

EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

Echoes of the Empire

OCTOBER 2023

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PLAYING IT SAFE ONLINE

BY ANDY CARTER MEMBER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER



ANDY CARTER

In today's world, most of us don't leave the front door unlocked. We protect our homes, loved ones, and valuables from intruders with locks, alarms, and other security measures. Cybersecurity is no different. It's the practice of protecting other valuables such as your identity, banking, health records, and other sensitive information from digital attacks and theft.

In addition to pumpkin spice lattes and crisper air, October is the time of year we recognize Cybersecurity Awareness Month. Taking necessary steps to protect our personal information is a year-round practice, and at Empire Electric Association, we use this time to share helpful cybersecurity reminders across our team of employees and with our members.



According to the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for strengthening cybersecurity and infrastructure protection), below are the four best ways to keep you and your family safe online.

- **Implement multi-factor authentication** (also known as two-step

verification) on your accounts. The additional layer of protection makes it much harder for criminals to access your information. Even if hackers obtain your password, they may be unable to access your accounts if multistep verification is enabled.

- **Update your software.** This is one of the easiest ways to protect your personal data. When downloading a software update, make sure it's coming straight from the company that created it. Beware of fake pop-ups that request urgent downloads. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.
- **Think before you click.** Most successful cyber attacks start with phishing emails. Don't take the bait when cyber criminals go phishing. Avoid emails (or texts) that look too good to be true, oddly urgent, poorly crafted, or include unusual requests.
- **Create strong passwords** using long, unique, and complex words or phrases. Consider using a password manager to save time. Some password managers can work across all devices, protect your identity, and notify you of potential phishing websites.

Just as you would talk with your children about safety in the physical world, discuss ways to stay safe online. Help them understand the public nature of the Internet. Young people need to know early on that what is shared online stays online and is difficult (if not impossible) to take back. Just as you would guard your money or valuables, children need to learn to guard their personal information, especially on social networks. As a parent or guardian,

help your children learn about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks and gaming sites.

Finally, cybersecurity and information protection extend beyond your internet connection. Phone calls are still used in attempts to get personal information. Phone numbers and Caller IDs can be spoofed. Seeing “Empire Electric” on the Caller ID

doesn’t necessarily mean it is your co-op calling. If someone calls you and wants immediate payment or they will disconnect your power, hang up immediately and call our number directly at 970-565-4444 to check the status of your account.

EEA takes cybersecurity and information protection very seriously. As we modernize our grid to continue to provide

safe and reliable electric service to you, we also ensure that any new technology is employed in a cyber safe manner. We use best-in-class security systems and focus on employee training to keep our guard up. We encourage you to do the same for your family or your business.

Safety Milestone Achieved

Safety is not just part of our mission statement at Empire Electric Association — it is something we focus on every day as we work to provide reliable power service to our members. On August 7, 2023, EEA achieved 2,000 days of work with no lost-time accidents. A lost-time accident is an event that results in an injury to a person so severe that they are unable to report to work the next scheduled day.

Empire Electric’s Safety and Compliance Administrator Jules Bitsilly credits the

cooperative’s safety record to employees broadening how they think about safety. “When it comes to safety at EEA, our employees have stepped up to the plate. Each day they put into practice what they learned at safety training and meetings. They realize the importance of safety not only on the job, but also at home.” Bitsilly is responsible for coordinating safety training as well as conducting inspections of safety equipment to make sure employees are prepared for accidents, should one occur.

EEA’s Operations and Engineering Manager Ken Tarr knows that a strong safety culture starts with leadership. Tarr stated “Linework is a very unforgiving trade where a moment of complacency or a little shortcut can have fatal results. The milestone of 2,000 days without a lost-time accident is a testimony to our awesome employees and Empire’s Safety Program as a whole. This can only be accomplished when each and every employee within the organization has “bought into” and cannot be attributed to any one individual person. We are also thankful for our board of directors who care about our employee’s safety and are always willing to support our safety needs so that our employees go home safely to their families every night.”



▲ Jules Bitsilly, EEA Safety and Compliance Administrator (left) and General Manager Josh Dellinger celebrate the co-op’s achievement in safety. EEA earned an award from CREA for having zero lost-time accidents in 2022.



▲ EEA Linemen R.L. Wilcox and Rocky Sanders practice a pole top rescue as part of their monthly safety training.

Safety is just as important in the office. Business Services manager Chris Snyder said, “The goal hasn’t ever been to avoid lost-time accidents for a certain period of time. The focus has been to do what we are doing right now as safely as possible. Focusing on the here and now leads to days, then weeks, months, and years free of lost-time accidents.”

Bitsilly cautions employees not to become complacent; he encourages them to think “Safety First.” “At times we may think we’re doing very well and therefore let our guard down,” he said. “Complacency can settle in and be a danger for us.” EEA conducts monthly safety training for all employees, and every line crew conducts a job briefing that addresses safety considerations before any work begins. This continuous focus on safety has helped EEA achieve a commendable safety record. Join us in congratulating our employees for their dedication to working safely.

