

HOTLINE SCHOOL KEEPS INDUSTRY GROUNDED

BY BILL BARLOW OPERATIONS MANAGER

A flurry of activity is happening for the next two weeks at Mesa Hotline School. Located near the I-70 Business Loop, the school is one of the best lineworker education and training programs in the country. The many poles jutting out of the ground give testament to the thousands of hours that students must spend practicing both technical and physical skills while minding specific safety procedures. The program — operated by CMU Tech (formerly Western Colorado Community College) and an independent board of directors — has taught and reinforced for thousands of men and women how to safely deliver the flow of electricity to homes and businesses.

What sets the program apart is its ability to satisfy two critical needs in the electric utility industry. First, Mesa Hotline School offers — through CMU Tech — a one-year certification program that is the first step to becoming a lineworker. The lineworker certificate is the foundation of a successful career. It equips lineworkers with the skills they will practice for four years on the job as an apprentice before becoming a journeyman lineman. Those who earn the certificate also have the option of continuing on to earn an associate of applied science degree.

The second need Mesa Hotline School fulfills is continuing education. Lineworkers travel to Grand Junction from across the country to dive deep into the electric industry during a one-week professional development program. Not only is it important for journeymen to regularly demonstrate their command of safe practices, but it's also critical that they learn how to use new tools and electrical equipment to grow their skills throughout their career. The weeklong Hotline School achieves this success for the industry.

Key to Mesa Hotline School's training programs is the support it receives from collaborators. There are more than 75 electric cooperatives, municipalities, and investor-owned utilities participating in the school's continuing education program and providing industry experts to teach classes. Grand Valley Power is among them. Staying grounded in the tools and techniques of the profession and teaching other lineworkers helps us to achieve a culture that puts safety at the top of our values.

We support Mesa Hotline School and the profession as a whole in another way, too. Since 2010, GVP has offered a \$2,000 scholarship for the Electrical Lineworker Program at CMU Tech. Applicants must be a Mesa



BILL BARLOW

County resident and should submit their application for the scholarship by June 1. The application can be found online at gvp.org. The scholarship reflects GVP's investment in our community and our industry.

GVP's scholarship has helped multiple young people launch their successful career in the trades. Each of the past five Lineworker Scholarship recipients has earned or is working toward their journeyman credential. Last year's scholarship recipient, Branson Padgett, is graduating this month from the CMU Tech Electrical Lineworker program. Grand Valley Power is pleased to have this promising young student begin his career next month as an apprentice lineman at the cooperative.

As the number of retirements grow and the number of young people pursuing trades declines, it is becoming more important than ever for utilities to support educational opportunities. GVP members rely on skilled lineworkers to safely restore power to their homes and businesses when it is disrupted, and the industry has a responsibility to prepare future generations for these jobs.

\$2,000

LINEWORKER SCHOLARSHIP

APPLY BY JUNE 1, 2024
gvp.org/scholarship-program

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Rural Communities Lead the Charge Against Wildfires

BY ELLIS THOMPSON COMMUNITY OUTREACH SPECIALIST, GRAND JUNCTION FIRE DEPARTMENT

Above the red rock canyons of the Colorado National Monument, where the wind blows through sagebrush and pinyon-juniper forests, residents are preparing for the threat of wildfire.

Glade Park, once a ranching community, has seen its landscape change due to persistent drought. Rangeland has become 40-acre parcels where people make their homes. The transformation has elevated Glade Park to one of the highest at-risk areas for wildfire in Mesa County. Over the past year, spurred by the convergence of creativity and rural living amidst high wildfire risk, residents have mobilized to organize, educate, and facilitate mitigation efforts, fostering wildfire resilience within the community.

The community has achieved remarkable feats in becoming a fire-adapted community. Working with Two Rivers

Wildfire Coalition, a group of volunteers has facilitated the \$30,000 removal of vegetation on private lands, protecting homes and evacuation routes.

This concerted effort, driven by a shared sense of responsibility, has significantly reduced the potential fuel for wildfires in two adjacent neighborhoods.

