Electric Association, Inc. is dedicated to providing high-quality, reliable electric service and related products to our members at competitive prices. Our members deserve and shall receive quality service unexcelled in our industry. We are committed to maintaining an environment where the Board of Directors and employees can perform at maximum potential to benefit our Y-W community.

WE LOVE OUR COMMUNITY

BY TRENT LOUTENSOCK GENERAL MANAGER



TRENT LOUTENSOCK

Being a member of a cooperative means being a part of something special. This month I want to bring one of our cooperative principles to light. The seventh cooperative principle is concern for community. This principle reflects the special bond and obligation that ties Y-W Electric Association, Inc., to the community we serve. With Valentine's Day approaching, we can't think of a better time to express how much we love this community and serving you, the members of the co-op.

We know when we helped to bring electricity to rural Colorado many years ago, the quality of life improved for all. Through the years, other issues needed to be tackled, and we have been at the forefront of helping to address some of those issues. We want to help meet the long-term needs of our community to ensure it continues to thrive — because just like you, we live here, too.

While our top priority is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the consumer-members that we serve. This focus to benefit the larger community is central to the way we operate as a cooperative. Y-W Electric Association, Inc., knows that electricity is a critical need for modern-day life, but it takes more than poles and power lines to make a community.

Over time, our co-op has evolved to meet the changing needs of our community, thereby improving the quality of life for everyone. And that can mean many different things. It can mean programs for Colorado's youth, such as education scholarships or the National Rural Electric Youth Tour, where we take our community's brightest young people to Washington,

D.C., for a weeklong immersion to experience democracy in action. The Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, held in Steamboat Springs in July, is an opportunity for us to educate our youth about the inner workings of a cooperative. By awarding over \$20,000 in scholarships each year, we are helping our youth achieve their higher education goals in life.

Over the last four decades, our community-focused programs and other giving projects have built water systems, helped businesses develop, ensured the safety of our communities with assistance to emergency dispatch centers and fire departments, enabled those in need to keep the lights on and so much more — and we couldn't do any of this without you, our members.

We all benefit from these programs because of you and your neighbors. You empower Y-W Electric Association, Inc., through your membership and by participating in and supporting these programs.

As a local business, we are proud to power your life and bring good things to our community. We hope you will continue to guide our efforts by sharing your perspective as we plan for the future. The energy landscape is undergoing dramatic changes fueled by evolving technology and consumer desires for more options. While the larger environment in which we operate is constantly changing, one thing remains the same: By working together, we can continue to do good things for our community. [Gerry B. Ohr, 182700200]

Keep Your Furry Friends Safe Around Electricity

You do all you can to keep your pets healthy: You take them to the veterinarian for checkups, feed them well and ensure they are up to date on vaccinations. After all, for many people, pets are part of the family.

Two-thirds (67%) of U.S. households, or about 85 million families, own at least one pet, according to the 2019-2020 National Pet Owners Survey. The survey was conducted by the American Pet Products Association and the numbers are up 11% from 1988.

There is something else you can do for your pets: Keep them safe around electricity. Y-W Electric Association and Safe Electricity offer these tips:

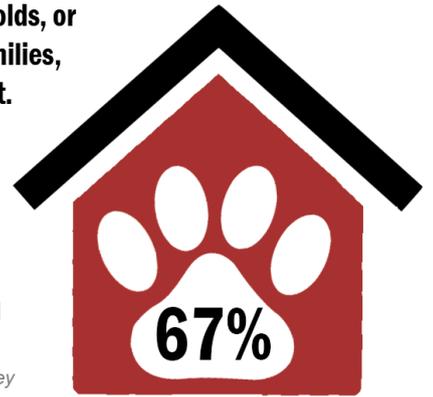
- Puppies and other pets love to chew on electrical cords. Keep cords out of sight or hidden with a cord cover. Provide teething or play alternatives.
- Watch your pet around dangling or sagging cords, including phone or tablet charging cables. Unplug charging cables once your devices are charged. Not only do they draw a small amount of energy when not in use, but the dangling cords are also just crying to be played with.
- Watch where you place lamps and other plugged-in items. Lamps can be a fire hazard if they are knocked over, especially if they have halogen bulbs.

67% of U.S. households, or about 85 million families, own at least one pet.

Keep pets safe around electricity.

Safe Electricity.org

**Source: 2019-2020 APPA National Pet Owners Survey*



- Do not leave your pet alone around items that get hot: curling irons and straighteners, an outdoor grill, a portable heater and other electric appliances, including cooktops. Pet proof your home much like you would for a baby or toddler. If you suspect your pet has been shocked or burned, take it to the vet right away. Owners may not realize a pet has been shocked until a few hours later when it has trouble breathing. Other symptoms include ulcers in the mouth and lesions on the tongue and gums. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org. [Merrill Jefferson, 371200800]



February 2020

Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Are you using your fireplace efficiently? Remember to turn down the thermostat when burning a fire, and close the damper when a fire is not burning.

Source: energy.gov

PILLOW TALK SAFETY

Taking your cell phone to bed with you can do a lot more harm than interfere with your sleep.

