



GROUNDS FOR POSITIVE FEEDBACK

BY VIRGINIA HARMAN GENERAL MANAGER

Autumn is a time of transition as our landscape turns a beautiful gold before being blanketed in white. It's time to get out our winter boots and put away the flip flops. It's time for warm drinks and baking goodies.

Our co-op is also going through many important transitions. We have three relatively new board members on our seven-member board. I was just recognized for six months of service at Mountain Parks Electric as the new general manager, and three others in our management team are also new to MPE. Construction on our middle mile fiber network project is complete. We will soon name a partner to build out fiber to the entirety of our system, offering high-speed internet service. Of course, there are continued power purchase agreement negotiations as MPE prepares to depart from Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association. Our goal of partnering with a new power provider will result in improved rate stability and more flexibility for self-generation projects. This transition also allows MPE to be eligible for major federal grant opportunities, which we are actively pursuing.

All these reasons and more led to us scheduling our first season of MPE's Coffee with Your Co-op events in September and October to visit with members across our

service area. I wanted the opportunity to hear directly from our members and for you to have a chance to meet and visit with our board members, management, and staff. As I write this piece, we have held three of our scheduled six events at coffee shops in Kremmling, Winter Park, and Grand Lake. By the time this is published, we will have also held events in Fraser, Walden, and Granby.

From our first three events, I was pleased to hear nothing but positive comments from our members. In Grand Lake, we visited with Mr. Phil Goes, a veteran and nearly 50-year member of MPE. Mr. Goes emphasized his appreciation for MPE's reliability. He also enjoys the community aspect of MPE, such as catching up with friends at the MPE Annual Meeting and other association events. I really enjoyed learning about him and his late wife and all the adventures they enjoyed across our beautiful service area. He also shared he was about to be celebrating his birthday. Happy 91st birthday, Mr. Goes!

In Kremmling, we were overwhelmed with the community turnout and support. It was great to see and visit with such a wide variety of members at Big Shooters. Winter Park's event was a bit quieter, but the conversations were just as rich. I appreciate all the hiking tips from some active and inspirational long-time residents — I



VIRGINIA HARMAN

look forward to getting out there with my family and exploring some of their recommendations.

Granted, the Coffee with Your Co-op events are a brewing ground (sorry for the pun) for positive feedback. We offer free coffee and pastries at wonderful local cafes. Members are welcomed by our smile-inducing inflatable Willie Wiredhand mascot and are greeted by their elected Board of Directors member. Nonetheless, as we visited with our diverse members across a variety of ages and from all walks of life, themes continued to resurface. They are pleased with the service they receive from MPE. Just like Mr. Goes, many shared how they are happy with the reliability of their electrical service. This is all a testament to the employees at MPE and the work they do, day in and day out, as well as to the MPE board and their vision.

For a calendar of upcoming community events and photos from recent past events, please visit www.mpei.com/events, and also follow us on Facebook.

▲ Pictured above: MPE's Chris Michalowski (left) and MPE board member Cray Healy (third from left) visit with members at Coffee with Your Co-op.



MPE Partners with Sustainable Grand to expand home efficiency projects

Thanks to funds donated from Mountain Parks Electric that were multiplied through the efforts of Sustainable Grand, a total of 12 area income-qualified households are completing weatherization and energy efficiency projects this year, up from two home makeovers in 2022.

Todd Budin, executive director of Sustainable Grand, shared at the September MPE Board of Directors meeting that five projects have been completed through August. The remaining seven projects, which are equally distributed across MPE's service area, are in process and on target to be completed before winter.

