

MORGAN COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

JULY 2024



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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.

NINE THINGS YOU MIGHT NOT KNOW ABOUT POWER RESTORATION

BY DAVE FRICK GENERAL MANAGER



DAVE FRICK

Have you ever watched a video or TV show where a person is cooking a meal, then suddenly, they snap their fingers, and the meal is plated and ready to eat? That's called a jump cut.

While we wish we could "jump cut" from a power outage to power restoration, it can often take a lot more effort and people to make it happen.

At Morgan County REA, we're accustomed to members' questions about power outages and why it can take time to get the lights back on. Given our reliance on electricity, there's simply never a good time to be without it.

This month, I'd like to shed light on our restoration process to help our members understand what may be happening behind the scenes. Here are nine things you might not know about restoration:

1. **We need you.** When your power goes out, it might be just at your home or small section of a neighborhood. There is a chance we may not know about it, and no one has reported it. We rely on you to let us know if your power is out. Call MCREA at 970-867-5688 to report outages.

2. **Our employees might be affected too.** MCREA is a local electric cooperative owned by the members we serve and our employees are local, too. They are your neighbors, friends, and familiar community volunteers. When you're without power, our people might be as well.

3. **It's a team effort.** All of MCREA's employees are working to get your power restored as soon as possible. We've got people taking your calls, surveying damage, clearing hazards, communicating outage information, and working to restore the system. When your power goes out, we all work together as quickly and safely as possible to get you back to normal.

4. **We assess the situation first.** Every outage is different, and we don't know how dangerous it is or what equipment might need to be replaced. When responding to outages, we first need to see what happened, then figure out what materials we need and a plan for how to fix the problem(s) without compromising electric flow for the rest of our members.

5. **Restoration is normally prioritized by the largest number of members we can get back online in the shortest amount of time.** Our crews focus on responding first to public safety issues and critical services. Then we complete work that impacts the largest of number of people first.

6. **Our employees face many dangers.** Besides working around high-voltage electricity, our crews are on alert for weather elements, possible debris, and fast-moving cars. (If you ever see one of our vehicles parked on the side of the road, please move over and slow down, it's state law.)

7. **Flickering lights are a good thing.** Some folks mistake flickering lights for outages, but these "blinks" are important because they indicate our equipment worked to prevent a possible outage likely caused by wayward animals or stray tree limbs on the lines.

8. **You need a backup plan.** We do our best to help those who need it, but if you depend on electricity for life support purposes, you must have a backup plan — remember, we don't always know how long restoration efforts will take. If using a backup generator, please ensure it is installed correctly, otherwise it could feed energy back onto our lines, creating an unsafe environment for the public and lineworkers working to restore power.

9. **Sometimes it's a waiting game.** Our portion of the power grid is fed by other power providers, and we maintain positive relationships with the utilities interconnected to our system. If our outage is due to an issue from their feed into our system, we must let them make their repairs and be mindful of what they're going through to fix it.

We do our best to avoid power disruptions, but they are inevitable from time to time. If the lights go out, know that your co-op team is working as quickly and safely as possible to restore power.

HARVEST SAFETY

Harvest season is undoubtedly a busy time of year. While it's fulfilling to see the culmination of a year's work come to fruition as the crops come out of the field, it's also a very important time to be extra mindful of safety. (Randy Fiscus, acct. #xxx3400)

Morgan County REA reminds all farmers that along with more obvious farming risks, accidents related to power and electricity are also possible. Although farmers usually have grain bin or large machinery-related dangers at top of mind, they should also remember that electrical accidents can injure or kill.

"Even though harvest season is filled with tight deadlines and heightened work stress, be sure to take the time to consider electrical safety," says Erin Hollinshead, executive director of the Energy Education Council. "It could save your life or the lives of others."

Take the time to talk with your harvest crews about these important electrical safety reminders:

- Always use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines — at all times, in all directions.
- Inspect the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.



- If a power line is sagging or low, call your local utility right away.
- If your equipment hits a power line, do not leave the cab. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away, and wait for the utility crew to cut the power. If immediate danger, like fire, is present and you have to exit the vehicle, you must jump — not step — from the vehicle with both feet hitting the ground together. Jump clear. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the vehicle and ground at the same time. Keeping both feet together, hop as far away from the vehicle as you can.

More great safety tips are available at SafeElectricity.org. MCREA wishes all farmers a safe and bountiful harvest season.

COMMON CAUSES OF POWER OUTAGES

There is never a good time for the power to go out, but if it happens on a sunny day, you might be left wondering why. Here are the most common causes of a power outage.



High winds, snow, and ice can cause tree limbs to fall on power lines. Other weather effects, like wildfires and lightning strikes, can cause major damage to equipment.



Squirrels, birds, snakes, and other animals can inadvertently contact power lines, causing short circuits and disruptions to electrical supply.



Vehicles can crash into utility poles, bringing down power lines. Construction and excavation work can also result in disruptions to underground lines.



Occasionally, we plan outages to perform upgrades or repairs to parts of the local grid.

