



## WHOSE LINE IS IT ANYWAY?

### LITTLE-KNOWN FACT: HOMEOWNERS OWN SOME UNDERGROUND SERVICE LINES

BY MARK JOHNSTON GENERAL MANAGER

Remember that show? Hosted by Drew Carey, it aired on the ABC Network from 1998–2007. The cast received a topic or prompt from the audience and acted out the scenario. Their spontaneous lines reminded me of how Tim Conway went off-script — usually at Harvey Korman’s expense — during the “Carol Burnett Show” a few of decades earlier.

One thing you never want to improvise with is when digging around your house. It doesn’t even need to be a big project like laying a foundation. Even small projects like planting a garden, installing a mailbox, or digging fence post holes can cause

problems. That’s because people often have no idea about the location (and sometimes the number) of utility- and non-utility-owned lines buried below the surface.

Before digging, call 811, the national call-before-you-dig phone number.

Mountain Parks Electric line crews always make that call before starting any project. 811 protects you from hitting utility-owned lines while digging, which can disrupt utility service, cost money to repair or cause serious injury or death.

You should call 811 a few business days before digging so the location of buried utilities can be marked. After making the call, a

notice is sent to utilities who have gas, electric, water, sewer and phone lines on your property.

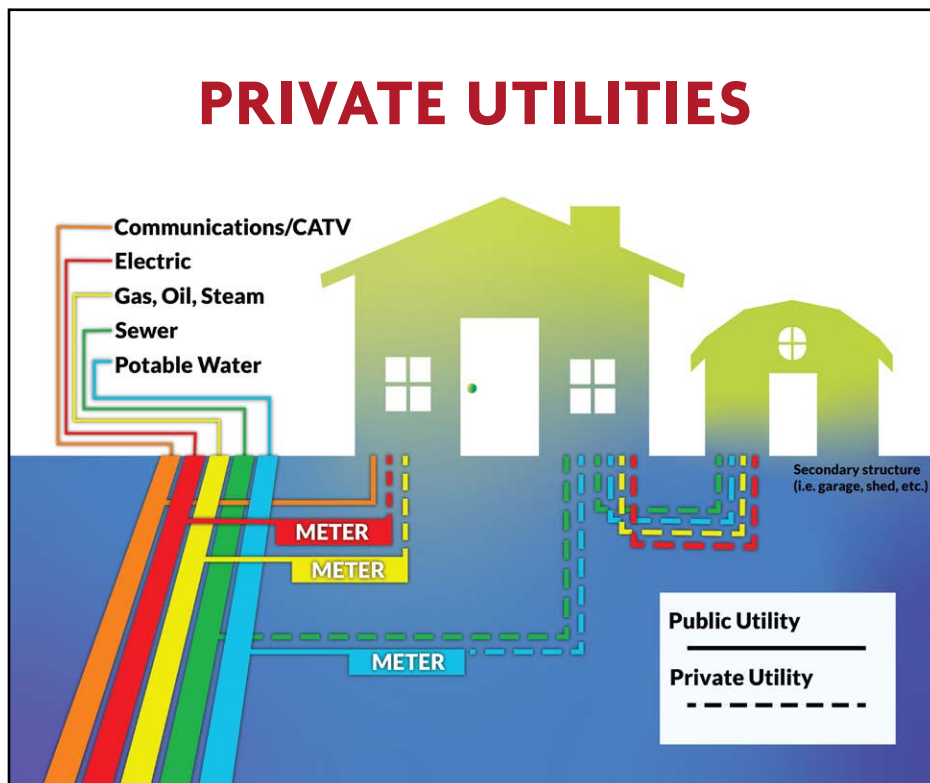
As the diagram below shows, utilities usually do not own all the lines below the surface. The solid lines are utility-owned. The dotted lines are “private lines.” It might surprise you to learn that these private lines belong to the homeowner. The homeowner is responsible for lines that connect their home to the utility service. Take electric service, for example: MPE owns the equipment to the meter, and the customer owns any line from the meter to the house.

Private lines will not be marked by a call to 811. These can include electric lines from the meter, water and sewer laterals, power to a detached garage, sprinkler/irrigation systems, lines connected to a propane tank and septic system. It is very possible there may be private lines within your dig area. It is the property owner’s responsibility to have these lines marked. 811 provides a list of private locating companies.

