

# MORGAN COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

JULY 2022



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## 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.

## KNOW THE SIGNS OF A SCAM

BY ROB BARANOWSKI MANAGER OF MEMBER SERVICES



ROB BARANOWSKI

It's no secret that consumers with water, gas or electric service have long been targets for utility scams, but fraudsters have changed their tactics in recent years. Consumers have become more reliant on technology for work, school and commerce. Scammers have adapted their tactics to that model.

Impostor scams are the number one type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission. While scam artists may come to your door posing as a utility worker who "works for the power company," in today's more-connected world, attempts are more likely to come through an electronic device via email, phone or text.



### COMMON TYPES OF SCAMS

A scammer may claim you are overdue on your electric bill and threaten to disconnect your service if you don't pay immediately. Whether this is done in person or by phone, text or email, the scammers want to create a sense of urgency to scare you into immediate payment so you don't have time to think clearly.

If this happens over the phone, simply hang up. If you're concerned about your bill, call Morgan County REA at

970-867-5688. If the scam is by email or text, do not respond and delete it immediately. If you're unsure, you can always call us or use SmartHub, MCREA's online portal and app, to check the status of your account. Remember, Morgan County REA's billing department will never use robocalls to contact you about your account.

Some scammers may falsely claim you have been overcharged on your bill and say they want to give a refund. It sounds easy. All you have to do is click or press a button to initiate the process. If you proceed, you will be prompted to provide banking or other personal information. But instead of money going into your bank account, the scammers can drain your account and use personal information such as a Social Security number for identity theft.

If this "refund" scam happens over the phone, just hang up and block the phone number to prevent future robocalls. If this scam attempt occurs via email (known as a "phishing" attempt) or by text ("smishing"), do not click any links. Instead, delete it and, if possible, block the sender. If you do overpay on your energy bill, MCREA will automatically apply the credit to your next billing cycle. When in doubt, contact us.

Be wary of calls or texts from unknown numbers. Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a utility worker who requests banking or other personal information. We want to help protect our community against utility scams, and you can help create the first line of defense.

Please report any potential scams to us so we can spread the word to prevent others in the community from falling victim.

# MCREA DIRECTORS RECEIVE NATIONAL RECOGNITION CERTIFICATES



Two directors from Morgan County REA recently received the Board Leadership certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

An ever-changing business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative directors, requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and a solid knowledge for the benefit of their electric cooperative consumer-owners.

The NRECA Board Leadership Certificate recognizes individuals who continue their professional development after becoming a Credentialed Cooperative Director. Directors who have attained the BLC have completed 10 credits in advanced, issues-oriented courses.

Achieving recognition at the May board meeting were MCREA vice president, Brian Pabst, and MCREA treasurer, Terry Linker.

NRECA represents the nation's more than 900 private, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, which provide electric service to more than 42 million people in 47 states, with over 7,200 directors. Morgan County REA serves over 4,800 members across six counties in northeastern Colorado.

Board president Cary Wickstrom presents NRECA board certifications to MCREA Vice President Brian Pabst (top left) and MCREA Treasurer Terry Linker (bottom left).



# MORGAN COUNTY REA PROUDLY SPONSORS 2022 BOBSTOCK

Every summer in July, music lovers from across the plains join their families and friends in downtown Fort Morgan to enjoy the Bobstock Music Festival. The two-day, free event is full of fun for the whole family and includes food, vendors and games, in addition to a handful of musical acts spread across three stages.

Morgan County REA, Tri-State Generation and Transmission and Basin Electric Power Cooperative, are proud to sponsor this community event. These three cooperatives donated \$6,000 to this year's Bobstock Music Festival, which is organized by Media Logic Radio.

Bobstock 2022 will take place July 8 and 9 at City Park in Fort Morgan.

More information on the event can be found online at [bobstockmusicfestival.com](http://bobstockmusicfestival.com).



MCREA Manager of Member Services Rob Baranowski (right) presents a check to Wayne Johnson (left) and Lindsey Bruntz (center) of Media Logic Radio to sponsor Bobstock Music Festival.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know the combined use of large appliances, such as dishwashers, clothes dryers and washing machines, account for the largest percentage of electricity use in the average U.S. home? Take small steps to save energy when using these appliances.

For maximum dishwasher efficiency, thoroughly scrape food from dishes before loading and run full loads only. In the laundry room, dry towels and heavier cottons separate from lighter-weight clothing, and clean the lint screen after every use. Washing clothes in cold water will save energy used to heat water.

