

# EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

*Echoes of the Empire*

JULY 2022

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## BEATING THE HEAT

BY ANDY CARTER MEMBER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER



ANDY CARTER

Keeping your cool in July can be a challenge, especially if we don't see our normal monsoon season with afternoon rain showers in southeastern Utah and southwestern Colorado. My favorite solution is to hitch up the camper and head for the mountains, but that only works for the weekends.

Fortunately, there are a variety of things we can do that can help keep indoor temperatures comfortable, and some of them only take a little planning and a few minutes to implement. Make sure to close window coverings to block out the sun and avoid solar heat gain. Another advantage in our dry climate is the large swings in daytime high and nighttime low temperatures. Opening your windows in the evening to allow cooler air in and then closing them in the morning will help keep your home cooler.

We often think of checking caulking and weather stripping as a fall chore, but it is important in the spring as well. Make sure your home is sealed well to keep the heat

outside in the summer. Another similar item to check if you have central air conditioning is to make sure your filter is clean and that the outside condenser unit is free from debris and has plenty of air space around it for good airflow. Air-source heat pumps are included in this. Each individual head has filters that need to be inspected and cleaned if necessary, and the outside condenser unit should also be clear of debris.

Our dry climate also makes it possible to cool your home with an evaporative cooler (swamp cooler). Evaporative coolers have their own set of maintenance needs including making sure the water circulation pump is in good shape; cleaning the mineral deposits from the evaporation pads; ensuring there are no leaks; and inspecting the water level float valve for the proper level of water. Swamp coolers typically have less than 1 kilowatt of demand and are an economical way to cool your home. It is important to



 A dirty air conditioner condenser unit works harder to cool your home. Keep it clear of dirt and debris and the unit will have better airflow and work more efficiently.

## YOUR CO-OP NEWS

make sure the evaporative pads fit correctly to keep dust and insects from being introduced into your home.

An important difference between traditional single-stage air conditioners and air-source heat pumps is how they are controlled. A member with a single-stage air conditioner can use a programmable thermostat to help them save money by increasing the set point temperature when they are not home or at night. Changing to a higher temperature setting on an air conditioner can save money by reducing the run time for the compressor.

A single-stage compressor always runs at its maximum capacity, so whenever cooling is called for, it is creating its maximum demand (kilowatt) and using a lot of energy (kilowatt-hour). A rule of thumb to determine air conditioning demand is 1 kW per ton of cooling. If your home has a 3-ton air conditioning capacity, it is estimated to create 3 kW of demand, plus 0.5 kW – 1 kW for the blower motor, for a total of 3.5 kW – 4 kW. It is important to keep this in mind when running other appliances because your distribution demand is determined by your highest 15-minute kWh energy usage. If you are using your electric clothes dryer in



▲ Air-source heat pumps are a good option for energy-efficient summer cooling.

the afternoon when your air conditioner is running, you are increasing the demand placed on the Empire Electric Association grid and that will increase your distribution demand charges.

Heat pumps use the same mechanical method to cool your home, but they are much more efficient at doing so. Most heat pumps have variable speed compressors that produce only the cooling needed to keep your house near the temperature set point. Because a heat pump operates so much more efficiently, it will use less energy keeping your home cool if you set the temperature you prefer and leave it there. Increasing the heat pump temperature set point higher when not at home during cooling season can cause your electric bill to increase because the heat pump will use more electricity to cool your home back down when you return

than it would have used to just maintain your preferred temperature.

Another important piece for controlling a heat pump is to change the mode for the season. Setting a heat pump in the auto mode can waste energy because the heat pump will heat or cool to be within a few degrees of the temperature set point. For example, if we have a very cool night during the summer where your indoor temperature drops below 67 degrees and you have the temperature set point locked in at 70 degrees, the heat pump will switch to heat mode and heat your home back up to 70 degrees. If the heat pump were set to cool mode, it would not turn the heat cycle on and instead would let your house naturally cool off and wait until the next day when the temperature reached 73 degrees to operate and cool the house back to the 70 degree set point.

Beating the heat runs the complete gamut from manually opening and closing blinds and windows to spending time studying owner's manuals, and meeting with your local heating and cooling expert to determine the best way to operate your heat pump or air conditioner. No matter what methods you choose to keep the heat off, we hope you can keep your cool this summer.



## Monthly Calendar

**July 4** – Independence Day – EEA office closed

**July 8** – 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). Members 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.



