

GUNNISON COUNTY ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

Powering Possibilities

JANUARY 2021



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



@GunnisonREA

GOALS FOR 2021

BY MIKE MCBRIDE CEO

In order to meet the publication deadline for the January issue of *Colorado Country Life*, I am writing this on November 30. As I write, I am reminded of how quickly situations developed and how often circumstances changed during 2020, and I wonder how much will change by the time you read this.

As I think back on 2020, I am intrigued by two observations. First, by how much we need each other. I am fundamentally an introvert. Even so, I recognize the profound loss of human connection during this pandemic. How I long for handshakes, smiles, face-to-face meetings and gatherings with family and friends.

Second, I am reminded how much diversity there is in our community, our nation and our world. This past election gave me a chance to think deeply about the members who we serve. We live in a community of good people with different needs, desires and priorities. We can't define people simply as left or right, right or wrong, bad or good.

I am reminded of a book I read a few years ago and highly recommend: *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion*. I won't attempt to summarize the book here. The title alone provides the point I want to emphasize. "Good people" do differ in their views and beliefs. How grateful I am to be surrounded by a community full of good people, to work with good people at Gunnison County Electric Association and to serve so many good people who we refer to as members.

As a cooperative, GCEA strives every day to meet the diverse needs of our members to the best of our ability. A comment in our 2020 member survey reminded me that we often talk about projects like community solar gardens and other renewable projects. What I often fail to emphasize is our determination to develop such projects without paying more for the power they produce.

With this perspective in mind, I want to



MIKE MCBRIDE

share with you some of our strategic goals for 2021.

We continue working to develop one or more 1-megawatt (1,000 kilowatts or about 8 acres) solar arrays. Even though a project of this size cannot compete in terms of the cost per kilowatt-hour produced from a 100-megawatt solar farm, our goal is to get a net cost per kilowatt-hour that is equal to what we currently pay for energy. We can do this by providing an opportunity for those members who have a strong desire for local solar energy to purchase the renewable attributes.

We intend to submit a proposal in January to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for a small hydropower project at the Taylor Dam. We will work cooperatively with all stakeholders and, once again, our goal is to develop a cost-effective resource.

We are also looking to build another 100 kilowatts of community solar. The members who subscribe to these community solar projects cover the full cost of each project.

Fire mitigation is also a strategic priority for us in the coming year. In recent years, we have taken a number of steps and plan to implement additional mitigation in 2021. These efforts span the spectrum from system design to system operation, equipment replacement and cooperative efforts with public and private landowners. All of this does come at a cost, but it is a cost that we feel is necessary.

As always, our number one goal is to serve our members by providing safe, reliable energy with a strong cooperative tradition and a vision for the future.

Thank you and best wishes for a healthy and prosperous new year! We hope to see you again soon.

Town of Crested Butte Green Power

At the beginning of 2020, the Town of Crested Butte generously began paying for green power for every GCEA member within town limits. This contribution plus the 30% renewable energy already available in Tri-State Generation and Transmission's energy portfolio means that 100% of electric usage for those in Crested Butte has been offset with clean energy.

Now that the new year is underway and members in the Town of Crested Butte will be opted out of the Green Power Program as of January 1, 2021, we want share with you our "Green the Grid" programs and your choices to opt in. Whether you are a resident of the Town of Crested Butte or a neighboring community, all GCEA members are invited to participate in one or all of these programs.

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

2. Local Renewable Project Fund — Sign up for a monthly contribution to support the development of local renewable energy projects.

3. Community Solar Garden — An affordable way to promote local solar production and reduce harmful greenhouse gas emissions is by leasing either short- or long-term shares in our community solar gardens in Crested Butte and Gunnison.

Please visit www.gcea.coop/Green-the-Grid for more details or call 970-641-3520 to speak to one of our member support specialists.



SMARTHUB

AT HOME OR ON THE GO

SmartHub allows you to manage all aspects of your electric account from your computer, tablet or phone.

- Make a payment
- Check energy use
- Report an outage



To register, you will need your account number and the name on your account exactly as printed on your bill statement.

For more information, please call 970-641-3520.

SAVE MONEY

Electricity is becoming cleaner every day and can save consumers money on their energy costs over time.



Did you know...
Replacing your HVAC system with an electric heat pump can **save you nearly \$1,000 per year** on your heating and cooling bills.¹



Did you know...
The average cost of **charging an electric car** is equivalent to **\$1.20 per gallon of gasoline**.²



Did you know...
Owning an electric vehicle can **save you over \$800** in annual maintenance.³

1. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jeffmcmahon/2018/08/19/if-youre-heating-with-propane-or-oil-study-says-go-electric/#208f82b77a71>
2. <https://www.energy.gov/maps/egallon>
3. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-11-29/electric-vehicles-drivers-save-a-lot-on-gas-money>



COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

GCEA linemen assist in fire restoration

Wildfires devastated Colorado this fall, which has led to damage to our state's electric co-ops' systems. Gunnison County Electric Association sent two linemen to assist Mountain Parks Electric (MPE) in power restoration to residents affected by the East Troublesome Fire in Grand County, Colorado. Journeyman Lineman Andy Holsteen and Apprentice Lineman Justin Hulick helped MPE and other co-op linemen with power restoration during the end of October. They worked through some long, cold and snowy conditions to get the power back on as soon and as safely as possible to MPE members.

