

MVEA'S STRATEGY TO WILDFIRE MITIGATION

Building a More Resilient & Responsive System

BY RUTH MARKS CEO | RUTH.M@MVEA.COOP

Colorado's wildfire season is changing—what used to be a concern for a couple of months at the end of the summer has become a possibility all year long. Our state's growing population, increasingly dry conditions, and suburban spread into wildland-urban areas has changed the conversation about utility wildfire mitigation efforts and the urgency of proactive strategic planning.

According to the National Interagency Fire Center, which coordinates wildland fire response efforts, about 70,000 wildfires occur in the United States each year. In recent years, there is a heightened awareness of the potential risks for wildfires, and interruption of power supply due to wildfires, that have taken place throughout the west and here in Colorado. Having experienced the devastation of the Black Forest Fire firsthand, Mountain View Electric Association is taking proactive steps through strategic planning and system upgrades to help reduce the wildfire risk in our service area.

MVEA's wildfire mitigation plan includes expanded vegetation management to ensure our infrastructure is clear of trees and shrubs, and infrastructure replacements, routine inspections, and maintenance of the electric system to help ensure safe and reliable electric service. This month, I'd like to share plan highlights and encourage you to visit www.mvea.coop/wildfire-mitigation for a comprehensive overview of MVEA's Strategy to Wildfire Mitigation.

- **Line Patrol & Power Pole Inspections:** MVEA has over 94,000 wood poles spanning across our 5,000 square-mile service territory. Every pole in the MVEA system is visually inspected on a three-year basis. Additional pole inspections occur on a 10,000 poles per year rotating schedule. Inspectors identify decay, measure defects, and estimate the pole's remaining strength.
- **System Infrastructure Upgrades & Replacement:** MVEA's system, including more than 6,450 miles of energized line and 25 substations, regularly receives scheduled upgrades and maintenance to ensure that we are providing safe and reliable electric service to our members.
- **Vegetation Management:** Cleared electric utility easements play an important role in wildfire mitigation. MVEA maintains a 20-foot wide tree and brush "no-grow" zone within our electric utility easement, ensuring that trees and vegetation are trimmed to keep designated clearance areas free of growth until the next scheduled trimming cycle.

- **Response to Red Flag Warnings:** MVEA monitors Red Flag warnings issued by the National Weather Service. During red flag warning periods, work practices are adjusted (limiting hot work, driving over pastures, welding, and grinding), and circuits in the fire mitigation areas are patrolled before re-energizing the line during periods of interruptions.
- **Utilization of Satellite Vegetation Management:** MVEA plans to employ satellite-based vegetation management empowered by artificial intelligence. This approach will provide comprehensive tree data including species, height, health, and proximity to high-voltage lines to allow MVEA to prioritize high risk areas.
- **Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA):** MVEA is in the process of implementing a SCADA system over the next two to three years. It will allow substation circuit protection and devices to be controlled remotely, enabling swift response to changing wildfire conditions that will allow MVEA to react more quickly to an interruption on the power line.

To bolster our wildfire mitigation efforts, we are working with an outside expert to create a Wildfire Risk Model. This model uses geographic analysis to pinpoint areas in MVEA's service territory that are at higher risk of wildfires due to factors like landscape, human population, and natural resources. In the future, we will add risk ratings, burn probability, fire intensity scale, and asset risk ratings to the model.

Upgrades and innovation do not come without a cost. To offset the expense of specific system improvements, we have made it a priority to tap into federal funding opportunities. To that end, I am happy to share that MVEA has been awarded a grant to support our expanded wildfire mitigation efforts. These funds allow us to incorporate innovative technologies, like drones and satellites, into our operations in a more cost-effective manner.

Though many elements of our fire mitigation plan focus attention on MVEA infrastructure and the effort to reduce fire ignitions, our primary objective is safety; and to protect lives and property by reducing the risk of a utility involved wildfire.



RUTH MARKS

PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY & RELIABLE POWER SUPPLY



MVEA's Strategy to Wildfire Mitigation

Mountain View Electric Association is committed to keeping people, their belongings, and properties safe from wildfires. Learn how our comprehensive plan can help us reduce the risk of wildfires in the communities we serve. Visit our webpage dedicated to wildfire safety, where you'll find helpful information and resources about the following topics:

- Vegetation Management
- Operational Practices
- Advancing MVEA's Initiatives
- Working with MVEA Members
- Wildfire Preparedness

www.mvea.coop/wildfire-mitigation





Moments With Our Members

OutPaws' Sweet Home Sanctuary

BY AVERY PARSON DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

In the heart of Peyton lies an 80-acre haven where compassion meets community spirit — OutPaws' Sweet Home Sanctuary. Founded in 2013 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, OutPaws' was born from a dream to create an animal rescue organization. The sanctuary operates under the dedicated leadership of Executive Director and Founder Carrie Thornburgh.

