

# MORGAN COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

SEPTEMBER 2023



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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.

## COOPERATIVE VALUE

BY DAVE FRICK GENERAL MANAGER



DAVE FRICK

Morgan County REA was created because it was the best way to electrify our area in the 1930s, with neighbors pitching in to share the cost of bringing power to rural farms and ranches. This electric cooperative exists today because we are not only committed to delivering safe, reliable power to our members at rates as affordable as possible, but we also care about the well-being of our members and our community. Therefore, the value of being a member of an electric co-op goes far beyond the dollar amount you see on your power bill each month.

Electric co-ops such as MCREA are unique in the fact they are run by members, for members. As an MCREA member, you don't simply buy your power from us — you and over 4,900 other members are owners of this cooperative. That's why many MCREA members receive capital credits checks each year. As a not-for-profit organization, any money that MCREA has remaining at the end of an operating year is given back to the members according to how much electricity they purchased. Investor-owned utilities, on the other hand, give those profits to shareholders who may not even know where your community is, let alone be part of it.

Because electric co-ops are owned by those they serve, democratic member control is key. At MCREA, we have nine member-elected board directors, three representing each of our districts. Board elections are held each year and members have equal voting rights, allowing you to actively participate in setting policies and making decisions for the co-op.

Concern for community is a pillar of every electric co-op, and it rings especially true at MCREA. When you call our office or see an MCREA truck driving by, you know it's someone who cares about the community — because they're part of it. We live and work in the same towns. Your power is our power. MCREA prioritizes customer service because you're not just customers; you're our neighbors.

Sometimes factors outside our control can affect our co-op. As we've previously discussed, inflation, higher energy prices, and supply pressures have made it necessary for Tri-State Generation and Transmission, our wholesale supplier, to increase the rates MCREA pays for power by about 6%. This, in turn, will affect our members, who haven't seen an increase since 2016 — in fact, MCREA lowered rates just last year.

While roughly 70% of your electricity bill goes towards wholesale power every month, the other 30% covers the cost of distributing that power: things such as materials and equipment that MCREA needs to maintain our system. We've seen prices go up for these items as well, which also factors into our rates. While increases are never favorable, MCREA is evaluating how to best adjust to these changes and minimize the impact on our members.

MCREA will continue its mission of providing safe, reliable power. As we work through changes in the electric industry, including increased costs, it's important to remember what it means to be part of an electric co-op. MCREA is owned by our members, governed by our members, and committed to serving our members. That's what makes electric co-ops special. That's the cooperative value.

# MCREA Supports Local Fairs and Rodeos

County fairs are a summer tradition, and each year Morgan County REA looks forward to joining members at the fairgrounds to share the co-op story.

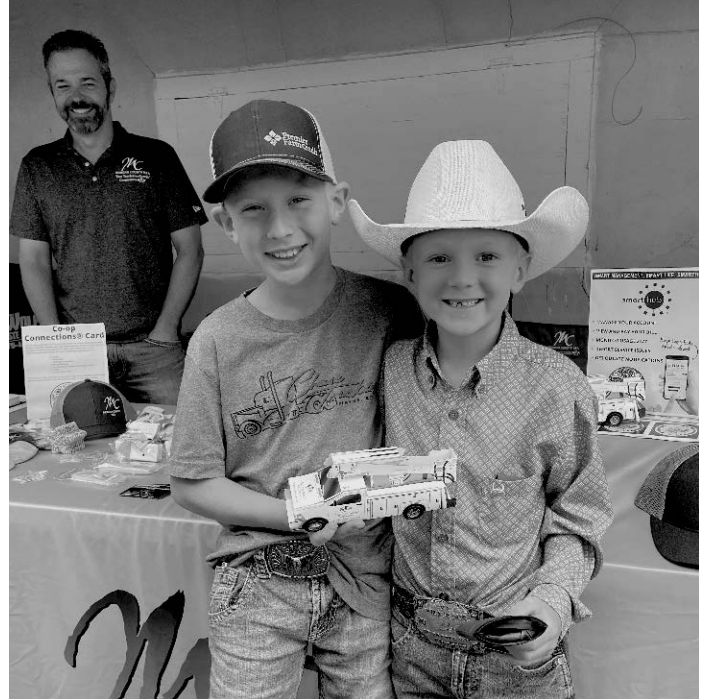
Fair season kicked off at the Northeast Weld County Fair in New Raymer on July 20. Affectionately named the “World’s Fair,” the event draws folks from the Grover, Briggsdale, New Raymer, and Stoneham areas — making it the perfect chance to visit with members in the northern part of MCREA’s service area.

A few weeks later, MCREA took part in the Morgan County Fair in Brush. On August 2, the co-op’s member services team enjoyed handing out giveaways at the annual steak fry — a community favorite — and chatting with members. The following day, MCREA participated in the junior livestock sale, where it purchased a market lamb from Josie Hunt of Wiggins.

MCREA is proud to support local 4-H and FFA members and is already looking forward to next year’s county fairs. (Prairie View Ranch Water District, acct. #xxx3900)



▲ Josie Hunt, Wiggins, and her market lamb at the Morgan County Fair. Photo by Dustin Price Photography.



▲ Young MCREA members Paxton and Porter show off the paper bucket truck they built. MCREA’s build-a-bucket-trucks were a popular item throughout the fair season.



▲ MCREA employee Maddie Pollart visits with members during the Morgan County Fair steak fry on August 2.



▲ Rob Baranowski and Maddie Pollart, MCREA’s member services team, host an MCREA booth at Raymer Fair.