For more information, visit:

Safe Electricity.org

Do Your Part to Keep Lineworkers Safe

Imagine this scenario: It's nearing 5 p.m. on a workday. Your boss wants that last-minute report and your kids need to be picked up from soccer practice or play rehearsal. You jump in your car and on the way you approach a work zone. You don't have time to slow down so you rush through it and ignore the orange work zone signs.

Or this one: You're having a garage sale and you think posting a sign on a utility pole won't hurt. Everyone does it, right?

In reality, either of these scenarios could

injure or kill one of our lineworkers.

The job of an electric lineworker is not easy. Lineworkers take great pride in providing safe and reliable service, but their job involves working on and around live power out in the elements.

We ask you to do your part to keep them safe:

1. Slow down and move over in work zones. Cars or trucks that go too fast not only endanger workers on the ground, but driving too fast or not

moving over can also put a lineworker who is working high up in a bucket in danger by causing it to move or sway.

2. Do not post anything on a utility pole, especially with staples, nails or tacks. These can puncture insulated gloves or other protective clothing and expose workers to high voltages.
3. Never plug a generator into an indoor or outdoor wall outlet. The power that backfeeds into the electric line could electrocute a utility worker.
4. Please be patient when the power goes out. Workers need to efficiently and safely restore power.

We appreciate your help in keeping our employees safe. For questions about employee safety, contact us at Y-W Electric Association at 970-345-2291. [Gary W. and Sharilyn K. Mansfield, 1363200901]

“Please be patient when the power goes out. Workers need to efficiently and safely restore power.”



Billing Corner

SmartHub Bill Pay & More

For convenience, Y-W Electric offers the ability to pay your account with the SmartHub app. This service allows you to pay your bill electronically with a credit or debit card or checking account. This is also a great place to go to get account information. Information on billing history, usage, payment history and past billing invoices are available. There is also a link to sign up for auto payment.

Reporting an outage is also available on SmartHub. This information goes directly to our operations department in an email. This leaves our phone lines open for those who do not have SmartHub available.

The app is compatible with iPhones as well as Androids. Check out our website at www.ywelectric.coop for more information. [Troy Pepper, 890918201]

Claim Your Credit

Each month, Y-W Electric offers members a chance to earn a \$20 credit on their next electric bill. If you recognize your name and account number in this magazine, call 800-660-2291 and ask for your credit. It couldn't be easier.

Get acquainted with your account number, read your *Colorado Country Life* magazine and pick up the phone. That's all the energy you'll need to claim your energy bucks.

You must claim your credit during the month in which your name appears in the magazine. (Check the date on the front cover.)

Winners claiming \$20 from the December 2019 issue:

- Butch Berry
- Doug and Paula Norman
- Rick Johnson
- Steve Perry
- E. Lynn and Diane I. Hagemeyer

Wildlife Woes With Electric Equipment

Besides being cute, fun to watch or simply slithery, animals can disrupt power. Although we do all we can to prevent animal interference by using equipment guards, anti roosting devices or other animal-friendly deterrents, sometimes our efforts are no match for persistent and curious critters who use overhead power lines as a superhighway or substations as a nesting ground.

According to the Electrical Engineering Portal, the following classes of animals have caused shorts and subsequent power outages or service disruptions:

1. **Squirrels** love to use power lines as their overhead highway. They are agile and crafty — oftentimes equipment guards and other deterrents cannot keep them away, much like a squirrel outsmarting a bird feeder. If they touch the power line and pole simultaneously, the electric current travels through them and their demise can cause problems with power transmission.
2. **Mice, rats and gophers** sometimes cause interruptions in service by gnawing through underground cables. These offenders and others can also try to make a home in a substation, which often does not turn out well for them and can cause a hiccup in power distribution for us.
3. **Birds** of different species can cause different types of problems. Although small birds can sit on a wire without a problem, some larger varieties like to build nests at the tops of poles, on transmission towers and in substations. Nesting material can cause faults (abnormal electric currents), and bird droppings can contaminate insulators, according to EEP. Other times,



large birds with long wing spans can touch a live power line with one wing tip and something else with the other and become a conductor for the voltage to pass through them. This is called “bridging.”

4. **Snakes** can disrupt service in both substations and underground service. They can squeeze through small spaces, travel upward and have enough length to bridge from one current to another, causing a problem.
5. **Fire ants** are often classified as animals. Although they are originally from South America, they have migrated to the southern United States and they like to build nests in pad-mounted transformer cabinets. Their presence can cause short circuits and they can eat conductor insulation. Needless to say, they can also make it a challenge to maintain equipment.
6. **Large animals** like cattle, horses, bison and bears can cause damage

to guy wires and poles. They can cause physical damage, creating an outage or making the system more prone to outages in the future. Feisty bears can climb wooden utility poles and make contact with live conductors.

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org. [Mark and Mella Hagemann, 741001801

Out With the Old, In With the New

Don't keep old, inefficient appliances that are costly to operate and will pose a future disposal problem. Replace old, worn appliances with new, high-efficiency models, but make certain that all new electrical equipment you purchase is safety-tested and bears the Underwriters Laboratories label.