



# NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS, PROTECTING OUR MEMBERS

BY DEREK ELDER CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Growing up in a small rural farming community in northeast Colorado, I often found myself dreaming about the day when I would have opportunities to grow beyond the small city limits that 2,000 residents called home. Each year, I would see a graduating class of 30-40 seniors celebrate by leaving the small community, only to see most of them return 10 years later and start the cycle all over with a family of their own. I wondered, "Wasn't there more to offer than gathering for picnics under the large shade trees in the city park?"

What I didn't realize at the time was that those shade trees would become a metaphor for life that ultimately shaped who I am today. Character is the roots of the tree that take a long time to grow but rarely change. Reputation is the canopy of the tree that can fluctuate from year to year and also takes time to grow. It's the roots of the tree or character of an individual that ultimately acts as the guiding principles that shape who we are and how we treat others.

In this small rural community I watched neighbors helping neighbors. Even if residents didn't agree with each other all the time, they knew that they would have each other's back — whether it was looking after their place while they were out of town for the day or trusting them to discipline their children for acting up when they

weren't around. It is this shared commitment that continues to build the foundational character of most small rural communities.

The same shared commitment of holding true to our values and principles exists at Grand Valley Power. Why should this matter to GVP and its members? Because we care about our members and how they are treated. We also want to make sure that anyone who does business with our members is watching out for them. Unfortunately, this is not always the case.

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We have been hearing from members asking if we are sending GVP representatives to their homes to sell solar.

The increase in number of bad actors in the solar industry was such a concern that, three years ago, the Colorado Solar and Storage Association started hosting utility workshops to address the bad actors within their industry. These bad actors would knock on people's doors and tell them things that were not necessarily true to get them to buy or lease a solar system. COSSA realized that the reputation of everyone in the solar industry could be negatively influenced by even just a couple of these predatory companies. In the last year, GVP started hearing from members who signed contracts for solar that increased their overall utility costs due to the misrepresentation of savings. This created concern for GVP, and we sought to



DEREK ELDER

help members by creating a Preferred Solar Installer List. The installers on this list have taken an ethics pledge to eliminate high-pressure sales tactics and never misrepresent their affiliation with GVP. They've also taken the time to attend an informational meeting

**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](mailto:twalch@gvp.org). Check out our website at [gvp.org](http://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.

## YOUR CO-OP NEWS

and understand GVP's interconnection process.

How will this list help GVP members? This list does not limit a GVP member's ability to sign an agreement with other solar companies that are not listed, but it is an additional resource that GVP members should use when evaluating their options. We encourage everyone who is considering solar to receive multiple quotes before signing agreements or contracts. Grand Valley Power does not work directly with — nor are we affiliated with — any solar companies. There should never be a rush to

sign a contract for solar before having the chance to shop around.

Why did GVP create the list? We have built our reputation over the last 87 years by providing value to the members we serve. The reputation that has taken so long to build is founded upon the roots that were established and nurtured by those who came before us. It is GVP's responsibility to recognize that strong foundation and protect our reputation through a continuous commitment to protect and serve our members. Serving our members is at the heart of everything we do. We won't

stand by when we see our members being taken advantage of through misleading sales pitches.

With a "neighbors helping neighbors" approach and continuous efforts to preserve the character of small communities, we will uphold our values and principles on which we've built our foundation and reputation. Grand Valley Power is rooted in this community and here to answer your questions as we remain your trusted energy resource.



# LINEWORKER SCHOLARSHIP

APPLY BY JUNE 1, 2024  
[gvp.org/scholarship-program](http://gvp.org/scholarship-program)

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## Powering our Community



One Line at a Time!

Lineworker Appreciation Day  
April 18, 2024

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# Savvy Siblings Grow 4-H Pigs

BY RITA-LYN SANDERS DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Momma Wiggy was ready. The black sow lay on the straw inside the farrowing hut near the warm red glow of a hanging lamp. Swollen with piglets, she barely fit through the door of the shelter. Still, she wasn't alone. On this chilly day in early December, the Bieser family of Mesa, Colorado, squatted on their haunches and, one by one, squeezed through the plastic slats covering the door to comfort Momma Wiggy.

Tucked into the small space, the Bieser siblings caressed the rough skin of the pig. Ludvik "Louie" Bieser and his sister, Remington Bieser, both members of the Plateau Valley Extreme 4-H Club, were as expectant as the sow they cared for. Louie, a fifth grader, and Remington, a third grader, would each pick a piglet from the litter to show, market, and auction at the Mesa County Fair in July. They had invested their own money to get Momma Wiggy inseminated, cared for her throughout the nearly four-month pregnancy, and wanted to raise their hogs from birth to ultimately sell and turn a profit at the fair. It's all part of their business plan.

