

GUNNISON COUNTY ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

Powering Possibilities

FEBRUARY 2022



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TAKE THE POWERWISE PLEDGE™

Last month, PowerWise Pledge™ launched as a brand-new effort to involve Gunnison County Electric Association members in taking climate action. This program came as a direct result of a member survey conducted in the fall of 2021. With 63% of respondents indicating they would be willing to pay \$1 or more on their monthly GCEA bill to support climate action, the GCEA Board of Directors recognized it was time to facilitate action through an opt-out program.

With as little as a \$1

Funds collected through PowerWise Pledge™ will allow GCEA staff to pursue development of local renewable energy projects. These projects are costly and are not adequately covered through current GCEA rates. Pledging as little as \$1 per month through PowerWise Pledge™ will help make these projects a reality and leverage the 7% allowance for local renewable generation under our Tri-State Generation & Transmission contract.

Energy conscious

Taking the PowerWise Pledge™ signifies more than simply accepting an additional \$1 charge on your monthly GCEA bill. It shows that you are conscious of your energy use and taking steps toward energy conservation and efficiency. When you choose to electrify your life and it helps you financially as well as helping the environment, we call that beneficial electrification.



Every choice to replace a gas-powered car with an electric vehicle or e-bike, or electrifying a stove or water heater means that fossil fuels are not being burned during everyday tasks. Instead, cleaner electricity — powered in part by renewable energy — is used.

Opt in

If you have not already taken the PowerWise Pledge™, we invite you to do so now by either calling 970-641-3520 or visiting gcea.coop.

- OPT-IN to PowerWise Pledge™ and \$1 will be added to your monthly bill
- OPT-UP to contribute any amount, or
- OPT-OUT of PowerWise Pledge™ anytime.

Auto enrollment

On March 1, 2022, all GCEA members who have not made their choice early will be automatically enrolled in PowerWise Pledge™ and \$1 will be added to their electric bill. We welcome early participation or opting out of the program and are happy to answer questions. Please call 970-641-3520 or visit gcea.coop for more information.

Make the Choice.

Take the Pledge.

Be PowerWise.

FEBRUARY 2022 IMPORTANT DATES

HOLIDAYS

Monday, February 21
Presidents Day
GCEA Offices Closed

ANNIVERSARIES

Cindy Wells
Accounting assistant,
12 years

Paula MacLennan

Financial and HR
specialist, 24 years

Chastity Miller

Billing assistant II, 15 years



GCEA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Brothers Morgan (left) and Caleb Weinberg offer handcrafted, creatively designed skis at their shop in Crested Butte. Romp Skis participates in both the Green Power program and community solar garden offered by GCEA.

ROMP SKIS, CRESTED BUTTE

Headquartered in Crested Butte at their shop on 420 Belleview, brothers Caleb and Morgan Weinberg have been building custom skis for avid mountain enthusiasts since 2010. The two learned to ski while growing up in New Hampshire and brought their love of the sport to Crested Butte when they relocated in the mid 1990s. The best startups often seem to begin in a garage, and Romp is no exception. The Weinberg brothers put their woodworking skills and love of skiing to work when they fashioned their first set of skis in Morgan's garage. Since then, they have moved their growing business to their own production facility where they have better control of the manufacturing process. The core of Romp's business is in its ability to offer handcrafted, creative designs and partner with customers who can customize their own skis at rompskis.com.

Romp supports GCEA by participating in the Green Power Program and community solar garden and attributes reliable electricity as an essential component of small business manufacturing in Crested Butte. Morgan serves as the GCEA Board Director for District 2 in Mt. Crested Butte.

2022

GCEA SCHOLARSHIPS
Gunnison County Electric Association is pleased to offer student scholarships for new and returning students.
APPLY AT WWW.GCEA.COOP
DEADLINE: MARCH 1, 2022



NEW IT SPECIALIST – TAYLOR WEEDA

We at GCEA are pleased to announce that Taylor Weeda joined our team on January 4 as an IT specialist at the co-op's headquarters. Taylor grew up in Gunnison and holds a bachelor's degree from Western Colorado University in recreation outdoor education with an emphasis in leadership, as well as a minor in computer science.

While attending classes at Western, Taylor worked in IT services as a help desk technician and student supervisor. After receiving his degree, Taylor continued to work for the IT services department at Western as a front-line support technician. Taylor enjoys the outdoors and his hobbies include hunting, snowmobiling, climbing and backpacking. With Taylor's education and previous work experience, he will make a great addition to the GCEA team and we are very excited to work with him.

OUTDOOR POWER TOOL REBATES

You might be thinking about buying a snow blower with all the snow we've been getting this season. If so, go electric! Electric power tools are quiet and do not produce emissions while being used. Gunnison County Electric Association rebates can help reduce your costs, and we offer rebates for much more than just electric snow blowers.

- 25% of the cost up to \$150 for new electric lawn mowers or snow blowers
- 25% of the cost up to \$100 for new electric chainsaws
- 25% of the cost up to \$50 for new electric trimmers, pruners, leaf blowers or power washers
- 50% of the cost up to \$25 for additional batteries; must be submitted with original equipment rebate application (battery-only applications will not be accepted)
- 25% of the cost up to \$150 for new electric bikes, limit of two per account, per year
- 25% of the cost up to \$1,000 for new electric riding mowers

For rebate details, visit gcea.coop.

Board Election and Annual Meeting Date

The **ELECTION FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS** and the **83rd Annual Member Meeting for Gunnison County Electric Association, Inc., will be held on Tuesday, June 21, 2022, at 6 p.m. at 37250 W US Highway 50, Gunnison, CO 81230.**

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

District No. 2 – (Incumbent Morgan Weinberg)

The northeast corner of the certificated service area of the Gunnison County Electric Association, Inc., including Mt. Crested Butte and Gothic to the Continental Divide.