The goal of each weatherization project is to reduce the amount of the homeowner's utility bills and to make their homes safer and more comfortable. Projects could include upgrading insulation, replacing a 30-year-old refrigerator, or upgrading lighting. All homes also get

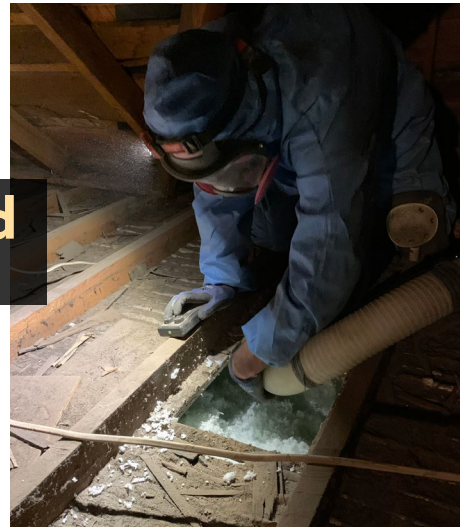
electronic thermostats, furnace cleaning and tune-ups, LED lighting throughout, and carbon monoxide detectors. Budin described them as "common-sense upgrades to bring these homes up to modern comfort and safety standards."

One project was for a senior resident in Kremmling. The home was upgraded to R60 insulation, which is the most modern energy-efficiency code.

"He was probably never going to get into his attic to see this, but he had zero insulation, so you can imagine how much energy that home was using to stay warm in the winter," Budin said.

Another home in Hot Sulphur Springs had a gas leak that was fixed. In Walden, perimeter insulation was added around a mobile home.

When the Board approved the \$20,000 funding for the income-qualified weatherization program in February, Budin said the target was that for every \$1 from MPE,



Income-qualified households benefit from weatherization and energy-efficiency projects such as new attic insulation.

that he would try to unlock another \$3 from other funding sources, such as the Energy Outreach Colorado CARE (Colorado's Affordable Residential Energy) Program. The program has exceeded that thus far by unlocking \$3.30 for every dollar, with a total cost of the five projects at around \$40,000.

"EOC is thrilled to be working with Sustainable Grand who was able to advocate for the CARE program for Mountain Parks Electric," Ashley Feiertag, Director of Residential Programs at Energy Outreach, said. "We hope the impact of this funding in the community will renew more funding in 2024. EOC is very excited for this partnership."

Sign Up for SmartHub & Join Paperless
 in November, December, or January
 for a chance to win prizes in Willie Wiredhand Plinko

Call 970-887-3378 or visit mpei.com/SMARTHUB

- SAVE THE DATE -

Join Mountain Parks Electric staff and board of directors at the

2024 MPE Annual Meeting

Saturday, April 27

Middle Park High School Auditorium

MPE IN THE COMMUNITY

Brian Stuart, Middle Park High School Wrestling Coach

Perseverance and discipline. For 25 years, Brian Stuart has been imparting these critical life skills to countless students through his role as Middle Park High School's boys and girls wrestling coach.

"A typical high school practice is extremely physical, which demands a very steady and balanced mindset that can keep emotions in check," Brian explained. "Athletes persevere through being very uncomfortable on a daily basis. The discipline it requires to manage weight and attend practice to embrace the grind is a feat in and of itself."

Brian should know. He competed in the sport from second grade through his second year in college. In 1990, he was the Colorado/USA Wrestling Freestyle State Champion and a USA Wrestling Freestyle All-American. In 1992, he was a Colorado High School All-American Runner-up. He retired from competitive wrestling because, as he put it, he found out he "wasn't tough enough or good enough."

The attributes that earned Brian success on the mats also helped him excel in his work at Mountain Parks Electric. He started at the co-op in 2019 as a materials handler and purchasing agent. In April 2022, he was promoted to warehouse/facilities supervisor. One of his key responsibilities is management of MPE's material inventory, which is one of the co-op's largest assets. He also handles all the facilities maintenance for the co-op.

"I am fortunate and appreciative to get to work in some gorgeous panoramic views with some passionate and professional coworkers," Brian said.

Although balance is also a key component to being successful at work and as a wrestler, Brian joked that he's still working on the formula for finding a work/life/wrestling balance.

"Balance is a challenge, but it boils down to time management. My biggest challenge is saying "no," but I've gotten better as I've gotten older. I've spent a lot of Saturdays with my family in a gym with mats on the floor," he said.

Two of his children — Champ and Annika — wrestled under his coaching. He said trying to be both dad and coach was one of the most challenging tasks he has encountered in his whole coaching career.

