



# GCEA NEWS



JANUARY – MARCH 2016

THE GUNNISON COUNTY ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

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Corrections and comments are always welcomed. Please contact us at [gcea@gcea.coop](mailto:gcea@gcea.coop) or 800.726.3523.

### *"Like us" on Facebook*

We are keeping you posted on events at GCEA, providing energy efficiency tips, and much more on our Facebook page.

"Like Us" at Gunnison County Electric Association.

Member Owned  A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## Message from the President

*By John Vader, Board President*

Another year has passed by and I wonder where the last 12 months have gone. It seems like the year has flown by so fast.

At GCEA it has been a busy year with many projects in process. First of all, this year we experienced an unusual amount of power outages and blinking lights due to a weak transmission source feeding GCEA as well as an abundance of rain, wind and lightning. The transmission system that normally feeds GCEA loads had extensive maintenance done in 2015. Blue Mesa and Morrow Point were not operating so our source of feed came from a greater distance, creating a weaker source and problems with reliability. These conditions placed an excessive amount of stress on our underground cable system, resulting in an abnormal amount of cable failures. All of the underground cable failures are tracked and failing cables will be replaced as warranted which will keep us busy into the coming year.

Secondly, a new project at GCEA has been implemented. It is a new way to pay your electric bill called the Pre-Pay Program. You can now choose the amount of your payment by purchasing specific amounts of electricity in advance. GCEA will notify you by e-mail or text message when your funds for prepaid electricity are running low. You can make an additional payment of your choice by credit or debit card, check or cash. Using the Pre-Pay Program can help you keep track of your usage and costs throughout the month.

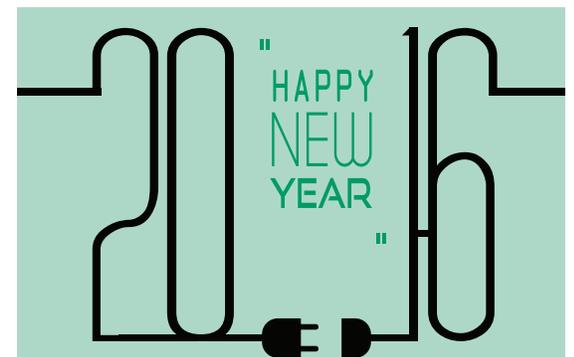
Finally, by the time you read this newsletter our electric car charging station will be up and running in Crested Butte. This trial station will enable GCEA to determine the present and future need for an electric charging station as well as help promote electric cars in the valley.

While the GCEA Board of Directors strives to keep rates as low as possible there does come a time that rates will need to increase slightly. As we all know the cost of living seems to only go up and not down. GCEA has not had a rate increase since May 2014. Once again we will postpone a necessary 3% increase until May 1, 2016 until after the higher usage months for winter heating needs have passed.

*Hopefully everyone has had a great year and I wish you an even better year in 2016.*

Thanks,

John Vader



*GCEA wishes you the joy of family,  
the gift of friends and the best of  
everything for the New Year!*

# GCEA News Briefs

## NIGHT OF LIGHTS

It was another Successful Night of Lights for GCEA. Thanks to the hard work of the employees, GCEA walked away with a first place finish in the best light decoration contest. *It's a Wonderful Life* was the theme. GCEA will donate the first place prize to the Adopt-a-Family program. Thank you to everyone involved in this great community event.



## 2015 SAFETY AWARD

Gunnison County Electric Association held its annual end of year all employee meeting on December 1, 2015.

At this event, the association's Safety Advisory Committee proudly recognized GCEA's Crested Butte branch office Member Support Specialist Cynthea Gunderson for actions she took in response to a very

serious automobile accident that she came upon as she traveled from her home in route to her office in Crested Butte. Cynthea was able to assist the accident victims and stayed on scene until EMS personnel arrived. The safety committee awarded Cynthea with a check for \$75.00 in recognition of her unselfish actions.

