

[GCEA News]

2017 HIGHLIGHTS

LOGANN LONG || COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH COORDINATOR

The cooler weather reminds me that another summer passed and we are now approaching the end of another year. As we reflect on 2017, I want to highlight some of what Gunnison County Electric Association was up to over the past 12 months.

2017 started out with a huge snowstorm, dumping 98 inches in Crested Butte. That's over 8 feet of snow in just 13 days. The massive amount of snow in such a short period was named "snowmageddon" by the locals. Snowboarders and skiers were in heaven.

Electrical lineworkers were not as much in love with the heavy dumping of snow.

We greatly appreciate everyone who helped GCEA during this tough time, and not enough can be said about the GCEA line crews who worked many hours to ensure that electric service was restored as safely and promptly as possible.

In February, we started the scholarship process and what a process it was this year. Scholarship applications doubled this year with 69 applicants. We awarded every member dependent a scholarship thanks to the generosity of members participating in Operation Round Up, the board of directors, Tri-State Generation and Transmission and Basin Electric Power Cooperative, as well as unclaimed and returned capital credit checks.

Another great change at GCEA is that the Green Power program rate was reduced by more than 50 percent. GCEA offers members a choice to buy green power to offset their usage and support renewable energy for an additional cost of only 12 cents per 100 kilowatt-hour block. The program also allows members to offset 100 percent of monthly usage with green power. With this option, the green power fee is calculated each month based on individual kWh usage. We have more than 450 people who are signed up and the list keeps growing by the day. The town of Crested Butte recently went 100 percent green through GCEA's Green Power program. The town council encourages all citizens to consider making the change themselves for their home or business.



GCEA allowed members to try out its electric vehicle this summer.

GCEA is always looking forward to the future in an effort to better serve its membership. In May of 2016, GCEA purchased a used 2014 Chevy Spark electric vehicle. After giving test drives for about a year, GCEA came up with the Adopt Spark-e program. As a way to further introduce and educate people about EVs, GCEA decided to loan the EV, nicknamed Spark-e, out for a week at a time so folks could have an opportunity to experience life with an electric car.

People are enjoying driving Spark-e so much that it hasn't been back to the office since June.

The Spark-e program was recently recognized nationally by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in an article on its website. Since the article went out in October, GCEA received emails and phone calls with questions from other rural electric cooperatives across the country regarding the Adopt Spark-e program.

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A GCEA employee shovels out equipment after more than 8 feet of snow fell in early 2017.

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GCEA is always looking to the future when it comes to electric rates. In an effort to help keep rates down in the future, GCEA recently rolled out the Take a Load Off campaign to educate members on when to use electricity. The campaign explains that it isn't just about how much electricity members use, it's also about when electricity is used. GCEA came up with the Three S rule (shift, stagger, save) to help members understand how they can reduce electric energy consumption during peak times. SHIFT usage from on-peak to off-peak hours by using appliances and other devices before 5 p.m. and after 10 p.m. STAGGER the use of high energy-consuming appliances and devices by using them at different times, so that the total required demand for electricity is lower than it would be using them all at once. SAVE electric energy by using appliances and other devices that use less electricity.

New electric use habits can help reduce energy consumption and lower peak demand, which occurs when the most electricity is being used simultaneously on the electric grid. The higher the peak demand, the greater the energy costs are for your electric cooperative. GCEA's on-peak hours occur from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday. GCEA has an optional time-of-use electric rate that is designed to provide electricity at a reduced rate when used



"Spark-e" gives GCEA members a chance to drive an electric vehicle.

off peak. Give GCEA a call if you have questions or if you have an interest.

At Gunnison County Electric Association, we understand and recognize that our members are what our electric cooperative is all about. 2017 was a great year and we finish it with expectations of 2018 being even better.

Thank you all for being members of your local rural electric cooperative.

SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER It is time to start thinking about higher education!

