

Y-W ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

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MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box Y
Akron, CO 80720



STREET ADDRESS

26862 U.S. Hwy 34
Akron, CO 80720



ph 970-345-2291
tf 800-660-2291
fax 970-345-2154
web www.ywelectric.coop

Y-W Electric Association, Inc. is dedicated to providing high-quality, reliable electric service and related products to our members at competitive prices. Our members deserve and shall receive quality service unexcelled in our industry. We are committed to maintaining an environment where the Board of Directors and employees can perform at maximum potential to benefit our Y-W community.

UNPLUG WITH MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

BY ANDREW MOLT DIRECTOR OF MEMBER SERVICES



ANDREW MOLT

Most adults have a vague memory of a time when “checking for messages” meant listening to an answering machine. We carried on with our days without relying on cellphones and managed just fine, but today we are more connected than ever through our smartphones and other devices.

Our phones are so much more now — from cameras to calendars to social media connections — and truly disconnecting from them can be difficult. But it’s even harder for our kids to unplug because they only know life with these tiny screens. It’s difficult for them to imagine life without computers, gaming devices, tablets or cellphones.

But there’s great value in unplugging for children and adults, even if it’s for just a short period of time. For kids, time away from the screen to be outside with other children allows them to connect with nature and others in a way that a virtual experience simply does not allow. They are able to experience life in the moment and allow their creativity and energy to break free.

Fortunately, we have access to great community programs and organizations for our youth that provide children with a safe place to play, learn and grow, while cultivating new skills and interests.

These types of clubs and programs offer kids an opportunity to explore activities and interests outside of school academics. Children can investigate areas they might not otherwise have access to and discover new interests and passions. They often learn new skills and strengthen existing ones. It’s no secret that the broader the range of experiences and activities children are exposed to, the more likely they are to find their own path and possibly a career. Community programs also foster important leadership

development and public speaking skills. Through guided and informal play and activities, children learn problem-solving and social skills that enable them to resolve conflicts peacefully and improve interpersonal relationships.

Adults can also find meaningful opportunities to spend time with the kids when we all unplug. From board games to craft projects to playing in the park, there are many ways we can unplug for some family fun.

While you and your children are disconnecting, take a moment to identify potential energy savings. Unplug electronics that are not in use to avoid “vampire” energy loss. This is the energy that is drained from technology and electronics even when they are not in use. For example, although it is turned off, your television is waiting to receive a signal from the remote and your DVR is waiting to record the next show or perform an update.

Let’s encourage youngsters to step away from the screens and join in — to play and be part of an organization that helps them connect with others, find meaningful interactions and explore new activities and interests.

When you do plug back in, Y-W Electric Association, Inc., is here to help you save money and energy by connecting you with our energy-saving programs and services. While we’d love to see you in person, we’re also just a call or click away: 970-345-2291 or www.ywelectric.coop.

Think Safety When Operating a Generator

A generator can be a valuable piece of equipment to keep appliances working during a power outage. Generators can be either temporary or permanently installed.

A permanent generator is wired into a house by a qualified electrician using a transfer switch that prevents a generator from feeding electricity back into overhead lines, which can be deadly for linemen.

A temporary generator is powered by gasoline and should not be attached to a circuit breaker, fuse or outlet. Before ever purchasing a generator, you need to know the wattage required to run the appliances you will attach to the generator. You also need to know the surge power, which is the power it takes to turn an appliance on.

Once you purchase the proper generator, follow these tips from Y-W Electric Association and Safe Electricity to properly operate your generator:

- Read and follow all manufacturer operating instructions to properly ground the generator. Be sure you understand them before hooking up the generator.
- Never operate a generator in a confined area, such as a garage. Generators can

produce numerous gases, including toxic and deadly carbon monoxide, therefore they require proper ventilation.

- Generators pose electrical risks especially when operated in wet conditions. Use a generator only when necessary if the weather creates wet or moist conditions. Protect the generator by operating it under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot form puddles or drain under it. Always ensure your hands are dry before touching the generator.
- When you refuel the generator, make sure the engine is cool to prevent a fire should the tank overflow.
- There should be nothing plugged into the generator when you turn it on. This

prevents a surge from damaging your generator and appliances.

