



Powering Possibilities

COOPERATIVE MONTH

POWERING POSSIBILITIES WITH MEMBERS IN MIND

BY LOGANN LONG | COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH COORDINATOR

Powering possibilities has been the mission of Gunnison County Electric Association from the beginning. This mind-set began in 1938 when a group of hard-working farmers and ranchers came together to bring power to the Gunnison Valley. With hard work and dedication, that dream became a reality and 79 years later GCEA is still powering possibilities for members.

Back in the day, powering possibilities meant improving the efficiency of work and the comforts of homes in rural areas. In 2018, that means so much more, and we are able to offer our members an almost endless amount of possibilities.

Starting with our youth, GCEA offers leadership opportunities to high school juniors and seniors to help them prepare for the future. The Washington D.C. Youth Tour introduces students to the nation's capital with tours of museums and historic monuments, meetings with the Colorado congressional delegation and fun-filled activities. Another great way for students to prepare for their future is through the Leadership Camp. For nearly 40 years, the electric cooperatives of Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming have provided this outstanding camp for students who are interested in leadership and electric cooperatives.

GCEA offers a variety of scholarships to students residing in the service territory. For decades, GCEA has provided scholarship assistance for graduating seniors to pursue an education beyond high school. Funding comes from unclaimed capital credits and generous donations from the GCEA Board of Directors, Operation Round-Up®, Tri-State Generation and Transmission, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, GCEA members and employees. Last year, 89 students received scholarship awards.

We are excited to offer more renewable energy choices to our members. Recently, the GCEA Board of Directors approved three local renewable projects. With these projects, we can meet the desires of members who want local renewables. The three projects consist of two 0.5-megawatt solar arrays and an expansion of our community solar garden.



Logann Long

GCEA now offers three green power choices including a 130 percent offset option in its Green Power Plus Club. With this option, members may choose to make a greater contribution to community efforts to reduce greenhouse emissions. GCEA has also introduced a new feature of its Green Power Program. Twenty-five percent of the amount members pay for green power now goes into a fund to help finance local renewable projects in the future.

Over the last three years, GCEA has introduced electric vehicles to the valley. Two electric car charging stations were purchased with grant money and put into place — one in the town of Crested Butte and the other in Lake City. New stations will be installed in Almont, Crested Butte and the Elk Creek Marina in Curecanti National Recreation Area. The GCEA headquarters' EV station will be upgraded as well. The most recent idea, and as a way to further educate and introduce people to EVs, is to loan members GCEA fleet electric vehicles for a week at a time.

Our Energy Efficiency Rebate Program provides our members with more choices for qualifying energy-efficient products they purchase. By providing a financial incentive, members can consider products that they might otherwise have looked past because price, or purchase more and different types of LEDs for their home or business. Some upgrade projects members want to make don't happen unless the rebate amount is calculated into the final cost, so this program can truly power more possibilities for our members.

In 2017, we rolled out a new option for your annual patronage capital allocation. You can either receive the current value of your allocation or leave it invested in your cooperative. We are also working on another patronage capital offering for 2019 that will provide even greater choice with respect to your ownership equity in GCEA.

This list could go on and on about how we are powering possibilities for our members 79 years later. We would not be where we are today without the pioneers from 1938. We are grateful for the past and excited about the future of GCEA. The dedicated employees will continue powering possibilities for our consumer-members.



SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER

Another school year is on us, and it's time to start talking with high school seniors about the importance of a higher education. Each year it gets harder to pay for college, but GCEA is here to help students pursue their dreams of furthering their education.

For decades, GCEA has provided scholarship assistance for graduating seniors to pursue an education beyond high school, and offers a variety of scholarships to students residing in the service territory. Funding comes from unclaimed capital credits and generous donations from the GCEA Board of Directors, Operation Round-Up®, Tri-State Generation and Transmission, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, GCEA members and employees. Last year, 89 students received awards.

