

2020 IN OUR REARVIEW MIRROR

BY TOM WALCH CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

As we ring in the new year, a lot of folks are expressing relief that 2020 will now be in our rearview mirror. With the promise of vaccines, the threat of COVID-19 will slowly but surely subside. When I consider everything we were up against, I am incredibly proud of everyone on our Grand Valley Power team, and the way we took on everything that 2020 threw at us. I'm not surprised, though, because everyone on the team is invested in our Grand Valley Power mission: Empowering Lives with Hometown Service. Everyone on the team takes our guiding principles to heart, as a quick review of the past year demonstrates:

We are committed to the safety of our workforce and the general public.

Safety serves as the foundation for everything we do. Our commitment to safety was even more important — and more challenging — in the midst of the coronavirus public health menace. Our employees moved quickly when the governor ordered office closures. We gave ourselves a crash course on how to work remotely and, thanks to good technology investments and great leadership, we protected our workforce and customers, without letting our five-star customer service drop off.

We all know that the job of a lineman is one of the most dangerous ones around. Many of the tasks required of our linemen can't be done wearing a mask or maintaining social distance. Critical safety training was much more difficult to complete, and probably not as effective as it normally is because of gathering-size limitations necessitated by COVID-19. Throw in other complicating factors such as the Pine Gulch Fire, which at the time was the largest wildfire in Colorado history. Thanks in large part to the

efforts of the wildland fire teams, GVP and its members stayed safe. Even with all these challenges, as this column goes to print, we are on track to close out 2020 without a lost-time accident.

We strive to do the right thing, holding true to our values and principles.

When it became clear that many of our members faced dire financial circumstances because of the pandemic, we responded with our Hometown Relief Fund, helping these consumers with their electric bills. We didn't stop there, as we continued to support the community by sewing masks for health care workers and first responders, supporting local food banks, and promoting local businesses with social media campaigns and contests.

We seek to find new and better ways to serve our members and communities.

In one way or another, all of the pandemic responses outlined above — just about everything we did in 2020 — were new and better ways for GVP to serve our constituencies. But one special effort warrants a special mention: GVP's first-ever virtual annual meeting. We were learning on the fly, but even so, our team members put together an engaging and informative video presentation that members could watch from the comfort and safety of their homes.

We are dedicated to delivering value to all we serve.

Delivering on this all-important value proposition is always a challenge for a company that runs as lean as GVP. There were unexpected costs and learning curves associated with working remotely. Administrative orders from the governor suspending disconnections and late fees, while necessary, impaired our ability to collect payment for the service we provided. Rather than



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rely on ready-made excuses for revenue shortfalls, our team members worked conscientiously and compassionately with consumers struggling to pay bills. As a result, our uncollectible accounts look like they will close out the year without a noticeable increase over prior, less complicated years. Our financial performance remains strong as we will hit all financial targets, including payout of CashBack credits to GVP members in accordance with budget plans for the year. Most importantly, we were able to do all these things without increasing our electric rates!

We learned many valuable lessons in 2020. Perhaps most importantly, we learned that a focus on our mission and guiding principles will help us take on just about any challenge that comes our way. I look forward to the coming year, knowing that the experience and confidence we gained this past year will serve Grand Valley Power and its members well in 2021 and beyond.

BOARD MEETING NOTICE

Grand Valley Power board meetings are open to the members, consumers and public, but due to current COVID-19 health concerns, please call us at 970-242-0040 if you are interested in attending our meeting remotely.

Regularly scheduled board meetings are held at 9 a.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at the headquarters building located at 845 22 Road, Grand Junction.

The monthly agenda is posted in the lobby of the headquarters building 10 days before each meeting and posted on the GVP website. If anyone desires to address the board of directors, please let us know in advance and you will be placed on the agenda.

HOME FIRES ARE PREVENTABLE

BY DIRK CLINGMAN COMMUNITY OUTREACH SPECIALIST, GRAND JUNCTION FIRE DEPARTMENT

A home fire is a sudden and catastrophic event. The events leading up to the fire, however, may have occurred slowly over time. Overlooked warning signs and bad habits can all contribute to a life altering fire in your home. The National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) has determined that **the five leading causes of home fires are cooking, heating, electrical, smoking and candles.**

Cooking is a daily essential part of life. Today's world is filled with distractions and carving out time to cook without interruption can be difficult if not impossible. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of cooking related fires.

