

PUTTING THE “HOME” IN HOMETOWN SERVICE

BY TOM WALCH CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Regular readers of this column know that hometown service is central to our mission here at Grand Valley Power. Our hometown nature truly sets us apart. Why is it so important? Reading the cover story of this issue of *Colorado Country Life* magazine featuring Grand Valley Power director Janie VanWinkle provides a few clues.

Janie has lived and worked in the Grand Valley for decades. She knows the challenges of being on the rural side of the rural-urban divide. She has spent enough time in the business world to understand how to make tough decisions. From our local feed stores to Denver, in influential circles of our state government, Janie knows people — and people know her. She knows how to get things done. Janie is willing to assume the mantle of leadership. On the Grand Valley Power Board of Directors, she has proven that she is committed to doing what is best for the broad membership of our cooperative for the long term.

Janie is a great example of the importance of having hometown folks serve on the governing board of our co-op. This hometown element is also a key building block of the day-in and day-out great service that GVP consumers have grown to expect. It makes a difference when customers are served by members of their communities. GVP members receive personal attention from real people who deal with the same issues and challenges they face every day.

GREAT SERVICE PERSONIFIED

This is the kind of service consumers have received from GVP Service Planner Perry Rupp for the past 40 years. That’s how long he has been meeting with consumers and developers about their power needs, designing electric service details, answering questions, and generally helping them any way he can. Perry has a knack for always

finding the positive in any situation, and he will always have a story to tell along the way. He is also versatile, as his design skills



 GVP Service Planner Perry Rupp retires from the co-op after 40 years of service.

brought us the GVP logo that is so recognizable across the Grand Valley. Combining his creativity, technical knowledge and experience with his down-home communication skills, Perry has helped build the culture of service that our Grand Valley Power team members take so much pride in. In so many ways, he personifies what great service can be.

GREAT SERVICE UNSEEN

GVP Finance Manager Pat Kanda has also made significant contributions to our service culture. His work is mostly behind the scenes, and the service he provides isn’t always apparent to consumers; but it is important, nonetheless. For the past 31 years Pat has served on GVP’s leadership team — preparing budgets, work plans, financial forecasts, analyses and reports — to make sure that our cooperative maintains its solid financial footing. Pat’s efforts and expertise help us keep our rates as affordable as possible. While his role at the co-op doesn’t call for regular interaction with the membership, he has been visible in the Grand Junction community where he was born and raised. He has an active role with the Clifton Lions Club, spent time on



TOM WALCH

the School District 51 Board of Education and served as treasurer of the Mesa County Republican Party. Pat takes civic responsibility seriously. But again, what he has done behind the scenes is probably more important, as he has tutored and mentored dozens of high school students, helping hone their math skills, paving the way for better futures for many of them.



 GVP Finance Manager Pat Kanda retires after 31 years of service at the co-op.

WELL-EARNED RETIREMENTS

Pat and Perry put the “home” in Grand Valley Power’s hometown service. Over the course of the next 30 days, Pat and Perry will be departing Grand Valley Power for well-earned retirements. Losing 71 years of combined knowledge and experience is never easy, but we can be comfortable knowing that they have conscientiously prepared their coworkers to carry the torch. Thanks to their leadership and example, everyone on the team is ready to step up and deliver great service to our Grand Valley Power consumers.

Please join us in thanking Pat and Perry and wishing them all the best in their retirement.

Brew Your Coffee with Confidence

BY RITA-LYN SANDERS DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

I'll never forget the day I decided to become a coffee drinker.

The morning was damp, and the foliage said fall. It was my freshman year at the University of Oregon in Eugene. I had a mid-term that day in J101: Grammar for Journalists, a packed lecture held in a massive auditorium. The writing platforms attached to the chairs offered barely enough space to rest your elbow once you opened your notebook. Despite its crowd and uncomfortable furnishings, it was my favorite class that term.

J101 was my only major course in a schedule chock full of core classes, and the teacher was delightful. He was a young, cute attorney who taught with a style so engaging that it was difficult to believe you weren't the only one in the lecture hall with him. Alas, that wasn't the case. This journalism class was required by several departments at the university, including the school of law, and had earned a reputation for being tough; especially for aspiring journalists who needed to secure at least a B to achieve acceptance into the competitive Journalism School.

After studying half the night, I thought a hot cup of coffee would surely help me through the test.

