



GCEA NEWS



SUMMER 2010

THE GUNNISON COUNTY ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

VOLUME 3

Member Owned  A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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Annual Meeting Marks Another Successful Year

GCEA members gathered once again at the headquarters building for the 71st Annual Meeting on June 22nd. Some members showed up to cast their votes for the board of directors, some were interested in learning more about the energy efficiency plans for our headquarters, some commented that they wouldn't dream of missing the barbeque, and others were simply hoping to win one of the energy saving door prizes. Regardless of the motive for attending, the turnout was great.

It was a lively affair where friends reunited over a hearty dinner and kids gathered around Dan "the electric man" McDonough's safety demonstration where they learned how to recognize and avoid unsafe actions. GCEA's linemen put on their own live line demonstration in the parking lot. Their demo trailer, constructed with poles, transformers and live hardware, helped members understand how the electric system works, and the extreme hazards of coming into contact with power lines. It is a powerful display emphasizing that electricity is not a toy, but a source of power to be viewed with caution. Meanwhile, Keith Emerson, Tri-State's Energy Services Coordinator, demonstrated a wide variety of lighting options.

In addition to reports from GCEA's Board President and Chief Executive Officer, Tri-State's Senior Vice President Mac McLennan gave a legislative update and briefed members on Tri-State's current and planned activities. Guests included State Senator Gail Schwartz and State Representative Kathleen Curry.

This year's board election results included reseating Chris Morgan from District 2 and electing Bart Laemmel from District 3. GCEA welcomes these newly elected directors as we begin to plan for a new decade of service to our membership.



GCEA Linemen Clint Smith and Levi Littrell distribute door prizes at the 71st Annual Meeting.

Do-It-Yourself Energy Assessments

Everyone is trying to save money these days – and most likely you've seen the articles that are popping up everywhere telling you that an energy audit is the first step towards reducing your energy costs. But what do you do if you're not ready to invest the funds in an energy audit? One option would be to call GCEA to schedule a free walk-through energy assessment. (See the article on page 2.) But what if you are not home during the working day or you don't have the time right now? Don't give up! You can try a do-it-yourself assessment just to get started.

Contact GCEA for a checklist.

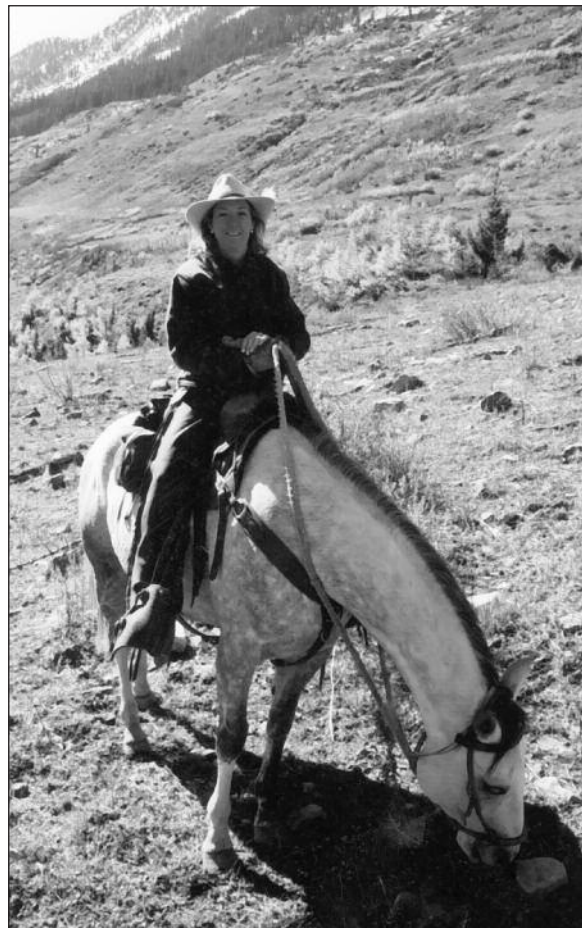
GCEA Thanks Helen K. Allen For Years Of Service

For the past 14 years, Helen K. Allen has devotedly maintained a 71-year family tradition by serving on GCEA Board of Directors. Helen's grandmother-in-law, Janet M. Allen, was one of the founders of the cooperative and served as a director from 1938 to 1974. Then, Helen's father-in-law, Tim Allen, served from 1974 until 1996. Helen's father, Pete Klingsmith, was the cooperative's attorney for 24 years. These were big shoes to fill, but Helen was definitely up to the challenge.