This year applications will be available in December at the Gunnison and Crested Butte offices, Crested Butte Community School, Gunnison High School, Lake City Community School and online at www.gcea.coop/content/scholarships. **Application deadline is Friday, February 1, 2019, by 4:30 p.m.**



Tracy Wheeler

NEW CRESTED BUTTE MEMBER SUPPORT SPECIALIST

The next time you visit the Crested Butte office, you will see a new but familiar face. GCEA is excited to announce that Tracy Wheeler is the new Crested Butte member support specialist.

Tracy worked at the headquarters in Gunnison for the past eight years as a member support specialist. She is now working alongside Marni Joslyn.

EMPLOYEE ANNIVERSARY

HOLLY PALMER
MEMBER RELATIONS
AND BILLING SUPERVISOR
20 YEARS



Alliy Sahagun

NEW MEMBER RELATIONS SUPERVISOR

GCEA welcomes Alliy Sahagun (first name is pronounced "Allie" and her last name rhymes with "lagoon") as the new member relations supervisor. Alliy previously was a sourcing manager for American Crafts and before that was the director of wholesale operations for DownEast Outfitters, Inc. She holds a Bachelor of Science in clothing and textiles with a fashion merchandising emphasis and a minor in business management. Alliy has a strong background in supervision, key account management, customer relations, conflict resolution and project management. GCEA is excited about Alliy's skills and abilities and believes she will be a great asset to both GCEA members and employees.

Alliy is originally from Reno, Nevada, but has called Gunnison home for the last 18 months. Her family is thrilled to be in Gunnison and loves to take advantage of all the opportunities to play in the outdoors — camping, biking, hiking, skiing, snowshoeing and rafting. Alliy is excited to join the GCEA team as the member relations supervisor and looks forward to getting to know the members and rest of the staff.

GCEA RECEIVES CHARGE AHEAD COLORADO GRANT TO FUND ADDITIONAL EV CHARGING STATIONS

GCEA will add three new level II (240-volt) electric vehicle charging stations to the area and upgrade a fourth station with help from the Charge Ahead Colorado grant. The \$36,000 grant will cover 80 percent of the costs including hardware, labor and materials to install stations with a \$9,000 maximum per station.

Charge Ahead Colorado grants were awarded to GCEA in previous years for the Crested Butte and Lake City charging stations. These stations prove to be useful for local EV owners and visitors. GCEA is seeing strong growth in station utilization, particularly at its Crested Butte station.

The stations will be strategically located to enable greater use by existing EVs and to encourage EV adoption by other drivers. Approximately 80 to 85 percent of EV charging occurs at home and, in addition to the environmental benefits of EVs, more EVs can help GCEA to keep its rates down for all consumer-members.

The National Park Service is providing a site at the Elk Creek Marina, which will reduce the gap between Montrose and Gunnison. Almont Resort offered space in its back parking lot. The town of Crested Butte is providing two more parking stalls to accommodate growing demand, this time in the parking lot at First Street

and Elk Avenue. Lastly, GCEA will be upgrading its public headquarters station.

Under the terms of the grant, GCEA has committed to a set fee structure for five years. Fees charged to drivers at the four charging stations will vary. The first three years will be free at Elk Creek Marina. At GCEA headquarters, drivers will be charged during on-peak hours (5 p.m. to 10 p.m.). Charging will be free at GCEA's headquarters during business hours. The first year will be free at the Almont Resort and the new Crested Butte location. At these two stations, drivers will be charged only during on-peak hours in the second and third year.

GCEA will soon start charging drivers at its Crested Butte and Lake City stations. The free charge commitment required by earlier grants will be met November 30, 2018, in Crested Butte and October 25, 2019, in Lake City. The grant funding received for these stations will exceed the cost of free power delivered several times over.

Charging time limits will vary by station and be enforced to achieve a balance between facilitating participation in nearby activities and maintaining charging station availability.



Three more EV charging stations like this will be added to the area in 2018.

The project started in September and will be complete by the end of 2019.

GCEA is excited to offer more resources to allow electric vehicle owners to travel with confidence between the communities in its area, promote clean energy technologies and encourage the use of more electric vehicles in the area.

For more information regarding the existing and new charging stations, please visit www.gcea.coop or call 970-641-3520.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT GCEA AT 970-641-3520 OR VISIT WWW.GCEA.COOP.

