

YAMPA VALLEY ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

DECEMBER 2020



MAILING ADDRESS

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Yampa Valley Electric Association

is a cooperative that provides value to its member-owners through technology that delivers safe and reliable electric service in an environmentally and financially responsible manner.

YAMPA VALLEY ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

BROADBAND ESSENTIAL SERVICES & COVID-19

BY STEVE JOHNSON GENERAL MANAGER



STEVE JOHNSON

The COVID-19 crisis has put the spotlight on the absolute and outright need for ubiquitous, high-performing broadband. The data — and the people themselves — tell us that today's rural America is not fully prepared for the "connected" state we are facing. It has taken a global health and economic crisis to a position where broadband has been identified as an "essential service," allowing Americans to work and attend school from their residence. Yampa Valley Electric Association has been working to help bridge the rural-urban communications gap through the work of our wholly-owned subsidiary, Luminare Fiber, LLC.

The pandemic has forced us to rethink the practice and delivery of health care, education and professional services, among many other things. As we move forward in the midst, and wake, of the pandemic both on the local and national levels, a realistic picture is being painted in rural America. In several of our communities, the challenges of not being connected have been daunting and debilitating. We are at a defining moment, and rural America must find a way forward, in what is already a more connected economy.

In our territory, it has been increasingly clear for quite some time that broadband is a

necessity for community health, economic development, education and well-being. Now more than ever, the future of regional economic development, student achievement and robust health and emergency services will depend on unilateral deployment of broadband throughout the counties we serve. In the last few years, the most populated areas in our territory have been the only financially attractive locations for private broadband providers to offer service. The remaining rural and remote high-cost areas have been left out and remain persistently unserved. In our commitment to serve ALL our communities, to be a stabilizing force in the face of power plant and coal mine closures and now to provide needed services during a global pandemic, we are doing everything we can to bring broadband to every member of our cooperative.

As many of you know, we live in some of the most rugged, remote and rural areas in the nation. Take a drive to Toponas, Hamilton or Maybell and you will understand why it has been discouraging to consider delivering fiber optics to these areas. Therefore, funding support is essential. We have been honored to receive nearly

YVEA OFFICES CLOSED

December 24, 25 and
January 1, 2021,
in observance of the holidays.

*Wishing you and yours a safe
holiday season and a happy new year.*



\$2.4 million in funding partnership from the Colorado Broadband Deployment Fund to bring fiber to north Routt County, and are currently lighting up service to these community members. And now, we are thrilled to announce we have received \$6 million in grant funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to deliver fiber to our most remote and rural members — those who live in the Hamilton and Maybell areas, and those who live in south Routt and north Eagle counties in the Toponas, Bond, McCoy and Burns communities.

This is not something we have done or are doing alone. It has taken the collaboration of countless community members to work toward the ambitious goal of having all our rural and remote citizens connected. From the partnership of Northwest Colorado

Broadband, to Project Thor, to the strategic broadband plans commissioned by Routt and Moffat counties, to assistance from the Colorado Broadband Office, this has been a step-by-step process of identifying needs and resources and working together to pursue what is best for our communities.

Before COVID-19, the stakes were exceptionally high. Today, they are even higher. The COVID-19 pandemic has radically altered everyday life. For YVEA and Luminare Fiber, extending true broadband communications into our rural areas is the current-day equivalent of the work our cooperative did to bring our rural members electricity in the 1940s. We continue to take our mission to power your life seriously.

Then. Now. Always. We're proud to power your life. #PowerOn

AWESOME SUMMER ADVENTURES AWAIT HIGH SCHOOLERS

Yampa Valley Electric Association is now accepting applications for the Youth Leadership Camp near Steamboat Springs, CO. The camp is an all-expense-paid trip for high school students between the ages of 16 and 18, as of June 2021.

The Youth Leadership Camp will take place July 17-22, 2021. This weeklong adventure brings together about 100 students from Colorado, Kansas, Wyoming, and Oklahoma to the mountains near Steamboat Springs, CO. Students will learn about the cooperative business model and leadership skills that will serve them well throughout their life. There is also plenty of time set aside for campers to explore and enjoy the mountains and take advantage of Colorado's great outdoors.

Yampa Valley Electric Association



Students at Leadership Camp watch YVEA perform a safety demonstration.

covers all costs for two students to participate in the program, including travel, lodging, and food. The only cost to the students being spending money for souvenirs or extra snacks.

Interested students must complete an application form. For more details about the Youth Leadership Camp visit <https://www.yvea.com/youth-leadership-camp>. Application deadline is January 15, 2021.

YVEA ONLINE MEMBER SURVEY

Yampa Valley Electric Association is conducting an online survey of its members through December 31, 2020. The survey has been sent to every consumer-member with an email address on file.

“As a member-owned cooperative, member feedback is important to us. We encourage all members to complete this survey,” said Steve Johnson, general manager of YVEA.

Because YVEA values member feedback, other short surveys may be sent via member email. To ensure the YVEA member surveys can reach you, please make sure you have an up-to-date email on file with YVEA. **To update your email address, please contact a YVEA member service representative at 970-879-1160.**

YVEA CAPITAL CREDITS UPDATE

The yearly capital credit retirement process has been completed thanks to the board of directors authorizing the retirement of \$1.75 million in capital credit allocations from the year 2003. This represents 42.8% of the remaining association allocations for that year. Anyone who was a member in 2003 will receive a capital credit retirement refund through several possible ways.

Active members:

- Should receive a check if their retirement is over \$50 (checks will be mailed from St. Louis, Missouri, on December 11).
- Should receive a credit on their electric bill if their retirement is under \$50. These credits started being applied to bills as of the December 3 billing cycle.