Morgan County REA Hosts Third Annual Member Appreciation Picnic

Over 250 electric co-op members gathered at Morgan County REA's warehouse on Thursday, June 13 for our third-annual Member Appreciation Picnic. Attendees enjoyed giveaways and a great meal, served by members of the Wiggins FFA and Weldon Valley FFA chapters.

There were plenty of activities at this year's picnic, especially at the Colorado State 4-H Extension Mobile Energy Lab. Sponsored by Colorado's electric cooperatives, including MCREA, the lab presents a handful of different hands-on activities to teach how electricity works. Both kids and adults alike enjoyed taking part in the various demos and science activities.

On the other side of the warehouse, members were able to learn about powerline and electrical safety. Using the co-op's smaller electrical safety demo, MCREA showed members what to do in situations involving downed powerlines and what types of things can cause outages, like weather or unruly critters. The demo also shared important household electrical safety tips.

For the second year in a row, members were able to take a look at the Ford F-150 Lightning, an electric pickup that was on display at the picnic. Kindly provided to MCREA by Tri-State Generation & Transmission, the co-op's wholesale power provider, the pickup sparked lots of conversation surrounding the pros and cons of electric vehicles.

As always, the door prize drawings were a crowd-favorite throughout the evening. Those in attendance were entered to win a robot vacuum, bill credits, MCREA swag, and gift cards to several local businesses. Perhaps the best part of the yearly picnic is the opportunity for neighbors to catch up, share a meal, and learn about all the ways their electric co-op is working to serve them.

MCREA exists because of the members we serve, and the Member Appreciation Picnic is our chance to say thank you. MCREA remains committed to our mission of delivering safe, reliable power to members and we are already looking forward to gathering with our membership at next year's picnic!



▲ A full house of MCREA members enjoy the Member Appreciation Picnic hosted at MCREA's shop.



▲ MCREA Lineman Bryson Fogg teaches young members about the importance of power line safety.



▲ Members of the Weldon Valley FFA and Wiggins FFA chapters take a break from serving food at this year's Member Appreciation Picnic.



▲ The CSU Mobile Energy Lab offers many great activities to teach picnic-goers about electricity.

MORGAN COUNTY REA: PROUD SPONSOR OF 2024 BOBSTOCK

The second full weekend of July is always an exciting time in Morgan County, as people near and far gather in downtown Fort Morgan for the Bobstock Music Festival — a two-day event featuring multiple bands, vendors, food trucks, and fun activities. The best part of Bobstock? Admission is free! In fact, Bobstock is the largest free festival in the region.


Established in 2008, Bobstock is a community favorite and the perfect opportunity to gather with friends — old and new — to enjoy great music. Morgan County REA is happy to support the event again this year. MCREA, together with Tri-State Generation and Transmission and Basin Electric Power Cooperative, are proud to donate a combined \$6,000 to this year's Bobstock Music Festival, which is organized by Media Logic Radio. (Robert Lingreen, acct. #xxx1400)

Bobstock 2024 will take place July 12 and 13 at Glen Miller Park in downtown Fort Morgan. More information about the event can be found at bobstockmusicfestival.com.



▲ A band plays on the Morgan County REA stage at the Bobstock Music Festival in 2023.

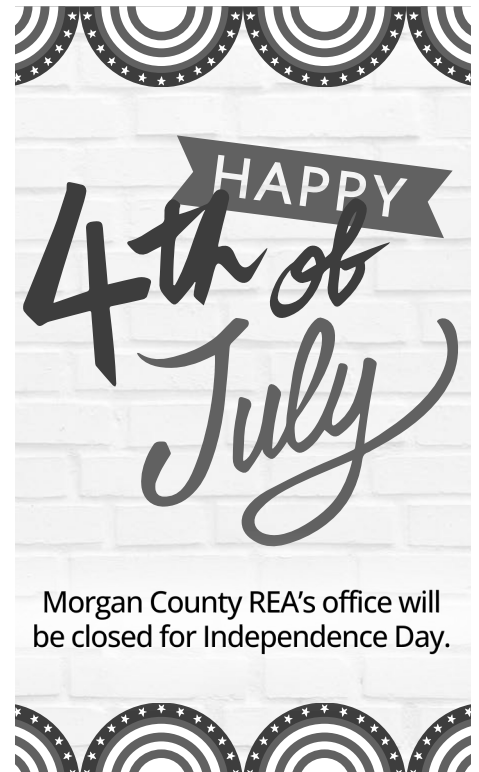




**Win \$25 Off
Your Electric Bill**

Each month, Morgan County REA gives two lucky members a chance at a \$25 bill credit, just by reading *Colorado Country Life*. Unfortunately, neither member whose name was hidden in May's magazine called to receive a 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 July 31 to claim a \$25 credit on your next bill.



Morgan County REA's office will be closed for Independence Day.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

TIP OF THE MONTH

Before you dry a load of damp clothing, toss in a clean, dry towel. The towel will absorb excess water and shorten the drying time. If your dryer does not include an autosense feature to determine drying time, remember to reduce the timer to about half of what you normally would. Remove the towel about 15 minutes after the cycle begins. Shorter drying times will extend the life of your dryer and save energy.

Source: homesandgardens.com