Cooperation among co-ops is one of the seven electric cooperative principles. When one co-op calls for help, the other co-ops come to their aid. Knowing you can count on your co-op family to help you during a crisis is one of the many benefits of being a part of a co-op. GCEA was happy to lend two linemen for several days to help MPE restore power to their members.

We are so proud of Andy and Justin for stepping up to help our co-op family. Leaving their own families for a week wasn't



easy, but we are happy they stepped up when called upon.

The year 2020 was full of surprises, but as a co-op family we came together to work through the challenges. We hope 2021 will bring us fewer surprises, but whatever it does throw our way, we will continue power through.

"Traveling to Granby to assist in fire damage restoration was a very rewarding experience. It was simultaneously heartbreaking to see the destruction caused by the fire and, at the same time, uplifting to witness how a group of complete strangers can band together and start to rebuild a community. It was amazing to observe how different entities can work together, from the tireless work of the firefighters, National Guard and police volunteers, to the immense effort put in by the people keeping communications running smoothly and

those cooking meals. I was humbled by the gratitude shown by the people of Granby and Grand Lake and by our host co-op, Mountain Parks Electric. I was very fortunate to be able to assist in the efforts for the short time I was there. It is comforting to know that if our community ever faced a devastating event like Granby did, there would be a solid group of people ready to roll up their sleeves and pick up a shovel to rebuild. It was such an honor to work with co-ops from all corners of the state; the camaraderie I felt was almost instant. I am lucky to have been chosen to go to Granby. My take-aways from the trip are of far greater value than any line I could have helped repair. I would like to especially thank our wonderful co-op for the opportunity to travel to Granby and for the outstanding people that make up the GCEA family."

**Apprentice Lineman
Justin Hulick**

"It was a very rewarding experience to go and help another co-op in a time of need. The brotherhood among linemen is a strong connection, and it was great to get an opportunity to see it in action. The work is nothing glamorous more often than not, but it is all necessary to restore power to the members. With a great amount of humor, even the most exhausting days can be good days."

**Crested Butte Journeyman Lineman
Andy Holsteen**



LINeworker SCHOOL

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.



January 2021
Energy Efficiency
Tip of the Month

Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips. Advanced power strips look like ordinary power strips, but they have built-in features that are designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use (also known as phantom load).

Source: nrel.gov

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

Board Election and Annual Meeting Date

The ELECTION FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS and the 82nd Annual Member Meeting for Gunnison County Electric Association, Inc. (GCEA) will be held on **Tuesday, June 22, 2021, at 6 p.m.**

Board Districts up for Election: The GCEA Board of Director positions, each at the end of a three-year term, that are eligible for election are as follows:

District No. 6 – (Incumbent Polly Oberosler)

The Tomichi Creek area east of the City of Gunnison to the Continental Divide within the certificated service area of GCEA.

District No. 7 – (Incumbent Mark Daily)

This district shall be considered an “at-large” district encompassing the entire certificated area of GCEA. A member from any of the association’s districts may seek nomination for the position of Director of District 7, subject to the nomination and election procedures applicable to all other districts.

How to Become a Candidate: In order to be nominated as a candidate for the GCEA Board of Directors Election, an interested person must meet the qualifications for serving as a director and must timely submit a written nomination petition signed by at least 15 members of GCEA. **Signers do not have to live within your district.** Additionally, GCEA strongly encourages any person interested in serving as a director to schedule an information/orientation meeting with CEO Mike McBride.

Petitions will be available March 15, 2021.

To serve as a director, you must be a member of GCEA, reside within the district for which you are nominated and meet all other qualifications for serving as a director.

DEADLINE: Completed petitions must be returned to GCEA by the end of the business day at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, May 7, 2021.

Information: For complete information concerning the nomination process, please call Chief Executive Officer Mike McBride or Executive Assistant Sherry Shelton at 970-641-3520 or email directorelections@gcea.coop.

REBATES

HOME APPLIANCES & EQUIPMENT

REBATES OFFERED:

ENERGY STAR® appliances:

- Refrigerator/freezer: \$50
- Recycling old fridge/freezer, limit 2/member/year: \$60
- Front load clothes washer: \$60
- Top load clothes washer: \$50
- Electric clothes dryer: \$30
- Hybrid heat pump clothes dryer: \$90
- Dishwasher: \$35



- Electric water heaters 30-55 gallons (does not need to be ENERGY STAR® certified)
- Standard electric water heater: \$50
- Marathon water heater with lifetime tank warranty: \$70

GCEA members, blow your costs away on a new electric snow blower with the outdoor power equipment rebate!
- 25% of cost up to \$50 for new electric blower

If you are interested in the rebates GCEA offers, please visit www.gcea.coop/rebates.

LAST CALL FOR SCHOLARSHIPS



Do you need financial assistance to help further your education? Each year college gets harder and harder to pay for, but GCEA is here to help students pursue their dreams of furthering their education. Applications are available online at www.gcea.coop/scholarships.

Returning college applicants must fill out and send in the returning student application form with current college transcripts.

Applications should be emailed to scholarship@gcea.coop. For questions, please call Logann Long at 970-641-3520.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE IS FRIDAY, JANUARY 29, 2021, by 4:30 P.M.