

# Co-op Principles In Action:

## Youth Leadership Trip & Scholarship Programs Announced

BY RUTH MARKS CEO | RUTH.M@MVEA.COOP

**A**s a Mountain View Electric Association member, you are part of an electric co-op that is dedicated to creating programs that give back to the members and communities we serve. This month, we are going back to co-op basics to help spotlight two popular community-focused programs that were recently approved by the MVEA Board of Directors: the Youth Leadership Trip Contest and scholarship program. Both programs are great examples of co-op principles in action and illustrate MVEA's dedication to bringing these principles to life.

Cooperatives around the world operate according to the same set of seven core principles and values that trace their roots back to 1844: Voluntary and Open Membership; Democratic Member Control; Members' Economic Participation; Autonomy and Independence; Education, Training, and Information; Cooperation Among Cooperatives; and, Concern for Community. How we incorporate these principles into our business model and build relationships with our co-op members is more important than ever during an era influenced by changes in rural communities, government regulations, and evolving technologies.

Electric co-ops across the U.S. take great pride in building partnerships and

creating programs that investor-owned utility companies do not regularly provide. Although I just joined the team in July, I would like to share that at MVEA these principles have a long history of being more than words — they are a way of thinking that is woven into our business practices and are at the heart of the services we provide.

Over the course of the next couple of months, you will see a variety of programs and events promoted that exemplify the principles of "Concern for Community" and "Education, Training, and Information." MVEA's Youth Leadership Trip Contest and scholarship program are examples of both. MVEA offers these programs because we recognize the importance of creating leadership opportunities in the communities we serve and supporting future generations of co-op members. Recently, both programs were adjusted to better fit the needs of applicants: both sophomore and junior students are now encouraged to apply for a youth leadership trip, and the scholarship program now offers additional funds for those students seeking an education from vocational, technical or trade schools.

These are tremendous opportunities for our co-op youth. If you read the August issue of this magazine, we provided a recap of the Washington, D.C. Youth Tour trip. One of the students, Reagan Massey a Falcon High



RUTH MARKS

School student, shared this about meeting elected officials, "They made me realize it's important to have strongly held beliefs and ways to be of service to my community. I also learned that it's incredibly important to stand up for what you believe — even if you're facing severe opposition." This is a core lesson she will take with her well into adulthood.

I understand that many scholarship recipients share that they hope to return to their community or the family farm after graduation, to better their life, pursue a dream and reach for opportunity. This year, four students will be chosen to attend a youth leadership trip, and \$28,000 in scholarships will be available.

Don't let your high school or college-aged student miss out on these opportunities — see the ad below for additional information as there are application deadlines.

### We Don't Just Brighten Homes, We Brighten Futures.

#### High School Sophomores & Juniors Win a Summer Trip!

##### MVEA Youth Leadership Trip Contest

High school sophomores and juniors are just a couple of short questions away from an opportunity to win a once-in-a-lifetime all-expenses paid trip. Top-placed winners will receive either a trip to Washington, D.C., with students from across the U.S. for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, or will be invited to the Colorado Electric Educational Institute's Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in the mountains outside of Steamboat Springs. For additional details and an entry form, visit [www.mvea.coop/leadershiptrip](http://www.mvea.coop/leadershiptrip). Deadline: Thursday, November 10, 2022.

#### Need Cash For College? Win a Scholarship!

##### \$28,000 In Scholarships Available

MVEA's scholarship program includes scholarships to accredited colleges, universities, junior or community colleges, as well as Vocational/Technical Scholarships. Additional scholarships include Power Lineworker Scholarships for students pursuing a career through a lineworker training program, as well as a Power Engineer Scholarship for current college students pursuing a power engineering career. For additional details, visit [www.mvea.coop/scholarships](http://www.mvea.coop/scholarships). Deadline: Monday, January 16, 2023.



# Member Advisory: Stay One Step Ahead of Utility Scammers

No matter the con, the best defense is the same: Call MVEA.

