



[GCEA News]

Several feet of snow in a short time frame makes for interesting utility work!

BY ROGER GROGG || CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

In January the snow gods were extremely good to the ski town of Crested Butte, dumping 98 inches — over 8 feet of snow — in just 13 days. This massive amount of snow in such a short time was named Snowmageddon by the locals. The push to remove snow and keep the roads open was massive with many contractors and state and county employees working what seemed like around the clock to keep the roads open. As the storm progressed, our two-lane roads in town shrunk into one-way traffic and the state highways ended up with no shoulders. Wide loads were no longer permitted during this time. The scene while walking through town was surreal. Snow banks towered 2 feet over your head as you walked down the sidewalk. I don't recall ever seeing so many happy and excited people.

I had to purchase plywood to cover the windows at my house so the snow shedding off the roof would not break the living room windows, since the level of the snow was taller than the bottom window sill. The only way to get to the shed or clear the dish receiver was to put on your snowshoes and pack trails in the backyard.

Now that I painted a picture of what happened, I have to say that most electric lineworkers were not as in love with these huge dumps of snow as the skiers and boarders were. I have to say that, overall, the electric system held together pretty well. The early snows were a bit wet for January and stuck to the overhead power lines, but the main backbone of the system had no issues. However, we did lose some taps. The town of Gothic went off almost daily and sometimes twice a day. The other tap was upper Cement Creek; both of these areas are unique and have tremendous avalanche danger. I will concentrate on Gothic where we lost this line to avalanches in previous years. When Gothic goes out during these conditions, we pretty much have our hands tied. During the last storm we waited for the lines to shed the snow and reset the switch. If it held, we called Billy in Gothic to make sure he had power so we knew we did not just energize a line laying on the ground (snow is a good insulator). The verification of the power being back on let us know the line was not broken.

If ever we do have a problem and it is not safe to enter the area, there is nothing we can do except wait for the area to be declared safe by professionals.

We hired experts to ensure safe access to Gothic and also Walrod Gulch prior to sending crews in to make repairs. We also have a great resource with the Crested Butte Mountain Resort, which has helped us with its expertise and equipment during these major winter events. In some cases, in the backcountry we have had to frame a tree or two to string power lines and restore power until permanent repairs could be made. At any rate, we restore power as soon as possible, but safety is always our first thought.

At Gunnison County Electric Association, 57 percent of our power lines are underground, which is one of the highest percentages in the state. This helps with reliability when we have heavy, wet snow or high winds, but like everything else, it has its drawbacks. We mark underground equipment prior to winter with snow markers that extend 6 feet above the equipment. When we accumulate over 8 feet of snow in a few weeks, the markers get buried or destroyed. We suffer the most damage when crews come back to remove snow and widen roads. Winter repairs offer big challenges for line crews, as just digging out a transformer for a place to start troubleshooting can take hours.

At GCEA we have a good relationship with contractors, as well as the state and county snow removal professionals. We provide them with some maps of where equipment is and they call us to locate facilities to prevent damage. Presently, we are getting GPS locations on our equipment since, when it is a sea of white, they are even tough for us to find.

We appreciate our line crews and everyone who helps us out during the tough times of the year.



THANK A LINEMAN ON APRIL 10

The second Monday of April is designated to appreciate and thank the men and women who keep the lights on. Linemen work 365 days a year under risky conditions to make sure you have power. They don't wait for the weather to pass and the sun to shine — they get out to restore the power. Linemen make it possible for us to live and enjoy today's modern lifestyle. Thank you to past and present GCEA linemen for keeping the lights on.

Remember, your power works because they do. Use #ThankALineman on social media to show your support.



GUNNISON LINEMEN

- John Stoeber, line superintendent, 22 years
- Todd Fuller, Gunnison working foreman, 11 years
- Dustin Cadwell, journeyman lineman, 8 years
- Robert Summers, apprentice lineman, 9 months

CRESTED BUTTE LINEMEN

- Dan Oberosler, journeyman lineman, 24 years
- Jeff Hanggi, Crested Butte working foreman, 20 years
- Andy Holsteen, journeyman lineman, 4 years
- Mike Pendency, apprentice lineman, 2 years

LAKE CITY LINEMEN

- Logan Rhodes, journeyman lineman, 3 years
- Brent Boyce, Lake City lead lineman, 10 years

GO GREEN WITH OUR NEW GREEN POWER PROGRAM RATE!

DID YOU KNOW YOUR LOCAL COOPERATIVE HAS A GREEN POWER PROGRAM THAT IS REASONABLE IN PRICE?

WHAT IS GREEN POWER?

Green power refers to electricity generated from renewable resources, such as solar, wind and biomass.

HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

Green power is available to purchase for an additional cost of just 12 cents per 100-kilowatt-hours per month. Members can offset their usage and support renewable energy by adding only 84 cents on average to their monthly bills.

HOW WILL THE PREMIUM AFFECT MY MONTHLY ELECTRIC BILL?

Here is an example of how the premium will affect an average member's bill. A member whose current electric consumption is 700 kWh pays the monthly service availability charge of \$28 plus 700 kWh times the residential rate of \$0.12355, or \$86.49, for a total bill of \$114.49 without tax. If this member wanted to purchase the entire 700 kWh as green power, he or she would need to sign up for seven blocks of green power at an additional cost of 12 cents per 100-kWh block. The member's bill under the Green Power Program would be calculated by multiplying 12 cents times seven blocks, equaling 84 cents. This amount would be added to the member's monthly bill of \$114.49 for a total cost of \$115.33.

