

MORGAN COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

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MCREA Mission

Morgan County REA, a member-owned cooperative, is dedicated to serving our members by providing safe, reliable energy with a strong tradition and vision for the future.

 This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



DAVID FRICK

STAY SAFE THIS SUMMER

BY DAVID FRICK GENERAL MANAGER

It's been quite a few years (the specific number isn't necessary) since I was in school. However, I'll never forget the anticipation and excitement for summer break. It meant no more homework and lots of playing outside. With summer finally here, I have no doubt that families across our community are excited for the adventures in store.

Summer is also a great time to be reminded about the importance of safety, especially when it involves electricity and power lines. Here are just a few safety tips to keep in mind as you kick off the season:

Outdoor Safety

- Flying kites, remote controlled planes, and even drones is a fun summer activity, but do not fly them near overhead power lines. Never attempt to free something stuck in a power line. Call MCREA for assistance.
- Never climb trees that are near power lines, as they can be conductors of electricity if branches are touching wires. Even if branches are not touching power lines, they could if weight from a child is added.
- Teach children to never play on or around pad-mounted electrical equipment. These are often the green metal boxes you see on cement pads. They contain transformers for underground power lines.

Driving Safety

- Nicer weather means more of us are on the road. Should your vehicle ever come in contact with a downed power line, do not attempt to drive away or get out. Call for help, and stay inside until utility crews say it is safe to get

out. The only exception would be if fire or other danger, like the smell of gasoline, is present. In that case, the proper action is to jump—not step—with both feet hitting the ground at the same time. Jump clear. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the vehicle and ground at the same time. Hop to safety, keeping both feet together as you leave the area.

- Summer is a busy time for farmers and other large-equipment operators. Remember to look up and around for power lines. Always keep you and your equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines and electrical equipment in all directions. Should your equipment contact a power line, follow the same protocol mentioned above.

Storm Safety

- Stay tuned to severe storm information from the National Weather Service and make sure you have an emergency kit assembled.
- If using a backup generator, make sure you know how to operate it safely. Unsafe operation can threaten you, your family, neighbors, and even line-workers working to restore power.

Safety is our top priority at Morgan County REA and I encourage you to visit SafeElectricity.org for more great safety tips. Be sure to discuss electrical safety with your children, too. On behalf of your electric cooperative, I'd like to wish all of our members a wonderful and safe summer.

ENERGY SCAMS UNMASKED

Scammers are more sophisticated than ever before, and they understand our increasing reliance on technology. With their sharpened digital knives, scammers have adapted their tactics to trick unsuspecting individuals through a variety of methods.

Morgan County REA wants to help you avoid energy scams. Here are some of the latest utility scams, as well as tips to help you stay safe from even the craftiest scammers.

Recent utility scams

Scammers typically disguise themselves — either physically or digitally — as utility employees or representatives to steal consumers' money or personal information. A common trick is to claim a consumer's bill is past due and threaten to disconnect service if payment isn't received immediately. This could be by phone call, text message, email, or even in person visits — though the digital line of attack is more common.

For example, new capabilities disguising caller ID or "spoofing" can make the phone number you see on caller ID appear to be from a trusted source. Spoofing makes it easier for scammers to deceive you because it's more difficult to immediately verify the call. Another recent scam uses fraudulent websites that are identical to a utility payment webpage — and what's worse, these pages are often promoted on search engines to trick consumers into clicking and making a payment.

Another recent scam involves phone calls, text messages, or emails claiming you overpaid your electric bill and will receive a cash or banking refund. This offer may seem too good to be true, and it is — it's likely a scam aimed to steal your personal information.

Spotting a scam

There are several red flags you can watch for to identify an energy scam.

Scammers often use high-pressure tactics to create a sense of urgency, like claiming your electricity or other services will be disconnected if a payment isn't made immediately.

Additionally, scammers may ask for unusual payment methods such as gift cards or cryptocurrency. If someone is pushing for an unusual payment method, it's likely a scam.

You've probably noticed that many digital scams, like emails or text messages, include poor grammar, spelling errors, and odd email addresses. These are red flags, so when you see these dodgy forms of communication, consider it a potential scam.

What MCREA will (and won't) do

MCREA will never demand an instant, immediate payment and threaten to disconnect your service without prior notices or warnings. We strive to resolve challenging situations and work with our members to avoid disconnects.

MCREA will never ask for your Social Security number or banking details over the phone or through email. We offer several secure payment options, including in person, by phone, and online through SmartHub, MCREA's app.

If you're ever in doubt about a potential energy scam, just give us a quick call at 970-867-5688, so we can assist. MCREA wants to help protect you and our community against utility frauds, and by notifying us about potential scams, you can create the first line of defense. We encourage you to report any potential scams so we can spread the word and prevent others in our community from falling victim.