Helen has always been committed to the Seven Cooperative Principles, emphasizing concern for the community we serve with open participation by all members, as well as on-going education and training for all directors and employees so that they can contribute effectively to the cooperative.

Taking her role seriously, Helen was the first director to complete the NRECA Credentialed Director course work and earned her Board Leadership Certificate in 2003. She has served as Board President and Secretary-Treasurer, and before retiring from the board this year, she served on the Scholarship Committee; the Policy-Rules, Regulations and Bylaws Committee; and the Technology Committee. She also represented GCEA as a delegate to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and National Rural Cooperative Finance Corporation.

Helen's thoughtful comments and passion for the cooperative will be missed. All of the GCEA directors and staff wish her well as she takes advantage of the opportunity to spend more time with her family, and engaging in the gardening, calligraphy, and ranching activities that she enjoys so much.



Helen Allen in one of her favorite settings.

GCEA Wants To Help Members Conserve Energy

Commercial Energy Audits

You can improve your business's bottom line with an energy audit from Gunnison County Electric Association. The commercial energy audits are overseen by Certified Energy Manager David Houghton of the Resource Engineering Group, Inc. Thanks to funding from the USDA, small businesses and agricultural producers can get the audits for just 25% of the cost. The USDA grant pays 75%.

The audit report will describe your historical and current energy usage and will provide you with information sufficient to make decisions regarding energy efficiency improvements, capital investments, and renewable energy development.

The audit will also qualify your business for government grants to finance the costs of the improvements. GCEA's Member Services Department is happy to assist members with these grant applications as we have extensive experience in grant writing and know what to expect!

Residential Energy Audits

GCEA can help lower your monthly electric bill with a residential energy audit. We offer two residential audit options — an Energy Assessment or an Energy Audit. The free Energy Assessment is a comprehensive evaluation of the home in which the auditor uses a detailed checklist and a variety of diagnostic tools to provide you with energy saving and air sealing recommendations. The Energy Audit costs \$75 and is a detailed technical analysis of your home's current energy use. We analyze various systems, including the building envelope, insulation, lighting, electric loads, appliances, heating, venting, and air conditioning. Then we provide you with a report recommending energy saving measures and potential cost savings from conservation, energy efficiency improvements, or renewable energy investments.





Doyleville Wind Project Will Generate Power For GCEA

In recent years there has been growing interest in harnessing the power of wind. This interest has been spurred by America's continually increasing reliance on foreign oil, the implications for national security, and the impacts of fossil fuels on the environment.

GCEA's journeyman lineman Ron Copenhagen spends a lot of time outdoors in the wind and this caused him to think seriously about how GCEA might take advantage of this renewable resource. One day, he got an idea – why not build a wind turbine at our remotely located Doyleville radio repeater station to generate the electricity needed to operate the station? And if the wind turbine was really effective, he thought, it might also generate enough power to off-set some of the energy that GCEA purchases from Tri-State.

Ron took his idea to the board of directors, who were inspired by his enthusiasm and the project's potential. After some preliminary research, GCEA staff began exploring opportunities for funding the pilot project. Earlier this year, GCEA applied for grants from the Governor's Energy Office (GEO) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Then we began the waiting process...which has not been easy given the enthusiasm for the project.

If our proposals are successful, we plan to contract with Fat Spaniel Technologies (a leading provider of software services for the renewable energy industry) to monitor and manage the wind energy generated at the site. We would also like to install a web-based kiosk at our headquarters that will allow members to view real-time wind energy data. Our hope is that the kiosk will serve as an educational tool for our members to learn more about wind generated energy and to evaluate whether it has greater potential for energy generation in our area. Keep your eyes open for a project update in the next issue of GCEA News.

Cost Of Green Power Falls

GCEA's Green Power Program has been popular among our members for several years. For those of you unfamiliar with the program, it provides an opportunity for members to contribute, at a minimal additional cost, towards energy that is produced by renewable sources.

Green power is available in 100 kilowatt blocks, but members may participate in the program by purchasing as many blocks as they wish. The cost of green power has decreased steadily since the program first started. Initially, it was \$2.50 a block and over the past few years it has been 50 cents a block.

Once again, Tri-State is passing along the reduction in the cost of green power to us. Now, the premium is just 25 cents per block! This means that the average household purchasing seven blocks of green power can contribute to renewable energy for just \$1.75 extra a month.

If you would like to become a renewable energy supporter, please contact GCEA toll free at 1-800-726-3523 for more information and to sign up.