"My youngest definitely benefited from her older brother suffering through the guinea pig stages of my quest to be both dad and coach all at once," Brian recalled.

Just as his memory of his competitive skills may be skewed toward the negative, it also seems his self-judgement of balancing his dad and coach roles is too harsh. All four of his children are currently in college, each with accolades any parent would be quick to slip into conversation in the workplace break room. Champ, 21, is nearly a senior at the University of Northern Colorado, majoring in finance. He enjoys intramural basketball and flag football. Mia, 20, will graduate in December from University of Colorado — Denver with a degree in business management. She has her real estate license, "and usually at least one other job!" Serena, 19, is a sophomore at the University of Northern Colorado, majoring in business and working for campus housing. Serena is the social butterfly of the group and has a network of strong friendships that she holds dear to her heart. Annika, 18, is a freshman at the Colorado School of Mines, majoring in Mechanical Engineering. She already holds the Mines Rec Center lifting records for women in squat, bench, and deadlift, respectively.

The MPE community recognizes Brian as a leader — it's people like him who help our communities shine.



▲ Brian and Annika at the Greeley West Invitational.



▲ Brian looks on as Annika gets a win at the UNC Open.



▲ Brian with the kids on spring break at Coco Beach. Pictured, from left, are Annika, Serena, Brian, Mia, and Champ.



▲ A Middle Park High School graduation celebration for Annika. Pictured, from left, are Serena, Mia, Champ, and Annika with their mother, Jennifer, and father, Brian.

POWER POINTERS

BY CHRIS MICHALOWSKI POWER USE ADVISOR



Each quarter, Mountain Parks Electric posts a new online survey (mpei.com/online-survey) where you can ask questions, leave feedback, and be automatically entered into a drawing for a \$100 bill credit. Chris Michalowski, MPE's power use advisor, responds to a few energy-use questions/comments below:

“Offer clean energy rebates and information on new technology for improving electric efficiency for existing homes.”

MPE has several different rebate options available for renewable energy and efficiency improvements. Our Clean Power Program offers a \$500 rebate for renewable energy systems. This rebate is funded by MPE members who voluntarily contribute to the program. The Clean Power Program has helped support over 2 MW of local renewable installations. MPE also offers many other rebates for things like electric landscaping equipment, e-bikes, heat pumps, EV chargers, smart thermostats, and more. For a full list of available rebates, please visit mpei.com/rebates.

“Power fluctuations and local outages are not uncommon; how can this issue be addressed?”

MPE owns and maintains approximately 1,800 miles of line and consistently has 99.99% reliability. That means that on average, out of the course of a year, a member can expect to be without power for less than three hours. It's a remarkable feat considering the terrain and weather conditions in which we operate. It takes a complete team effort to provide this level of reliability.

“Convince local governments that small wind farms should be allowed in the backyard of your home since it is windy all the time.”

When comparing Grand and Jackson counties, only Jackson County has favorable conditions for a wind farm. Grand County just doesn't have the consistency of wind that would make a wind turbine optimal. I know of one MPE member who wanted to get wind data on their Grand County property, so they mounted a wind anemometer (a fancy term for a wind gauge) on a pole for a year. The average wind speed was below the minimum start-up speed for most small wind turbines. There's nothing stopping someone from installing a small wind turbine, but the economics in Grand County tend to favor solar versus wind.

⚡ Got more questions? Email cmichalowski@mpei.com.

STICKER PHOTO COMPETITION FEATURING MPE'S MASCOT

WHERE'S WILLIE WIREDHAND?!



MONTHLY PRIZE WINNERS

- 1. GET A WILLIE WIREDHAND STICKER**
(available at MPE Headquarters, 321 W. Agate Ave., and at MPE community events)
- 2. STICK IT SOMEWHERE INTERESTING**
(must be on your property...not public or someone else's)
- 3. SHARE A PHOTO OF YOUR STICKER**
(share on Facebook as a comment under our sticker competition post, tag @mountainparkselectric on Instagram, or email to memberrelations@mpei.com)