

# EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

*Echoes of the Empire*

MAY 2023

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# MAY IS MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

BY JOSH DELLINGER GENERAL MANAGER



JOSH DELLINGER

Service. Mission. Country. You likely identified immediately (and correctly) that these three words describe our nation's veterans. They also succinctly describe a core co-op ethos.

While veterans are innately motivated to serve, in a similar vein, electric co-ops are guided by foundational principles that put their community first. After all, electric co-ops were founded to bring electricity to rural areas where there was none. In doing so, they powered local economies and helped them thrive. I believe this close connection to an essential mission is why there are so many veterans in the utility industry and why they are such a great fit for electric co-ops.

Today's veterans are highly skilled because everyone who joins the military is either trained in a tech career field or exposed to advanced technology during their years of service. Many veterans have skills in advanced disciplines such as engineering, electronics or mechanics, which are all beneficial for the utility industry. EEA is fortunate to have employed many veterans over the years and currently has three in our ranks. We are grateful for their contributions both to the co-op and to our community.

## LEADERSHIP AND TEAM-BUILDING SKILLS

Our veteran colleagues joined EEA already equipped with training in leadership and teamwork. That's because while on active duty, servicemen work closely together as they know their lives depend on each other's actions. This fosters not only a high level of self-discipline but also a sense of personal responsibility and passion for excellence.

The utility industry is increasingly complex and undergoing profound transformation. While there is the traditional

engineering and vegetation management aspect of the utility industry, it now also encompasses technology, cybersecurity and the electrification of the transportation sector and other areas of the economy. Veterans are adept at responding to changing conditions and learning and adapting to new technologies — all are essential in our evolving industry.

## MISSION-ORIENTED OUTLOOK

Working for an electric co-op is more than just a job. There is a clear mission in the work: to help our consumer-members and the community. When you work closely with the community, you can't help but feel a sense of commitment and responsibility to co-op members. It's similar to the sense of duty and responsibility that veterans experience in the military. They feel deep, personal responsibility and commitment to their co-op team members and to the consumer-members we serve. Veterans are trustworthy, goal oriented and want to do right by their co-op and their community.

May is Military Appreciation Month and at EEA we are grateful to have veterans within our ranks; we are proud to serve them and their families within our community. I hope you'll join me in recognizing the sacrifices veterans have made to our great country — and the many contributions they continue to make to our wonderful community. Veterans, we salute you.



# A Safe, Happy House

Four Easy Ways to Boost Electrical Safety at Home



**May is National Electrical Safety Month.**



## Monthly Calendar

**May 1** – Continuing education scholarship applications available

**May 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 may attend in person or remotely. Instructions to attend remotely are included on the agenda.

**May 14** – Mother's Day

**May 20** – Armed Forces Day

**May 29** – Memorial Day – EEA office closed

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

The location of your thermostat can impact your HVAC system's ability to maintain an ideal indoor temperature. For maximum accuracy, thermostats should be placed in the center of the home, away from air vents, plumbing pipes and exterior doors. Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your thermostat, which can cause the HVAC to run longer than necessary. Avoid installing thermostats in rooms that tend to feel warmer or colder than the rest of the home. Do not place furniture in front of the thermostat, which can block air flow and result in inaccurate readings.





The safety functions of ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) can fail without notice, so check them monthly. Pick the first or last day of the month so that it is easy to remember.

### HOW TO TEST A GFCI OUTLET:

- Find the test and reset buttons.
- Press the TEST button.
- You should hear a snap sound that trips the outlet.

### CONFIRM THE POWER IS CUT

- Plug in a lamp or other device.
- The item you plug in should not turn on.

### RESET THE OUTLET

- Once you confirm the GFCI is working properly (that the outlet does not work when tested), press the reset button to restore power to the outlet.

### RETEST FOR REMAINING SOCKET(S)

You can also buy a GFCI outlet tester that has a display and test button.

GFCI protection can also be installed on circuit breakers to safeguard an entire circuit. They should be tested monthly by pressing the test button on the breaker. If working properly, the interrupter should shut off power to the circuit.



