

GUNNISON COUNTY ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

Powering Possibilities

NOVEMBER 2021



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CLIMATE ACTION: LET'S DO THIS TOGETHER!

BY ALLIY SAHAGUN
MEMBER RELATIONS SUPERVISOR



ALLIY SAHAGUN

GCEA continues to hear from many members about the importance of reducing carbon emissions and providing options for cleaner energy to support a healthier community.

Our partnership with Tri-State Generation and Transmission is helping us achieve that goal with over 30% of our current energy mix coming from renewable energy sources. Tri-State intends to replace even more fossil fuels and has goals to achieve 50% clean energy by 2024 and 70% by 2030. On top of these goals, we have a local target to leverage the full 7% allowance in our Tri-State contract to produce our own clean electricity. We continue to push forward with our Taylor River hydro-power project, which will power up to 500 homes in the Gunnison Valley, and multiple solar projects including another community solar garden.

Some may say that we are not moving fast enough, and we need to take further action to curb emissions faster and stop climate change in its tracks. Others remind us how important it is to keep rates stable and provide reliable service. It is a delicate balancing act, and this is where we turn to you, as our GCEA members, for help. Change happens on many fronts and it will take all of us doing our part to slow the tide of climate change. May I suggest a few ways for our members to get involved and take a few small steps toward climate action?



EVALUATE YOUR USAGE

Did you know you can view your electric usage in the palm of your hand at any time? Download the SmartHub app on your phone or tablet and you can identify trends in your usage. If you see unusual patterns, call 970-641-3520 and speak to our member support staff to learn how you can cut back and ultimately save on your bill.



AVOID THE PEAK

Staggering your electric usage throughout the day and avoiding peak hours of Monday through Saturday, 5 to 10 p.m., helps to reduce the need for generation from the less environmentally-friendly fossil-fueled power plants to meet high demand and helps GCEA avoid higher cost power.



GREEN THE GRID

Join the hundreds of GCEA members already putting a few cents each month toward building a local renewable project fund or supporting green power. Visit www.gcea.coop to learn more.

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ELECTRIFY YOUR LIFE

With the touch of a button or the flick of a switch, life can be further electrified in so many ways, and GCEA will help pay for your purchase. Check the website for great rebate offers and incentives on home appliances, outdoor power equipment, electric vehicle charging equipment, e-bikes and more.



PAPERLESS BILLING & AUTO PAY

Save a tree and help GCEA save money on printing and postage. When you sign up for SmartHub, you can elect to receive your bills electronically and pay automatically each month through auto pay. Sign up for paperless billing today and you'll be entered in a quarterly contest to win a \$50 bill credit.

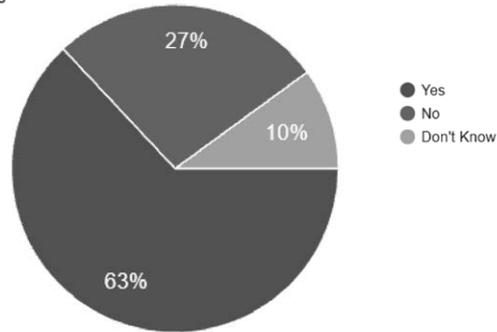
CLIMATE ACTION SURVEY RESULTS

GCEA members spoke, and we listened. We recently conducted a random member survey on climate action to know whether it is important to our members and if we should get involved, and at what additional cost to our membership.

Results are posted to the right, and the leadership team is working on a plan to address the vote and find additional ways for both GCEA and members to further support climate action. Thank you to those who participated in the survey.

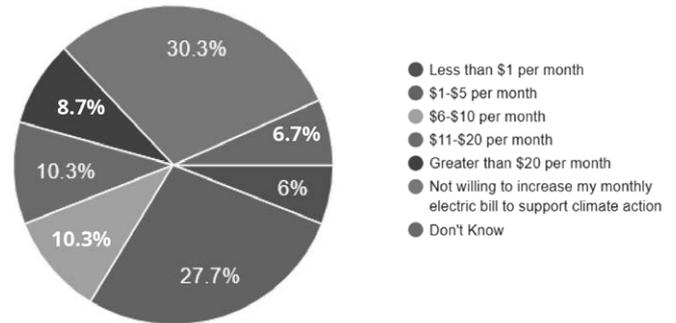
Is climate action important to you, and would you like GCEA to be involved in climate action goals and initiatives?

300 responses



How much more would you be willing to pay on your monthly GCEA electric bill to support the coop's efforts to promote climate action?

300 responses



Attention Students!

GCEA is excited to offer four all-expense-paid leadership opportunities next summer for area high school juniors and seniors whose parents or guardians are GCEA members.

WASHINGTON D.C. YOUTH TOUR

June 12-19, 2022

COOPERATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP

July 16-21, 2022

Applications are available online at gcea.coop. The deadline to apply is Friday, December 3, 2021.

For more information visit gcea.coop or call 970-641-3520.

