

# EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

*Echoes of the Empire*

AUGUST 2022

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## EEA'S 2022 ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

BY ANDY CARTER MEMBER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER



ANDY CARTER

Empire Electric Association, Inc., held its annual meeting on Thursday, June 23, at our Engineering and Operations Center located just north of Cortez. Cooperative board members and General Manager Josh Dellinger shared reports from cooperative operations during 2021, and the election for the District 3 board position was completed. Challenger Corey Robinson was successful against incumbent Audra Fahrion with a vote of 1,515 for Robinson and 1,130 for Fahrion. The EEA board and employees extend their gratitude and appreciation to Fahrion for her dedicated service to the cooperative and wish her well in her future endeavors. We also look forward to serving with Director Robinson as we all strive to fulfill our mission of meeting our membership's electrical energy needs. You can learn more about Robinson on page 8.

Board Vice President Kent Lindsay presided over the meeting in the absence of President David Sitton. Director Lindsay encouraged members to take advantage of programs the cooperative offers for their benefit and to explore the rate options that are now available. He also expressed his support for Tri-State Generation and

Transmission Association, EEA's wholesale power supplier, and reminded members of the 2% rate reduction Tri-State implemented in 2021 that EEA passed on as part of the rate restructuring in September 2021.

Board Secretary/Treasurer Jerry Fetterman reported on EEA's financial condition. The cooperative is on a firm financial footing and exceeds all benchmarks required by our financial partners. Despite a reduction in total operating revenue of 9.5% from 2020, EEA's strict cost controls and equitable rate structure allowed EEA to achieve an operating margin of \$483,999 and retire \$1,691,449.84 in capital credits to its membership. EEA's full 2021 annual report is available in the June 2022 issue of *Colorado Country Life*, at eea.coop or at our headquarters located at 801 N. Broadway in Cortez.

Dellinger's remarks centered around the challenges EEA continues to face and EEA's efforts to provide safe, reliable and affordable electric service. Inflation and supply chain issues have required the cooperative to find unique ways to meet member needs, and we continue to search for ways to keep costs down. One way is to leverage our



Director Kent Lindsay presides over EEA's 2022 Annual Meeting and shares with attendees his thoughts about the past year.



EEA member-owner Brandon Johnson wins the EGO battery-powered chainsaw donated by Tri-State. Congratulations!

## YOUR CO-OP NEWS

relationships with suppliers. “Cooperation among cooperatives” is a cooperative principle we practice. Dellinger referred to the rate reduction by Tri-State in 2021 as well as the transition to a new software suite provided by National Information Solutions Cooperative. The wholesale power rate reduction and annual savings realized by utilizing NISC’s software are helping EEA keep costs down and avoid raising rates.

Dellinger reminded members that EEA is responsible for our distribution system and how it is designed, built, operated and maintained. The cooperative has direct control over some factors that drive our costs, but there are many that we do not control. We rely on our partners at the wholesale level to do their part to ensure power is delivered as needed to our distribution system and that we receive the physical hardware necessary in a timely manner to keep our grid reliable.

Tri-State CEO Duane Highley was EEA’s guest speaker for the annual meeting. Highley remarked that the focus for



▲ A Tesla Model 3 electric vehicle on display at the EEA annual meeting. It is part of the EV fleet owned by Tri-State and available to provide real-world driving experiences to cooperative consumer-members.

Tri-State is like EEA’s focus for our individual members. As a cooperative, Tri-State exists to serve its member cooperatives. The Tri-State board consists of member cooperative directors and functions through a democratic process like EEA. Tri-State’s mission is still centered on delivering reliable, affordable and responsible electric power to members.

Highley noted the current transition to cleaner power sources has presented challenges, and Tri-State has embraced them. Tri-State is focused on reducing its costs

even as the price for renewable power is increasing. It has maintained reliable power deliveries to members, while using any excess capacity to take advantage of short-term market volatility to increase revenue, which can help mitigate cost pressures.

Tri-State addressed member direction for a cleaner supply portfolio and anticipates having 50% clean power by the end of 2024 and 70% by 2030. It also collaborated with members to increase contract flexibility for those who desire more control over a greater portion of their power supply.

The annual meeting concluded with drawings for door prizes. Prizes included \$25 electric bill credits, bill credits for one year of solar production from panels in the Solar Assist solar garden, water bottles, iPad/notebook computer cases, and extension cords that feature USB as well as regular 120-volt receptacles. The grand prize, won by member Brandon Johnson, was a 56-volt battery-powered chain saw by EGO, courtesy of Tri-State.

## DIRECTOR COREY ROBINSON INTRODUCES HIMSELF

I’m honored to be your new board member and am thrilled to get to work on behalf of the members of our co-op. It’s an exciting time to be in the energy world, with unprecedented challenges and opportunities.

My wife, Ellie, and I live in Cortez and we’re expecting our first child in September. We met here in Cortez and love the strong sense of community, open space and outdoor recreation our area has to offer. For my day job, I work as a cinematographer for documentary television. I’ve been lucky enough to travel all over the planet, but never tire of coming home to our wonderful corner of the world. I love my work because I get to be part of a team and dive deep into tremendously varied subjects, from fossil hunting in Antarctica to searching for Amelia Earhart’s

remains in the remote central Pacific. Learning on the fly and keeping a team on track are part of my day-to-day life while in the field and will be an asset in working with my fellow board members and the EEA staff.

