

# MORGAN COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY 2024



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## MCREA Mission

Morgan County REA, a member-owned cooperative, is dedicated to serving our members by providing safe, reliable energy with a strong tradition and vision for the future.

 This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## JOIN MCREA FOR OUR 87<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

BY DAVE FRICK GENERAL MANAGER

Since 1937, Morgan County REA has powered rural communities in northeastern Colorado. As times and technologies have changed over the past 87 years, MCREA has been there to light the way. At MCREA, we continue our co-op's mission to serve our members by providing safe, reliable energy with a strong tradition and vision for the future.

### ANNUAL MEETING

MCREA's annual meeting, held each March, plays an essential role in upholding that mission. Our annual meeting informs members of the state of their electric cooperative and allows them to actively participate in the decisions being made. After all, MCREA is owned and operated by the members it serves.

I kindly invite all of our members to attend MCREA's 87th annual meeting, which will be held by phone call at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, March 19.

Telephone Town Hall, a Colorado-based telecommunications service provider, will once again facilitate our annual meeting. Over the past four years, this format has proven to be highly efficient in carrying out all business functions of our annual meetings.

In fact, we've noticed increased participation and open dialogue among our membership, who no longer need to be in attendance physically, to voice questions and concerns. The telephone meeting has also eliminated any weather cancellation concerns, as we all know March can throw some mighty storms across our service area.



DAVE FRICK

Of course, it wouldn't be an MCREA annual meeting without prizes. By listening in to this year's meeting, attendees will be entered to win a brand-new electric smoker. Another lucky listener will win a \$250 cash prize. Finally, as is done every year, a name will be drawn from our entire membership of nearly 5,000 members. If the member selected is on the call, he or she will receive a \$1,000 cash prize.

I encourage MCREA members to register for MCREA's annual meeting by clicking the banner on our homepage at mcrea.org. Registering for the meeting will enter you into a drawing for local gift cards as well, so be sure to sign up.

### MEMBER APPRECIATION PICNIC

We are looking forward to gathering with our members in person this summer, as we host our third annual MCREA Member Appreciation Picnic on Thursday, June 13. This is a great time to enjoy a meal with friends and neighbors, and learn more about what your electric co-op is doing to serve you.

In addition to food and door prizes, we will have fun activities and displays available for all ages, so bring the family. Mark your calendars for June 13 and watch for more event details in future issues of *Colorado Country Life* and on MCREA's social media pages.

We look forward to seeing everyone this year.



## NEW EMPLOYEE: CHRIS BANZ

Morgan County REA is excited to welcome Chris Banz as the cooperative's newest lineman. Originally from Utah, Chris and his family are excited to take in the rural way of life here in Morgan County. Having been a lineman for more than eight years, Chris enjoys working as part of the electric distribution system and seeing firsthand how the entire grid works to deliver power.

"One of my favorite parts about being a lineman is the interesting jobs we are given and different tools we get to use," Chris mentioned. "I also appreciate the family-like camaraderie among crews."

Chris is also eager to be part of an electric cooperative. "I've attended hot line school with other lineworkers who came from electric co-ops and heard great things," Chris said. "That's something I'm most looking forward to being part of at Morgan County REA."

In his free time, Chris enjoys being with his family and ice fishing. Welcome to the team, Chris!

## MCREA Director Receives National Credential Certificate

Director Terry Linker recently received the Director Gold credential from the National Rural Electric Association. Director Linker previously became a Credentialed Cooperative Director and completed 10 credits in advanced, issues-oriented courses to earn the Board Leadership Certificate. Director Gold recognizes directors who wish to continue to learn throughout their service on the board.

An ever-changing business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative directors, requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and a solid knowledge of the cooperative principles and business model. MCREA's board has a commitment to work through NRECA to sharpen this body of knowledge for the benefit of their electric cooperative members. (Terry Michel, acct. #xxx0800)

"Director Gold is geared toward directors who are committed to continuing their education beyond the CCD and BLC and who desire a tangible credential that reinforces their stature as part of an experienced and educated group of directors," Dave Frick, MCREA general manager said. "Director Gold also demonstrates to co-op members



MCREA President, Cary Wickstrom (right) presents the Director Gold certificate to Director Terry Linker.

those directors' ongoing commitment to advancing their knowledge and performing their fiduciary duty to the best of their ability."

Unlike the CCD and BLC certificates, Director Gold includes a continuing education requirement that calls for directors to earn three credits of approved course work and/or conferences every two years to maintain their Director Gold status.

Congratulations to Director Linker on his certification.

2024  
**SCHOLARSHIPS**  
**APPLICATIONS DUE FRIDAY, FEB. 16**  
For more information or to submit an application, please visit [www.mcrea.org/college-scholarships](http://www.mcrea.org/college-scholarships).

## Unclaimed Capital Credits

In December 2023, Morgan County REA returned a record-breaking \$4.5 million in capital credits to members. This capital retirement, the largest in MCREA history, came after the MCREA Board of Directors elected to fully retire 2017 MCREA patronage, partially retire 2018 MCREA patronage, and partially retire 2004 Tri-State G&T capital. In December, capital credits checks were sent to people who were members of the cooperative during these years. The amount of each capital credits check is based on each member's purchase of electricity and the operation revenue remaining at the end of those specific years. (Samuel Hawkins, acct. #xxx6500)

It is not unusual for MCREA to have unclaimed or uncashed capital credits checks from our margin allocations. In some cases, letters containing refund checks were returned to us due to MCREA having an invalid address for a member. There are also instances in which capital credits checks were never cashed.

