

GUNNISON COUNTY ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

Powering Possibilities

OCTOBER 2020



MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 180
Gunnison, CO 81230-0180



STREET ADDRESS

37250 West Highway 50
Gunnison, CO 81230



ph 970-641-3520
tf 800-726-3523
fax 970-641-7333
web www.gcea.coop
email gcea@gcea.coop



[facebook.com/
GunnisonCountyElectricAssociation](https://facebook.com/GunnisonCountyElectricAssociation)



[@GunnisonREA](https://twitter.com/GunnisonREA)

MEMBER COOPERATION IS THE KEY TO MAKING A DIFFERENCE

BY ALLIY SAHAGUN MEMBER RELATIONS SUPERVISOR



ALLIY SAHAGUN

It was a crisp autumn evening in September 2019 when I met Gunnison County Electric Association consumer-members Dana Delaney and Randy Swift for the first time. Together, they coordinated a local effort in Crested Butte to march down Elk Avenue in support of climate action. I attended the rally with Gunnison County Electric Association CEO Mike McBride to support our members and share information about GCEA's Green Power and electric vehicle programs. The turnout was fantastic, and the vibe was powerful. Several people spoke about their desire to ensure our planet is cleaner, both now and for future generations. Twenty-five GCEA consumer-members signed up for green power that night, sending a powerful message to the GCEA board and wholesale power supplier Tri-State Generation and Transmission that clean, renewable energy is important to the Gunnison Valley.

Since that time, we have seen increased participation from GCEA members attending member forums, board meetings, and climate action conferences, and creating groups like the Gunnison Valley Climate Crisis Coalition (GVC3). These members are finding a way to share what matters to them and better understand how we as a community can work together not

just to talk about needed change, but also to take action.

This type of consumer-member involvement demonstrates the seven cooperative principles that come with GCEA membership. To these consumer-members, their involvement goes way beyond paying their bill and enjoying the convenience of power at the flip of a switch. They are committed to the principles and ideals that formed this cooperative in the first place, and they have the creativity and passion to join arm in arm with other members and GCEA staff to make a difference.

To help organize the efforts of various groups and stakeholders in the valley, GCEA formed a Climate Action Coalition to streamline the sharing of information and discuss local renewable projects. Being part of this bigger coalition has helped members like Delaney feel empowered and better connected, not only to their community, but also with GCEA. "I am proud to be working on common goals together with



▲ GVC3 brings information on Green Power to a gathering in Crested Butte.



▲ Last fall, GCEA was on hand for a march to support climate change.



▲ GCEA joins the local valley conversation on the move to renewable energy resources.

GCEA,” Dana Delaney said. “We are all part of the same mission — greening the grid.”

In furthering the work of this green mission, GVC3 members have taken a grassroots approach to educating their fellow GCEA members on how to participate in GCEA’s green programs: Green Power, Local Renewable Fund and Community Solar Garden. They held meetings, made phone calls, went door-to-door and held events to promote these programs and encourage members to sign up.

GCEA and GVC3 member Gesa Michel finds that her involvement in GCEA’s green programs allows her to share ideas and contribute to GCEA’s goal of adding renewable energy to the grid. Her experience has shown her that the expression “member-owned” is becoming a reality and not just words on a brochure. Gesa added, “When participating in the many programs that GCEA offers, you feel enabled, part of a group and supported when there is need. You feel that you have some kind of say in what type of electricity you receive.”

The momentum of these efforts is growing. We are seeing more consumer-members sign up for green power, contribute to our local renewable fund, reserve shares in our community solar garden and take an EV test drive. Our membership is taking action and it is exciting to see. This momentum is happening because our consumer-members are engaging with their electric co-op. What matters to them matters to us, and we are working together for the common good. If you want to be a part of something that can have an impact on future generations, join us in our efforts to “green the grid.”

Your cooperation with your fellow electric co-op consumer-members will make a difference.

EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARIES

Holly Palmer - Member Relations and Billing Supervisor, 22 years
Sarah Taramarcaz – Billing Assistant, 2 years

GCEA CO-OP CONVERSATIONS

VIRTUAL MEETING

Thursday, October 8 at 6:30 pm.

Virtual Conversations with your Directors!

Get acquainted with your GCEA board of directors and ask questions about your electric co-op. The floor is yours!



Please visit, www.gcea.coop for login information.

LINeworker SCHOLARSHIP

GCEA offers scholarships for students planning to pursue a career in the electrical industry. For more information on the lineworker scholarship, please contact GCEA at 970-641-3520 or visit www.gcea.coop/scholarships.





GCEA
Member Appreciation Month

GCEA has been helping members for over 80 years, and wants to show appreciation during October's National Cooperative Month. This year we will be giving the first 50 members to submit a webform submission a \$5.00 bill credit. Members who enter will also be entered into a drawing to win a \$50.00 bill credit!

Visit www.gcea.coop for your chance at a bill credit.

GCEA IS OWNED BY THE MEMBERS IT SERVES.
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT GCEA, AT 970-641-3520.

OPERATION ROUND UP®

College tuition keeps rising every year, and it gets harder and harder for families to pay for it. Luckily, Gunnison County Electric Association members have an opportunity to support the educational funds of youth in the service territory by participating in Operation Round Up®.