Leaving a hot pan on the stove while answering a phone call, returning a text or helping your child with homework can easily become a habit, but a small kitchen fire can quickly grow out of control. Remain in the kitchen when cooking on the stovetop and set timers to remind you to remove items from the oven.

Maintain a 3-foot "child-free zone" around the stove, until young children can be safely introduced to cooking.

During the winter months it may be necessary to add additional **heat producing appliances** to your home. Holiday guests may require a space heater to keep them warm and toasty on the pull-out couch or inflatable mattress.

Always plug space heaters directly into a wall outlet without using an extension cord or power strip. Designate

a 3-foot "kid-free-zone" around any heat producing appliance or fireplace.

Purchase products that have been tested by a qualified safety organization and with a working emergency shut-off should it be knocked over. Replace aging equipment without modern safety features.

Electricity is fully integrated into our daily lives. It is easy to take safety for granted when plugging in chargers, appliances, or stretching extension cords to hang decorative lights. Never plug more than one heat producing appliance into an outlet at a time (such as a coffee maker, toaster or space heater).

Extension cords are intended for temporary use and should not be used in place of a wall outlet. Ensure that extension cords are not running across doorways or under carpets.

Phone chargers that are damaged or poorly constructed can produce excess heat or even sparks. Never cover your charging phone with blankets or a pillow while charging.

According to the NFPA, **smoking** caused 17,200 home fires in 2014, resulting in 570 deaths and 1,140 injuries. Most deaths occurred during fires started indoors. If you smoke, smoke outside and discard smoking materials in a deep noncombustible receptacle after dousing your smoking material in water or sand. E-cigarettes have caused fires while being used, transported or

during charging. Never leave a charging e-cigarette unattended.

Candles can add a decorative and pleasant-smelling environment to your home. Candles producing an open flame cause approximately 21 home fires every day peaking in December.

Use candles at least 1-foot from any combustible material in a sturdy holder that cannot easily tip over. Blow out candles before leaving a room, and use caution when lighting candles avoiding contact with your hair or loose clothing.

Include your family and work together to make your home safe from fire. Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and inside bedrooms. Demonstrate safe habits to all family members, plan two ways out of every room and choose an emergency meeting place outside of your home.

Prioritize fire safety and you and your family can greatly reduce the threat of fire in your home.



86% of home heating fire deaths involve space heaters.

Source: National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

Safe Electricity.org

Colorado Youth Tour
June 15-20, 2021

Scan me!

Pack your bags and apply, today!

gvp.org/youth-leadership-programs

GVP GRAND VALLEY POWER

@GVRuralPower

Scholarships are open to GVP High School Juniors & Seniors. Applications are available till January 13, 2021.

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Are we friends yet?

THE BENEFIT OF BEING A CO-OP MEMBER

BY CHRISTMAS WHARTON COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

In many ways, Grand Valley Power resembles other businesses. It has a similar lobby and facility, performs similar functions and must follow sound business practices under state law by filing articles of incorporation and drafting bylaws. Members elect a board of directors and the board sets policy and hires a chief executive officer or general manager to run the day-to-day business. In other regards, cooperatives are distinctly different. The seven cooperative principles explain the way a co-op operates, and the differences are found in the purpose, ownership, control and how benefits are distributed.

MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

One of the specific differences and benefits of a cooperative is returning member capital to the membership. While investor-owned utilities return a portion of any profits back to their shareholders, electric co-ops operate to provide a service at cost. So, instead of returning excess funds, known as margins, to folks who might not live in the same region or even the same state as you, GVP allocates and periodically refunds member credits based on how much total electricity you purchased during a year.

After reviewing the financial health of the cooperative, the board of directors may declare a retirement, at which time part of each member's capital allocation amount is refunded. CashBack Credits are sent by mail (usually in December) in the form of a check.

SCHOOL DISTRICT 51: POWERING EDUCATION

While our members are largely residential, we do have some commercial accounts on our lines, such as School District 51. It is one of our largest accounts (and one of the oldest, with GVP serving it since the 1950s). Mesa County Valley School District 51 is the largest school district on the Western Slope of Colorado and the 14th largest school district in the state. We provide electric service to many of the schools in our county, including Loma Elementary, Mesa View Elementary, Thunder Mountain Elementary, Gateway School, Rimrock Elementary, Fruita 8/9, Independence Academy Charter School and Caprock Academy (although Caprock is a state charter school).

