

Standing Up for You

BY TOM WALCH CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

We're all familiar with the classic schoolyard bully saga. Big guy picks on smaller kids, going so far as to take their lunch money because he's stronger. The big guy usually gets away with it, as the principal typically looks the other way or shrugs their shoulders because there's nothing they can do about it. The little kids might stand up to the big guy. In the movies, the little kids often prevail. But as we all know, real life isn't usually like the movies.

In the Colorado utility schoolyard, sometimes it feels like Xcel is the big guy pushing around the little kids. And the little kids — retail and wholesale customers — include Grand Valley Power. You know the story: In February 2021, Winter Storm Uri hit. Xcel incurred exorbitant costs because of a historically expensive natural gas market. Even though Colorado's other wholesale providers managed the market without significant consequences, Xcel couldn't, and passed along almost all of the exorbitant costs to its customers. In a sense, this amounted to a "lunch money grab" from the little kids that netted Xcel's shareholders more than \$500 million. You, Grand Valley Power consumers, paid about \$2.5 million of that.

Your GVP Board and management felt that we had to stand up and challenge Xcel. We joined with Xcel's other three electric cooperative wholesale customers and engaged Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) attorneys with expertise in addressing this kind of issue. We knew that it would be a tough fight: the burden of proof is difficult to meet. Our attorneys identified legal precedents and outlined a theory for recovery that, from the wholesale customer view, had reasonable prospects to get some of our

consumers' money back from Xcel. So, we filed a complaint with FERC. Unfortunately, FERC handed down its ruling a few weeks ago and it didn't go our way. Again, in a situation reminiscent of the schoolyard principal, FERC said it understood our complaint but shrugged its shoulders and focused on the unprecedented nature of the February 2021 gas price spikes. It bought Xcel's argument that it wasn't "unduly risky" for Xcel to assume it could make inexpensive purchases on the open market.

Every good parent knows, there comes a time when the little kid must stand up for what's right, even if it isn't certain you'll succeed. Even if the immediate fight is lost, at least the big guy gets the message that it won't be so easy to roll the little kids the next time. If nothing else, we hope that we accomplished this with our FERC action.

Good parents also know that there are other ways to deal with bullies. It could be as simple as taking a different route to school. That's what Grand Valley Power has done by terminating its power purchases with Xcel and signing on with Guzman Energy. When the Guzman contract takes effect in 2028, Grand Valley Power, and you our consumers, will be in a much stronger position than we are now.

But what about the kids who lose their lunch money? The enterprising ones that don't want to go hungry try to find another way to pay for lunch. Grand Valley Power is doing this as well. We have submitted detailed applications seeking federal assistance for energy resource development that could significantly reduce our members' power costs and boost resiliency. These assistance programs are outgrowths of the Biden Administration's Inflation Reduction Act. They include the Powering Affordable



TOM WALCH

Clean Energy or PACE program, and the Empowering Rural America (New ERA) program. While highly competitive, the benefit for our members could be substantial. We are putting our best foot forward in applying for these grants.

These days it seems like too many people are following the path of least resistance. Taking a stand isn't always easy. But sometimes it is the right thing to do. At Grand Valley Power we strive to do the right thing, holding true to our values and principles. Even if this puts us against the big guy, we want everyone to know that we are committed to standing up for our members and doing what is best for them.

COMMENTS TO THE CEO

You are a member of a cooperative and your opinion does count. If you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please let Tom Walch know by writing to *Ask the CEO*, P.O. Box 190, Grand Junction, Colorado 81502, or send an email to me at twalch@gvp.org.

BOARD MEETING NOTICE

Grand Valley Power board meetings are open to members, consumers, and the public. Regularly scheduled board meetings are held at 9 a.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at the headquarters building located at 845 22 Road, Grand Junction, Colorado.

ENERGY VAMPIRES WORD SEARCH

Are energy vampires hiding in your home? These electronic devices consume electricity even when they're not in use and can drain home energy bills.

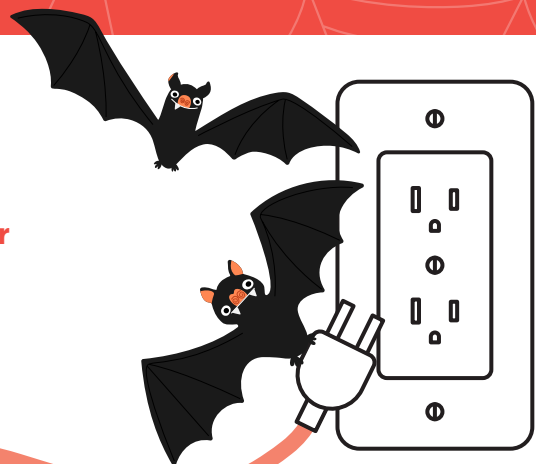
Read the tips below to learn how you can fight energy vampires, then find and circle the **bolded** words in the puzzle.



R W Y E S B G S V F S V V X Q
 X E M R M X X T V B N U D T O
 G P K X G K J C I B B J U I O
 J R X A R C N R E P M J V R E
 A V R T M P T Y Y I C Z U W L
 T R W Q U E D G U K N J P I O
 E R R A X N E K Z X C D E F S
 F E K Y S V Y F A Y E H Z E N
 Y R N L T F I L F A Q W O U O
 O A A W V Z D E H O X O L N C
 G N K Z T T Y S K R C L K A E
 T Q S D G M J S W W W X S N M
 Z E R E G R A H C E N O H P A
 B A C T T Z K Q N U X E M Y G
 L A P T O P C O M P U T E R S

Tips to Fight Energy Vampires:

- If your phone is juiced up, unplug your **phone charger**.
- Tell your parents to unplug the **coffee maker** when they're finished brewing.
- When you're finished playing that new game, unplug your **game console**.
- Unplug **laptop computers** when you're done with homework.



