



GCEA

POWERING POSSIBILITIES

JANUARY 2024



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We want to be social with you!

Like us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram to find out about GCEA events, energy efficiency tips, safety tips and so much more.



Facebook.com/
GunnisonCountyElectricAssociation



@gcea_news

2024 OFFICE HOURS

GCEA offices are open, Monday-Thursday
8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Offices are closed on Friday.

THE GROWTH ZONE

BY ALLIY SAHAGUN

MEMBER RELATIONS SUPERVISOR

“There is no growth in the comfort zone, and there is no comfort in the growth zone.”

I came across this quote several years ago and it has stayed with me as a reminder that growth comes as we begin and work on “hard things.” As I reflect on the efforts GCEA has made over the last several years to accomplish its strategic goals, it is obvious that we have been working our way through one of the toughest “growth zones” in GCEA history.

The electric utility industry is experiencing daily challenges with supply chain issues, decarbonization trends, reliability and resiliency requirements, and growth of distributed generation, while meeting consumer expectations for affordable, reliable, and environmentally responsible energy. During GCEA’s monthly Board Meetings, conversations are centered around these topics and how GCEA will address each one. One of the greatest accomplishments of 2023 was the Board’s approval of a five-year strategic plan with enduring priorities focused on safety, reliability, and business resilience. These pillars will aid GCEA staff in 2024 as we aim to enhance the other five strategic priorities identified in our strategic plan: our member experience; establish ourselves as the energy provider of choice for our community; focus on environmental responsibility; maintain excellent governance; and take care of our employees by fostering employee care and engagement.

Building on momentum from 2023, there is great promise for an even more productive 2024. Improvements to GCEA’s system continue to bolster reliable electric service to each of our members. Progress continues to move along renewable energy projects at



ALLIY SAHAGUN

the Taylor River hydro plant and Crested Butte’s “Oh Be Joyful” solar array. And we are pushing hard to secure ground for a third community solar garden. Completing these projects will boost our local renewable generation to power hundreds of homes - a goal that GCEA’s Board has been working to meet for decades.

GCEA’s member relations team has been working hard to meet members where they are in the community at co-op sponsored events like Coffee with Your Co-op, Annual Meeting, and Brats & Kilowatts, as well as supporting established events such as Cattlemen’s Days, Lake City Alpine 50 Bike Race, Adaptive Sports Center’s Bridges of the Butte, Gunnison Car Show, Night of Lights, and more. GCEA supports students’ education by offering generous scholarships and student leadership trip opportunities and visits local schools to provide free electric safety and energy efficiency education.

2023 introduced online voting for the first time in GCEA Board of Directors election history and provided a convenient solution for more members to vote for their district representatives. The spring of 2023 brought a fresh look and feel to our bill design and provided a visually appealing, straightforward approach to reporting billing details. The PowerWise Pledge™ fund continues to support our rebate program by providing money back to members who electrify their home appliances, bikes and vehicles, and outdoor power equipment.

All these accomplishments have been completed during a time of inflation, supply chain shortages, and cost increases to labor and materials. As GCEA strives to maintain

THE GROWTH ZONE

a razor thin margin while budgeting for necessary expenses, we face the unfortunate reality that upward rate pressure will continue to be our discomfort in the growth zone. As of January 1, Tri-State implemented a wholesale power rate increase to GCEA, which will be directly passed to our members through a rate increase slated for March 1. Details of this proposed rate increase, along with notice of a meeting for member comments and questions, can be found at www.gcea.coop. GCEA appreciates the continued support and partnership of our members, without whom our co-op would not be possible.

**OFFICE
CLOSED**

Monday, January 15
Martin Luther King Jr. Day

5 Affordable Home Purchases to Help Save Energy

BY PETER RUSIN TRI-STATE MEMBER RELATIONS MANAGER

With a handful of simple purchases, you can increase your home's energy efficiency and reduce your energy bill each month. Below are five practical items and affordable home purchases that may help save energy.

Ceiling fans

Ranging from \$50-\$200 dollars, it may not be fair to place ceiling fans in the "affordable" category. However, their impact is worth considering when deciding how to spend your money. Placing ceiling fans in the main living areas throughout your home helps your heating and cooling system work more efficiently.

In moderate weather, a ceiling fan can provide enough air circulation to maintain room or home comfort and allow you to turn off your system altogether. On hotter days, ceiling fans act as an assistant to your air conditioning, keeping the air flowing and allowing you to turn the thermostat up by about four degrees while maintaining the same room temperature.

Ceiling fans can also help in the winter by assisting your heater. Ceiling fans have a switch that changes the direction the blades spin. Heat rises, so by switching the direction of the rotation, the ceiling fan works to push warm air down and disperses heat throughout the room.

Smart power strips

Appliances and devices can draw power even when they're not being used. This is called "phantom power," and devices like smart TVs, coffee makers, printers and more can consume five to ten percent of your energy bill when plugged in — even if they're turned off.