District No. 3 – (Incumbent Bart Laemmel)

The Ohio Creek and Taylor River drainage areas beginning approximately one half mile north of the Jack's Cabin cut-off, inclusive of Crested Butte South, and to the City of Gunnison service area on the south and extending to the western and eastern boundaries of the certificated service area of the Gunnison County Electric Association, Inc.

How to Become a Candidate: In order to become 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 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 and orientation meeting with CEO Mike McBride.

PETITIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE FEBRUARY 15, 2022.

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 Thursday, April 21, 2022.

Ballot Mailing Deadline: In case of a contested election, ballots will be posted for mailing to members on Friday, May 27, 2022. Ballots are mailed to members of record as determined 60 days prior to the election date and sent to the member's main address on file. Ballots must be completed per instructions and returned by the close of registration at the Annual Meeting held on June 21, 2022. Any ballots received after this deadline will be considered invalid.

For more 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.



BLUE MESA POWER PLANT

Gunnison County Electric Association is pleased to partner with Tri-State Generation and Transmission and Western Area Power Administration on system upgrades and an added distribution point from the Blue Mesa Substation located near the Blue Mesa Power Plant. Tri-State approached GCEA to be included in the project as it worked to redesign the transmission infrastructure in the sub yard and saw an opportunity for GCEA to benefit on the distribution side. Through this project, GCEA will gain a tie line that will provide another feed into the main distribution line going down to Lake City. The line will consist of a combination of both underground and overhead distribution power lines along County Road 25 to Highway 149. Ultimately when the project is finished, it will provide better reliability for electricity in Lake City. The Blue Mesa substation project is slated to be complete by 2025.

SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES AFFECT GCEA

Materials are getting more expensive and harder to acquire due to supply chain issues. This is causing delayed lead times on key items such as transformers, connectors and wire. These supply issues have caused minor delays and rescheduling for the GCEA operations team, but fortunately, all jobs have been completed despite the setback in materials.

With lots of construction planned for 2022, GCEA Chief Operations Officer John Stoeber has carefully developed his operations budget and schedule to prioritize member projects first with in-house projects second and he feels confident GCEA will maintain successful completion of projects throughout the upcoming year.

San Luis Valley REC Power Restoration

When power went out mid-December in neighboring San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative's service territory, GCEA linemen Dustin Cadwell, Justin Hulick, Ty Percival and Logan Rhodes stepped up to help. The four linemen packed two bucket trucks, a derrick truck, a backhoe, and a line truck and headed south to help SLVREC get power restored. Strong, hurricane-like winds across the southern San Luis Valley knocked out hundreds of transmission and distribution poles, cutting power to hundreds of customers for several days. GCEA's line crew worked alongside distribution crews from La Plata Electric Association and SLVREC to repair poles and downed power lines. This mutual aid trip was coordinated by CREA's Director of Safety and Loss Control Dale Kishbaugh and was a first for Cadwell, Percival and Rhodes. Lineman Justin Hulick had previously helped with mutual aid restoration work with Mountain Parks Electric during the Granby wildfires in October 2020.



▲ GCEA brings equipment to the San Luis Valley to assist the local electric co-op with repairs to its system after strong winds caused damage.



▲ The GCEA line crew takes a break for a meal and to review repair and restoration plans.



WALLY BAKER RETIRES AFTER 14 YEARS AT GCEA

On January 3, GCEA said goodbye to another long-time staff member and friend, Wally Baker, who worked in the metering department for the past 14 years. With his background as a master electrician, Wally was an incredible asset for GCEA and our members.

During his time at GCEA, Wally worked through the transition to advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) and personally replaced thousands of meters over the years. Wally enjoyed the hands-on aspect of his job and loved being out in the field, roaming the wide expanse of GCEA's service territory. From Sherman to White Pine and Pittsburg to Tin Cup, Wally has visited most service locations and enjoyed getting to know GCEA's members.

Wally will be missed, and we wish him the best for a healthy and happy retirement!

GCEA COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS

GV-HEAT

Gunnison County Electric Association's community support continues in 2022 with a \$25,000 contribution to the Gunnison Valley Regional Housing Authority's Gunnison Valley Home Energy Advancement Team (GV-HEAT). The annual contribution helps fund energy-efficiency improvements to homes in GCEA's service territory in the Gunnison Valley, including energy audits; home weatherization, such as air sealing and increasing insulation amounts; new Energy Star refrigerators; and upgrades to LED lighting. The services and products are available to income-qualified households at no cost to them. GV-HEAT programs include Energy Outreach Colorado's Affordable Residential Energy program and the Crested Butte Green Deed program. The energy-efficiency upgrades help make homes more comfortable — especially during the cold winter months — and reduce energy bills. GCEA is proud to continue to partner with GV-HEAT to help our members keep their bills down and stay warm. For more information, contact GV-HEAT at 970-234-5613 or info@gvrha.org.



CRESTED BUTTE AVALANCHE CENTER

Another way GCEA provides community support is through a contribution to the Crested Butte Avalanche Center. This year, GCEA is providing \$2,500 to help CBAC cover costs associated with the locally-generated, accurate and useful avalanche forecasts and weather forecasts CBAC provides daily during the winter season. A full-time forecaster and three pro observers provide the forecasts, increasing the quality of the information published on CBAC's website.

Contributions such as GCEA's help keep the positions funded and maintain the high-quality data they collect. For more information about CBAC, visit cbavalanchecenter.org.