In 2021, OutPaws' expanded its mission by relocating to its current location. There, they provide forever homes to animals rescued from neglect and shelters with the help of 80 volunteers. The sanctuary is home to 10 different species, including pigs, chickens, ducks, cows, turkeys, sheep, and goats, totaling 115 animals. They also house

seven dogs, including one with a customized cart due to severe back leg injuries; four cats; and four bunnies eagerly awaiting their new rabbit shed and outdoor pen, built by dedicated volunteers. OutPaws' mission, as Carrie passionately stated, is "to teach people that all species of animals deserve compassionate and humane treatment." Through education and hands-on experience, OutPaws' advocates for a societal shift in how people regard animals.

As a proud member of MVEA, OutPaws' relies heavily on the support of the community and the essential services the cooperative provides. "We rely on electricity to be able to provide around-the-clock care for our animals," Carrie shared. From

birthing baby goats on cold winter nights to using oxygen concentrators for piglets with pneumonia, electricity is vital for their operations. Carrie also looks forward to utilizing MVEA rebates to make sustainable choices for renewable electric energy.

She appreciates the personal touch that comes with being part of a smaller utility, where neighbors help neighbors. "When I first moved in, MVEA redid my poles and connected power, and one of the people who showed up for the job was a neighbor right down the street. It's a community, which is very different from large corporations," Carrie said.



MVEA Linemen Bring Light to Night through Light Up Navajo Project

In July, volunteer linecrews from Colorado's electric co-ops, including MVEA, participated in Light Up Navajo. The program is an initiative led by the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority in collaboration with the American Public Power Association. It aims to bring electricity to more than 13,000 Navajo Nation families who live without access to electricity.

MVEA was honored to send a team of four dedicated linemen: Nathan Ortiz, Levi Suarez, John Webb, and Jon Weitz. Over a rugged landscape and in 100-degree heat, the MVEA crew went above and beyond to serve the mission of building line and connecting a family who had never enjoyed the modern convenience of living with electricity. MVEA's dedicated and hardworking linemen are lighting up more than just homes; they are lighting up futures and creating opportunities for a better quality of life for Navajo families.

▲ Dedicated MVEA linemen Levi Suarez, John Webb, Jon Weitz, and Nathan Ortiz bring electricity to a home on Navajo Nation near Kayenta in northeastern Arizona — a sparsely populated area known for its rugged terrain and dramatic desert landscapes.

MVEA Board of Directors Update: Officer Positions Announced

At its June 13 meeting, the Mountain View Electric Association Board of Directors elected Kevin Paddock, District 5 representative, as President of the Board.


Paddock, previously serving as Secretary/Treasurer, has been an MVEA Board member since 2018. He retired in June 2021 from a 31-year career with Colorado Springs Utilities Water Treatment, his latter 17 years as Operations Supervisor.

Barry Springer, District 6, was re-elected as Vice President. Jim Riggins, District 7, was elected as Secretary/Treasurer and Joseph Martin, District 1, was elected Assistant Secretary.

Martin, a Board member since 1988 who had previously held the President officer position for 30 years, decided not to run for the position this year. Under his leadership, Martin has seen MVEA grow from 18,000 meters to more than 66,000.

MVEA is governed by a board of directors elected by its members. The seven-member Board establishes MVEA's policies and monitors the financial position and the management of the cooperative. In these matters and other business of the organization, each Director represents the interests of the membership. To learn more, visit www.mvea.coop/board-of-directors.



 MVEA Board President Kevin Paddock represents District 5.



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MISSION STATEMENT

To provide our members safe, reliable, affordable, and responsible electric service and access to broadband services.

This Association is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Rise & Shine

MVEA Member Appreciation Breakfast

SATURDAY, AUGUST 24 • 9-11 A.M. • FREE EVENT

MVEA's Falcon Office | 11140 E. Woodmen Rd. | Falcon, 80831

GATES OPEN AT 9 A.M. | RSVP ENCOURAGED

Breakfast Sandwiches, Fresh Fruit, Coffee, Water
High Voltage Demonstrations and Bucket Truck Rides
Informational Booths and EV Ride & Drives

Learn More & RSVP at www.mvea.coop/riseandshine.




Power Up Your Lawn Care with Electric Equipment

The landscape of lawn and garden care is evolving, and electric equipment is at the forefront of this change.

While electric lawn tools aren't new, advancements in technology and more options mean prices have become more competitive, making electric equipment an accessible option for many consumers.

Benefits of electric equipment

Electric lawnmowers have come a long way since the days of extension cords tethering you to an outlet. Battery-powered mowers offer the same freedom of movement as gas-powered models, but with reduced noise and maintenance.

