

PRESERVING THE LOCAL NATURE OF GVP GOVERNANCE

BY TOM WALCH CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Ever since my arrival here on Colorado's Western Slope 12 years ago, I have marveled at the resilient, independent spirit of the folks who call Mesa County home. Something about the way people here have always had to carve out a living — whether in our rugged canyons, in the sparse desert, or in our isolated high country — ingrains in them that they can't rely on outside help to survive. Local institutions such as Colorado Mesa University, HopeWest, and Grand Junction Economic Partnership thrive, in large part because of their independent, can-do approach to getting things done. Smaller businesses like Powderhorn Mountain Resort, Talbott Farms, VanWinkle Ranch, and countless others follow the same path. We instinctively bristle at the thought of having policy-makers and outside interests on the Front Range telling us what we can and can't do.

I like to think that Grand Valley Power is included among the independent, resilient businesses that make Mesa County the great place that it is. After all, our cooperative was built by independent farmers and ranchers in the Lower Valley who couldn't get electricity from traditional sources; they found a way to do it themselves. The local, independent, and autonomous nature of our governance, with our policy-making directors elected by the member-owners of the cooperative, would seem to ensure that this won't change. But I'm here to tell you that if complacency creeps in — if our members take some of the good things about our business model for granted — there will be change.

What am I talking about? There is a movement afoot on Colorado's Western Slope, where outside interests are trying to take over the governance of rural electric cooperatives. Last year a Denver

magazine published an article detailing how “environmental activists” executed a plan a few years ago to “lead a coup” to take over the board of one of GVP's neighboring cooperatives. The website of a Boulder-based advocacy group boasts of successes helping to elect new directors to the boards of four different Western Slope rural electric cooperatives over the past two years. And right here in Grand Junction, a local advocacy group actively campaigned for at least one GVP director candidate, canvassing neighborhoods and sending out mailers, ostensibly without the knowledge of the candidate himself.

These outside interests are certainly welcome to support and endorse candidates they favor in campaigns to run for the Grand Valley Power Board of Directors. At the same time, our cooperative leadership believes that greater transparency about the source of support for director candidates will help to preserve the critical local nature of our governance. With this in mind, the GVP board recently approved amendments to its policy regarding director elections. These changes include more frequent (weekly) reporting of director election campaign contributions and expenditures, and requirements to disclose contacts with advocacy groups that support or endorse the candidate. The updated policy — Policy Bulletin No. 50 -Voting and Elections — can be viewed on the GVP website at gvp.org/director-election.

While we hope that the revised policy will increase transparency, the best way for GVP members to preserve the local nature of our organization's governance is to participate in our director elections by casting an informed vote. One of the advocacy groups attempting to influence cooperative elections accurately points out that most members do



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not participate in director elections. They point out that success only requires reaching out to a small fraction of the cooperative's membership. At GVP, typically only about 10-15% of ballots are returned. Over the past few years, at least three elections have been decided by a dozen votes or less.

With participation like this, and voting margins as thin as they are, every GVP vote for director is significant. If independent, hometown governance of our cooperative is important to you, please remember to vote in our director elections this summer.

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. Check out our website at 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.

The monthly agenda is posted in the lobby of the headquarters building 10 days before each meeting and posted on the GVP website.

If anyone desires to address the Board of Directors, please let us know in advance and you will be placed on the agenda.



Grand Valley Power linemen Caleb Monger, Matt Mason, and Leif Karo demonstrate for D51 school district third graders how to stay safe should they encounter downed power lines.

Mesa County Safety Fair Educates Students

BY RITA-LYN SANDERS
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mesa County is doing it right. Like something out of a Tom Clancy novel, at any given moment a sleeper cell of trained specialists is prepared to respond in force to any emergency. Be it a natural disaster or manmade, Mesa County’s agents of care are ready to swoop in, bringing aid to the injured, supplies to the impacted, and information to everyone.