Do you need financial assistance to further your education after high school? Each year college gets harder to pay for, but GCEA is here to help students pursue their dreams of furthering their education. Last year, 69 students received scholarships. Applications are now available at the Gunnison and Crested Butte offices, all three local high schools and online at www.gcea.coop.

Returning college applicants must fill out and send in the returning student application form with current college transcripts.

Scholarship applications are due Friday, February 2, 2018, by 4:30 p.m.

December Co-op Calendar

Night of Lights, Downtown Gunnison
Friday, December 1

First Day of Winter
Thursday, December 21



GCEA Offices Closed
Christmas Day
Monday, December 25

New Years Day
Monday, January 1, 2018



BE PREPARED FOR WINTER SAFETY

Another fast and busy summer came and went, and now here we are in the midst of winter again. Snow is flying, temperatures are dropping and it is inevitable that from time to time the electric power will go off. Gunnison County Electric Association wants to take this opportunity to remind you of some of the dangers that you all face in the winter months regarding electrical safety.

SPACE HEATER SAFETY

As the temperature drops, it may be tempting to use space heaters to take away winter's chill. Please be sure that all recommended safety precautions are followed. Precautions include checking for frayed cords and remembering not to place heaters close to combustible items.

ELECTRIC BLANKET AND HEATING PAD SAFETY

Make yourself aware of manufacturer's instructions and use the product only as it is intended. Never use an electric blanket that is wet or folded, and perform regular checks of the product to look for scorch marks or visible damage.

SNOWPLOW SAFETY

Snowplow safety should be taken seriously and every snowplow driver should be aware of hidden dangers. Here are some helpful tips if you are out helping clear the streets, roads and driveways.

BE AWARE

- Know your surroundings and the route you're plowing.

STAY CLEAR

- Never go near or drive over a downed wire. Assume it is energized. Call your local utility and notify it of the downed line.

NEVER, EVER

- Never drive over snow-covered high-voltage boxes.
- Never pile snow on or by electrical boxes or on any electrical structures.