The Bieser siblings have participated in 4-H activities for several years. They've bottle fed calves and purchased piglets to nurture and then market at the fair. Last year, GVP bid on and purchased Louie's pig during the Junior Livestock Sale. Participating in the sale is one of the ways that Grand Valley Power demonstrates its commitment to the cooperative principle *Concern for Community* and supports its young members. For the Bieser siblings, raising 4-H animals has given them the opportunity to take responsibility, care for animals, and plan for and execute a business plan. "It teaches them responsibilities," said Joseph Bieser, Louie and Remington's dad. "It teaches them how to manage their money and how to be successful. It isn't just choosing a pig and going out there and selling it. There's a lot more."

That December day at the Bieser farm, Momma Wiggy gave birth to 11 piglets. One of them, Wilbert, needed to be pulled. Still, the assist didn't seem to phase the piglet. Remington, who owns Momma

Wiggy, chose her pig first and picked Wilbert for his stride, bone structure and the way he holds himself. Louie, who chose second, selected a female he has yet to name.

Since the birth of their piglets, the Bieser siblings have participated in many of the pig rearing steps that they previously missed out on by purchasing their pig a few weeks old from a 4-H breeder. Besides giving the piglets an iron shot to boost their immunity at birth, the

brother and sister have seen how to castrate the animals, clip their teeth, and ear notch them for showing. They've watered and fed them every day with a nutritious mix of grains and protein to keep them on target to hit their market weight. Pretty soon, as the weather begins to warm and the spring thaw turns the frozen ground into a slick brown goo, Louie and Remington will be working their pigs every day, driving them with a pig bat, keeping their heads up, and encouraging them to remain calm despite distractions.

Come July, when their pigs are fully grown, Louie and Remington hope all their work will pay off in the Junior Livestock Sale at the Mesa County Fair. As a nameless pig roots around Louie's muddied muck boots, he ponders the inevitable day that he and his pig will part ways. "I haven't gotten sad yet," he said. "I'm used to knowing that's how it works. It's business."



4-H siblings Louie and Remington Bieser learn the business of raising pigs from birth to market at their family's farm in Mesa, Colorado. Photo by Tanya Marchun



# Celebrate a Member Support Representative's Retirement

BY TANYA MARCHUN COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

If you called Grand Valley Power within the last 17 years, you have likely spoken to Laurie Miles. As a Member Support Representative with GVP, she has contributed her problem-solving skills, friendly voice, and fun attitude to providing amazing customer service to you — our members. Laurie enjoys and welcomes new educational opportunities, which is evident in how she expanded her knowledge over the years. She has learned about meter reading, member capital, and member billing. When asked what she will miss most, Laurie did not hesitate: “I will miss the members and the great connections I have made. GVP is a wonderful place to work, and I am very blessed to have had this experience. The member and coworker friendships I have gained will be difficult to leave, but life is short, and I am taking advantage of another great opportunity!”

Laurie and her husband will begin a new adventure after her retirement this month. Whether it is canning, quilting, or tending to the chickens, Laurie is excited for the next chapter on their 40 acres in Eaton, Colorado. “I cannot wait to stargaze and enjoy the beauty of the open space that will be in my backyard,” Laurie said. “I am looking forward to waking up, drinking coffee on my back porch, and enjoying the views of the Rocky Mountains.”

Please join us in congratulating Laurie on her retirement after 17 years of service to Grand Valley Power.



**Laurie Miles** retires after 17 years of service to GVP members.

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## Director Petitions Available this Month

The election for the Grand Valley Power Board of Directors is approaching. While the election is held in August, the nominating procedure begins this month. Three director positions are up for election every year. Directors whose terms expire in 2024 are Jesse Mease, Bill Rooks, and Brian Woods.

To be eligible to become or remain a director, a person must receive electric service from GVP at the member's primary residence. A director cannot be engaged in a competing enterprise or in other businesses involving a conflict of interest. Grand Valley Power's bylaws provide in-depth information on director qualifications, terms, elections, meetings, and officers.

Election procedures for the board of directors are governed by Colorado statute. The cooperative's bylaws and election policy comply with statutory requirements. These bylaws and policies are on GVP's website at [gvp.org/director-elections](http://gvp.org/director-elections). Upon request, these written documents can be picked up at GVP's headquarters or mailed to you.

Nominating petitions will be available for pickup beginning April 29 at the GVP office. Petitions must be signed and returned no later than 5 p.m. on June 7. If no more than three petitions are returned to fill the three positions that are open for this year's election, there will be no mail ballot and the election of directors will take place at GVP's annual meeting to be held on Thursday, August 8 at Colorado Mesa University's Meyer Ballroom. More details on the election process are on GVP's website at [gvp.org/bylaws](http://gvp.org/bylaws).