To avoid this sneaky energy usage, consider installing a smart power strip that costs about \$17. This is one of the quickest and easiest energy-saving strategies. Smart power strips detect when your device is in standby mode and cuts the power off to that individual device or appliance. Using smart power strips means you don't have to remember to unplug your gadgets as you move from room to room.

Phone and tablet charging stations

Charging stations for your devices are recommended for the same reason as smart power strips. It's common to leave phones, tablets, and other device chargers plugged in for convenience but they're consuming phantom energy even when they're not in use.

To save energy, purchase a charging station that automatically turns off and stops phantom power leaks when your device is fully charged, or after a specific length of time. Most devices are fully charged after about four hours. For around \$35 you can place one on your bedside table or wherever you charge your devices most frequently. Buy a second station and place it in the kitchen, living room, or guest room to make charging convenient for guests.

Motion sensor light switches

Walk freely from room to room without worrying about turning off the lights when you install motion sensor light switches. Motion sensor light switches may seem like a luxurious item to have in your home. They're certainly an impressive touch, and they're more affordable than you might think. For roughly \$17 you can begin turning your space into the energy-efficient home of your dreams.

LED bulbs

Perhaps the easiest way to increase your home's energy efficiency is by switching to LED bulbs. LED bulbs appear to be the more expensive option on the shelf, but because they consume 80% less energy and last 25 times longer than incandescent lights, they'll end up saving you money in the long run. Energy Star-certified bulbs produce about 70-90% less heat. They're safer to operate and can cut energy costs associated with home cooling. Burning at a lower temperature also makes them the safest household option.

For energy efficiency tips and ways to reduce your electric bill, explore more articles at tristate.coop/blog.

Do You Need Help with Your Electric Bill This Winter?



Life happens. Sometimes you need help with your electric bill. It's the time of year when home heating costs increase, and we want you to stay safe and warm this winter. The following resources can help you stay current with your GCEA bill:

- LEAP - Low-Income Energy Assistance Program
- Energy Outreach Colorado
- Gunnison Valley Home Energy Advancement Team (GV-HEAT)
- Housing Resources of Western Colorado
- Energy Smart Colorado

Visit our website at www.gcea.coop to find information and links to these energy assistance programs. Click on the dropdown menu Account Services and click on Energy Assistance.

NEW YEAR 2 24 NEW REBATES

**MONEY
BACK**



**ENERGY
SAVINGS**



Take advantage of your GCEA membership, by applying for a rebate on items such as LED lightbulbs, Energy Star home appliances, outdoor power equipment, e-bikes, and so much more!

**ALL REBATES MUST BE REQUESTED
WITHIN 90 DAYS OF INSTALLATION.**

SCAN THE QR CODE TO VIEW
REBATES OFFERED TO
GCEA MEMBERS



YOU ARE THE FUTURE!

STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES POWERING STUDENTS' FUTURES



SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



GCEA awards scholarships to graduating high school seniors, returning college students, and nontraditional students. Scholarships will be awarded to students who meet all the requirements and plan to attend an accredited college, university, trade school, online school, or community college.

- Eligibility is dependent upon receiving electrical service from GCEA.
- Applications can be submitted via:
 - Email - scholarship@gcea.coop
 - Mail - PO BOX 180, Gunnison, CO 81230
 - GCEA Headquarters - 37250 West Highway 50, Gunnison, Co 81230



APPLICATION DEADLINE ON MARCH 1, 2024



must be a GCEA member to apply
Scan the QR code for more information

APPLICATION AVAILABLE AT GCEA.COOP



SMARTHUB

AT HOME OR ON THE GO

Avoid the cold walk to your mailbox and view your electric bill from the comfort of your home!

SmartHub allows you to manage all aspects of your electric account from your computer, tablet or phone.

- Make a payment
- Check energy use
- Report an outage



Scan the QR code with your phone to sign up for SmartHub

For more information, please call 970-641-3520.

EMPOWER YOURSELF

Looking for ways to cut down your electric bill? Schedule a FREE energy evaluation with GCEA today!

WHAT IS AN ENERGY EVALUATION?

- Electric usage review
- Discuss concerns and goals
- Infrared camera images
- Receive tips and suggestions to make your home or business more energy efficient.

To schedule your evaluation, scan the QR code or call 970-641-3520.

WAYS TO SAVE DURING WINTER

Winter weather typically means increased energy use at home. Keep your bills in check with these tips to save energy.



Mind the thermostat. If you have a traditional heating and cooling system, set the thermostat to 68 degrees or lower. Consider a smart or programmable thermostat for additional savings.

Get cozy. Add layers of clothing for additional warmth and snuggle up under your favorite heavyweight blanket.

Don't block the heat. If your air vents or heating elements (like radiators) are blocked by furniture or rugs, your home isn't being adequately heated.

Take advantage of sunlight. Open window coverings during the day to let natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to block the chilly night air.

Block air leaks. Seal windows and exterior doors with caulk and weather stripping to improve indoor comfort and decrease the amount of energy used to heat your home.

Perform routine maintenance on heating systems. Be sure to do some routine maintenance to ensure your home heating system is running smoothly. Replacing your heating system filter is easy to do and helps it work more efficiently.