

# Y-W ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

SEPTEMBER 2020



## MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box Y  
Akron, CO 80720-0570



## STREET ADDRESS

250 Main Avenue  
Akron, CO 80720



**ph** 970-345-2291  
**tf** 800-660-2291  
**fax** 970-345-2154  
**web** [www.ywelectric.coop](http://www.ywelectric.coop)

**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.

## MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

BY TRENT LOUTENSOCK GENERAL MANAGER



TRENT LOUTENSOCK

There's an old political saying: "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu." This adage is the perfect answer to the question, "Why vote?" It's a blunt description of what happens when you don't engage in the political process. If you don't vote, you're not only missing the opportunity to support a candidate who shares your views and concerns, you're allowing others to chart a course that impacts your future. That's why we're encouraging all Y-W Electric Association, Inc., consumer-members to recognize National Voter Registration Day on September 22, 2020. Whether you're registering yourself or others to vote, or helping members of our community get organized, there are many ways to get involved. Many thanks to those Y-W Electric Association, Inc., consumer-members who participated in the grassroots push to send emails and letters to the Colorado Public Utilities Commission last month in our effort to get Y-W Electric at the table.

### Your vision, your vote

While local elections may not be as exciting as the high-profile presidential election, they are just as critical. Local elections have a direct impact on your community and on your quality of life. Like the national level, local elections represent who we are as a community and, more importantly, where we want to go. Whether it's an election for a mayor, sheriff, state representative, school board or an electric co-op board member, your vision for the community is tied to your vote.

Voting keeps elected officials accountable. Elections are a direct and tangible source of feedback. For example, Y-W Electric board members who are elected at our annual meeting held in the spring, provide strategic guidance on the direction

of the co-op and how it serves the community. Local board members embody the voice and identity of the community.

### Staying in sync with the community

Ultimately, the role of the co-op board is governance. While day-to-day decisions are made by our employees, bigger decisions are made by the board members whose mission is to look out for the vitality of the co-op and the consumer-members it serves. Y-W Electric board members provide their perspective on community priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments.

However, boards are not perfect and we need you, the consumer-members of the co-op, to help keep the system in check. We depend on you and your neighbors to vote so we can stay on course and ensure that we are in sync with the community that we serve. A strong voter turnout shows investment in the community and ensures that a diverse number of views are represented.

The whole community benefits when more people participate in the process because greater numbers reflect a consensus on the direction of the future and the will of the people. By voting in national, state and local elections, and participating in grassroots efforts, you are serving as a role model for your family, friends and colleagues. The act of voting and participation in grassroots efforts demonstrates your support for the community and helps officials chart a course for the future.

Democracy is not a spectator sport. Research candidates, learn about issues that are on the ballot and get out and vote!

# FARM SAFETY

# POWER LINE AWARENESS

Make sure EVERYONE is trained on safe practices around electricity. Utilize these safety tips for you, your employees, seasonal workers, family members, and anyone else accessing your farm.

- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines — at all times, in all directions.
- Know all power line locations on your farm and routes between fields.
- Always use a spotter when moving equipment near power lines.
- Don't completely rely on autosteer or GPS to detect and clear power lines or poles.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, contact us.

If your equipment does hit a power line, pole, or guy wire, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 9-1-1, warn others to stay away, and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.



**Safe**  
Electricity.org

# FARM SAFETY

# POWER SOURCES

Make sure EVERYONE is trained on safe practices around power transmission. This includes you, your employees, seasonal workers, family members, and anyone else accessing your farm. Keep in mind:

- Bigger equipment allows farmers to cover more ground in less time; however, this can be a hazard when electrical infrastructures are nearby.
- Inexperienced, fatigued or distracted operators are more likely to come in contact with a power line or pole.
- Sources of electricity include power lines, electrical boxes, and damaged (non-grounded) guy wires.

If your equipment does hit a power line, pole, or guy wire, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 9-1-1, warn others to stay away, and wait for the utility crew to cut the power. [Jessica Brophy, 821100512]



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# Taking Care of Our Co-op and Community During COVID-19

BY DAN RIEDINGER

In the early days of the coronavirus outbreak, it was clear that the pandemic would change our perception of normal. As concepts such as “social distancing” first circulated among health officials, electric cooperatives looked ahead to identify and confront the possible impacts of COVID-19.