▲ Co-op Photo Contest Winner July 2022 – "Lizard Head" by David Lee Reineke



## Help Us Help You

Have a new phone or a new email address? If you do, please let Empire Electric Association know. EEA periodically calls members to inform them of planned outages in their area or emails important information to members who are on paperless billing. If we don't have accurate contact information, you may miss out on something you need to know. You can update your information using SmartHub or by calling EEA at 970-565-4444 or 800-709-3726. Thank you.

# Congratulations!

## 2022 EEA Scholarship Winners



Kiersten Anderson  
Monticello - Adult



Mariela Avalos  
Mancos HS



Jessica Ayers  
Dove Creek HS



Talissa Bahr  
Mancos - Adult



Erin Brown  
Dolores HS



Tara Buffington  
Dove Creek HS



Aspen Bumgarner  
Mancos HS



Shiloh Burger  
Dolores HS



Courtney Cashner  
Cortez - Adult



Cheyenne Castillo-Calvillo  
MCHS



Zayne Clappe  
MCHS



Mason Goodwin  
Mancos HS - Tri-State



Gina Hollen  
Cahone - EEA Dependent



Koral Jackson  
MCHS



Ryan Jarmon  
Dove Creek HS



Madi Keyes  
Monticello HS



Allie Kibel  
Dolores HS



Andres Moreno  
Mancos HS



Allison Porter  
Yellow Jacket - Adult



Kylie Rogers  
Monticello HS



Trinity Samora  
Mancos HS - Tri-State



Evan Sehnert  
Mancos HS



Jessica Slack  
Monticello HS



Natasha Spencer  
Mancos - Adult



Brighton Torgerson  
Monticello HS



Makayla Wayman  
Mancos HS - Basin



Mersadez Wilcox  
Monticello - EEA Dependent



Avery Wright  
MCHS



Arlina Yazzie  
Cortez - Adult





^ Brian Balfour

# Your Co-op Employees

We at Empire Electric Association are excited to welcome Brian Balfour as our new energy management advisor. He will be assisting members with billing questions, advising on how to reduce your energy use and explaining the process for installing renewable generation at your home. Brian is a lifelong resident of Cortez and recently retired after 20 years of service with the Farmington Fire Department. His last position was battalion chief. His experience in working with the public and critical thinking skills gained as a fire engineer and investigator will make him a great asset for our co-op. Brian is an outdoor enthusiast and is active in his church, but his favorite pastime is spending time with his wife Sarah and five children. Join us in welcoming Brian to the co-op family.

## 5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Working on an outdoor project? Careless digging poses a threat to people, pipelines and underground facilities. Always call 811 first. Here are five easy steps for safe digging:



### 1. NOTIFY

Call 811 or make a request online two to three days before your work begins. The operator will notify the utilities affected by your project.

### 2. WAIT

Wait two to three days for affected utilities to respond to your request. They will send a locator to mark any underground utility lines.



### 3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utilities have responded to your request by comparing the marks to the list of utilities the 811 call center notified.



### 4. RESPECT

Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. The markers are your guide for the duration of your project.



### 4. DIG CAREFULLY

If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project location.



## ELECTRICITY 101

To stay safe around electricity, start with these **SEVEN** basic tips:

1.



### DON'T OVERLOAD OUTLETS OR CIRCUITS

Plugging in too many items or drawing too much power on a circuit can cause overheating, fire, and damage to devices.

2.



### DON'T USE FAULTY ELECTRICAL CORDS OR PLUGS

Do not use cords that look frayed, worn or cracked. Do not use broken plugs. Never remove the grounding pin from a three-pronged plug.

3.



### HAVE YOUR ELECTRICIAN'S NUMBER IN YOUR PHONE

Most electrical repairs or installations are not DIY projects. Hire an expert to avoid serious injury or wiring problems.

4.



### BE CAREFUL AROUND H<sub>2</sub>O

Never use electricity while standing in damp or wet conditions. Keep all electrical devices away from water, including cell phones that are charging.

5.



### EVALUATE YOUR APPLIANCES

Do not use appliances in disrepair. Older or broken appliances can overheat, start a fire, and cause serious injuries.

6.



### TEST YOUR GFCIs

Outlets near a water source should be equipped with GFCIs, which help prevent shock and electrocution caused by ground faults. Test monthly to make sure they are working.

7.



### MAKE SURE YOUR HOME IS UP TO CODE

Your home should be properly wired and electrically sound. Contact a reputable electrician to evaluate your home.