HOW CAN I SIGN UP?

Members can sign up to buy as many blocks of green power as they want and may discontinue participation in the program at any time by contacting GCEA one month in advance. The additional cost to participate in the Green Power Program will appear as a line item on participating members' monthly electric bills.

Nonparticipating members can rest assured that the Green Power Program has no impact on the price they pay for electricity; their power is produced by the most cost-effective and efficient means possible.

Members can also sign up to offset 100 percent of their usage and be charged an additional \$0.0012 per kWh they use for the month.

JOIN OVER 300 OTHER GCEA MEMBERS IN SUPPORTING GREEN POWER!

Call GCEA at 970-641-3520 or stop by the Gunnison or Crested Butte offices to sign up.

50%
PRICE CUT
Beginning May 1, 2017

SAVE THE DATE!

78th Annual Meeting

Tuesday, June 27, 2017

GCEA Headquarters

37250 W. Highway 50, Gunnison

Dinner at 5 p.m.

Business Meeting at 6 p.m.

Come Celebrate With Us!

COLOR CODED FOR SAFETY

Electricity isn't the only utility that can be located underground. Gas, water, sewer and communications and telephone can also be buried beneath the earth. When located, the following utilities are marked with their corresponding color:

- Red — electric
- Orange — communications, telephone and CATV
- Blue — potable water
- Green — sewer and drainage
- Yellow — gas and petroleum pipeline
- Purple — reclaimed water
- White — future site where digging or excavation is planned

OPERATION ROUND UP®

College tuition keeps rising every year, and it gets harder and harder for families to pay for it. Luckily, Gunnison County Electric Association members have an opportunity to support the educational funds of youth in the service territory by participating in Operation Round Up®.

ample, if your monthly bill was \$52.30, you would pay \$53. The extra 70 cents goes into a special account. Once you are signed up, GCEA will automatically round up the bill each month. Every little bit helps students with college expenses.

HOW IT WORKS*

Members who volunteer to take part in the program will have their monthly electric bill rounded up to the next highest dollar. For ex-

**Members are not required to participate, but GCEA would greatly appreciate the generous donation to the scholarship fund. These donations are not tax-deductible.*

OPERATION ROUND UP® ENROLLMENT FORM

Yes! I wish to make a contribution* to Operation Round Up®.

Please add the amount to my monthly electric bill. I understand I may stop my contribution at any time.

___ Round up my electric bill to the next highest dollar.

___ I wish to make an additional monthly contribution of \$_____.

Please print:

Name: _____

Account Number: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please send completed form to:

Gunnison County Electric Association | Attn.: Billing | P.O. Box 180 | Gunnison, CO 81230

***Not tax deductible.**

Thunderstorm Safety Tips From the Red Cross

When thunderstorms are rolling your way, stay safe with these helpful tips from the American Red Cross:

- Listen to local news or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio for emergency updates. Watch for signs of a storm, like darkening skies, lightning flashes or increasing wind.
- Postpone outdoor activities if thunderstorms are likely to occur. Many people struck by lightning are not in the area where rain is occurring.
- If a severe thunderstorm warning is issued, take shelter in a substantial building or in a vehicle with the windows closed. Get out of mobile homes that can blow over in high winds.
- If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be in danger from lightning. If thunder roars, go indoors: The National Weather Service recommends staying inside for at least 30 minutes after the

last thunderclap.

- Avoid electrical equipment and telephones. Use battery-powered televisions and radios instead.
- Shutter windows and close outside doors securely. Keep away from windows.
- Do not take a bath or shower and avoid plumbing fixtures.
- If you are driving, try to safely exit the roadway and park. Stay in the vehicle and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain ends. Avoid touching metal or other surfaces that conduct electricity inside and outside the vehicle.
- If you are outside and cannot reach a safe building, avoid high ground; water; tall, isolated trees; and metal objects, such as fences or bleachers. Picnic shelters, dugouts and sheds are not safe.

Source: American Red Cross

EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARY

DAN MCDONOUGH —
Member Relations
Supervisor and Safety
Director, 43 Years



FOR SAFETY'S SAKE

If you are on equipment that makes contact with a power line, stay put. Do not attempt to climb off the equipment, because you could become the path to ground for electricity. Call for help and warn others in the area to stay back until Gunnison County Electric Association is called and the line is de-energized, regardless of its voltage.

an underground line is **damaged**
every **six minutes**



call 811 **before** you dig

Information collected from the Common Ground Alliance

CO-OP CALENDAR

APRIL 10 – National
Lineman
Appreciation
Day

APRIL 21 – Colorado
Arbor Day

APRIL 22 – Earth Day

APRIL 28 – National
Arbor Day



DID YOU KNOW?

SIX HOURS OF EACH YEAR
30 MINUTES OF EACH MONTH

CAUSES 46% OF GCEA'S
WHOLESALE POWER BILL

IT'S CALLED A DEMAND
CHARGE AND IT'S BASED
ON THE HIGHEST 30
MINUTE PERIOD OF USAGE
EACH MONTH.

75% OF THE TIME THAT 30
MINUTE PERIOD OCCURS
WITHIN TWO HOURS
AFTER SUNSET.

TO LEARN HOW YOU CAN
HELP, VISIT
WWW.GCEA.COOP