

# MORGAN COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

AUGUST 2021



734 Barlow Road  
P.O. Box 738  
Fort Morgan, CO 80701



970-867-5688



customerservice@mcrea.org



www.mcrea.org



facebook.com/MorganCountyREA



@MorganCountyREA



@morgancountyrea



youtube.com/MorganCountyREA

## MCREA Mission

Morgan County REA, a member-owned cooperative, is dedicated to serving our members by providing safe, reliable energy with a strong tradition and vision for the future.

 This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



DAVID FRICK

## CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

BY DAVID FRICK GENERAL MANAGER

Summer is always a prime time to witness a community in action. County fairs, sporting events, festivals and other gatherings are in full swing during the summer season and our community here at Morgan County Rural Electric Association is no exception. As many of our consumer-members may know, MCREA is guided by seven cooperative principles, one of which is a concern for community. Now of course, this concern can present itself in a variety of ways — especially coming from a rural electric association.

MCREA shows this concern each time a storm causes electric outages within our service territory. We appreciate our consumer-members who report these outages when they happen, and our crews try to be as prompt and efficient as possible as they safely work to get power back on. They understand the importance of providing power to our community.

MCREA also makes community involvement a priority. Your association enjoys attending some of the local fairs and events this summer to host booths and visit with our consumer-members about our services. We also aim to support our area youth not only through our MCREA scholarship and youth programs, but also by participating in the livestock sale at the county fair. Taking part in events such as these allows us to

engage with our consumer-members and answer any questions about the association. Our employees at MCREA are always happy to answer any questions and encourage consumer-members to call or stop by the office at any time.

As an electric association that provides service to areas in six different counties, MCREA does its best to keep the interests of our consumer-members at the forefront of what we do. For example, the cooperative is happy to offer capital credit refunds to qualifying consumer-members once each year. Our association also helps our consumer-members receive rebates for energy-efficient purchases. Additionally, MCREA urges our consumer-members to join our grassroots efforts in order to make the needs of our rural community heard when future legislation and regulations are being discussed. (Gabriel Andrade acct. #xxx0700)

So much of what we do at MCREA stems from concern for community because, after all, we are a member-owned cooperative. It is our consumer-members who provide for and rely on MCREA, and this cooperative is proud to serve that community.



August 2021

## Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

When shopping for new light-bulbs, 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

# UNDERSTANDING POWER SURGES AND BLINKS

BY ABBY BERRY

Have you ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave oven clock when you arrive home. When this happens, you likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power surge or "blink." While the symptoms of surges and blinks can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

## WHAT'S A POWER SURGE?

Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances of a power waveform that can damage, degrade or destroy electronic equipment within your home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage; however, power surges can reach amplitudes of tens of thousands of volts — this can be extremely damaging to your electronic equipment.

Surges can be caused by internal sources, like heating and cooling systems with variable frequency drives, or external sources, like lightning, and can cause damage to power lines and transformers.

Morgan County REA encourages all consumer-members to install surge protective devices, such as surge protector power strips, to safeguard your sensitive electronics. If you experience frequent surges in your home or business and believe the cause is internal, contact a qualified electrician to inspect your electrical system.

## WHAT'S A POWER BLINK?

Power blinks are also brief service interruptions, but they're typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line or protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can occur through a variety of instances, such as squirrels, birds or other small animals contacting an energized power line; tree branches touching a power line; or lightning and other similar events. In fact, when it comes to power disruptions caused by critters, squirrels reign supreme. In 2019 alone, squirrels were responsible for more than 1,200 outages.

Any of the events noted above can cause your power to blink, but you may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices that act like circuit breakers are



working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are actually good because that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

Regardless of the cause, our MCREA crews will be on their way to inspect the damage and make necessary repairs after a power outage. You can help, too. Any time you experience repeated disruptions to your electric service, please let us know by calling 970-867-5688.

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

GOOD LUCK TO THOSE PARTICIPATING IN  
**LOCAL  
FAIRS & RODEOS**  
MORGAN COUNTY REA IS PROUD TO SUPPORT OUR AREA'S YOUTH!

MORGAN COUNTY REA  
Your Rural Electric Cooperative

## Plan for Proper Tree Planting

The best time to plant a tree is March 15 through June 15 or September 1 through October 15, according to the Colorado State Forest Service ([csfs.colostate.edu](http://csfs.colostate.edu)).

If you plan to plant a tree this fall, be sure to select an appropriate location to stay clear of power lines and consider fire prevention strategies.