So before you pick up a shovel or rent a backhoe, don’t forget to talk to these folks who can tell you whose line it really is, so you can find out where it is located and stay safe.

#### MORE INFORMATION:

- Visit [colorado811.org/private-locate-companies/](http://colorado811.org/private-locate-companies/)
- Call MPE to find local companies that can provide this service (usually for a fee).
- Scan this QR code with your smartphone to learn more.



Shannon Holzwarth, ACCT 947010784

# MPE SENDS TWO STUDENTS TO D.C.

Did you know the winner of the Mountain Parks Electric annual essay contest gets a weeklong, all-expense-paid tour of our nation's capital? While there, the winner (one high school junior or senior from within MPE's service area) joins students from across the United States to visit memorials, meet legislators and learn about the electric industry. The trip was canceled last year due to COVID-19, so this year MPE sent two students: Middle Park High School's Serena Stuart (the 2021 essay contest winner) and Aida Hestor (the 2022 winner). Read Serena and Aida's account of their life-changing trip below.



▲ We met a former Paralympian who told us his story. It was inspiring because he was just a typical boy playing basketball one day, and he got shot accidentally by his friend. He became paralyzed and no longer had feeling in his legs. His story inspired us to appreciate everything we can do in life and how easy it is for us to do it.



▲ This photo was taken in Congresswomen Lauren Boebert's office. This was amazing because we saw where she works and met assistants and tech people who help her. On our way out of her office we tried the chocolate they make, and it was delicious!

▶ Here we are in front of the Colorado sign at the World War II Memorial. It was eye-catching because there is a huge water fountain in the middle of all the state signs. And it was cool seeing how each state in our nation was recognized.



▲ It was cool to see how tall the Washington Monument is in person. There is a pond leading up to it which made the monument seem taller.



▲ Serena (left) and Aida (right) in front of the Library of Congress. This tour was interesting. We learned that Thomas Jefferson sold a lot of his books to the library. On the inside, there are different paintings and images that look astonishing.



▲ Fort McHenry in Baltimore is a place to go to see cannons, see where the trenches and hideouts were built and learn how they were modeled. This was really cool to see because we know it as the birthplace of the U.S. National Anthem. At the beginning of the tour, we watched a video about the Revolutionary War. After the video, the screen was lifted and we saw our nation's flag.



▲ In front of a waterfall that was part of the Franklin Roosevelt Memorial. This was one of the best memorials we saw because it showed how tall people were back in the 1930s. There were waterfalls everywhere, and we got to see a statue of Roosevelt with his dog.



## WAYS TO \$AVE WHEN NOT IN USE

BY LINDSAY MCCANN  
MEMBER SERVICE SPECIALIST

- 1. Unplug cellphone chargers**  
They continue to draw a small amount of electricity when plugged in but disconnected from your phone.
- 2. Turn off your laptop**  
In standby mode, computers use approximately one-third the power they use when they are in full use.
- 3. Unplug other unused appliances**  
Everything including coffee makers, TVs and CD players can use power when OFF. **If there's an illuminated LED light on your appliance or electronic, it is consuming power!**

Gary Carlstrom, ACCT 940033001



## FIND YOUR NAME WIN \$5

If you find your name in this magazine, contact Mountain Parks Electric to receive a \$5 credit on your power bill. Winners must contact MPE within one month of the date of issue.

## MPE TO RETURN CAPITAL CREDITS IN DECEMBER

### Your Piece of the Pie!



Mountain Parks Electric, a not-for-profit electric utility, is owned by those it serves.

As such, MPE returns margins to its consumers, calculated by profits earned from electric sales to each consumer. Not surprisingly, electric bills are higher in the mountains during the winter heating season than in the summer months. This year, MPE will return capital credits in December to coincide with consumers' higher electric use.

Visit [mpei.com/capital-credits](http://mpei.com/capital-credits) for more information.

## There's still a chance to win!

### ENTER MPE'S 2022 BENEFICIAL ELECTRIFICATION DRAWINGS ON FACEBOOK



**Mountain Parks Electric**, your Touchstone Energy Cooperative, kicked off its beneficial electrification giveaway in June. There are still two more chances to win!