SNOW REMOVAL SAFETY

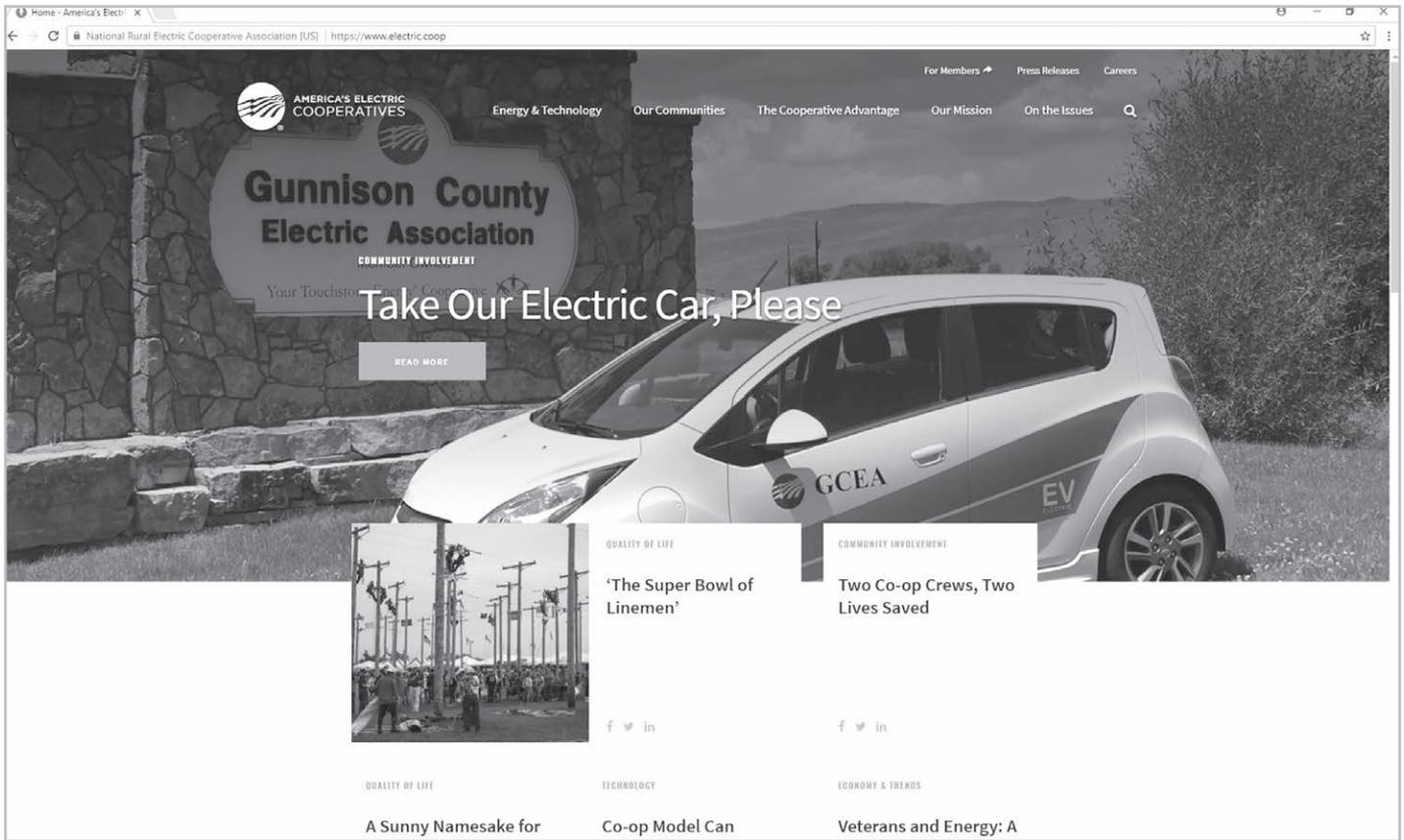
Every winter the snow builds up on the eaves of our homes, and it becomes necessary to remove it to prevent ice buildup and eliminate excessive weight that can cause structural damage. One of the ways this is accomplished is with the use of a snow rake. A snow rake is usually made of aluminum, which makes it a good conductor of electrical current. Be careful as you begin the snow removal process and keep an eye on where the electrical service wires are located that may be attached to your home. Remember that electricity always looks for the shortest path to ground and you don't want to be part of that situation. If your practice is to shovel snow off of your roof, watch where you put your ladder and be sure that you and your tools stay clear of all overhead wires.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!

**GCEA WISHES YOU A SEASON OF
HAPPINESS AND CHEER
AND TOP IT OFF WITH A
WONDERFUL YEAR!**



SPARK-E GETS NATIONAL ATTENTION



The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association recently recognized GCEA's electric vehicle program. The article described how GCEA has promoted electric vehicles over the past couple years. To read the article, please visit www.electric.coop/colorado-electric-car-borrow.

WINTER SUPPLY KIT

Are you ready if a snowstorm hits? Remember the snowstorm last year that dumped between 3 and 8 feet of snow in 13 days? Assembling supplies before a storm arrives is one of the keys to weathering a winter storm emergency. Make sure your supply kit includes:

- Flashlights with fresh batteries
- Matches for lighting gas stoves or clean-burning heaters
- Wood for a properly ventilated fireplace
- First aid kit, prescription medicines and baby supplies
- Food that can be kept in coolers and a manual can opener
- A landline telephone and/or fully charged cellular phone
- Bottled drinking water
- Battery-powered emergency lights and radio

HOW NEW HABITS CAN HELP REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION & PEAK DEMAND

GCEA's December peak occurs 60% of the time in the last six days of the month between 5 P.M. and 10 P.M.

Reducing your energy use during peak times is easy. Try setting your heating system back 5 degrees during on-peak hours. You can program your thermostat to warm your home before peak hours.