**For more tree planting tips, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).**

# WHAT GRASSROOTS CAN DO FOR OUR COMMUNITY

BY ROB BARANOWSKI MANAGER OF MEMBER SERVICES

Look back 85 years to 1936. The world was changing. Innovations were being made that would reshape our way of life forever. Electricity was brought to large cities and modern-day conveniences like lights, washing machines and electric stoves — which we often take for granted today — were just being introduced. Electricity in homes and businesses increased convenience, quality of life and prosperity for all those who had access. But rural areas, which were not seen as profitable for companies investing in new electric technologies, were often left out.

People living in rural communities were missing the opportunity to benefit from the new, modern conveniences that access to electricity provided. Rural leaders took the novel approach of stepping away from a for-profit model into one where consumer-members and communities were put first. Support and passage of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 provided federal loans to pave the way for electric distribution systems to be built to serve rural areas in the United States.

Morgan County REA's founding consumer-members started a grassroots program to push for rural electrification through which they personally invested in. They incorporated and undertook line construction in 1937 to begin Morgan County Rural Electric Association. This grassroots effort was the first step that led us to where we are today: a place where a nonprofit electric

association, owned by its consumer-members, serves power to its rural community. This boots-on-the-ground approach made electricity available to rural families for the first time. It increased quality of life, in addition to promoting growth in our region and supporting and expanding our agricultural economy. It is what modernized rural America.

join its grassroots effort now and use your voice to support the community, economy and our way of life. Joining does not lead to any commitments. Rather, it allows MCREA to reach out to you by email or text and ask you to return prepared letters and emails to elected officials and commission officers in support of affordable energy, this community and the local economy.



**JOIN MCREA'S  
GRASSROOTS PROGRAM**  
[www.mcrea.org/GrassrootsSignup](http://www.mcrea.org/GrassrootsSignup)

Today we have access to safe, reliable energy, but our work is not done. Often, our values and local economic impacts are not fully considered when new legislation is proposed and passed. As community members, we all have a voice that can support our local values and way of life. This is the same voice that shouted to be heard when our area was overlooked during electrification efforts across the country 85 years ago.

Morgan County REA is asking you to

It is that easy to educate those responsible for legislation so that the community's best interests are considered. Your voice and support will continue the strong tradition of grassroots advocacy and keep MCREA and the community it serves strong as we look to the future.

You have a voice — the voice of rural America. Join us in our grassroots effort at [mcrea.org/GrassrootsSignup](http://mcrea.org/GrassrootsSignup) and make that voice heard.



**Win  
\$25 Off  
Your  
Electric Bill**

Each month, Morgan County REA gives two lucky consumer-members a chance at a \$25 credit on their electric bill, just by reading *Colorado Country Life*.

Congratulations, Blair and Yvonne Ersek (acct #xxx5800) and Treacy Heineman (acct #xxx4500). Your names were hidden in the June issue of *Colorado Country Life* and you received a \$25 credit on your bill.

There are two more MCREA consumer-member names and their account numbers hidden somewhere in this issue. If you find your name and account number, call member services at 970-867-5688 by August 31 to claim a \$25 credit on your bill.



## **CONGRATULATIONS** to Our New Journeyman Lineman

**M**CREA congratulates **Travis Kallweit** on attaining his journeyman lineman certification. This is no easy task, as it requires 8,000 hours of work as an apprentice lineman and the completion of a 200-question written test, as well as both oral and hands-on field tests. (Kelly Pelton acct. #xxx6400)

While working toward his journeyman lineman certificate, Travis also completed one of the world's most comprehensive training programs for power line personnel. The Merchant Job Training and Safety Program is administered to line personnel in more than 40 states throughout the United States. Travis and the support staff at MCREA are proud of such an accomplishment, as the program requires rigorous oversight, study and closed-book testing.

**Congratulations, Travis, on what is sure to be a rewarding lifelong occupation.**

## **PREVENT Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**

**T**here were 55 carbon monoxide deaths in Colorado in 2018, according to the Colorado Environmental Public Health tracking program. To prevent this from happening to you, avoid using equipment such as generators, charcoal grills and camp stoves that can cause CO to build up in your home.

- Never use a generator or gasoline-powered or coal-burning equipment inside your home, basement or garage. Keep such items outside and at least 20 feet from any window, door or vent.
- Never heat your home with a gas oven.
- Never run a vehicle inside an attached garage, even with the garage door up.
- Never go without CO detectors in your home and be aware of the symptoms of CO poisoning — there are many, but they include headaches, difficulty breathing and feeling lightheaded or drowsy. Detectors that feature battery backup are a good idea for times when the power goes out.

# GET OUTAGE UPDATES

WITH YOUR SMARTHUB ACCOUNT