Source: EIA and DOE

## STAY CONNECTED: UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION WITH MCREA

Today we are more connected than ever. From phone calls and text messages to emails and social media, information can reach masses of people quickly. These are useful tools of communication, especially for electric cooperatives. (Carroll Scott, acct. #xxx9100) That is why it is important to ensure that Morgan County REA has your most current phone number, mailing address and email address.

Updated contact information helps us best serve our members when it comes to both planned and unexpected power outages or other electrical emergencies. Current contact info also helps MCREA assist members with billing questions and ensures that your capital credit refund check makes its way to you.

Take some time to make sure your contact information is up to date by calling MCREA at 970-867-5688.

In addition to updating contact



information, MCREA also encourages our members to sign up for SmartHub, our online portal and mobile app. With SmartHub, you can monitor your usage, check your account, pay your bill and receive outage notifications. Signing up is easy and can be done by clicking the "log in to account" button at the top right corner of our website, [www.mcrea.org](http://www.mcrea.org).

Do you use social media? MCREA's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages are another great way to stay informed on what is happening at your co-op. Give us a follow today.



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

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

Congrats James McKie, Jr.! You spotted your name in the May issue and received a \$25 bill credit! Sorry, Kelly Hise, you did not find your name and call to receive your \$25 bill credit. There are two more MCREA member names and their account numbers hidden somewhere in this issue. If you find your name and account number, call MCREA member services at 970-867-5688 by July 29 to claim a \$25 credit on your bill.

HOME OF THE FREE. BECAUSE OF THE BRAVE.

# Independence Day

**Morgan County REA's office will be closed Monday, July 4.**



# HARVEST IS HERE: LOOK UP AND LIVE

It is that time of year. After anxiously watching weather forecasts, preparing equipment and gathering crews, farmers across the area are about to embark on the 2022 wheat harvest. Reward for nearly a year's worth of work is attained in just a few short weeks. While harvest time is gratifying, it can also be a busy and stressful season — making safety more important than ever.

Morgan County Rural Electric Association wants to remind farmers to take all safety precautions while in the field.

- Watch out for overhead power lines, especially when moving large equipment.
- Keep yourself and equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines in all directions at all times.
- Never attempt to raise or move power lines to clear a path.
- If power lines near your property have sagged over time call MCREA to repair them.

Safety extends beyond equipment. (Jake Mortensen, acct. #xxx7400). Harvest is well-known for long days and little rest. Fatigue can often intensify stress during this time, and lead to injury. Prioritizing rest when possible is important, as it helps crews avoid reduced reaction time and lapsed concentration. This can help prevent injury and maintain production, two of the main goals for a successful wheat harvest.



As a rural power provider, MCREA's mission is simple: Our member-owned cooperative is dedicated to serving our members by providing safe, reliable energy with a strong tradition and vision for the future. Farmers work to feed and clothe the world with that same strong tradition and vision for the future in mind. MCREA proudly supports our area's farmers and wishes all a safe and successful harvest.

## Stay Cool and Beat the Peak This Summer

As temperatures begin to spike, there are steps you can take to save money on energy bills this summer.

According to the Department of Energy, a typical home uses a whopping 48% of energy expenditures just on heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. Although a majority of that 48% is spent on heating expenses during cooler months, Americans still spend \$29 billion every year to power their air conditioners.

Aside from replacing your central air conditioner with a newer, higher-efficiency model, there are some things you can do to increase efficiency and reduce your energy bills. Follow these tips from Morgan County REA:

- Weather strip and caulk around windows and doors in your home (which is always a good idea, regardless of time of year).
- Close curtains, blinds and shades during the hottest part of the day. One-third of a home's energy is lost around windows, and about 76% of sunlight that falls on standard double-pane windows enters the home to become heat, according to energy.gov.
- If you don't already have one, install a programmable or smart thermostat. You can save up to 10% per year on heating and cooling by adjusting your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting for 8 hours a day, according to energy.gov.
- Change the HVAC filter monthly and get your air conditioning unit inspected by a professional.
- Make sure your outdoor condenser unit is clean and free from debris. Ideally, the unit should be in the shade.

Morgan County REA members should also consider replacing their current air conditioning system with an air source heat pump. Not only will an ASHP meet your cooling needs during the summer, it also heats your home during the winter and can cost up to 50% less to run than a propane furnace. If you are interested in an ASHP or would like to discuss other ways to save on your energy bill, call MCREA's member services department at 970-867-5688.