But their journey is far from over. At the forefront of their endeavors is the upcoming Community Wildfire Preparedness Day, scheduled for May 4 at the Glade Park Fire Station from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. This event serves as a cornerstone of their outreach efforts, aiming to educate the wider community on the risks posed by wildfires and impart essential knowledge on emergency alert registration,

••• **GLADE PARK FIRE FAIR** •••
May 4, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.
Glade Park Fire Station

Join the Glade Park Fire Mitigation Cooperative and celebrate National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day with family activities, fire response equipment, food, music, and fun!

evacuation planning, and adopting wildfire-ready lifestyles.

As they march steadily towards their goals, this community stands as an example of what can be achieved when neighbors come together in pursuit of a common cause.

From Office to Campsite: GVP Dispatcher Retires

BY TANYA MARCHUN COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

In a quiet, timid voice, she said, “Can you hear me now?” Cindy Roling didn’t mean to sound like a Verizon Wireless commercial, but that is how she describes her first few times on the dispatch radio when she began working at Grand Valley Power in March 2006. Prior to serving as GVP’s dispatcher, Cindy was a project accountant for a pipeline production company. She had never used a dispatch radio, didn’t know anything about the electrical industry, and never imagined the deep impact that GVP would have on her life. Whether it is a service call for outages, work orders, utility locates, security lights, or trees, Cindy is the friendly, bubbly voice answering those calls and dispatching the GVP linemen — her “boys” as she fondly calls them — for more than 18 years.

Now it will be our turn to ask Cindy, “Can you hear me now?” If she is not out of cell service range on her first trip to Yellowstone National Park or exploring new camping spots, she will be in the stands cheering for her grandson at his baseball games. As Cindy prepares for retirement mid-May, she is most excited to spend more time with her children and grandchildren. “We want to pack up the camper and the dog and go for a visit,” she says with a big smile, referring to her son who lives in Arizona with his wife and two children. Cindy also has a son, daughter-in-law and grandson who live in Grand Junction.

Cindy’s contagious laugh, cheerful personality, and warm presence will be missed at GVP. However, fun and exciting opportunities await. Please join us in congratulating Cindy on her retirement after 18 years of service to Grand Valley Power.



▲ Cindy Roling, retires after 18 years of service at Grand Valley Power.

GVP Directors Earn Industry Certificates

BY TANYA MARCHUN COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Three Grand Valley Power board directors earned certificates last fall from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. NRECA director certificate programs ensure that cooperative directors continue to recognize, understand, and navigate industry trends and apply this knowledge effectively within cooperatives. The courses offer three tiers of professional development, along with additional educational resources that provide directors with opportunities to continue their growth and advance their knowledge of the industry.

The Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate requires a director to take five courses that are focused on the necessary skills to serve as an elected official. Courses cover topics including director duties and liabilities, understanding the electric business, board operations and process, strategic planning, and financial decision making.

The Board Leadership Certificate includes the five CCD courses with an additional 10 credits from a variety of specialty areas, including grassroots, power supply, cooperative business model, governance, financial, communications, technology, and risk management.

The Director Gold credential is the final tier that consists of the CCD, BLC, and three additional education credits from the BLC specialty areas.



▲ (Left to right): Board Director Carolyn Sandeen-Hall, Board President Janie VanWinkle, and Board Secretary/Treasurer Brian Woods value their cooperative education from NRECA.

Grand Valley Power Board President Janie VanWinkle and Board Secretary/Treasurer Brian Woods completed the Board Leadership Certificate and Board Director Carolyn Sandeen-Hall completed the Director Gold credential.

Thanks to the investment in their professional growth, GVP and our cooperative members gain educated and knowledgeable directors who continue to be committed and to serve the co-op.

DIRECTOR PETITIONS AVAILABLE THIS MONTH

Director petitions are available for eligible Grand Valley Power members who want to run in the August board election. Petitions can be picked up at GVP headquarters at 845 22 Road, Grand Junction. Three director positions are up for election every year. Directors whose terms expire in 2024 are Jesse Mease, Bill Rooks, and Brian Woods.