- Be sure to keep children and pets away from the generator, which could burn them.
- Shut down the generator properly. Before shutting down a generator, turn off and unplug all appliances and equipment being powered by the generator.
- Remember maintenance between uses. It is also a good idea to inspect the fuel and oil filters, spark plug, oil level and fuel quality and to start the generator on a regular basis before an emergency occurs. [Todd Houser & Amanda Luthey, 1140304609]

For more information on electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.safeelectricity.org).

Claim Your Credit

Each month, Y-W Electric offers consumer-members a chance to earn a \$20 credit on their next electric bill. If you recognize your name and account number in this magazine, call 800-660-2291 and ask for your credit. It couldn't be easier.

Get acquainted with your account number, read your *Colorado Country Life* magazine and pick up the phone. That's all the energy you'll need to claim your energy bucks.

You must claim your credit during the month in which your name appears in the magazine. (Check the date on the front cover.)

Winners claiming \$20 from the July 2021 issue:

- Glosson Construction Company Inc.
- Mary A Miller
- Edward J Baker

Tips for a Safe Harvest

BY ABBY BERRY

Agriculture is the backbone of our country, and our livelihood greatly depends on the crops provided by American farmers. In addition to being one of the most labor-intensive professions, farming is also considered one of the most dangerous jobs in the United States.

The hard work and exhaustive labor are tough, but rushing the job to save time can be extremely dangerous — even deadly — when farming near electrical equipment.

Every year, we see collisions where tractors and other farming equipment accidentally collide with utility poles and power lines, causing injuries and power outages. These dangerous accidents can be avoided by looking up and around your surroundings when operating large farm machinery. If you're preparing for harvest season, please keep the following safety tips in mind:

- Maintain a 10-foot clearance around all utility equipment in all directions.
- Use a spotter and deploy flags to maintain safe distances from power lines and other electrical equipment when working in the field.
- If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed power line, call 911 immediately and remain inside the vehicle until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab (without touching it) and hop away to safety.
- Consider equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle. Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipes and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.

September 19-25 is National Farm Health and Safety Week, but practicing safety on the farm year-round yields positive results. We hope you never find yourself in a situation where farming equipment contacts power lines or poles, but if you do, we hope you'll remember these safety tips. [Brie Sampson, 420700202]

Abby Berry writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. [Tyson & Tiffany Sprouse, 741814801]

Receive Rebate Money For Being Safe

Install all your double-throw generator transfer switches and collect a sizable rebate as a reward for safety. Y-W Electric reminds those members using standby generator sets how important it is to connect them into the electrical system correctly.

Since 2001, the Y-W directors have sponsored a rebate program to encourage all members with standby generators to install the proper double-throw transfer switches.

The program was initiated to provide safety for linemen working on downed power lines following storms.

For a number of years before that, Y-W Electric provided double-throw transfer switches at cost for members. However, even at cost, the purchase price discouraged members from installing the safety devices. The Y-W board reasoned that providing a rebate that covers approximately two-thirds of the cost of the panel would encourage members to install the switches for safety.

The provisions for receiving the rebate are as follows:

1. A member may purchase a double-throw transfer switch with an Underwriters Laboratories approval rating for service entrance equipment from any source and present

the purchase invoice within 180 days of purchase.

2. A member may install equipment or hire others to install the equipment.
3. Switch installation must be inspected and approved by a Y-W Electric employee.
4. Rebate is to be paid based on the schedule shown below.

Y-W Electric has contacted the electrical contractors in the area and discussed the program with them. All of them expressed support for the program. Y-W Electric has no intention of competing with the contractors. Y-W Electric will gladly advise the consumer who wishes to do his or her own work, but Y-W will not install any of the equipment.

If you have any questions, you may call your electrical contractor or Y-W Electric Association at 800-660-2291 or, in the Akron calling area, 970-345-2291.

Safety rebates for double-throw switches:

- 100 ampere, single phase . . . \$250
- 200 ampere, single phase . . . \$325
- 400 ampere, single phase . . . \$600
- 100 ampere, three phase . . . \$425
- 200 ampere, three phase . . . \$500
- 400 ampere, three phase . . \$1,300

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Energy used for cooling and heating your home makes up the largest portion of your monthly energy bills.

By combining regular equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings, you can save about 30% on your energy bills while helping our environment.