**YOU CAN 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** to claim a **\$25 credit on your next bill**.

# September is National Preparedness Month

As adults, we understand the importance of storm safety, but younger children and teens may not realize the dangers storms pose. That's why it's so important to have a storm plan in place. Here are several tips you can share with your loved ones.

## BEFORE THE STORM

- Talk to your family about what to do in the event of a severe storm or tornado. Point out the safest location to shelter, such as a small, interior, windowless room on the lowest level of your home. Discuss the dangers of severe thunderstorms; lightning can strike 10 miles outside of a storm. Remember: When you hear thunder roar, head indoors.
- Make a storm kit. It doesn't have to be elaborate — having a few items on hand is better than nothing at all. Try to include items like water, non-perishable foods, a manual can opener, a first-aid kit, flashlights and extra batteries, prescriptions, baby supplies, and pet supplies. Keep all the items in one place for easy access if the power goes out.

## DURING THE STORM

- Pay attention to local weather alerts — either on the TV, your smartphone, or weather radio — and understand the types of alerts. A thunderstorm or tornado watch means these events are possible and you should be prepared; a warning means a thunderstorm or tornado has been spotted in your area and it's time to take action.
- If you find yourself in the path of a tornado, head to your safe place to shelter; protect yourself by covering your head with your arms or materials like blankets and pillows.
- If you're driving during a severe storm or tornado, do not try to outrun it. Pull over and cover your body with a coat or blanket if possible.

## AFTER THE STORM

- If the power is out, conserve your phone battery as much as possible, limiting calls and texts to let others know you are safe or for emergencies only.
- Stay off the roads if trees, power lines, or utility poles are down. Lines and equipment could still be energized, posing life-threatening risks to anyone who gets too close.
- Wear appropriate gear if you're cleaning up storm debris on your property. Thick-soled shoes, long pants, and work gloves will help protect you from sharp or dangerous debris left behind.

## Practice Storm Safety

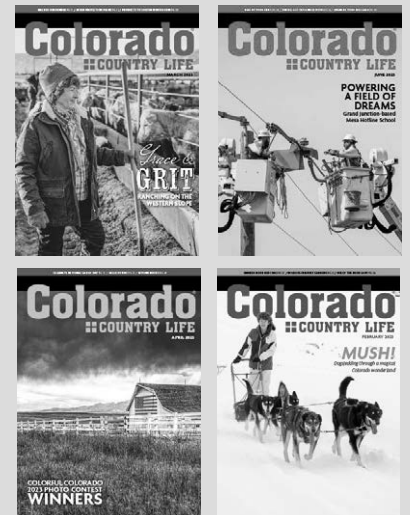
Have a plan in place and make a storm kit.

Listen to local alerts and know where to shelter.

Stay off the roads if trees and power lines are down.



## Why Do I Receive Colorado Country Life Each Month?



Colorado Country Life is an award-winning monthly magazine published for Colorado's electric cooperatives. This publication is a unique and cost-effective way for Morgan County REA to communicate and engage with you. Each month you'll find MCREA updates, including board election processes, annual meeting information, safety news, and fun member events such as barbecues and other gatherings. You also get exciting human-interest stories, gardening advice, outdoors-themed articles, delicious recipes, and energy-efficiency information in every issue.

We love your feedback. Please call MCREA at 970-867-5688 if you have any questions or feel free to email us at [memberservices@mcrea.org](mailto:memberservices@mcrea.org)

# Farm Safety & Health Week

Farmers and farm family members face dangers every day. Unfortunately, electrocution and electrical burn accidents are far too frequent on farms. Electrical safety is one of the top priorities during National Farm Safety and Health Week, typically observed the third week of September. (James Baladez, acct. xxx7200)

The simple movement of a portable grain auger from one bin to another can have tragic results if the individuals involved are not extremely careful. The use of tractors with large cabs and antennas and oversized grain wagons can also result in preventable electrocution incidents.

Electrical equipment around fields, such as power lines in the end rows, may get overlooked during such a hectic time of year as harvest. However, failure to notice overhead power lines can be a deadly oversight.

Most farmsteads could use a very careful overhead visual inspection of electric lines. The service may no longer meet the proper height codes because of age and/or damage to poles and pole guy wires. The sag may have increased over the years, while the height of the machinery being used today may be much higher.

Today's farm equipment has a long reach

when extended; even when collapsed for roadway transport, many pieces of equipment may exceed the height of power lines. A daily check should be made of where equipment will be moving to ensure that it will clear power lines. Don't take matters into your own hands — power lines may not be as high as they look. Always use a spotter, someone with a broad vantage point, when working in the vicinity of power lines.

Maintain a 10-foot separation from a power line completely around it, whether you are driving underneath or passing a grain auger near it. A 53-year-old Michigan truck driver who was cleaning sugar beets out of his truck unknowingly raised the bed into a 4,800-volt overhead power line. As he stood in the wet field and touched the energized truck bed, he was fatally burned.

In addition to conducting a field survey of power lines to locate potential hazards, employers should obtain safety information from utility companies for the benefit of their workers.

Where possible, install electrical safety warning signage to prevent equipment and human contact with power lines. This will also be beneficial to your suppliers who may be making deliveries to your farm.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Did you know fall is the perfect time to schedule a tuneup for your heating system? Home heating accounts for a large portion of winter energy bills, and no matter what kind of system you have, you can save energy and money by regularly maintaining your equipment.

Combining proper equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing, and thermostat settings can save about 30% on your energy bills.

*Source: Dept. of Energy*



**REMEMBER TO LOOK UP**  
WHEN WORKING NEAR POWER LINES

**Safe Electricity.org®**