



HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THE “GOOD OLD DAYS?”

BY MARK JOHNSTON GENERAL MANAGER

We often think we live in challenging times. Rising prices of just about everything are stretching family budgets and requiring us to make hard choices. It reminds me of the intro to Gladys Knight’s version of “The Way We Were.” She sings about how we reminisce about days gone by, but however tough we think today is, our kids will remember these days as their “good old days.”

That got me to thinking about how much better we have it today, especially when compared to the cooperative’s founders. Our website details a brief history of the utility, but I want to give you some perspective about how far we have come.

On the heels of the Great Depression and World War II, times were, by any measuring stick, hard — exponentially so for those living outside of town limits. In those years, access to electricity was often determined by geography.

In 1947, residents of Walden enjoyed modern conveniences: electric lights, refrigerators, washing machines, even waffle irons. That’s because of a one-cylinder diesel generator that literally shook the town. On the other side of Willow Creek Pass, other localities — including Kremmling, Hot Sulphur Springs, Granby, Tabernash, Fraser and Hideaway Park — also had electricity.

But for rural residents, unless they could afford a generator, life was profoundly less convenient. Simple economics created the disparity. Town-owned utilities couldn’t afford to build miles of expensive power lines for a handful of scattered farmsteads and businesses.

FDR’s “New Deal” was the catalyst for the electric revolution in rural America, but not without clearing hurdles. Initially, the federal government offered financing to investor-owned utilities

to extend power lines to the countryside. After crunching the numbers, those utilities declined. It was too costly, they said. Unprofitable. In response, Congress enacted the 1936 Rural Electrification Act, allocating \$100 million for publicly-owned utilities.

Now, I acknowledge that history can be dry and uninteresting, but often it teaches and informs. I think in this case, the rest of the story does just that.

On October 16, 1946, a group of Walden ranchers established North Park Rural Electric Association to electrify rural Jackson County. They collected a \$10 membership fee (which was credited back on the customers’ first electric bill) from people who wanted to “get hooked up.” That humble organization overcame numerous obstacles to eventually become Mountain Parks Electric. Below are just a few of the highlights.

1950: Acquired its first federal loan for \$845,000 and extended power lines to 569 additional Jackson County residents. Purchased Walden’s distribution and generating assets, consisting of 14.5 miles of line and a diesel generator that served 300 residents. Two weeks later, lightning struck and destroyed the generator. Fortunately, NPREA was able to lease the nearby fluorspar mine’s steam generator.

1952: Hired John Tarr to evaluate acquiring Granby’s Mountain Utilities Corporation to provide service for rural Grand County and



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the Laramie River Valley. MPREA joined Tri-State Generation and Transmission, assembled by cooperatives and public power districts from Colorado, Nebraska and Wyoming.

1953: Submitted a joint bid (with Glenwood Springs-based Holy Cross Rural Electric Association) to purchase MUC's assets. The acquisition dramatically increased the membership, most of which resided in Grand County. To reflect

its expanded territory, the board changed the name to Mountain Parks Electric, Inc. and moved its headquarters to Granby.

1960: Purchased Kremmling Power and Light and began providing electric service to Kremmling,

1968: Purchased surrounding municipalities but kept many of the former utilities' existing electric rates. MPE's board of directors streamlined its rate structure, reducing the number of rates from 19 to nine.

Clearly, MPE has come a long way in the past few decades. Many things have changed, but what will never change is that we exist to serve you. For some, driving their first Tesla will be the good old days.

Want a chance to win one of three \$100 bill credits? Email your favorite MPE story to CustomerService@mpei.com. You may just see it in print.

SOLAR STALWARTS: JACKSON AND GRAND COUNTIES' PHOTOVOLTAIC ARRAYS

MPE's commercial-scale solar arrays are separated by 63 miles of mountain peaks, alpine slopes and pristine meadows. In geographic terms, that's less than one degree of latitude. One set of panels sits atop Whiskey Hill, just north of Walden on Highway 125; the other, on Grand Country Road 5 near Fraser, escapes the notice of most passersby. Both generate electricity at a hum slightly louder than a whisper. Installed in 2019, cumulatively, they produce enough electricity to power hundreds of homes within MPE's service area each year. And we fully expect them both to generate clean energy in our neck of the woods for the next 20-plus years. C.W. Keissm. ACCT 502647200



If you're ever curious how much power the arrays generate in real time, it's easy to find out. Simply select the MPEI SOLAR button on our website or visit mpei.solarlog-web.net/mountain-parks-electric-plants.html.



YOU CAN HELP SUPPORT LOCAL RENEWABLES

GREEN POWER PROGRAM

MPE's Green Power Program gives you the opportunity to donate as little as \$1 a month to incentivize the installation of consumer-owned local renewables.

Since 2011, this program has awarded nearly \$300,000 to more than 1,500 MPE consumers. To learn more, visit mpei.com/green-power-program-contribution-form.



What other local renewable energy does MPE deliver to your home and business?



Find more at mpei.com/renewable-energy-portfolio.