In the student union, I settled on a dark green, reusable Go Ducks! mug with a lid. As I filled it with the dark brown liquid, the caramel aroma reminded me of why I wanted to drink it. And the cool factor. And my new Ducks mug! And the fact that I "officially" became an adult just a few months earlier. To be clear, I had only tasted coffee up until this point. I would drink it now — with creamer.

I carried my prize to class in the lecture hall and picked a seat near the top, in the back. I waited for the teacher to hand out the multiple-choice exam and slowly began sipping my coffee. As I focused on the questions, I paused every now and then to take a drink.

About halfway into the two-hour mid-term I began to feel a bit anxious even

though none of the questions had evaded my study sessions. The next thing I noticed was how warm the room was getting. Then there was the shaking that took over my hands as I filled in the last few bubbles next to my answers. I packed up my things, quickly made my way down the stairs to turn in the test and then exited the hall.

It took me a few minutes to compose myself and figure out that the coffee was to blame. Too much caffeine for a lightweight. After that, I used my new mug only for beverages like tea and hot cocoa. It was another 12 years before I became a regular coffee drinker, and I'm still pretty much a 1-cup-a-day kind of person, and half of it is almond milk.

Regardless, my family brews a small pot every day. It doesn't take long, less than 10 minutes, and it costs much less than purchasing the liquid dessert in a cup that I order when I stop at one of our local coffee shops. According to calculations by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, I could continuously brew coffee for 38 hours at home for the cost of a \$5 cup of coffee.

That's a lot of brewing. I would also need to buy the beans and perhaps grind them, but it reminds me that electricity is a good value. I would even go so far as to say electricity is a great value considering how important it is and all the creature comforts that we have because of it.

Residential electricity rates have increased across the country over the past two years — and this month for Grand Valley Power consumers — due to the escalation in the price of fuel sources used to generate electricity, as well as increased operational costs. It seems that nothing has escaped our nation's inflationary economy, the pandemic and international events.

When we look back, though, it's also true that the cost of powering our homes has risen slower over the previous few years than other

common expenses such as cable and satellite TV, medical care, and housing costs. At Grand Valley Power, we work hard to control costs and provide our members with the exceptional service that they expect. It is one of the benefits of cooperative membership. You are not just a member. You are an owner in a viable, compassionate company focused on benefiting you and our community — not a group of anonymous investors.

So, when you brew coffee, wash a load of laundry or pop a bagel in the toaster, you can do it with the confidence that we are here to empower your lives with safe reliable, and affordable electricity.

Value of ELECTRICITY

1 cup from the coffee shop = 38 hours of brewing at home

- Based on 13 cents per kWh, a \$5 cup of coffee and a coffee maker that uses 1,000 watts/hr.

1 pair of new jeans = 685 hours of running the washing machine

- Based on 13 cents per kWh, a \$48 pair of jeans and a clothes washer that uses 500 watts/hr.

1 order of avocado toast = 68 hours of using a toaster

- Based on 13 cents per kWh, a \$6.80 order of avocado toast and a toaster that uses 800 watts/hr.

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: FOOD BANK OF THE ROCKIES WESTERN SLOPE

BY DANA POGAR

COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, 33.8 million people struggle to find resources to meet their most basic need: food. However, one hometown organization is determined to change those statistics by providing hunger relief to communities across western Colorado. The Food Bank of the Rockies Western Slope built its new distribution facilities in co-op territory. Located just three miles east of Grand Valley Power headquarters, we are proud to welcome Food Bank of the Rockies to the cooperative family.

A community-wide initiative

Food Bank of the Rockies is the largest hunger-relief organization in the Rocky Mountain region, distributing upwards of 178,000 meals daily. Communities across western Colorado, from the valleys up into the mountains, continue to see the highest need when alleviating food insecurity compared to the rest of the state. “We built the Etkin Family Distribution Center in Grand Junction to provide the best support for our Western Slope neighbors,” said Western Slope Director Sue Ellen Rodwick. “This facility is 84% larger than the size of our previous location and can store even more food. With our new location, we will be able to grow to provide over 60% more meals annually.”