*Safety is always priority one for all employees at GCEA. We are very proud that Cynthea is part of our GCEA family.*



## SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER LAST CALL!

## ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS & COLLEGE STUDENTS

### Do you need financial assistance to further your education after high school?

GCEA has provided student scholarships for decades thanks to the generosity of the Board of Directors, Tri-State Generation and Transmission, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, members participating in Operation Round-Up®, and unclaimed capital credit checks. GCEA offers a variety of scholarships to students residing in GCEA's service territory.

**First time applicants** must fill out an application form, which is available at [www.gcea.coop](http://www.gcea.coop), at our local Gunnison and Crested Butte offices, and all area high schools.

### PLEASE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WITH YOUR COMPLETED APPLICATION:

- List of high school and community activities
- Statement of other activities
- Two letters of recommendation
- High school or college transcript
- First page of the member's Federal income tax return 1040 or 1040A
- A 200 word essay relating to cooperative business

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

Letters and applications should be attached and mailed or delivered to Gunnison County Electric Association Inc., no later than **4:30 P.M., on Tuesday, February 2, 2016.**

## CO-OP CALENDAR



MONDAY, JANUARY 18

*Martin Luther King Jr. Day*

**Offices Open**

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15

*Presidents Day*

**Offices Closed**

SUNDAY, MARCH 13

*Daylight Savings Time Begins*

## *Notice of GCEA Annual Meeting and Board of Directors Elections*

The ELECTION FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS and the 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Member Meeting for Gunnison County Electric Association, Inc. will be held at the company headquarters located at 37250 US Highway 50, Gunnison, Colorado on Tuesday, June 28, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting registration and voting begin at 5:00 p.m.

### **BOARD DISTRICTS UP FOR ELECTION:**

Gunnison County Electric Association Board of Director positions that are eligible for election are as follow:

#### **District No. 2 – Term expiring for Chris Morgan**

The Northeast corner of the certificated service area of the Gunnison County Electric Association, including Mt. Crested Butte and Gothic to the Continental Divide.

#### **District No. 3 – Term expiring for Bart Laemmel**

The Ohio Creek and Taylor River Drainage Areas beginning approximately one half mile north of Jack's Cabin Cut-off to the city of Gunnison service area on the south and extending to the western and eastern boundaries of the certificated service area of the Gunnison County Electric Association, Inc.

### **HOW TO BECOME A CANDIDATE:**

In order to become nominated as a candidate for the Gunnison County Electric Association's Board of Directors election, a written petition must be signed by at least 15 members of the Association. Signatories do not have to live within your district. Petitions will be available at Gunnison County Electric Association headquarters as of March 14, 2016.

To serve, you must be a member of GCEA and reside within the District for which you are nominated.

### **PETITION DEADLINE:**

Completed petitions must be returned to GCEA Headquarters by the end of the business day at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, May 13, 2016.

### **BALLOT MAILING DEADLINE:**

In case of a contested election, ballots will be sent to members on Wednesday, June 1, 2016. Ballots must be completed per instructions and returned by the close of registration at the Annual Meeting held on Tuesday, June 28, 2016. Any ballots received after this deadline will be considered invalid.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

For complete information concerning the election process, please call Chief Executive Officer Mike McBride or Executive Assistant Sherry Booth at 970-641-3520.

## *Help GCEA Make a Difference... Choose Green Power!*

**Gunnison County Electric Association members: Did you know your local cooperative has a **Green Power Program** that is reasonable in price?**

Green power is available to purchase for an additional cost of just 25 cents per 100 kWh per month, members can offset 100% of their usage and support renewable energy by adding \$1.75 on average to their monthly bills. That's just one-sixth the cost of competing green power offers.

**Join over 300 other GCEA members in supporting green power!**

Call GCEA at **970-641-3520** or stop by our Gunnison or Crested Butte offices to sign up!

## *Solar Garden*

What's the big deal about solar gardens? A solar garden is a community and a distributed generation project. DG is electricity generated within our distribution area at or near the point of use. Distributing power production offers benefits to communities beyond the local aspect. The solar garden generates more than just renewable energy; it helps create jobs locally, conserves delicate habitats, cleans the air and provides affordable energy. It will help everyone in the end.



Gunnison County Electric Association partnered with the town of Crested Butte in 2014 to bring community-owned solar power to members. Community solar provides an additional renewable energy option for GCEA members who want the benefit of solar ownership without all the work.