LINEWORKER SCHOLARSHIP

GCEA offers scholarships for students planning to pursue a career in the electrical industry. For more information on the lineworker scholarship, please contact GCEA at 970-641-3520 or visit www.gcea.coop/content/scholarships.



"Like us" on Facebook

Check our Facebook page for events at GCEA, energy efficiency tips, safety tips and so much more. "Like us" at Gunnison County Electric Association.

CAMP AND YOUTH TOUR SIGN-UP

GCEA offers leadership opportunities to high school juniors to help them prepare for the future. The Washington D.C. Youth Tour introduces students to the nation's capital with tours of museums and historic monuments, meetings with the Colorado congressional delegation and fun-filled activities. Applications for the 2019 Youth Tour are due **Friday, November 16, 2018**.

Another great way for students to prepare for their future is through Leadership Camp. Every July, the camp is held at Glen Eden Resort near Steamboat Springs. For nearly 40 years, the electric cooperatives of Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming have provided this outstanding camp for students who are interested in leadership and electric cooperatives. Although students learn a lot in one week, it's not all hard work. Each year, there is a float trip down the Colorado River, a trip to Steamboat Falls and plenty of free time to swim, play volleyball and meet new friends. The 2019 Leadership Camp application deadline is **Friday, November 16, 2018**.

Applications are available at the GCEA Gunnison and Crested Butte offices, Crested Butte Community School, Gunnison High



High school juniors at the 2018 Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs.

School, Lake City Community School and online at www.gcea.coop/content/scholarships.

GCEA RECEIVES SAFETY HONOR FROM CREA

BY JOHN STOEBER | GCEA LINE SUPERINTENDENT

When you go to work, you don't always think of all the things that could affect the way the day will end. It is a great pleasure to work with a co-op that holds safety at an extremely high standard.

GCEA staff attended a Safety and Loss Control seminar hosted by the Colorado Rural Electric Association, of which Gunnison County Electric Association is a member. GCEA and its employees were recognized at the 2018 Safety and Loss Control seminar and received the Achievement of Excellence award for its safety performance in 2017. Co-ops are evaluated on certain criteria each year, and the most recent award covered the period between January 1 through December 31, 2017.

Co-ops are first evaluated using several criteria: accidents, workers compensation experience modification ratio, total number of calendar days without a lost-time accident, number of lost-time accidents, number of Occupational Safety and Health Administration recordable injuries or incidents, number of OSHA first reports of injury, total hours worked and electrical contacts for the year of 2017.

The second field evaluated is employee and company participation in safety



CREA's Dan Whitesides (middle) presents John Stoeber (left) and Dan Oberosler (right) with the 2017 Achievement of Excellence award.

programs. GCEA is enrolled in the Colorado Cost Containment program.

GCEA gives incentives for safety suggestions, discusses near misses in safety meetings and verifies rubber glove field use is 60 days or less. GCEA participates in CREA's Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program and had employees on the RESAP inspection team in 2017. For safety and training, GCEA had 12 office safety meetings and 12 operation and engineering meetings. The safety committee met 12 times in 2017.

GCEA participated in the Speak Up, Listen Up Program and conducted a fire drill in 2017. All employees are trained in

cardiopulmonary resuscitation, first aid and running an automated external defibrillator. GCEA also had employees participate in outside safety training in 2017.

The third field CREA evaluates is the number of vehicle accidents.

The fourth field evaluated is public education: safety-related messages inserted into bills and newsletters; safety-related articles placed in *Colorado Country Life* or other magazines, newsletters or newspapers; and safety-related messages aired on websites and local radio and television stations. GCEA also presented classroom safety talks to schools and high-voltage safety demonstrations in 2017.

This award is an outstanding accomplishment when you look at all of these factors and compare GCEA to the other 22 member co-ops of CREA. Thank you to GCEA for having this high standard of safety. Thank you to all the employees who look out for each other and help safety be the number one priority. And thank you to our consumer-members who recognize that safety is a priority at all jobs, including the one GCEA may do for you.

Congratulations to all of you for the great year in 2017.