SIGNS OF AN ENERGY SCAM

- High Pressure Tactics**
Scammers will pressure you, creating a sense of urgency. Claims that your power will be disconnected without immediate payment are common with utility scams.
- Sketchy Payment Methods**
Scammers may ask for unusual payment methods like gift cards or cryptocurrency. In these cases, it's likely a scam.
- Dodgy Communication**
Whether an email, text, or letter, utility scams typically include poor grammar, spelling errors, or unusual email addresses. These are common warning signs of a scam.



Join us for Morgan County REA's Member Appreciation Picnic

It's that time of year! Please join us for Morgan County REA's third annual Member Appreciation Picnic on Thursday, June 13, from 5-7 p.m. at MCREA headquarters, 734 Barlow Road in Fort Morgan. The picnic is a great opportunity to see your electric cooperative, visit with neighbors, and learn about all the ways that we at MCREA are working to serve you — our members.

In addition to a great meal and giveaways, those in attendance will also have the chance to win door prizes, including our grand prize: a *Shark AI Ultra*™ robot vacuum. The CSU Extension Mobile 4-H Energy Lab, sponsored by Colorado's electric cooperatives, will also be at the event. The mobile lab presents a variety of hands on

energy education activities for kids and adults alike — making for a fun evening for the whole family!

Planning on coming? Feel free to call MCREA's office or visit mcrea.org and click on the Member Appreciation Picnic button to submit an RSVP. While RSVPs are not required, those who RSVP will be entered into a separate drawing to win one of 10 available \$25 bill credits. Winners will be drawn at the event and must be present to win.

If you have any questions about this year's picnic, please call MCREA member services at 970-867-5688. We hope to see you there!

MCREA's office will close at 3:30 p.m. on June 13 before the event.



**Win \$25 Off
Your Electric Bill**

Each month, Morgan County REA gives two lucky members a chance at a \$25 bill credit, just by reading *Colorado Country Life*. Congratulations, Shepsky Inc. and Eldon Hawes! You each spotted your names hidden in the April magazine and called to receive your bill credit.

There are two more member names and their account numbers hidden somewhere in this issue. If you find your name and account number, call MCREA member services at 970-867-5688 by June 28 to claim a \$25 credit on your next bill.



WELCOME NEW MCREA LINEMAN BEN JOHNSTON

Morgan County REA is happy to welcome new lineman Ben Johnston to the MCREA team. Originally from northern California, Ben has been an electrical lineman for 12 years, working most recently on Colorado’s Front Range.

“I enjoy the satisfaction of fixing things when they’re broken,” mentioned Ben, when discussing his favorite part about being a lineman. “Everybody likes to be the hero.”

In his free time, Ben enjoys dirt biking and cooking. He is ready for his new role at MCREA.

“I’m looking forward to being part of the community.”

Welcome to MCREA, Ben!

MORGAN COUNTY REA COMPLETES NEW TRAINING YARD

Practice makes perfect. The age old phrase rings especially true in the electric utility industry and was one of the main drivers for building a multifaceted training yard at Morgan County REA’s headquarters. The new training yard, completed in May, includes a variety of equipment and training areas to support lineworkers in practicing and sharpening their skillset.

Designed and built by MCREA linemen to best suit the electric co-op’s needs, the training yard includes both underground and overhead line, as well as a transformer bank, three-phase vault, and pad-mount transformer. The training facility allows linemen to practice different scenarios, test equipment, and enhance work practices. (TDS Telecom, acct. #xxx7400)

“It will be really helpful when new apprentices join our team,” said Alan



Lineman Bryson Fogg sets a pole for MCREA’s new training yard.

Mason, MCREA’s manager of operations. “But it also serves as a great refresher for guys who have been here a while.”

The electric industry is constantly evolving and lineworkers serve a vital role. The training yard helps crews to be prepared and ready to resolve issues when they arise. It is just another way that MCREA remains steadfast to our mission of delivering safe, reliable electricity to the members we serve.

MCREA Linemen Attend Mesa Hotline School



MCREA lineman Andron Brown (on pole) instructs two students changing out a fused cutout at Mesa Hotline School.

Each year toward the beginning of May, lineworkers from across Colorado and surrounding states gather in Grand Junction at Mesa Hotline School. Two different weeklong sessions are an opportunity for lineworkers to build on their existing skills, network with other industry professionals, and stay informed on new issues facing the industry. (Arrowhead Trash Service, acct. #xxx0100)

Morgan County REA sent eight individuals to Mesa Hotline School this year, some of whom helped instruct courses. At hotline school, lineworkers complete in class instruction as well as training in the field, utilizing the school’s 26-acre training facility. While none of the equipment or lines are energized, they are simulated and treated as such during training.

The insight gained from sharing and learning from other utilities is invaluable, making Mesa Hotline School a huge asset for those who attend. Hotline school also serves as a reminder of the bright future of the industry, as hundreds of lineworkers gather to learn and improve — each with a staunch dedication to keeping the lights on.