In 2021, the Food Bank of the Rockies Western Slope-based distribution center distributed more than 11.8 million pounds of food, equivalent to more than 9.5 million meals. “Our mission is to ignite the power

of community to nourish people experiencing hunger,” said Development Manager Gabriela Garayar. “With our new facility, Food Bank of the Rockies can not only store more food but preserve fresh foods using our commercial food dehydrators.” Through the dehydrator program, which is the only one operating within the Feeding America network, the distribution center can dehydrate produce to extend the impact and shelf-life of food.

While technological advancements aid operations, the volunteers behind the orga-



Around 30% of the products that Food Bank of the Rockies distributes are fresh, nutrient-rich foods including fruits, vegetables, meat and dairy.

nization continue to support our neighbors’ lives. “2022 Rising Volunteer of the Year, Steve Barton, is one of many individuals who has dedicated his free time to helping others. He is just one example of the many servant hearts volunteering at the Food Bank of the Rockies,” Rodwick said. Since October 2021, Robert has volunteered more than 190 hours at the Food Bank of the Rockies.

Lend a helping hand

If you are passionate about community service, the Food Bank of the Rockies offers a variety of ways for you to get involved. One way to make an impact and to support this organization is to donate funds. From a



Food Bank of the Rockies Western Slope Director Sue Ellen Rodwick (left) and Development Manager Gabriela Garayar (right).

single donation to a monthly contribution, every \$1 donated helps provide enough food for three meals.

Community members are welcome to volunteer at the distribution center. “From packing nutrient-rich boxes to helping at one of our mobile pantries, Food Bank of the Rockies is always looking for those willing to lend a helping hand,” Garayar said. “Every hour donated ensures that anyone experiencing hunger on the Western Slope can get the food they need to thrive.”

For neighbors in need

Sometimes the people you’d least expect are in greatest need of assistance. If you or a loved one needs assistance, please visit foodbankrockies.org/food.

We at Grand Valley Power feel privileged to have Food Bank of the Rockies in our community and on our lines.

Visit foodbankrockies.org/ws to donate or to sign up to volunteer.

2023 Board Meetings

Regularly scheduled board meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at 9 a.m. at 845 22 Road, Grand Junction. *Meeting date changed due to conflicts/holidays.

- March 15
- April 19
- May 17
- June 28*
- July 26*
- August 16
- September 20
- October 18
- November 14*
- December 13*



Cheers to 40 years! GVP Service Planner retires

BY DANA POGAR
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

GVP Service Planner Perry Rupp (left) and retired co-op employee Tom Holman at Grand Valley Power's annual meeting in 1992. ▶



If you have been a Grand Valley Power member during the past 40 years, you've likely had the privilege of meeting GVP Service Planner Perry Rupp. From his quirky sense of humor to his servant's heart, Perry is one of a kind. So, while we're sad to see him go, GVP is excited for his adventures ahead — Perry has retired after 40 years.

Perry's first day on the job was February 7, 1983. "I started as a mapping technician for Grand Valley Power and quickly progressed through various positions in the engineering department," he said. Before serving in his current role, Perry often assisted in service planner-related projects. "After working with other planners, I quickly discovered my love for the job. So, when a service planner position opened up,

I immediately applied and have been in this role ever since," Perry explained.

During his time at Grand Valley Power, Perry valued his friendships with employees and members. "Working at Grand Valley Power is like working with family. But, like they always say, it's not working when you love your job, and that describes my past 40 years at GVP"

During retirement, Perry hopes to indulge in his love for cars and spend time with friends, family, and his wife, Donna. "While I do not have any firm plans, I look forward to not having anywhere to be and having time to enjoy the great outdoors," he said.

Grand Valley Power congratulates and thanks you for your 40 years of service to the cooperative.

March is Employee Appreciation Month

HERE'S TO THE PEOPLE BEHIND YOUR POWER. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE TO THE CO-OP.

GVP Director Achieves Credential in Today's Electric Utility Competencies

Grand Valley Power Director Joe Burtard recently received the Credentialed Cooperative Director 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 of the cooperative principles and business model.

As your hometown electric cooperative, Grand Valley Power has a commitment to work through NRECA to sharpen this body of knowledge for the benefit of the electric cooperative consumer-members. The NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) program requires attendance and demonstrated understanding of the basic competencies contained in five core courses:

- Director duties and liabilities
- Strategic planning
- Understanding the electric business
- Financial decision making
- Board operations and process



▲ GVP Board President Carolyn Sandeen-Hall presents Director Joe Burtard with his Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate.

Please join us in congratulating Joe on his recent accomplishment.