

MORGAN COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

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MCREA Mission

Morgan County REA, a member-owned cooperative, is dedicated to serving our members by providing safe, reliable energy with a strong tradition and vision for the future.

Morgan County REA Always Learning

BY DAVID FRICK GENERAL MANAGER



DAVID FRICK

It's a new school year and kids of all ages are getting ready for a fresh year of learning. From kindergarten to college, students in the classroom gain knowledge about a broad variety of subjects and learn new skills that prepare them for the future. In a similar vein, we at Morgan County REA are continually learning; we stay up to date with industry trends and find new ways to better serve you, our members.

For example, we understand that members today want more ways to manage and pay their electricity bill. In addition to offering a variety of options, including automatic bill pay, prepay, and online or in-person payment, MCREA encourages you to download SmartHub, our mobile app that allows you to track your electric use, pay bills, and receive outage notifications.

MCREA stays up to date with new technologies that can improve our system. In recent years, MCREA has increased automation across our system. Using advanced metering infrastructure, the co-op can pinpoint the cause of outages and detect problems in our system before they cause larger issues. This increases efficiency and improves reliability of the whole system.

The energy sector is rapidly changing. As technologies like solar generation and electric vehicles grow in popularity, our energy experts here at MCREA stay informed on industry trends. Give them a call, and they can provide a candid view of the pros and cons of solar installs or EVs. We're here to help you choose what is best for your given situation.

Our employees aren't the only ones learning new ways to better serve our membership. Your MCREA board directors take part in continuing education courses to increase their knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills, and the seven cooperative principles. Directors are committed to sharpening this knowledge to serve MCREA members to the best of their ability. Each of our nine directors hold multiple certifications from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association reflecting that commitment.

Cooperation among cooperatives, the sixth cooperative principle, plays a key role in this learning process. Electric co-ops can learn from each other. Though every co-op is different, discussing new ideas and sharing what works best helps MCREA find ways to improve and meet the needs of our own membership.

As students embark on a new school year, MCREA will continue learning as well. Whether it's examining energy trends or exploring how emerging technologies can benefit our electric cooperative, for MCREA, our "school year" is never over. We will continue to learn from our members about their priorities for the future, and we remain committed to studying and researching the electric industry so that we can best serve our members.



MCREA HOSTS MEMBER APPRECIATION PICNIC

More than 250 members gathered at Morgan County REA's headquarters for the co-op's annual Member Appreciation Picnic on Thursday, June 15. The New Raymer FFA and Brush FFA chapters helped serve the meal, and MCREA employees presented demonstrations and activities to those in attendance.

MCREA linemen presented a safety demonstration using the cooperative's full-voltage hotline trailer. The demo teaches the importance of powerline safety, shows how power is delivered to homes, and explains what can interfere with the system and cause outages.

One activity popular with MCREA's younger members was the Little Lineworker Kids Course. Created by MCREA employees, the linework-themed obstacle course was an interactive way to teach children how electricity gets to them: from generation sources, along high voltage transmission lines to substations, then carried via MCREA's distribution lines to homes, farms, and businesses.

The new Ford F-150 Lightning, an electric pickup truck, was also on display at the event. In addition to learning the pros and cons of the vehicle, members could sign up for their chance at a test drive. The F-150 Lightning was kindly provided to MCREA by Tri-State Generation and Transmission, the co-op's wholesale power supplier.

Throughout the evening, prize drawings were held for members to win electric tools, bill credits, MCREA swag, and gift cards to local businesses. It was a time for neighbors to catch up, enjoy a barbecue, and learn how their electric cooperative is working to serve them best. (Cynthia Jensen, acct. #xxx5300)

After all, without its members, MCREA would not be possible. Members have guided the co-op for the past 86 years, and MCREA is committed to providing safe, reliable energy to members for many years to come.

◀ MCREA members gather in the co-op's warehouse at the 2023 Member Appreciation Picnic.



▶ The New Raymer and Brush FFA chapters serve attendees a meal at the MCREA Member Appreciation Picnic in June.



▶ MCREA Journeyman Lineman Andron Brown presents the hotline safety demonstration.



▶ A young MCREA member works through the substation part of the Little Lineworker Kids Course with MCREA employee Maddie Pollart.

MCREA employees (left to right) Amanda Green, Fabian Vigil, David Frick, and Zeque Chenoweth announce door prize and bill credit winners. ▶



From Morgan County to Washington, D.C. Kenia Hansen-Guzman attends Youth Tour

BY MADDIE POLLART COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

“It’s D.C. — everything happens here!” thought Kenia Hansen-Guzman, as she and 33 other students from Colorado rode the bus into our nation’s capital.

Kenia was selected by Morgan County REA to join hundreds of other young co-op members from across the country for the 2023 National Rural Electric Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. During the weeklong trip, students learn more about electric cooperatives and get a full Washington, D.C., experience that includes meeting members of Congress and touring monuments and memorials.

On June 12, before flying east, Colorado students met in Denver for a day to tour the state Capitol and speak with representatives. That afternoon, they saw an electrical safety demonstration and learned more about what makes electric cooperatives like MCREA special.