When not working, I enjoy mountain biking, gardening, woodworking and throwing the tennis ball for our dog, Bodie. Over the last several years I’ve become fascinated by the way the energy world is changing and am excited about the opportunities it could offer our community. I have a lot to learn and am excited to collaborate with my fellow board members.

As a board member I promise to advocate for our membership and work hard to continue Empire’s proud tradition of



providing reliable, affordable power while fostering a vibrant future for our community.

— Corey Robinson  
EEA District 3 Director



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

An easy way to save energy is to seal air leaks and holes where plumbing pipes run through walls in your home. You can also check wall-mounted cabinets for plumbing holes or air gaps in the back.

Fill any holes or gaps with spray foam. Wear protective gloves and use a damp rag for cleanup.

Source: Dept. of Energy

## Welcome New Co-op Employees



▲ Dalton Randolph

**Dalton Randolph** joined us at EEA in June to be our new system engineer. He is a recent graduate of Fort Lewis College and a native of Dove Creek. Dalton's responsibilities include monitoring distribution system performance to ensure it meets member needs and working with engineering and operations employees to design distribution system upgrades and maintenance projects.

Dalton is an avid outdoorsman and enjoys hunting, fishing and hiking. He and his wife, Jessica, are excited to be able to raise their family in the community they grew up in. Please join us in welcoming Dalton to the EEA co-op family.



▲ Isaac Jordan

**Isaac Jordan** joined EEA's IT department in June in the role of part-time IT support technician. He is originally from Durango and is working toward a cybersecurity degree at Western Governors University. Isaac's responsibilities include troubleshooting network, software and device issues for EEA employees; hardware installation and minor repairs; and IT system maintenance.

When Isaac isn't supporting EEA employees or studying, he enjoys being in the great outdoors camping, hiking or hunting. Please join us in welcoming Isaac to the EEA co-op family.



▲ Monthly Calendar & Co-op Photo Contest Winner August 2022 –  
"La Platas from Echo Basin" by Errin Walker



## Monthly Calendar

**August 12** – 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.

## Warm Weather Window Tips to Maximize Energy Efficiency

- Install white window shades, drapes or blinds to reflect heat away from the house. It is always best to install exterior shades whenever possible.
- Close curtains on south- and west-facing windows during the day.
- Install awnings on south- and west-facing windows to create shade.
- Apply sun control or other reflective films on south-facing windows to reduce solar heat gain.

Visit [energy.gov](http://energy.gov) for more energy savings tips!

## Top 10 Home Electrical Safety Tips

<p>use a qualified electrician for repair work</p>	<p>repair loose outlets; replace cracked, worn electric cords</p>	<p>watch for hot or discolored switch plates, flickering lights, or buzzing sounds.</p>
<p>get regular check-ups for older homes</p>	<p>use bulbs with correct wattage for the fixtures</p>	<p>if children are present install tamper resistant outlets to protect against shock</p>
<p>use extension cords temporarily, not as permanent wiring</p>	<p>unplug electrics if you smell something burning</p>	<p>keep cords out of walkways and high traffic areas</p>
<p>educate the household on electrical safety</p>		

Learn more about home electrical safety at



## Avoid Distractions While Driving

Some temptations are hard to resist. While driving, we typically hear that “ding” on our phone, alerting us to a text or call coming through, and we sometimes feel the urgent need to check it. We know we shouldn’t, but we reason that we’re going to make an exception — just this once.



So, why do we indulge in behavior we know to be wrong and dangerous? Call it hubris. According to AAA research, most people feel they are better-than-average drivers. After all, we have busy lives and are accustomed to multitasking. However, mounds of research and thousands of deaths every year prove otherwise.

August is Back to School Safety Month. As a new school year begins with young drivers and school buses back on the road, this is a good time to remember the dangers of distracted driving.

The reality is that using a phone while driving creates enormous potential for injuries and fatalities. Distractions take a motorist’s attention off driving, which can make a driver miss critical events, objects and cues, potentially leading to a crash.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, one out of every 10 fatal crashes in the U.S. involves distracted driving, resulting in more than 3,000 deaths annually. This statistic is heartbreaking considering that so many of these accidents could easily be avoided if we simply put down our phones while driving.

Distracted driving is defined as any activity that diverts our attention, including texting or talking on the phone, and adjusting the navigation or entertainment system. Texting is by far one of the most dangerous distractions. Sending or reading one text takes your eyes off the road for an average of 5 seconds. At 55 mph, that’s like driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed.

In addition to refraining from texting while driving, we can help keep the roads safe by moving over for first responders and other emergency vehicles. Additionally, if you see utility or road crews conducting work near the roadside, slow down and move over when possible and give them extra space to perform their work safely.

At EEA, safety is foremost in everything we do — for both our employees and the members of the communities we serve. We routinely remind our crews of the dangers of distracted driving, and we hope you’ll have similar conversations with your teens who may be new to the roadways and are especially susceptible to the lure of technology.

Let’s work together to keep everyone safe on the road.