Source: *energy.gov*

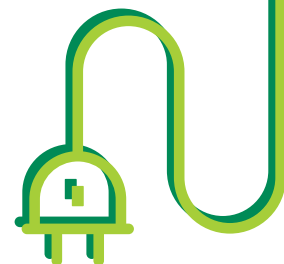
Billing Corner

SmartHub Bill Pay & More

For convenience, Y-W Electric offers the ability to pay your account with the SmartHub app. This service allows you to pay your bill electronically with a credit or debit card or checking account. This is also a great place to go to get account information. Information on billing history, usage, payment history and past billing invoices are available. There is also a link to sign up for auto payment.

Reporting an outage is also available on SmartHub. This information goes directly to our operations department in an email. This leaves our phone lines open for those who do not have SmartHub available.

The app is compatible with iPhones as well as Androids. **Check our website at www.ywelectric.coop for more information.** [Debra Cooper, 341203801]



Efficient and Safe Farming Technologies

BY MARIA KANEVSKY

As farming technology advances, farmers are finding new ways to reduce costs, improve efficiency and increase crop yields. The newest trend of technological advancements for farming is precision agriculture, a strategy where farmers use advanced technologies to control the growth of crops and raising of livestock more accurately and efficiently.

As precision agriculture grew in recent years, the technologies became even more technical and precise by using data analytics and machine learning. With a whole suite of benefits, like reduced costs, standardized data and metrics, and minimized resource waste, it's no surprise that technologies and strategies for precision agriculture are becoming more commonplace.

The initial wave of precision agriculture in the 1980s was made possible by GPS (global positioning system) devices, which were first placed on tractors. GPS-connected devices could control a tractor and automatically steer the tractor based on the field's GPS coordinates. This helped reduce any overlap while driving, making farming practices more efficient.

Beyond autonomous tractors, there have been many innovations in farming technologies that are part of precision agriculture. One technology is the crop-monitoring drone, which can take aerial views of fields and help give the farmer a bird's-eye view of their land. Connecting the drone to special software and GPS can also allow the drone to automatically take photos, making it even easier to use. When combined with GIS (geographic information system), the drone can help analyze the geospatial field data in real-time for the farmer.

Using robotics for precision agriculture can be applied to many kinds of machines. For example, robotic milking machines can be used to automate the cow milking process. These machines help farmers reduce their labor demands while also increasing efficiency, freeing up time for farmers to work on other parts of their farm. Since the machines are optimized to work efficiently, they can also help to remove more milk per cow and provide more rest for the cows.

If farmers want to optimize their crop production, then variable rate technology (VRT) can help. VRT allows the farmer to use a variable rate schedule for application of fertilizer or for irrigation. Although there are several different options for using VRT, the basics consist of a computer, software, GPS and a controller. Farmers can choose to use VRT in either a map-based or sensor-based way, depending on needs of the farm. Using VRT helps farmers accurately measure water and fertilizer, save time, and maximize irrigation and fertilization efficiency.



▲ Alexander Frick Jr., co-owner of Frick Farms, LLC, uses a smart device to review data and plans his customized seed application for the day. Photo from Lance Cheung, USDA

To properly use these new technologies, there are some important safety tips to consider. When learning to use any new technology, be sure to fully read the manual and understand the instructions before beginning any work. This can help farmers avoid preventable accidents. Different types of farm equipment will also require different safety precautions. For example, when working with grain bins, farmers should be especially careful to follow training procedures when it is necessary to work inside the grain bin.

Being aware of the best safety practices when working with a specific technology is the best way to avoid accidents. Additionally, since these technologies are digital, the threat of cybersecurity comes into play. Appropriate use of any USB thumb drive and being aware of “spear-phishing” cyberattacks will help prevent malicious entities from gaining access to the farmer’s confidential data.

Although the benefits are clear, there are a few barriers to using these new agricultural technologies. Having a well-established broadband connection is crucial for some of these technologies, and a lack of high-speed internet access can limit the use of precision agriculture technologies. Furthermore, using precision agriculture comes with a relatively large upfront financial investment, which may not provide a return on investment quickly enough to the farm.

Before incorporating precision agriculture technology into any farm, planning and preparation are crucial to make the best use of the technology. [Allen Pugh, 2561006502]

Maria Kanevsky writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.