Remember, anyone who was an MCREA member in 2004, 2017, and/or 2018 should have received a check, even if they no longer receive electric service from the co-op. If you did not receive a capital credits check and you were an MCREA member in the years listed above, please contact MCREA and verify that we have your current address to ensure that your capital credits check makes its way to you.

For more information or if you have questions, please call us at 970-867-5688 or email [customerservice@mcrea.org](mailto:customerservice@mcrea.org).



## Guard Against Utility Scams

It is the world we live in today — the necessity to pause and consider before we click, answer, or respond to someone seeking information. No industry, person, or business is off limits to scammers who try to con their way into the utility industry.

The Better Business Scam Tracker reports that victims typically lose \$274 in all types of scams and \$500 in a utility scam.

When it comes to power bills, scammers try gaining access to personal details and account information in multiply ways, using phone calls, emails, or even text messages.

Scammers may claim they are with your power company and demand that immediate payment be wired, loaded on a reloadable gift card or debit card, or sent using cryptocurrency, otherwise your power will be shut off. Scam calls like this are more frequent in the height of summer and winter, when people want to stay comfortable during the extreme heat and cold. Morgan County REA will never call and demand payment in this threatening manner.

Do not provide any information — including your utility account number — or agree to immediate payment. Instead, hang up and check with MCREA by calling 970-867-5688 or checking your account on SmartHub, MCREA's online app.

When it comes to identifying a scam call, follow your gut instinct. If something doesn't seem right, it is most likely a scam. Hang up the phone, don't click any links, and avoid giving any information. You can always call MCREA to check on your account.

## WIN \$25 OFF YOUR NEXT BILL

Each month, Morgan County REA gives two lucky members a chance at a \$25 bill credit, just by reading *Colorado Country Life*.

Congratulations, Shannon Bucks and Dana Delisle! You each spotted your name in the December issue and called to receive a \$25 credit.

There are two more member names and their account numbers hidden somewhere in this issue. If you find your name and account number, call MCREA member services at 970-867-5688 by February 29 to claim a \$25 credit on your next bill.

**2024 MCREA ANNUAL MEETING**

TO REGISTER, CLICK THE BANNER AT [MCREA.ORG](http://MCREA.ORG)

ENTER YOUR

- NAME
- TELEPHONE NUMBER
- SERVICE ADDRESS

REGISTERING FOR THIS YEAR'S MEETING WILL ENTER YOU TO WIN GIFT CARDS!

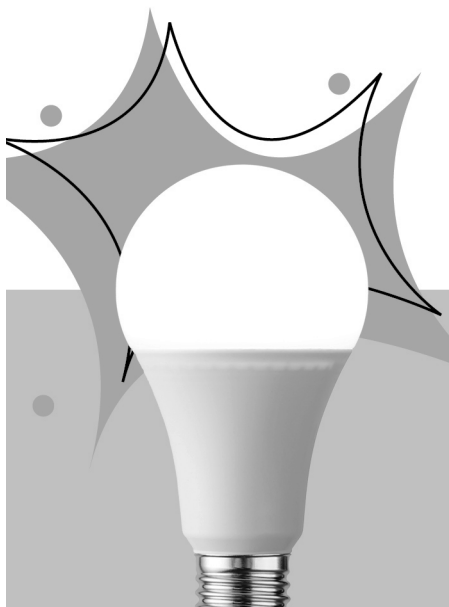
ANSWER THE PHONE MARCH 19 @ 6PM.

**MORGAN COUNTY REA**  
Your Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup> Cooperative

## **ENERGY EFFICIENCY** TIP OF THE MONTH

Area rugs are an easy, cost-effective solution to cold floors. Adding area rugs to hard-surface flooring can add warmth to any room and keep your feet cozy on cold winter days.

Choose rugs made from wool or other natural fibers and plush or high-pile textures for the most insulation. Place rugs in areas where you need additional warmth, like the foot of a bed or under a coffee table. Area rugs can enhance the aesthetic of your home and keep you cozier.



▲ MCREA employees Curtis Berg (left) and Rob Baranowski (right) teach students about the equipment used by linemen to fix powerline issues.

## **MCREA Joins STEM Festival at MCC**

Like last year, Morgan County REA was excited to take part in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math Festival hosted by Morgan Community College. The event provided career exploration opportunities for Morgan County 10th grade students, who rotated through hands-on STEM stations offered by MCC instructors and professional booths that showed careers available in STEM.

MCREA employees taught students about the many different careers available at electric cooperatives, all of which use STEM training and skills. MCREA also shared the importance of powerline and electric safety with students.

Concern for community is one of the pillars of the cooperative model and MCREA appreciated the opportunity to share more about the electric co-op world with the next generation.

## **Morgan County REA Awards Years of Service Pins to Employees**

At the Morgan County REA Christmas party, the co-op recognized two employees with Years of Service pins. Rob Baranowski, manager of member services, received his 10-year pin. Cheryl Lewis, GIS specialist, received her 5-year pin.

Each of these individuals are an important part of the MCREA team and dedicated to serving the nearly 5,000 members in our service area. Congratulations Rob and Cheryl!



▲ Cheryl Lewis and Rob Baranowski receive recognition pins for their years of service to Morgan County REA.