GRAND VALLEY POWER IDENTIFIES PREFERRED SOLAR INSTALLERS

Members' experience is top of mind

BY DESTRY SMITH ENERGY SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR | DSMITH@GVP.ORG



DESTRY SMITH

Thinking about going solar? Wondering what reputable companies to consider for your installation? Look no further. Grand Valley Power recently held its first ever Preferred Solar Installers Workshop, and now you can go to the GVP website and find a list of companies that we've identified as preferred installers. The current Preferred Solar Installers list comprises four companies, some of which have been conducting business in the Grand Valley for many years. All have successfully completed installations for GVP members over the past couple years.

The companies on our inaugural list of Preferred Solar Installers include Atlasta Solar Center, Mountain Power Solutions, SOCO Solar and Power, and Titan Solar Power. Each of these vendors attended our Preferred Solar Installers Workshop where they completed a thorough vetting process to help ensure they provide members with expert advice and quality service; and they pledged to conduct business with integrity and honesty.

The goal of GVP's Preferred Solar Installers program is to establish a clear communication path between GVP and solar installers and to ensure that our members have a positive experience. In the past, GVP has encountered members who have not had a good experience with solar companies and who were met with "high pressure sales tactics" and "fly by

night" installers. Grand Valley Power's new Preferred Solar Installers program seeks to identify reputable installers that will work with GVP members and will have members' best interests in mind.

One common misconception that GVP addresses regularly is that once solar is connected to the meter, the member should never have another bill. Regardless of usage, all members pay the monthly Grid Connectivity Charge. This cost is a fixed charge that all members are subject to even if a member is net-metered. The Grid Connectivity Charge helps to cover the cost of operating and maintaining GVP's distribution system.

After this fee, the other part of members' bills is the usage portion. Keep in mind that usage is broken down into two time periods: On-Peak (4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.) and Off-Peak (all other hours of the day). Solar electricity that is generated within each of these time periods can only be used to offset electricity usage within the same time period. This is why it is important to get accurately sized systems and that the panels face in a direction that will most benefit one's usage. It's important to capture the sun's energy during the time period when your household uses electricity.

Remember, too, that solar energy generated by the installed solar system will vary month to month due to environmental factors such as clouds. Members may notice that sometimes their solar installation

doesn't produce enough electricity to offset their household electricity usage, and they still rely on GVP for a portion of their power. It is also important for GVP members to understand that once the solar installation is complete, without an additional energy storage system (battery), net-meter members will not have electric power during a GVP system outage that affects their service.

During the Preferred Solar Installers Workshop we engaged in great discussions regarding Grand Valley Power's Interconnection Policy and Time-of-Use Rates. Grand Valley Power's Preferred Solar Installers are aware of these topics and are sure to communicate this information with all members during conversations about a solar installation.

The number one driver behind Grand Valley Power's Preferred Solar Installers program is our members. As your trusted energy advisor, we want to ensure that you get accurate information when you need it. As always, call me and we can talk. I will work to answer your questions. We can dive into your usage and see how solar will affect your bill and talk about what you can expect with your usage during On-Peak and Off-Peak hours.

If you are a solar installer who has successfully completed an installation with us in the past few months, and you want to participate in this program, please reach out to me and we can start the process.

ASK OUR EXPERTS

BY RITA-LYN SANDERS

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS



RITA-LYN SANDERS

It's a darn good thing I am not a cat. Because if curiosity killed the cat, then I certainly would have met my end decades ago.

You see, I've always had a curious mind. I ask A LOT of questions. I just like to know things, and this knowledge provides perspective and enables me to share what I've learned. It is one of the reasons I became a journalist: to ask questions and tell a story that provides information in relevant, thoughtful ways.

I know that I'm not alone in my curiosity. At GVP's annual meeting in August, we fielded a dozen questions submitted by our members on topics including solar energy, rebates, our future power supply transition, and time-of-use rates.

We enjoy engaging with our members and would like to answer your questions throughout the year and not just at the annual meeting. In that spirit, we invite you to submit your questions to our Ask the Expert column. We may reach out to you personally to answer your inquiry, and we'll publish the questions and answers that are of interest to our broader membership here in *Colorado Country Life*.

GVP's experts include:

- Destry, who has a great deal of knowledge about energy usage, solar, electric vehicles, and most anything energy services related;
- Karen, who leads our Information Technology Department and is passionate about keeping computers and electronic data secure;
- Matt, who knows the design and mechanics of electric distribution like the back of his hand;
- Bill, who has spent 30-plus years responding to outages and understands what it takes to keep the lights on;
- Joe, who is our financial guru and is constantly crunching the numbers to make sure GVP maintains its stable financial position;
- And me, who is happy to answer questions about anything related to our co-op principles (think member engagement, concern for community, democratic and economic participation).

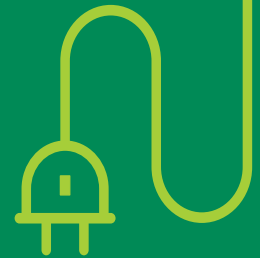
Let's not save up all our questions for the annual meeting. If you've got questions, we've got experts who can answer them, or who will find the answer for you. Please send your questions with the subject line *Ask the Expert* to communications@gvp.org.

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

Save time and money!



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Go Paperless! View bills online. Save on postage. Cut the clutter.

Step-by-step instructions: gvp.org/paperless. Or call us at (970) 242-0040 and our helpful member support team will walk you through it.