In 2021, the Federal Trade Commission received 5.7 million incident reports in the consumer marketplace. About half of those were identified as fraud and a quarter as identity theft. Those statistics don't tabulate utility fraud specifically, but the Better Business Bureau says it receives about 1,000 complaints of utility scams each year.

## Let's look at a few common scenarios of utility scams:

- You receive a random call. The caller says you didn't pay your last electric bill and your power will be cut off immediately unless you pay right now by credit card over the phone. Caller ID shows it came from the utility; they even told you the exact amount of your most recent bill.
- You receive an alert that you overpaid your utility bill and to get the refund, you need to provide your financial information.
- A friendly couple in uniform knocks on your door saying they're from the power company and are following up on high-bill complaints from your neighbors. They just need to look at your utility bill so they can get the information code to make sure you aren't being double charged.

## Scammers take you by surprise

While most people do the right thing and hang up the phone or contact their utility rather than handing over money or private information, more than \$6 billion in losses

to various scams were reported in 2021. According to Utilities United Against Scams, the typical cost for each victim who lost money was about \$500.

Reading about how to avoid utility scams makes it sound simple, but the thing about scammers is they take you by surprise. They might be the most charming people you ever met. They might be the meanest and most intimidating, bullying you into acting. It can be hard to say "no" in the moment. One busy businessperson ended up handing over \$1,000 just to get through another one of the day's fast-paced distractions.

Scammers are notorious for recognizing when people are most vulnerable: Christmas, right after a hurricane or tornado, or with the approach of extreme hot or cold weather. Fraud reports skyrocketed during the COVID-19 pandemic—FTC figures show complaints rising from almost 3.5 million in 2019 to more than 5.5 million in 2021.

## The latest trends in utility fraud

Con artists keep up with technology—they'll come at you through email and texting. In one of the top recent scams, you're told to pay by gift or cash card, giving the swindlers the card and PIN number so they can have easier access to your money. Another new scheme tells you to pay your bill with cryptocurrency. MVEA will never ask you to pay by gift card or bitcoin.



The best way to avoid being a victim of a utility scam is to call MVEA directly. Scammers will try to rush you into acting, but no billing situation is so urgent you can't check on it. If you're contacted by someone claiming to represent MVEA but you're unsure, just hang up the phone and call us directly. Do not assume the name and number on your caller ID are legitimate. Caller IDs can be spoofed. You can reach us at 800-388-9881 to verify the situation. We can provide you the status of your account, and you can alert us to the fact that someone is trying to run a utility scam in our area.

Our increasingly connected world provides scammers with more opportunities to connect with unsuspecting utility customers. **Be vigilant and please report any utility scams to MVEA so we can let others in our community know. Learn more, visit MVEA's scam alert center at [www.mvea.coop/scams](http://www.mvea.coop/scams).**

Mountain View Electric Association, Inc.  
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- Celebrate National Co-op Month | October 2022 •

## MVEA Member Appreciation Days

*Because you're not just a customer, you're a co-op member!*

Join MVEA for lunch and pie to celebrate over 80 years of powering possibilities through decades of innovation and industry changes!

**October 12, 2022**  
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

MVEA's Limon Office  
1655 5th St.  
Limon • 80828

**October 13, 2022**  
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

MVEA's Falcon Office  
11140 E. Woodmen Rd.  
Falcon • 80831

MVEA

Free Event!

## MVEA's Quarterly "Switch & Save" \$300 Account Credit Winner Spotlight: The Biggers

It's a common answer when "Switch & Save" winners are asked why they made the switch — convenience! Timothy and Melody Bigger didn't choose paperless billing or bank account auto-pay for the monthly bill credit or chance to win a \$300 account credit. "I would occasionally forget to pay, prior to auto-pay," Timothy shared when he was notified about being a recent "Switch & Save" \$300 account credit winner. "With prices rising on gas and groceries, this was a nice surprise," he added.