HOW IT WORKS* Members who volunteer to take part in the program will have their monthly electric bill rounded up to the next highest dollar. For example, if your monthly bill was \$52.30, you would pay \$53. The extra 70 cents goes into a special account. Once you are signed up, GCEA will automatically round up the bill each month. Every little bit helps students with college expenses.

**Members are not required to participate, but GCEA greatly appreciates the generous donation to the scholarship fund. These donations are not tax-deductible.*

OPERATION ROUND UP® ENROLLMENT FORM

Yes! I wish to contribute* to Operation Round Up®. Please add the amount to my monthly electric bill. I understand I may stop my contribution at any time.

- Round up my electric bill to the next highest dollar.
- I wish to make an additional monthly contribution of \$ _____.

PLEASE PRINT

Name: _____

Account Number: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

Signature: _____

SEND COMPLETED FORM TO: Gunnison County Electric Association
Attn.: Billing | P.O. Box 180 | Gunnison, CO 81230

*Not tax-deductible.

YOUTH TOUR & CAMP

GCEA offers leadership opportunities for high school juniors to help them prepare for the future. The Washington D.C. Youth Tour introduces students to the nation's capital with tours of museums and historic monuments, meetings with Colorado congressional delegations and fun-filled activities. **Youth Tour applications are due Friday, November 20, 2020.**

Another great way for students to prepare for their future is through the Leadership Camp. Every July, the camp is held at Glen Eden Resort near Steamboat Springs. For nearly 40 years, electric cooperatives in Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming have provided this outstanding camp for students who are interested in leadership and electric cooperatives. Although students learn a lot in one week, it's not all hard work. Each year, there is a float trip down the Colorado River, a trip to Fish Creek Falls and plenty of free time to swim, play volleyball and meet new friends. **The Leadership Camp application deadline is Friday, November 20, 2020.**

Applications will be available in October at the Gunnison and Crested Butte offices, Crested Butte Community School, Gunnison High School, Lake City Community School and online at <http://gcea.coop/content/scholarships>.



7 Cybersecurity Tips You Need to Know When Working From Home

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people either have been forced or have chosen to work from home. This new working environment has many benefits, but it is important to protect yourself in cyberspace. Here are some expert cybersecurity tips to keep yourself and your organization safe when you are working from home:



1. Follow Your Company's Security Practices

Have a dedicated inbox folder for your work emails and check them regularly for security updates. Before you set up your home office, get all the details on what your organization's rules and protocols are for cybersecurity.

2. Stick to Your Organization's IT Products

Make sure your home computer has the same tech products that your company uses, especially when it comes to secure messaging, antivirus and firewall protection. You don't want to be your company's weakest link when it comes to cybercriminals.

3. Keep Your Software and Operating Systems Updated

As soon as you see a reminder to update your software, do it! Software companies release patches and issue updates fixing glitches all the time. Don't ignore those messages. Either act on them straight away or set your computer to update automatically.

4. Swap Out Passwords for Passphrases

Security experts are now advising the use of strong passphrases rather than passwords. They are easier to remember and harder for hackers to hack. Use a different password or passphrase for every website and app on your phone, tablet and computer.

5. Switch on Multifactor Authentication

Multifactor authentication gives you an extra layer of protection from cybercriminals eager to hack your computer. This form of security can use combinations of a passphrase, PIN, security key, or biometric identification, such as a fingerprint, and is extremely difficult for hackers to decode.

6. Use a VPN

A VPN, or virtual private network, is a way of shielding your device from external observation. Many organizations specify that employees working from home use a VPN on their computers. A VPN will encrypt any data you send to the office and will scan for malicious software like viruses.

7. Don't Fall for Phishers

Being skeptical of emails from people you don't know should be your regular practice anyway, but it's especially important when you are working from home. Cybercriminals might send an email purporting to be from your organization or bank, and these can look extremely convincing. Be aware and cautious, especially before opening messages and email attachments.

SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER

Another school year is in session, and it is time to start talking with high school seniors about the importance of higher education. Each year it gets harder to pay for college, but GCEA is here to help students pursue their dreams of furthering their education.

For decades, GCEA has provided scholarship assistance for graduating seniors to pursue an education beyond high school and offers a variety of scholarships to students residing in the service territory.

Funding comes from unclaimed patronage capital, the generosity of consumer-members, the Allen, Somrak and Drake families, Tri-State Generation and Transmission, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, individual directors, and GCEA employees. This year applications will be available in December at the Gunnison and Crested Butte offices, Crested Butte Community School, Gunnison High School, Lake City Community School and online at www.gcea.coop/scholarships. **Application deadline is Friday, January 29, 2021, by 4:30 p.m.**

GREEN THE GRID

Are you looking for different ways to help green the grid?

GCEA offers several different ways to voluntarily support clean energy through our Green the Grid Programs. You can easily reduce your carbon footprint by simply signing up for one or all of the options below.



GREEN POWER PROGRAM

For a little extra per month, the Green Power Program offsets your electric usage with renewable energy credits (RECs).

www.gcea.coop/green-power-program



LOCAL RENEWABLE PROJECT FUND

Sign up for a monthly contribution to support the future development of local projects!

www.gcea.coop/local-renewable-project-fund



COMMUNITY SOLAR GARDEN

An affordable way to promote local solar production and reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions.

www.gcea.coop/Community-Solar-Garden

WWW.GCEA.COOP/GREEN-THE-GRID