Energy Efficient Improvements

After so many years of "getting by" with short term fixes, GCEA's headquarters remodel is moving forward. Rather than investing in capital improvements during the high-cost construction boom, GCEA's board of directors patiently waited to take advantage of more reasonable construction costs. Additional energy efficiency incentives will allow GCEA to construct offices designed for productivity and low-energy use. The energy cost savings will help off-set the remodel costs. This is just one more way that GCEA strives to provide reliable, low-cost service to our members while

being mindful of the need to reduce waste and conserve energy.



Artist's rendering of the remodeled exterior.

East elevation, left, is the side of the building.

Below is the North elevation or front of the building.



Energy Efficiency Programs Are A Hit With Members

Due to popular demand, GCEA continues to offer energy efficiency programs. One of the easiest and least expensive measures you can take is to replace incandescent lights with CFL bulbs. You can still purchase CFL bulbs for just \$1 from GCEA. Another effective measure is to replace old refrigerators, dishwashers, and clothes washers. GCEA offers rebates for Energy Star® appliances, along with an extra bonus for recycling your refrigerator. Call the Member Services Department at 970-641-3520 for more information.

Crested Butte Electrical System Improvements

This summer GCEA began a project to rebuild the overhead electrical lines in the Town of Crested Butte. The rebuild is necessary both for safety reasons and to increase the capacity of the electric system. The current lines were built in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and there have been significant changes to the



CPI begins Crested Butte Rebuild.

National Electric Safety Code since then. GCEA believes safety is important and wants the lines built to current standards.

Some members have asked why we aren't putting the lines underground. There are several reasons why. First, there are no existing easements to accommodate the locations of transformers and switches. Second, the cost of an underground system would be an estimated three to four times greater than the overhead rebuild. Third, snow plows already have to deal with tight quarters when plowing around poles in the alleys of Crested Butte and large transformers and switches would make it tougher for the drivers to avoid accidents. If a snow plow does hit an underground transformer in the winter, the outage would be much longer than an overhead outage. In addition, thinking towards the future, if the Town of Crested Butte decides to install a wireless Internet mesh system, the overhead rebuild would accommodate the ability to do so.

During scheduled outages required for some aspects of construction, your power may be out for a short period of time. We apologize for any inconvenience this rebuild may cause. Any questions should be directed to Engineering Technician Brian Muth at 970-641-7338 or Chief Operations Officer Roger Grogg at 970-641-7332.

GCEA Employees Embrace Community's Fight Against Cancer

After last year's success, Gunnison County Electric employees formed three teams to take part in the 2010 Relay For Life held on June 4th and 5th at Jorgensen Park. Team captains Holly Palmer, Josie Casebolt, and Jerry Sharpe were the foot-soldiers in the fight against cancer. They organized and delegated needs for the GCEA teams' fundraising activities. Co-captains Cynthea Gunderson and Marni Joslyn served on the Relay's Crested Butte Committee helping to recruit teams and contributions from up-valley. Co-captain Chastity Miller served on the Survivor Committee. All of GCEA's captains and co-captains worked on a yard sale, soliciting donations and bake sale items from GCEA employees. This single event brought in more than \$500.

Relay For Life is more than a fundraiser. It's a community experience in which everyone has a chance to celebrate, remember, and fight back against the disease. Because cancer never sleeps, relays are held all over the world as a 24-hour overnight event. In Gunnison, employees, friends and family on the GCEA teams spent the evening walking, making sure at least one team member was on the track at all times between 6:00 pm and 6:00 am.

GCEA's fundraising efforts brought in \$2,500 for the American Cancer Society. With 30 total teams and over 240 participants, the Gunnison Relay for Life raised over \$37,726.19! Fundraising continues through August, so if you would like to make a tax deductible donation to the American Cancer Society, please contact us at 800-726-3523.

FREE Weatherization Assistance

Cost-effective, energy-efficient home improvements are available to qualifying low-income residents from Housing Resources' Weatherization Program, in partnership with the Governor's Energy Office. Designed to reduce energy usage while improving comfort, weatherization improvements can include: insulation in attics and walls, furnace replacement, furnace safety testing, refrigerator replacement, sealing air leaks, compact fluorescent light bulbs, and storm windows and doors.

Now is the time – before your first winter heating bill – to make your home as energy efficient as possible. To learn if you qualify, call Housing Resources at 970-241-2871 or visit www.housingresourceswc.org.

Corrections and comments are always welcome. Please contact the editor, Vicki Spencer, Energy Use/Communications Specialist: vspencer@gcea.coop or 800-726-3523 or 970-641-7359.

Customer Service 970.641.3520 or 1.800.726.3523 or email us at gcea@gcea.coop