Co-op members are eligible to lease a 240-watt solar panel for \$1,012.92. Panels are anticipated to produce 1.3 kilowatt-hours per day.

Call Roger Grogg or Josie Casebolt at **970-641-3520** to learn how you can participate in the community solar garden.



## Mike Young Retirement

Gunnison County Electric Association says farewell to Mike Young, GIS Technician, after 36 years of hard work and dedication to the co-op.

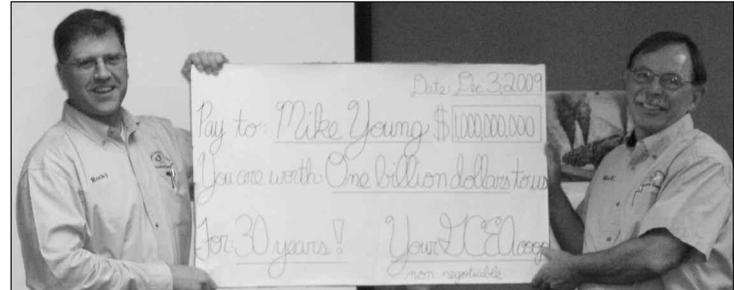
Mike is originally from Englewood, Colorado but moved to Gunnison in 1970 to attend Western State College, now currently known as Western State Colorado University. During his time at GCEA, Mike found time to meet Roxie

Rule and have a family which now includes grandchildren. He has two sons — Josh and his wife Shannon have three children and his other son Steven and wife Cassidy have two children.

Mike has worn a couple of different hats while working at Gunnison County Electric Association. On December 3, 1979 Mike filled a vacancy in the line crew and started work for GCEA as a lineman. For about 16 years he worked as a lineman. In 1995 Mike accepted the newly formed mapping position and has been in that position since. “GCEA has given me the opportunity to pursue and fulfill two different careers,” said Mike.

Since Mike has been with GCEA for so long he has had the opportunity to work with almost the entire current line crew here at GCEA. Roger Grogg said Mike in one way or another has had a hand in training every lineman in this company, including Roger himself. Mike helped to train all of the “old-timers” still

here, from apprentice linemen to journeyman linemen. Several of the techniques he passed down are used by the linemen he trained and have been passed down to the new employees. One of Roger’s favorite qualities about Mike is that, “we can have a ‘spirited’ debate and still walk away friends and hopefully we came up with a solution to a problem.”



What Mike has enjoyed most about his time at GCEA is grilling hamburgers and interacting with the members at the Annual Meetings. He also said he will miss his co-workers and being a part of the GCEA family. The feeling is mutual about Mike. The staff at GCEA will miss him and the yummy baked goods he would bring in made by Roxie.

Mike retired to spend more time with Roxie and grandchildren. He also plans to master wood working.

***Thank you for all your hard work!***

***GCEA wishes Mike all the best in his retirement.***

## ENERGY AUDITS

***Make a New Year’s Resolution to be more energy efficient and sign up today for a free energy audit!***

GCEA offers free energy audits to our residential and small commercial members. We can help you identify how much energy your appliances, electronics, and lighting use and how they contribute to your electric bill. We can also perform a blower door test to show areas of air infiltration and inspect insulation levels in your home or business to determine if they’re sufficient. Call Alantha, Energy Use Specialist, at **970-641-7319** today and we’ll provide a Home Energy Score in addition to your audit if you’re a residential member!

## BE GREEN IN 2016

Paperless billing is a win-win situation for everyone. It’s easy and convenient for you, saves your cooperative money, and helps the environment by reducing paper waste. Members who are not already participating in paperless billing and sign up during 2015 will be entered into our Paperless Billing Contest.

Log on to <https://gcea.smarthub.coop>. If you do not already have a user name and password, you will need to create one. Once you are logged in, click on “My Profile,” then “Update My Printed Bill Settings” and select “Turn off Printed Bills.” If you have any questions, please give us a call at 970-641-3520.

Each fiscal quarter, we will hold a drawing for members signing up for paperless billing for the first time during that quarter. The lucky winner will receive a **\$100 Visa Gift Card**.