The next day, the group flew into Baltimore, Maryland. They enjoyed an afternoon in the harbor and toured Fort McHenry — where the national anthem was written. After some time in the city, the Colorado group boarded a bus and headed south to Washington, D.C.

“One of my favorite parts of the trip was the Marine Corps Sunset Parade at the Iwo Jima Memorial in Arlington that evening,” Kenia said. “I’m musical, too, and even though the parade had different instruments than what I play, the Marine Corps Band was just fantastic!”



▲ Kenia visits Mount Vernon, President George Washington’s estate.

The rest of the week in D.C. was jam-packed with activities. Students visited historical places, including Mount Vernon, and toured Smithsonian museums.

“This is my kind of learning,” Kenia said. “We got to choose which museum to explore, and I chose the African American History Museum. It was poignant and amazing.”

The Vietnam War Memorial and the World War II Memorial also made quite an impact on

▲ Kenia poses with students from Colorado and Wyoming in front of Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

Kenia. “These places were so just so moving — which is what memorials should be,” Kenia said.

One of the coolest parts of the trip? Meeting new people. Each student had a handful of pins showing which state they came from. Throughout the trip, they traded and collected as many as possible. Kenia’s lanyard is now full of pins from across the country.

“I love meeting new people, and we all bonded instantly,” said Kenia. Students were sent by their local electric co-ops, so most kids were from rural, small towns across the United States. “It was fun to experience a place like Washington, D.C., with people from communities similar to mine.”

During their day on Capitol Hill, students met more new people — the politicians who represent them. Students visited with members of Congress and congressional staffers. “I enjoyed meeting Rep. Yadira Caraveo, who is also a medical doctor,” Kenia recalled. “I plan on pursuing a career in the medical field and appreciated Rep. Caraveo taking some extra time to speak with us.”

Throughout the week, Kenia and the rest of the group developed a better understanding of the need for electric cooperatives and how they work. (Belle Prairie Land Company, acct. #xxx6900)

“Before this trip I knew MCREA provided our electricity — but now I’ve learned so much about the role of electric cooperatives at the state and national level,” stated Kenia. “When you flip on a switch, I think it’s important to know why and how the lights come on.”

Kenia cannot wait to encourage her friends to apply for their chance to take part in Youth Tour next year.

“This was an amazing trip,” recalled Kenia. “I’m thankful to have had this experience, and I’m incredibly grateful to MCREA for giving me this opportunity.”



▲ The United States Marine Corps Band performs the Sunset Parade in front of the Iwo Jima Memorial in Arlington.



Bryson Fogg

New Apprentice Lineman Bryson Fogg

Morgan County REA is happy to welcome new apprentice lineman, Bryson Fogg, to the MCREA team. A native of Pierce, Fogg is excited to work in a rural community.

“I’d heard a lot of good things about Morgan County REA,” said Fogg, when asked what made him want to join the co-op. “I’m looking forward to the opportunities here.”

When it comes to being a lineman, Fogg has more than one favorite thing about the job. “I like getting power back on for people. It’s cool to see the lights of houses come back on, especially at night,” said Fogg. “I really enjoy the work.”

Welcome to MCREA, Bryson!

On the Horizon Wholesale power rate changes

For the past few months, we have discussed the ins and outs of electricity: How it is delivered, what factors into its cost, and how that cost compares to the inflation-driven prices of other common goods. Knowledge of these factors helps to better understand the pressures facing the electric utility industry and how they impact rates.

What’s happening

Due to inflation, higher energy prices, and supply pressures, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Morgan County REA’s wholesale power supplier, announced on June 5 that its board had approved a 6.36% increase in the average Class A wholesale rate and a new rate design for filing with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. This proposed change — which would take effect January 2024 — comes after seven years of stable rates, with Tri-State even providing a 4% total decrease in rates in 2021 and 2022. As a proud Tri-State member, MCREA appreciates the power supplier’s efforts to go against electrical utility trends the past several years, staving off the inevitable change as long as it could.

What this means for Morgan County REA

As Tri-State’s member co-ops await a ruling from FERC on the proposed rate change, MCREA will conduct a thorough assessment of how the changes will impact our cooperative. MCREA will evaluate what rate structures best allow the co-op to continue the mission of providing safe, reliable power to members, at prices that are as affordable as possible.

“With its diverse resource portfolio and extensive planning, Tri-State continues to be an invaluable resource for MCREA and that mission,” David Frick, MCREA general manager said.

**WIN \$25 OFF
YOUR ELECTRIC BILL**

Each month, Morgan County REA gives two lucky members a chance at a \$25 bill credit, just by reading Colorado Country Life. Congratulations, Robert Jones! You spotted your name in the June issue and called to receive a \$25 credit.

There are two more member names and account numbers hidden somewhere in this issue. If you find your name and account number, call MCREA member services at 970-867-5688 by August 31 to claim a \$25 credit on your next bill.

**Happy
LABOR
Day!**

**MCREA's office will be
closed Monday, Sept. 4.**