

# EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

*Echoes of the Empire*

AUGUST 2021

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## Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

When shopping for new lightbulbs, know the difference between lumens and watts. Lumens measure the amount of light produced by the bulb.

Watts measure energy consumption. Energy-saving LEDs come in a variety of colors and brightness levels and last 15-25 times longer than incandescent bulbs.

Source: energy.gov

# EEA'S 2021 ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

BY ANDY CARTER

MEMBER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER



ANDY CARTER

Empire Electric Association held its annual meeting on Thursday, June 17, at the Engineering and Operations Center just north of Cortez. The contested election for District 1 was decided in favor of incumbent Jerry Fetterman. Robert “Bob” Barry, who ran unopposed for District 2, will serve another term as well. Our guest speaker was Brad Nebergall, senior vice president, energy management at Tri-State Generation and Transmission.

Brad gave an overview of the progress made by Tri-State as it moves forward in implementing its Responsible Energy Plan while maintaining grid reliability. He specifically mentioned the Dolores Canyon and the Coyote Gulch solar generation projects being built in EEA territory totaling 250 megawatts, and the 104 MW Crossing Trails wind farm that achieved commercial operation in May. These new renewable energy sources are part of Tri-State’s plan to supply 70% of its members’ electricity needs with clean energy by 2030.

Brad also described how Tri-State was able to reliably deliver affordable power through its diverse power supply portfolio and robust transmission system during the extreme cold weather event in February. Tri-State’s emphasis on system integrity and preparedness allowed it to continue to meet the needs of its member cooperatives with minimal financial impact.

Remarks from board President David Sitton and General Manager Josh Dellinger described a year full of challenges where cooperative employees worked to make sure our membership had the electricity they



Brad Nebergall, Tri-State senior vice president, energy management, addresses the EEA membership.



Jerry Fetterman, District 1 director



Robert “Bob” Barry, District 2 director

needed while protecting employees and maintaining the cooperative’s good financial position to ensure EEA will be there for future generations. A moment was taken to remember and honor former EEA directors John Porter and Bill Bauer who recently passed away.

Josh also outlined the planned rate structure change that will become effective on September 1. The new rate options will provide consumer-members more control over their bills, reduce subsidization in rate classes by charging in a more equitable manner, and improve EEA’s financial



▲ **Grand prize winner Bill Mollenkopf with the battery-powered electric lawnmower he won at EEA's 2021 Annual Meeting. A big thank you to Tri-State for donating the mower.**

stability by aligning how consumer-members are charged with how expenses are incurred to operate and maintain the distribution system. He also announced board approval to pass on the Tri-State rate reduction through reduced rates beginning on September 1 in conjunction with the rate structure change, plus a one-time bill credit to account for the savings from March 1 through August 31 on consumer-members' September 2021 bills.

## Monthly Calendar

**August 13** – EEA's board meeting begins at 8:30 a.m. at its headquarters in Cortez. The agenda is posted 10 days in advance of the meeting at [eea.coop](http://eea.coop). Consumer-member are reminded that public comment is heard at the beginning of the meeting. Meeting restrictions due to health concerns may require the meeting to be held remotely.

**August 20** – Deadline for making rate option choice. Go to [eea.coop](http://eea.coop) for more details, or call EEA at 970-565-4444.

**August 30** – EEA's office closed to complete software system transition.



## Generate Safely.

Never use a portable generator indoors.

Do not plug generators into standard electrical outlets.

Use heavy-duty extension cords to connect appliances into the generator.

Start the generator before connecting appliances.



▲ **Co-op Photo Contest Winner August 2021**  
"Reflections of Lavender" by Cindy Lindvall

# EMPIRE ELECTRIC SOFTWARE SYSTEM UPDATE

BY ANDY CARTER MEMBER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

**“Guests, like fish, begin to smell after three days.” — Benjamin Franklin**

Fortunately, software systems have a longer shelf life than fish, but at some point, upgrades are needed. EEA is in the final preparations to convert its major software systems to allow staff to work more efficiently and provide you, the consumer-members, better support and access to your account information. The upgrade will also result in reduced expenses over the next 10 years, which will help keep rates affordable. The target date for the transition is August 30, 2021.

The new software suite will provide a robust customer interaction platform and will include an online portal as well as a mobile app. You will have better access to your account information and more ways to

interact and communicate with EEA. Your ability to transact business with EEA online will be greatly improved and allow you to work when and how it is most convenient for you.

One change you will see is a new bill design that will begin with your September billing statement. The layout will provide more details in an easier to read format and will arrive with a detailed explanation on how to find your power use and charges. EEA will continue to provide paperless billing options and automated bill payments. Any necessary changes or re-enrollments for those options will be communicated to participating consumer-members over the next few weeks to ensure you will be prepared for the transition. Most of the requirements to re-enroll are driven by security measures EEA takes to safeguard

your data and privacy and include re-entering your credit card information for payment and opting in for notifications.

There will be a short time interval at the end of August where EEA will manually record transactions while historical customer data is transferred to the new system. This will include closing the EEA office on Monday, August 30, to allow employees to manually enter transactions that were requested during the data transition period and verify the historical data transfer was complete and accurate. EEA is working to make the transition with as few inconveniences as possible and appreciates your understanding as it upgrades the software to continue providing excellent consumer-member service well into the future.



# WHAT TO DO AFTER A WILDFIRE



## IMPORTANT SAFETY TIPS:

Call 911 if any danger is perceived, including downed power lines or damaged power or gas lines.

Hire a qualified electrician/licensed contractor to assess your home's electrical system.

Consult local experts on the best way to restore and plant your land with fire-safe landscaping.

There are more than 50,000 wildfires in the U.S. each year. Between 85 and 90% of wildfires are started by humans. More wildfires occur in the East (including central states), but wildfires in the West are larger and burn more acreage.

Once a wildfire has subsided, always check with officials before returning to your home. **When it is safe to do so, check your home for the following:**

- Hot spots in the ground.
- Smoldering stumps and vegetation.
- Sparks or embers in exterior areas (including the roof), in the attic and in the entire house.
- Fire damage throughout your home.
- The well or pump-house being in working order.

Sources: CAL FIRE, Congressional Research Service

 Safe  
Electricity.org®