EEA RATES CHANGING JANUARY 2024

Empire Electric Association has announced new rates that will be effective January 1, 2024. The new rates are designed to position EEA for a sustainable future, recover costs more fairly, and align with rate changes from Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, EEA's wholesale power provider. On- and off-peak energy charges in all the Time of Use and Demand (TOUD) tariffs have been changed to reflect Tri-State's new peaking period, which will be 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. These are revenue neutral changes.

The Grid Access Charge (GAC) in the Residential All Energy, Residential TOUD, and General Service Single-Phase All Energy tariffs have been increased to help reduce

cross-class subsidization and recover costs more fairly. Our latest cost-of-service study confirmed growing negative margins for these rate classes. These changes will move these rate classes closer to zero net margin.

The purchased power components of the Large Power and Transmission Service tariffs will be changed to a formula structure that directly passes through purchased power costs to members in these rate classes through a formula instead of a stated rate. Tri-State has moved to a formula rate and the changes to these tariffs will allow EEA to continue to pass through our purchased power costs in the most efficient manner. A summary of the rate changes is below.

TOUD RATES	CURRENT RATE	1/1/2024 RATE
Residential		
GAC	\$32.00	\$32.40
On-Peak kWh	\$0.14814	\$0.17027
Off-Peak kWh	\$0.04339	\$0.04185
Demand (kW)	\$2.74	\$2.74
GS 1-Phase		
GAC	\$32.00	\$32.00
On-Peak kWh	\$0.13200	\$0.16607
Off-Peak kWh	\$0.04339	\$0.04185
Demand (kW)	\$6.92	\$6.92
GS 3-Phase		
GAC	\$51.87	\$51.87
On-Peak kWh	\$0.15300	\$0.15520
Off-Peak kWh	\$0.04339	\$0.04185
Demand (kW)	\$8.00	\$8.00
Irrigation 1-Phase		
GAC	\$33.00	\$33.00
On-Peak kWh	\$0.14774	\$0.16383
Off-Peak kWh	\$0.04339	\$0.04185
Demand (kW)	\$6.85	\$6.85
Irrigation 3-Phase		
GAC	\$48.90	\$48.90
On-Peak kWh	\$0.15799	\$0.14019
Off-Peak kWh	\$0.04339	\$0.04185
Demand (kW)	\$8.00	\$8.00

ALL ENERGY RATES	CURRENT RATE	1/1/2024 RATE
Residential		
GAC	\$38.00	\$45.00
kWh	\$0.09452	\$0.09452
GS 1-Phase		
GAC	\$38.00	\$42.50
kWh	\$0.10599	\$0.10599
Irrigation 1-Phase		
GAC	\$33.00	\$33.00
kWh	\$0.11132	\$0.11132
Irrigation 3-Phase		
GAC	\$48.90	\$48.90
kWh	\$0.11247	\$0.11247

LARGE POWER	CURRENT RATE	1/1/2024 RATE
GAC	\$231.15	\$231.15
Distribution Dem.	\$10.25	\$10.25
Generation Dem.	\$10.04500	Formula
Transmission Dem.	\$8.90820	Formula
kWh	\$0.04120	Formula
TRANSMISSION SERVICE		
GAC	\$1,483.15	\$1,483.15
Distribution Dem.	\$1.09	\$1.09
Generation Dem.	\$10.04500	Formula
Transmission Dem.	\$8.90820	Formula
kWh	\$0.04120	Formula



WELCOME ROB PETROSE

Rob Petrose accepted the Geographical Information System and Information Technology Support Technician position at Empire Electric Association and started on August 21. Rob will be responsible for developing and maintaining EEA's GIS database and providing IT support to his fellow co-op employees. He has a well-rounded IT background including telecom and IT experience with Lucent Technologies; 13 years as an electronics and IT instructor; and running his own local IT business. Rob grew up in southwest Colorado and northern New Mexico and has lived in the Cortez area for 39 years. When asked his favorite way to spend time when not working, Rob responded, "Being grandpa is the best!" Rob and his wife Rita have eight children and 15 grandchildren and both treasure time spent with them. Rob also enjoys serving his church and is a Denver Bronco fan. Technology is involved in every aspect of our business, and we are excited to have Rob join our team to ensure that EEA can provide the reliable and affordable power you need.

October is National Cooperative Month

EEA members are the most important part of our business!

Member Appreciation Day

October 31

11 a.m.– 2 p.m.

**Stop by our office at
801 N. Broadway
in the Calvin Denton Room**

We will have snacks and giveaways!



Monthly Calendar

October 13 – 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. Members may attend in person or remotely. Instructions to attend remotely are included on the agenda.

October 31 – Member Appreciation Day! Stop by our Cortez office between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. for snacks and giveaways

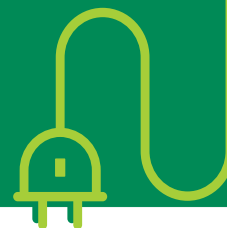
Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Did you know using your dishwasher is more energy efficient than washing a load of dishes by hand? To maximize efficiency, wash full loads in the dishwasher and don't block the arms or other parts that move while the appliance is in use.

For additional savings, turn on the "air dry" setting instead of using the "heat dry" setting and use a rinse aid to help dishes dry faster without spotting and streaking.

Source: Dept. of Energy



 **Co-op Photo Contest Winner October 2023** – "Young Horned Owl" by Sandra Bryan