▲ Co-op Photo Contest Winner May 2023 –  
“Gadwall Duck” by Sandra Bryan

## NOTICE OF 2023 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

### EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

The Annual Meeting of the members of Empire Electric Association, Inc. is scheduled to begin at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 15, 2023. The meeting will be held at EEA's Engineering & Operations Center located at 23999 Road L.4, Cortez, Colorado. The following business is scheduled to be transacted:

I. Election of directors submitted by written petition pursuant to Article III Section 4 of the cooperative's bylaws. One director is to be elected from the following districts:

DISTRICT NO. 5 [Four-year term]

DISTRICT NO. 6 [Four-year term]

(NOTE: Article III, Section 4 of Empire's bylaws states, "Should there be only one nomination from each district open for election then no ballots will be mailed or cast and the candidate will be declared elected as a matter of law at the annual meeting or within five (5) days thereafter as provided by law.")

II. Voting upon proposed amendments to the Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation, if necessary

(NOTE: No Bylaw or Articles amendments are proposed at this time.)

III. Reports of Officers, Directors and Committees and action thereon

IV. Any other business transacted which may properly come before the meeting or any adjournment thereof.

Jerry Fetterman, Secretary-Treasurer  
Empire Electric Association, Inc.  
PO Box K  
Cortez, Colorado 81321

# Plan for Safety

BY ANDY CARTER MEMBER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER

April showers bring May flowers and a whole host of outside projects. As the days get longer and the weather improves, many of us look forward to tackling those projects we planned by the fire on cold winter days. May is electrical safety month and I hope that safety is an integral part of your planning process.

If your project involves digging or trenching, it is important to make sure you do not damage any buried utilities. Call 811 at least two business days before you plan to dig to have buried utilities marked so you know where you can safely dig. 811 will only mark utilities owned by public entities like EEA, so if you think there may be other buried lines on your property you may want to hire a private utility marking company to make sure you do not dig into something installed by a previous landowner.

You should also look around your project area for other safety hazards. Be aware of overhead electric lines and keep all objects and equipment at least 10 feet away. Electricity will take the shortest path to ground and the closer you get to a high-voltage line, the greater your risk of becoming that path and being electrocuted. It is important to keep the right of way clear under and around overhead lines to allow crews access to repair and maintain the line. Typical rights of way extend 15 feet either side of the overhead line.

If your project includes adding additional electric load, you should call EEA to verify that our facilities are large enough to accommodate what you want to add. Smaller loads, such as a pump for a water feature or a few lights in your garage will most likely be fine. If you are adding something that requires its own subpanel, such as a heat pump, hot tub or an outbuilding, the project should be reviewed by EEA first. You can call EEA at 970-565-4444 to provide your project details and schedule a visit from an engineering technician.

When you are ready to get to work, make sure you continue with a safety attitude. Have personal protective equipment available for you and anyone helping with the project. Safety glasses,



⬆ This carport was not properly anchored. During a spring storm, strong winds lifted the carport and dropped it on an EEA overhead line, breaking the pole and causing an outage for several members. Photo courtesy of Ken Tarr.

hearing protection, gloves, and proper clothing and footwear may be required. If you are using power tools, make sure they are in good condition and that cutting tools are sharp. Extension cord size and length should be capable of providing the power for the tools being used. Inspect all cords for cracked or frayed insulation or signs of overheating. An inadequate extension cord can ruin the tool and may damage the circuit it is plugged in to. Also make sure connections are protected from getting wet and are secure. It is a good idea to use GFCI outlets when working outdoors or near water indoors.

While you are working, follow your plan. If you are using a DIY kit, make sure you read, understand and follow the instructions. If things are not working out the way you planned, it is safest to stop work and seek advice from the manufacturer or a professional with experience in the kind of work you are performing. Continuing can have dangerous consequences — it is always better to be safe than sorry.

May is a great time to work on projects that can make your life easier and your home more beautiful. Remember to include safety in your plan so that you can enjoy the fruits of your labor.

Choosing the Right Extension Cord			Watts = Volts x Amps	
Cord Size	Up to 50 Feet	100 Feet	150 Feet	
16 Gauge	13 Amps Max	10 Amps Max	⚡	⊘
14 Gauge	15 Amps Max	13 Amps Max	⚡	⚡
12 Gauge	20 Amps Max	15 Amps Max	⚡	⚡
10 Gauge	20 Amps Max	20 Amps Max	⚡	⚡