MPE'S PINK HARD HAT CAMPAIGN

Raising Awareness and Funds Every October

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF CANCER TREATMENT

An anonymous MPE employee survivor story

- 3:45 a.m.** Alarm goes off.
5 more minutes? No—time to get up.
- 3:50 a.m.** Brush teeth and shower—no hair washing, lotion or deodorant allowed.
- 4:10 a.m.** Try to eat breakfast, but the chemo infusions make everything taste like metal.
- 4:20 a.m.** LOL. A spoonful of sugar does not help the medicine go down.
- 4:30 a.m.** Leave Grand County for the treatment center in Arvada. My wonderful husband is driving me.
- 6:30 a.m.** Sit in traffic on I-70 for 20 minutes.
- 6:55 a.m.** Whew! Found a parking spot.
- 7:00 a.m.** Check into the infusion center.
- 7:10 a.m.** Weighed, blood pressure taken and led to an infusion station with a beautiful view.
- 7:20 a.m.** A nurse comes in to put a cold cap on my head to reduce hair loss.
- 8:05 a.m.** It takes about 45 minutes for my scalp to go down to 32 degrees. This process causes the worst ice cream headache ever.
- 8:10 a.m.** Tempted to rip the cold cap off and embrace baldness. My husband squeezes my hand and tells me a joke. I leave the cap on.
- 8:15 a.m.** Nurse returns and starts the chemo infusion through the port in my chest.
- 8:15 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**
I watch TV, read, drink warm tea and doze off. Husband stays by my side, ready to crack a joke if needed.
- 3:00 p.m.** Nurse takes off the cold cap and removes the needle from the port in my chest. Infusion is finished for the day. I say goodbye to the nurses who have been so nice and helpful.
Walking out of the treatment center, the bone pain and nausea kicks in. All I want to do is get under a blanket and go to sleep in our truck. But then I remember I have been advised if I keep moving my body will feel better. So when my husband wants to stop at Costco, I get out of the truck and walk around in the sunshine. I start to feel better and I'm glad I didn't stay under the blanket.
- 6:00 p.m.** We arrive back home in Grand County. Feeling thankful to have such a caring husband and family, access to good health care and kind people helping me along the way.
- 8:00 p.m.** Goodnight.



(left to right): Bryce Poppe, Shawn Axtell, Chase Gaines, Dalton Greenwood.

DOUBLE YOUR CONTRIBUTION NOW! MPE will match the first \$500 contributed to Mountain Family Center's Taking Steps program.

JOIN US IN RAISING AWARENESS AND FUNDS

Each October, Mountain Parks Electric's Pink Hard Hat campaign broadens awareness of and funding for locals affected by cancer. We invite you to join us in helping our family, friends and neighbors.

One hundred percent of the funds raised through the MPE Pink Hard Hat Campaign (in coordination with Mountain Family Center) will be earmarked for cancer treatment-related expenses for people living in Grand and Jackson counties.



TO DONATE TO THE PINK HARD HAT CAMPAIGN visit mountainfamilycenter.org/cancerfund and click on the "Donate Now" button. To refer someone to the program or for more information, please call 970-557-3186. Sam Hochevar, ACCT 947007966

ANOTHER WAY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE LOCALLY

Is there anything more telling than a cause? A food drive, cleaning up a park, donating blood — any of a hundred acts that require more resolve than deliberation. A cause frequently evokes the very thing it reveals: a human heart. MPE provides a year-round opportunity for members seeking to make a difference in their own backyard. Robin Kupernik, ACCT 1012460

OPERATION ROUND UP gives you a chance to help locals in need and nonprofit community organizations by simply rounding up your electric bill to the next dollar. Since 1999, MPE has collected those pennies through this program and awarded more than \$1 million to residents and organizations in the communities it serves. Donations are tax deductible. The average contribution is \$7 a year. To sign up, visit mpei.com/operation-round-home.

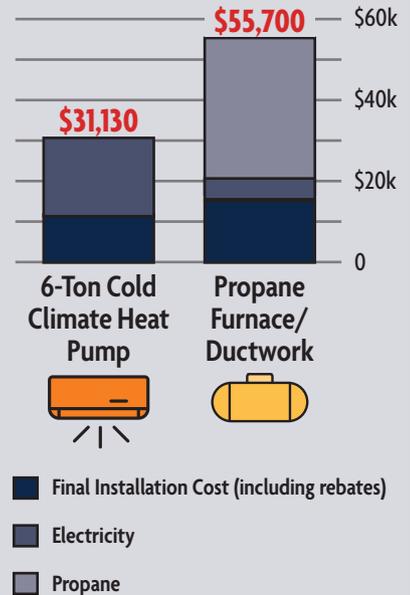


COLD CLIMATE HEAT PUMP VS. PROPANE FURNACE

Initial Installation Cost Comparison

Estimate for a 2,000 square foot home in Grand County, Colorado	 6-Ton Cold Climate Heat Pump	 Propane Furnace/ Ductwork
Initial equipment cost	\$30,000	\$11,000
500 gallon propane tank installation cost	\$0	\$3,000
State of Colorado 12.9% tax credit	 -\$3,870	\$0
Inflation Reduction Act upfront discount (qualifies for up to 150% AMI)	 -\$8,000	\$0
★ MPE rebate	-\$6,000	\$0
Final Cost	\$12,130	\$14,000

15-year Equipment & Operating Cost Estimate



AND THE WINNER IS...



👉 Congratulations to MPE consumer Russ Morgan, winner of the solar generator in our summer online giveaway drawing. Stay connected with MPE online for more chances to win.



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.



WAYS TO \$AVE

SAVING WATER SAVES MONEY

BY LINDSAY MCCANN
MEMBER SERVICE SPECIALIST

Wasting water not only affects the environment, but also affects your wallet.

- **SHUT OFF** running water when brushing your teeth.
- **FIX** dripping faucets and running toilets.
- **COLLECT** rainwater for indoor plants.
- **KEEP** a jug of water in the fridge for cold and ready-to-drink H₂O.