GVP's bylaws and election policies provide in-depth information on director eligibility, positions and election procedures. This information is available on the GVP website at gvp.org/director-elections. Upon request, these written documents can be picked up at GVP's headquarters or mailed to you.

Petitions must be signed and returned no later than 5 p.m. on June 7.

WIRED WISDOM

Knowledge for Powering Your Life

Welcome to WIRED WISDOM, a column dedicated to quick facts, tips, and insights relating to the energy industry and what Grand Valley Power provides you – our members! As your dedicated electric cooperative, we strive to empower you with knowledge and information to be a well-versed energy consumer.

Next month, our first tip will cover solar.

Athleticism Fuels Member's Love for Barrel Racing

BY RITA-LYN SANDERS DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The rider keeps her hands quiet and squeezes with her legs. Acknowledging the silent signal, the animal throws on the brakes, and her black body seems to defy gravity as she leans into the turn and skirts around the first of three barrels.

Barrel racing is all about connection, says Trista Linsacum. “We are very involved in getting our horse to move and giving them cues,” she explains. Linsacum, a Grand Valley Power member and barrel racer, has been focused on keeping her riding partner — Tyson — and herself healthy so they can enter the Colorado Stampede in Grand Junction over Memorial Day weekend.

A revival of a once popular Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association event held annually in Grand Junction, the Colorado Stampede is returning to the Mesa County Fairgrounds May 24-26. It will feature bull and bronc riding, steer wrestling and roping

events, and barrel racing, among others. Laura Mendel, a GVP member who lives on the Grand Mesa, is managing the rodeo. She organized rodeos on the Front Range before moving to her grandmother’s homestead last year. Grand Valley Power is proud to sponsor the rodeo’s barrel racing event and is excited to support our community and rodeo competitors.

Linsacum remembers when her dad bought her mom a horse. The daughter of a United States Marine, she didn’t grow up in a rodeo family. She and her older sister spent a lot of time at the barn with their mom. When Linsacum started riding, she tried a variety of equestrian disciplines, from hunter and jumper to Western styles such as reigning and cutting. It didn’t take her long, though, to hone in on barrel racing. Linsacum loved to ride fast and she liked the adrenaline rush that came with the speed of racing around barrels. “While I was riding different disciplines to improve my horsemanship, I knew barrel racing was what I was going to stick with,” Linsacum says. She competed in her first amateur rodeo in high school and her first professional rodeo in her 20s. Over time, she has come to appreciate the bond between rider and steed. It’s a connection, a trust between athletes that transcends all else in the arena, she says.

During competition, Linsacum looks

for and appreciates the athleticism of the animals. “They are athletes, too,” she says. “We ask them to do something that is not natural for them: run full speed then shut themselves down and turn a barrel, tight and efficient.”



Trista Linsacum and Tyson work the barrels. Photo by Emily Prather of Hells Half Acre Photography.

Linsacum, who is also a wife and mother with three girls of her own, trains several days every week. She and Tyson engage in a variety of conditioning activities — including trails and hills — to keep the horse’s mind stimulated. Linsacum is hopeful they’ll be ready for rodeo season and to compete in the Colorado Stampede. “Success is different for everybody,” she says. “Sometimes it’s setting a goal to make a clean run and making that happen. Sometimes it’s placing in a go round. Sometimes it’s just showing up, staying confident, and competing against tough, strong women. It’s important to find what keeps you going and adds fuel to your fire.”

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MESA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS
MAY 24-26, 2024
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Co-op Calendar

<p>Glade Park Fire Fair - May 4</p> <p>Mother's Day - May 12</p> <p>May Board Meeting - May 15</p> <p>Colorado Stampede - May 24-26</p>	<p>Memorial Day (Office Closed) - May 27</p> <p>CMU Tech Lineworker Scholarship Applications Due - June 1</p> <p>Director Petitions Due - June 7 by 5:00 p.m.</p>
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