Inactive members:

- Will receive a check once their accumulated capital credit refund reaches \$25 (checks will be mailed from St. Louis on December 11).

If you should have any questions, please call 970-879-1160 or email capital-credits@yvea.com.

Small Change, **BIG** Difference

Grants awarded for October 2020

Operation Round Up grants provided \$37,100 to help nonprofit organizations around the YVEA territory during the October 2020 grant cycle. The Operation Round Up Board of Directors allocated funds to the following organizations:

- Chief Theater
- Horizons
- Integrated Community
- Little Snake River Assisted Care
- Mountain Village Montessori Charter School
- Operation Warhorse
- Partners in Routt County
- Steamboat Springs School District
- Stone Soup Suppers
- Valley Community Center
- Yampa River Botanic Park
- Yampa Valley Parkinson's Support



Thanks to participating YVEA consumer-members rounding up their bill, more than \$477,500 has been donated through Operation Round Up to organizations making a difference throughout the YVEA service territory. Be a difference maker for your community. Join Operation Round Up by visiting www.yvea.com/operation-round-up, email OperationRoundUp@yvea.com or call 970-879-1160.

The next nonprofit organization **application deadline is May 15, 2021.**

Yampa Valley Electric Association Purchases Solar Garden from Clean Energy Collective

Exciting news! Yampa Valley Electric Association has purchased the Clean Energy Collective Community Solar Garden located in Craig. The solar garden will now be known as the Yampa Valley Community Solar Garden.

Currently the garden is fully subscribed, and participants will continue to benefit from the energy produced by those panels.

This is an important community project, and YVEA is proud to keep it powered up for all subscribers as well as keeping this renewable energy in its power mix.



New Electric Vehicle Charging Station Rates

On January 1, 2021, YVEA will implement an electric vehicle charging station rate designed to recover costs on co-op-owned public EV charging stations. Currently YVEA has Level 2 co-op-owned stations at our Craig and Steamboat campuses available for any EV driver to use. YVEA will soon have a Level 3 fast charger in the town of Yampa.

The fueling rates are as follows:

- Rate code 61 for all association-owned electric vehicle Level 2 charging stations: 15 cents per kWh plus \$1 per hour if charging more than 3 hours.
- Rate code 62 for all association-owned electric vehicle Level 3 charging stations: 25 cents per minute plus 20 cents per kWh.

Both of these rates are the recommended rates furnished by the Colorado Energy Office. They are designed to align with our mission to be fair and equitable and recover costs associated with delivering power and maintaining these units for the drivers who use them.



Luminate Broadband

December is the time for holiday cheer and gathering with family and friends. Luminate Broadband's Managed WiFi service lets you focus on enjoying the time spent with your loved ones instead of being frustrated managing your WiFi network.

Optimizing network performance, troubleshooting network issues and managing devices can be a distracting headache. Give yourself the gift of WiFi peace of mind with Luminate's Managed WiFi, which also includes the setup of up to 10 devices and two in-home service calls per year.

For more details or questions, call 970-GIG-DEAL (970-444-3325).

YVEA Announces USDA Grant Award

Increasing high-speed broadband access in rural northwestern Colorado

Steve Johnson, general manager and CEO of Yampa Valley Electric Association and Luminare Fiber, LLC, and Sallie Clark U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Colorado State Director announced that the USDA is awarding \$6 million to YVEA to expand broadband service in northwestern Colorado.

The USDA will provide funding to YVEA and Luminare through its ReConnect program to deploy a fiber-to-the-premises network that will connect 264 rural households, 27 farms and ranches, 27 businesses and three post offices to high-speed broadband. With this funding, YVEA and Luminare will construct 200 miles of middle mile fiber to connect northwestern Coloradans in Routt, Moffat and Eagle counties.

“Across our territory, it has been increasingly clear that broadband services are not an option at this time, but a necessity for community health and well-being,” Johnson said. “The buildout of broadband is the single most important investment we



Shown holding a length of fiber optic cable are (left to right): Routt County Commissioner Tim Corrigan, USDA Rural Development Colorado State Director Sallie Clark, YVEA and Luminare General Manager Steve Johnson, Eagle County Commissioner Kathy Chandler-Henry, Colorado Energy Office Director of Federal Broadband Engagement Teresa Ferguson and Moffat County Commissioner Ray Beck.

can make in our communities — impacting economic development, student achievement, emergency services and health care. We are grateful to the USDA for helping us provide stability and opportunity to the rural and remote citizens of northwestern Colorado.”

USDA’s ReConnect Loan and Grant Program launched in 2018 as a pilot program to expand broadband service to primarily unserved rural areas.

#YVEA #PowerOnTogether

INTERESTED IN BACKUP POWER?

Get your name on the list for our 2021 standby generator program

We offer Briggs & Stratton 12-kilowatt and 20kW Fortress generators with 10-year warranties. Installed costs range from \$10,000 to \$15,000. The standby generator program is offered to YVEA residential members who own the property on which the generator will be installed. The generators will be permanently installed and provide backup power for your entire home.

If you are interested in YVEA installing a standby generator at your home, please visit the website at www.yvea.com/standby-generator-program to fill out an interest form. For questions, please send an email to generators@yvea.com or call the energy solutions department at 970-871-2267.



DECEMBER SPONSORSHIPS

Craig Downtown Business Association
Christmas Lighting

YVEA and Craig Daily Press
Tour of Lights Contest

Town of Phippsburg
Lighting Contest

Town of Yampa
Lighting Contest