In addition to first responders, this group represents humanitarian entities, municipalities, schools, transportation, and utilities. I am proud to say that Grand Valley Power is among them. We work together to build meaningful relationships and coordinate our efforts long before a crisis taps on the door. What does this mean to you? The biggest benefit is knowing that if our region is struck by disaster, we will be prepared.

Relationships are key to this success. Through discussions and practice exercises, we’ve learned how each agency works and handles different situations. This knowledge makes for a more efficient response. Knowing who to contact when you need support or information is critical. In my first few months as a school communicator, a small tornado touched down in our town,



RITA-LYN SANDERS

damaging houses and fences and coming near enough to a few of our schools that we sent students and staff to shelter in place. Tornadoes are not typically a thing in Washington state, so my school district pulled a rabbit out of our hat that day. A tornado doesn’t tell you where it’s going. We had eight schools sheltering and no idea what to expect. It’s like we were managing the emergency blindfolded.

Even so, we were able to apply our emergency procedures, training, and the relationships we had built with regional emergency management folks to get the information we needed to keep kids safe. It was a crazy day, to say the least. To make it worse, phone lines were tied up. At the school district, we called the personal cell number of a colleague in the regional emergency management center. When we told him what we needed most — information about where the tornado was headed and if

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SOLAR ELECTRICITY CONSIDERATIONS



Is Solar Right for You?

Determine your goals. Lower energy costs? Reduced environmental impact?

Have you considered energy-efficient home improvements?

What is the age of your roof? What direction does it face? Is it shaded?



Five Steps to Going Solar

Determine if solar meets your goals.

Consider energy-efficient home improvements.

Contact GVP to review the process and how solar will impact your bill.

Get quotes from multiple installers on our Preferred Solar Installer list.

Research incentives and tax credits.



Questions for Solar Installers

Do you have a local office?

How long have you been in business?

Can you provide references from local customers?

More information: gvp.org/solar

Make Your Mark with an Enthusiastic Scholarship Essay

BY TANYA MARCHUN COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST | TMARCHUN@GVP.ORG



TANYA MARCHUN

Grand Valley Power is guided by seven cooperative principles. Two of them—*Education, Training, and Information* and *Concern for Community*—are emphasized by the \$20,500 in scholarships that GVP awards each year to students for continuing education. Grand Valley Power is excited and honored to help advance the development of our communities and share in local students' growth through scholarship opportunities.

The cooperative is accepting applications for 2024 scholarships through March 1. Scholarship applications are open to current members residing in a home served by Grand Valley Power. Several scholarships are available, including the \$2,000 Jack Broughton-CMU Scholarship, which is renewable for up to four years; and six \$1,500 GVP scholarships that can be used at accredited colleges, universities, and vocational schools for undergraduate education or technical and trade programs with at least a one-year course of study toward a degree or certificate. A \$1,500 CMU Tech scholarship can be applied to the cost of full-time enrollment at CMU Tech.

The criteria used to weigh each application are academic performance, financial need, letters of recommendation,

and an original written essay. Each of these areas is integral to choosing the scholarship recipients, but the essay carries the most weight.

It's important that applicants' essays impart their passion and demonstrate their professionalism and enthusiasm for their future. With that in mind, here are a few pointers on how to make your mark with your written essay.

Create an outline for your essay. Map out exactly how you want your essay to read. Make sure your spelling, grammar, and vocabulary are clear, elevated, and professional. Good writing is a skill set you will use throughout your entire life. It is important to communicate well with your readers.

Show your worth. Be humble, but the scholarship committee wants to hear about what makes you — YOU! Share and highlight your unique experiences and how they impact your life. For example, if you work part time, volunteer, and play a sport, make sure to include that. It demonstrates responsibility and time management skills. Don't be afraid to share the great things you are achieving, but also incorporate how receiving the scholarship will help you to do what you love in the future.