As co-ops responded to local concerns and circumstances, we worked to present a unified front to our political leaders in Washington, D.C., and urged them to address the specific needs of our communities and electric cooperatives. Working alongside our national trade association, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, we informed policymakers about the challenges being faced on the ground throughout Colorado.

One of the first things we looked at was the projected economic impact of COVID-19 on co-ops and their consumer-members. NRECA projected that lost electricity load and unpaid bills would total a staggering \$10 billion nationally through 2022.

In response, electric cooperatives have helped their local communities by working with co-op consumer-members on extended payment plans, accelerating cash-back programs and expanding broadband access. But the federal government has a role to play as well.

Among the policy responses sought by co-ops is the ability to refinance loans from the Rural Utilities Service. Electric cooperatives deliver essential services in the most rural and impoverished parts of the country. Many of them meet that challenge, in part, with low-cost financing from the RUS.

However, the RUS does not permit borrowers to adjust existing loans simply to take advantage of lower rates, and penalties are significant in the narrow circumstances that allow for refinancing.

NRECA and its members are pressing for legislation that would allow electric co-ops to adjust RUS debt to current market rates, providing greater cash-flow flexibility to meet the needs of rural consumers in these challenging economic times and allowing co-ops to be part of the long-term recovery.

Electric co-ops could realize \$10.1 billion in net present value savings from the repricing of \$42 billion in RUS loans.

One of the Seven Cooperative Principles, Concern for Community, is looming large right now in the minds of America’s electric co-ops. It has governed our response to the pandemic from the beginning and will continue to serve as our primary focus as we seek additional ways to help our co-op consumer-members. [Andrew and Kenna Dible, 890617205]

Dan Riedinger writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. [Madeleine L. Shirley, 5021008001]

## It’s Baby Safety Month

Keep little ones safe and be sure your outlets are all tamper resistant and all electrical hazards are out of reach, such as electrical cords. For more baby safety tips, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



September 2020

### Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Clothes dryers make up a large portion of your appliance energy consumption. Clean the lint filter after each cycle, and scrub the filter with a toothbrush once per month to remove residue and increase air circulation.

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

## Billing Corner

### SmartHub Bill Pay and 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 is 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 and Android devices. Check out our website at [www.ywelectric.coop](http://www.ywelectric.coop) for more information. [Byron and Lyn McCall, 743313601]

# “Standby” Me

## The pros and cons of a permanent standby generator

Many big businesses and massive buildings rely on standby power when the power goes out — for the safety of their employees and customers as well as to power essential items. More and more home versions are also being installed so families can have backup power when they need it — to power appliances and essential medical equipment, or simply for convenience.

There is more than one type of permanent generator. One has a transfer switch that must be manually “thrown” before turning on the alternate source of power, which is wired into a house. This type of generator is permanent but not considered “standby” because of the manual switch, and it should not be located near a home. (Consult a professional electrician when installing or maintaining a permanent generator.)

Not throwing the switch can result in backfeeding, which sends electricity back into power lines and can seriously injure or kill electric lineworkers or others.

Another type of fixed generator is permanently housed in a metal box and is usually located close to the house. It is the most expensive permanent generator: a standby version that is permanently and professionally installed to power most of the appliances in your home.

When needed, a standby generator automatically transfers the power source from the electric grid to the generator. The cost of this type of permanent generator varies depending on how much backup power you want.

Besides the cost of the system, there are also installation costs to consider since it needs to be installed by licensed and bonded contractors — this is definitely not a DIY project. Fixr, a home remodeling resource, estimates the national average install cost



▲ Thinking about getting a permanent generator? Call Y-W Electric Association first.

between \$4,500 and \$9,000, not including the price of the unit.

When considering a standby generator, a representative from the supplier you select will assess your home’s energy needs and should ask you what you want to power in the event of an outage. Other required steps include preparing a site near your current electrical meter and pouring a concrete pad.

The contractor will install a new subpanel and automatic transfer switch. Your generator supplier should also create a detailed plan of which appliances and electronics should not be supplied with power during an outage, since the generator’s power supply can fluctuate and possibly damage sensitive items.

To inquire about how permanent generators should be safely used and installed, contact Y-W Electric Association at 970-345-2291.

**For more information about electrical safety, go to [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org). [Lori Willis, 3305008404]**

## 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 July 2020 issue:

- Timothy and Rhoda Crumley
- James and Rebecca Grogan