Many MVEA members enjoy the convenience of online billing and account management while also supporting the conservation of resources. Paperless billing through SmartHub is an easy way for MVEA members to cut clutter and save trees, money, and time. Currently, more than 30,000 MVEA accounts are enrolled in the program through paperless billing, bank account auto-pay, or both. Members can save up to \$1 per month for participating in paperless billing and bank account auto-pay. Another bonus? MVEA's quarterly "Switch & Save" \$300 account credit drawing!



Go paperless through SmartHub or bank account auto-pay, and save up to \$1 per month! Plus, all participating "Switch & Save" accounts are automatically entered into a quarterly drawing for a \$300 account credit! **Learn more at: [www.mvea.coop/payment-options](http://www.mvea.coop/payment-options).**

## 19th Annual Slavic Fest

**St. Mary's Holy Dormition Orthodox Church**  
19485 N. Calhan Hwy. Calhan, CO 80808

**Saturday, October 8 • 11 a.m.-5 p.m.**  
**Sunday, October 9 • 11 a.m.-3 p.m.**

**Traditional Slavic & Czech Food (\$20 Per Plate)**

**Live Dancing & Entertainment**

**Learn more! [www.slavicfest.net](http://www.slavicfest.net)**



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### Telephone Numbers

Toll-Free: (800) 388-9881  
(719) 495-2283

**Credit Card Pay-By-Phone**  
(877) 999-3415

**Falcon Office**  
11140 E. Woodmen Road  
Falcon, CO 80831

**Limon Office**  
1655 5th Street • P.O. Box 1600  
Limon, CO 80828

**Monument Office**  
(Temporarily Closed)  
15706 Jackson Creek Parkway, Suite 100  
Monument, CO 80132

**Office Hours**  
Monday - Thursday • 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

**Visit our website:** [www.mvea.coop](http://www.mvea.coop)

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This Association is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## If You're Interested In Going Solar, We're Here To Help!

MVEA regularly works with co-op members and solar contractors to transition to solar power through our interconnection program. In fact, we currently have nearly 2,500 (and counting) accounts spread throughout our service territory! As the demand for solar power has increased, so has the number of calls we receive from members regarding costs and logistics. If you have questions about going solar, please visit [www.mvea.coop/interconnection](http://www.mvea.coop/interconnection) or call us at 800-388-9881.



### MAKING THE SOLAR SWITCH: COMMON MVEA MEMBER SOLAR INSTALLATION CONSIDERATIONS

#### **Thoroughly investigate the company: Is it backed by the Better Business Bureau? Does it meet local and state licensing requirements?**

If a representative from a solar company contacts you claiming to be “with MVEA” or that they are “part of MVEA’s solar efforts,” please know that MVEA does not have preferred solar installation contractors. While we work with MVEA members in making the solar switch, we do not have preferred vendors or send sales teams out to canvas neighborhoods. MVEA’s interconnection program is driven by member demand and we work with the companies who our members select.

**Know all the costs, not just those for equipment and installation.** In addition to equipment and labor, there are also pricey “soft costs” that can cost more than the system itself, according to Energy.gov. Soft costs include permit acquisition, financing charges and “pass-along” marketing, advertising and research costs.

**How will the installer work with MVEA to meet interconnection requirements? Does the installer have experience coordinating and integrating solar systems with the electric grid? How much energy will the system provide and is it enough? Too much?** This is a substantial investment with specific system requirements that need to be met. As such, MVEA requires members or their solar contractor to contact us prior to purchasing a solar system to ensure that it can fully integrate and connect with MVEA’s system.

Renewable Energy Options • MVEA’s Energy Mix • Rebates • [www.mvea.coop/save-energy-money](http://www.mvea.coop/save-energy-money)

## A Faster Future is Just a Few Clicks Away!

Fiber internet from Connect, powered by Mountain View Electric Association, will be a game changer for MVEA members.

*Connect's broadband services will allow you to...*

- Work from home seamlessly and productively.
- Videoconference friends and family.
- Upload and download with the same fast speeds.
- And more!

*The possibilities are endless with fiber!*

Sign up now at  
[ConexonConnect.com](http://ConexonConnect.com)  
or scan below!