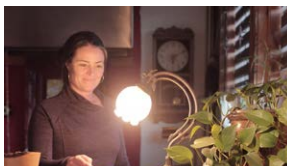
**MPE will give away one solar generator and one electric chain saw. Enter the drawing on our Facebook page.**



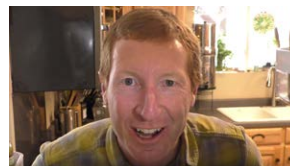
**Why electric?** Because the grid is becoming increasingly renewable. Replacing fossil fuel-powered tools and tech with their electric counterparts can reduce your carbon footprint. For more details and to enter, just visit MPE's Facebook page and comment under the drawing prize post which prize you most hope to win. **Good luck!**

Matt Dahlstrom, ACCT 1023435

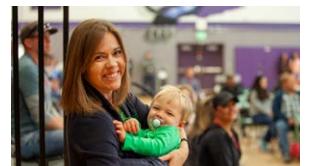
## CHECK OUT MPE'S NEW VIDEOS ON YOUTUBE!



"Owned by Those We Serve"



"Power Minute:  
Induction Cooking"



"Annual Meeting Recap"



Wild About Birds  
1112 B Grand Ave.  
Grand Lake, CO 80447  
970-281-0698

Open 7 days a week in the summer  
10 a.m. – 6 p.m.  
Located between Whispering Pines  
and Beyond Blessed Thrift Shop

Heather and Erick Bishop, Wild About Birds shop owners in Grand Lake.

## Wild About Birds BY ROB TAYLOR MANAGER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MEMBER RELATIONS

There's a "twitcher" inside us all, some say — a predisposition to, given proper inspiration, become a full-blown bird enthusiast. It happens a lot in Grand Lake. There, in spring and summer along the boardwalk, feeders and hanging baskets spilling with lobelias and petunias lure hummingbirds dressed in punches of reds, greens and blues. They zip from one feast to the next, in chits and chats, hovering like eye candy.

"Look!" you will certainly hear a pedestrian or two exclaim at the sight, pointing. Never have they beheld a hummingbird this close. Or so many clustered together. And even if board walkers are not fast enough to capture the moment on a smartphone, the day is improved.

Afterward, spillover is common: a heightened awareness for birds of all feathers — flitting chickadees, nesting osprey, mountain bluebirds and grass-hopping robins cocking their heads at the sound of a worm. On the hiking trails, birders crave more: a glimpse of a bald eagle or a goldfinch or to hear the trill of a red-winged blackbird to supplement their moose and elk sightings.

**A HAVEN FOR BIRDIES (AND BIRDERS)**  
Now in Grand Lake, on the boardwalk,

there is a store that feeds this passion: Wild About Birds. As the name suggests, it's an avian gift shop, complete with field guides, binoculars, feed, houses and feeders. The store also sells a variety of gifts, books, puzzles, jewelry and housewares, including locally-made items.

According to owners Erick and Heather Bishop, broad-tailed and rufous hummingbirds routinely fly by the storefront. Less frequent visitors include pine siskens, various finches, Steller's jays, robins, magpies and more.

Shoppers are mesmerized by the hanging birdhouses adorning the ceiling, the hummingbird section and the German cuckoo clocks.

"We've quickly become the go-to gift store for people shopping for their mothers and grandmothers," Heather says.

### NEW KIDS ON THE BOARDWALK

Though Wild About Birds is a boardwalk newbie, Heather's family is not. Her great-grandfather, James Cairns, arrived in Grand Lake in 1881 with two covered wagons full of wares. Cairns opened the first retail shop in Grand Lake, catering to local silver miners and later to tourists. His original store building remains to this day, now known as Humphrey's Cabin Fever.

Cairns eventually wed Mary Lyons from Ellsworth, Kansas, who came to Grand Lake to fill a schoolteacher position. Later in life, Mary authored several books, including historical pieces about the town.

James and Mary's daughter, Patience (Heather's grandmother), as chance would have it, was born in a house that once stood directly across the street from Wild About Birds. Patience was a founding member of the Grand Lake Area Historical Society and secured grant funding to purchase the Kauffman House.

Not surprisingly, while growing up, Heather spent countless weekends at her family's Grand Lake cabin and her grandmother's house.

### WILD INSPIRATION

After COVID-19 temporarily closed Erick and Heather's Colorado Springs business, the Bishops moved to Grand Lake. The couple wanted to open a niche store that didn't compete directly with other shops in town.

Knowing his wife well, Erick suggested a bird theme. And the rest of the story, as they say, is now history. Or perhaps more accurately stated, is a continuance of a grand Colorado adventure dating back to the 19th century.