Think outside the box. Share what makes you unique and worthy of receiving a scholarship. The readers know nothing else about you except what you share in your essay. For example, if you have overcome hardship or have an interesting circumstance, highlight how that has given you the strength and determination to continue pursuing your dreams.

Ask for help. Find a trusted teacher, friend, or family member (or all three) and ask them to read your essay. Take their advice and comments into consideration so that you can present your best work and your best self to the scholarship committee.

When it's ready, submit your application to Grand Valley Power's Hometown Scholarship Program. Scholarship applications are due no later than March 1.

Visit gvp.org/scholarship-program for application requirements.

Apply Now!

HOMETOWN SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM 2024

Over \$20,000 in scholarship funds available

APPLICATIONS DUE MARCH 1, 2024

gvp.org/scholarship-program




GRAND VALLEY POWER
Empowering Lives with Hometown Service
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Mesa County Safety Fair Educates Students

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we should expect more weather events — he got us the information from the National Weather Service and shared it across emergency frequencies so we could coordinate an appropriate response.

If we hadn't developed that relationship, I don't know that we would have been able to remove our blindfolds that day. Instead, we kept our kids safe with informed decisions.

That is the very reason why I so appreciate the collaborative culture of my Mesa County colleagues. We are proactive about emergency preparedness.

We encourage members and the public to do the same. Safety is one of our values, and Concern for Community is a cooperative principle. Later this month, Grand Valley Power will be at the Mesa Mall with trained professionals in emergency management to bring our safety messages to 1,500 elementary students from the Grand Valley. Our lineworkers will be at the two-day event, educating students on how to stay safe should they encounter downed power lines. They'll join trained professionals from across the county. It's an innovative event that has been happening for over four decades and is just one example of how Mesa County does it right.

Email Rita at rsanders@gvp.org

2024 BUDGET APPROVED

The Grand Valley Power Board of Directors approved the 2024 budget at the December board meeting. The budget is our road map for the year, and management will use it to guide our cooperative business. Conditions and situations may arise that could potentially change the budget during the year, and as a result the budget might be amended. The following is a comparison of the 2023 budget, the estimated actual results for 2023, and the 2024 budget.

	2023 Budget	2023 Est Act	2024 Budget
Operating Revenue & Patronage Capital	39,479,471	39,068,423	39,485,186
Purchased Power	21,373,495	20,784,774	20,883,563
Transmission Expense	72,992	28,179	48,379
Distribution Expense: Operations	2,864,707	2,777,632	3,243,090
Distribution Expense: Maintenance	1,353,118	1,297,614	1,423,415
Customer Accounts Expense	1,104,484	1,126,338	1,078,310
Customer Service & Information	788,812	778,064	888,954
Administrative & General	3,375,207	3,578,897	3,962,996
Total Operations & Maintenance	30,932,816	30,371,498	31,528,707
Depreciation & Amortization	3,204,921	3,163,707	3,260,689
Tax Expense: Property	942,422	939,357	942,422
Interest on Long-Term Debt	1,882,070	1,882,070	1,924,822
Interest Expense: Other	200	200	200
Amortization of RUS Premium Payoff	52,868	52,868	52,868
Other Deductions	75,000	164,252	75,000
Total Cost of Electric Service	37,090,297	36,573,951	37,784,707
Patronage Capital & Operating Margins	2,389,174	2,494,472	1,700,479
Non-Operating Margins: Interest	35,000	68,750	92,520
Non-Operating Margins: Other	21,500	19,400	21,000
Capital Credits & Patronage Dividends	300,000	251,254	275,000
Total Patronage Capital or Margins	2,745,674	2,833,876	2,088,999

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION

Board of Director elections will take place at the Grand Valley Power Annual Meeting of the Members on Thursday, August 8, 2024 at Colorado Mesa University. Directors whose terms expire in 2024 are Jesse Mease, Bill Rooks, and Brian Woods.

More information about the election process and how to petition to run for the Board will be forthcoming in the months ahead. You can also visit gvp.org/director-election to read more about Grand Valley Power's election policy.