Cold Climate Air Source Heat Pumps

BY ALANTHA GARRISON ENERGY USE ADVISOR

The first heat pump was developed and built in 1855, and the technology has come a long way since then. Heat pumps do not create heat but, instead, transfer heat. Air source heat pumps pull warmth from the air and condense the warm air, which raises its temperature. Condenser coils transfer the heat inside the home in the winter or to the exterior in the summer.

However, do air source heat pumps work at our high altitude with cold temperatures at night during the winter? Yes, but be sure to use a cold climate air source heat pump (ccASHP). ccASHPs have gone through advanced engineering and use a variable inverter with a refrigerant cycle that runs at various speeds, thus matching refrigerant to the home load or temperature. This increases the performance of the heat pump across a wider range of temperatures and increases the efficiency of the unit. Proper equipment sizing, building envelope efficiency and education of how the heat pump works are all important for overall satisfaction. Energy and cost savings of 50% compared to traditional electric heating systems are typically achieved when using a ccASHP.

In the summer, air source heat pumps can be up to 400% efficient, but in our climate, they are usually only 200-250% efficient during the winter. Supplemental heating sources such as electric space heat may be necessary to completely heat your home on the coldest days of the year (when temperatures drop to negative 25 degrees and below), especially with ducted systems.

Air-to-air ducted and ductless units both:

- Can be installed in a single or multi-zone configuration.
- Can be utilized in new home construction and retrofits.
- Are rated in SEER (seasonal energy efficiency ratio) and HSPF (heating season performance ratio). HSPF is more important in cold climates and, like SEER, the bigger the number the better. Typically, cold climate heat pumps have a SEER greater than 17, and an HSPF above 9 for ducted systems and above 10 for ductless systems.
- Will greatly reduce energy spent compared to traditional heat pumps, electric furnaces and baseboard heat and propane furnaces.

There are a few key differences between ducted and ductless ccASHPs:

- Ducted ccASHPs generally have backup resistant heat for negative temperatures.
- Ductless mini split systems are rated by AHRI with matched pairs, where certain compressors can only achieve stated SEER or HSPF with specific cassettes or wall units.

If you are experiencing high winter heating bills and are looking for a long-term solution to keep your heating costs down, consider installing a ccASHP. A heating, ventilation and air-conditioning technician can help determine the size of the system you will need to install to comfortably heat your home.

Air source heat pump rebate information is available on our website at gcea.coop.

DRIVE ELECTRIC MONTH

Gunnison County Electric Association representatives had a great time driving around the co-op territory offering test-drives of GCEA's Tesla Model 3 and Chevy Bolt. This year we popped up in Crested Butte, Lake City and at GCEA's Gunnison office. Members who test-drove one of the EVs during the month of September were entered to win dinner for two and drive in style to dinner in the Tesla. The lucky winners of the dinner are **Tad and Lisa Stoorza**.

If you are interested in an EV loan, contact us at 970-641-3520 to sign up for our EV test drive program.

WINTER ENERGY ASSISTANCE

The Low-income Energy Assistance Program is designed to help low-income households meet their winter home heating costs; it does not pay the entire cost of home heating. LEAP is a federally-funded program made available to Coloradans through the Colorado Department of Human Services. The program is administered locally at Gunnison County Department of Health and Human Services. The Gunnison and Hinsdale departments of human services accept applications from November through April each year. You can download the LEAP application at gcea.coop/Energy-Assistance.

Fall Member Forum

GCEA and Tri-State Generation and Transmission representatives enjoyed the Brats & Kilowatts event on September 23 in Crested Butte. Despite the chilly and windy weather, we had an amazing turnout for some yummy bratwurst and great conversation about climate action and beneficial electrification.

The event gave representatives the opportunity to talk with the community about beneficial electrification to reduce emissions by using electric power tools, EVs and electric bikes as well as the rebates GCEA offers. A big thank you to Fullmers Ace Hardware for bringing electric power tools so members could have a hands-on learning experience. Members were also able to test ride electric bikes thanks to Wheelies and Waves and Crested Butte Sports.

Thank you to Gunnison Valley Climate Crisis Coalition (GVC³) for supporting the event before the climate action march.



Members admire GCEA's Tesla Model 3 at the Brats & Kilowatts event.



Crested Butte Sports and Wheelies and Waves offer electric bike test rides to GCEA members at the September member forum.



GCEA Energy Use Advisor Alantha Garrison (left) talks to a member about beneficial electrification.



2022 SCHOLARSHIPS

Do you need college scholarship assistance for the upcoming 2022-2023 school year? Deadlines are approaching for Gunnison County Electric Association's scholarship applications. If you are a high school senior, returning college student or a nontraditional student, you may apply for GCEA's college scholarship if you, your parent or legal guardian is a GCEA member. **Applications are due March 1, 2022.** For more information, contact GCEA at 970-641-3520.



Electric lawn mowers and snow blowers are a popular conversation between members and representatives from Fullmers Ace Hardware.