This year, we're sending over 18,000 CashBack Credit checks to members and we're shining the light on our longtime member,



▲ Mesa County Valley School District 51 Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Brian Hill and D51 Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Diana Sirko accept this year's CashBack Credit check. The funds are used for various efforts such as scholarships, educational materials or experiences and instructional programs.

School District 51. Now more than ever, families and businesses have been impacted financially by the coronavirus. From the shift to distance learning to the impact on school budgets, CashBack Credits come at a time when they can be used by the district to provide families access to opportunities that perhaps they could not afford.

"We will utilize the funding to provide scholarships for students to attend special events or educational experiences some families could not otherwise afford so that all of our students have access to these opportunities. The funding is also used for educational materials for special activities or instructional programs," said Superintendent Dr. Diana Sirko. In years past, CashBack Credits helped purchase additional computer stations and technology for classrooms.

As the pandemic stretches into 2021, the importance of our concern for community (also another cooperative principle) is deeply embedded within our employees and board of directors. Community support will have an impact on providing students and parents with the unique challenges that come with rural school districts. With this new year, we're supporting the education of students even more with a donation to the School District 51 Foundation. Together, we will power our students and provide the resources they need to thrive.

For additional information about your co-op member capital, visit gvp.org/CashBackCredits.

OPERATION INTERDEPENDENCE: MISSION COMPLETE

BY DANA POGAR COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

As we begin the New Year, it's time we reflect on the past 12 months to recognize what we've achieved as a cooperative, community and membership. Given the hardships presented this past year, it was even more important for us at Grand Valley Power to focus on the seventh cooperative principle: concern for our community. Each year, employees and board members are given the opportunity to vote on a charitable organization that truly hits home for them. Given the strong veteran presence at the co-op, it was no surprise that employees and board members voted to support Operation Interdependence.

Operation Interdependence is a nationwide 501(c)3 organization that provides care packages to active military troops and veterans at home. In 2019, the Grand Junction establishment shipped 2,145 boxes that contained over 53,000 care packages to our active and former military members. It's obvious that the hearts behind this team of volunteers are truly committed to supporting our troops, and we were proud to partner with them. Here's a breakdown of how we completed our mission in 2020:

ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Life is "butter" when you have a delicious pancake breakfast in the morning. On October 21, 2020, GVP employees and board members were served a socially distanced pancake breakfast with eggs, sausage and, of course, bacon. For a \$10 donation, attendees could eat flapjacks until both their hearts and bellies were full.

R.E.D. TUMBLER FUNDRAISER

What is better than getting a stylish new tumbler and supporting a great cause? Well, it's getting a limited-edition Grand Valley Power tumbler and raising funds for our troops overseas. This year we wanted to remember everyone deployed (R.E.D.) by providing our employees with something they carry every day: a coffee thermos. Employees and board



▲ GVP employees Eric Lowary (left) and Joe Michalewicz (right) cook a hearty breakfast for our cooperative family.



▲ Grand Valley Power's donation site for collecting care package items.



▲ Forty-six entries were submitted to GVP's coloring contest. Three winners were selected to receive a gift card to Eureka! McConnell Science Museum, Bananas Fun Park, or eBricks Unofficial LEGO Distributor.

members could purchase a patriotic GVP thermos for \$15 plus five thank you notes to troops. With these efforts, we filled 252 care packages with a personalized thank you note to active soldiers and raised \$1,000.

CARE PACKAGE SUPPLY DRIVE

The generosity of our community was truly the key in fulfilling Operation Interdependence's biggest need: care package items. From September through November, we hosted a care package supply drive where the public was encouraged to donate items, such as playing cards, beef jerky or chewing gum, to include in care boxes. In total, we provided and filled over 1,000 care packages for active military members and veterans at home.

COLOR FOR OUR TROOPS

This year we wanted to get our mini community members involved by giving them a chance to say thank you by participating in our Color for Troops contest. This contest was open to the public and allowed kids to get creative by coloring a patriotic GVP coloring page. We were truly humbled by the number of submissions we received and want to recognize and thank each artist who took part in this contest. Congratulations to Wesson, Joel and Karter for winning a \$50 gift card to a fun local business.

Grand Valley Power wants to personally thank all who contributed to this year's community project. With your help, GVP raised a total of \$5,265 for Operation Interdependence and sent over 1,000 care packages to troops overseas. It's amazing what we can do as a community and co-op when we all work together.

If you want to further support O.I., please visit oidelivers.org, and for more information on GVP's hometown partnerships, visit gvp.org/hometown-partnerships.