Battery life was once a major drawback to making the switch to electric lawn tools. But today's growing demand for electric equipment has resulted in major advancements for lithium-ion batteries, making them more reliable, cost-effective, and efficient. For most consumers, electric lawn tools can get the job done just as well as gas-powered models.

Many electric mowers offer push-button starts, and because they are lighter, they are easier to maneuver around tight turns. Improved batteries provide longer run times to tackle larger spaces. Like their gas-powered counterparts, electric mowers are available in push, self-propelled/walk-behind and riding models. And there's no need to refill gas cans or change oil and air filters, resulting in less hassle and maintenance.

Electric blowers, string trimmers, and chainsaws also have fewer moving parts, require minimal maintenance, and are quieter. Because electric tools are generally lighter in weight, they're also more ergonomic and easier to maneuver. This feature is especially handy for projects that require tools like chainsaws for precise work.

Choose electric equipment to meet your needs

Electric lawn tools have some limitations, so the size and terrain of your outdoor space are important considerations when purchasing new equipment. When comparing gas-powered and electric mowers, consider the torque rating — this is the driving force behind a blade's rotation. On average, electric lawnmowers generate less torque than gas mowers. If you have a challenging outdoor space that includes overgrown brush, tall grass, or hills and dips, torque is a key factor.

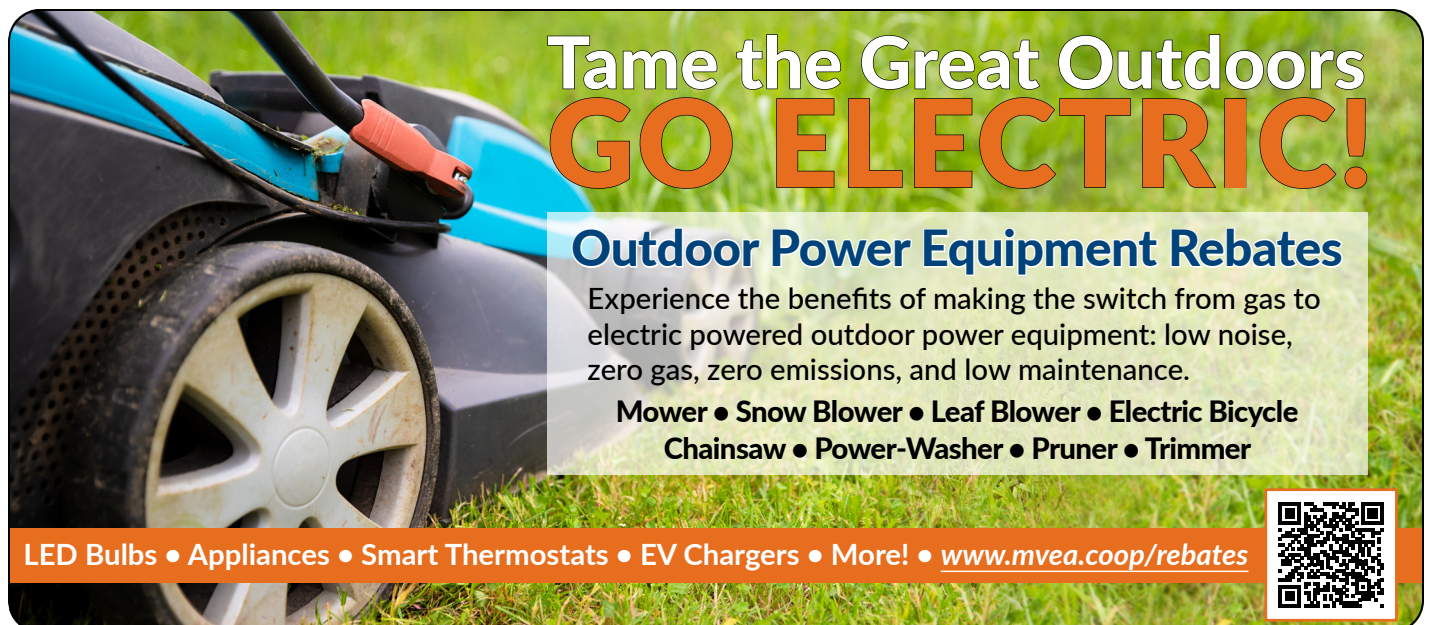
Choosing the right type and size mower is particularly important for spaces larger than half an acre. If you have a large property, consider purchasing an extra battery to ensure uninterrupted workflow.

Many manufacturers offer interchangeable batteries and chargers, providing flexibility and convenience. Choosing a single brand can ensure charging compatibility across your lawn tools and streamline charging.

While both gas and electric lawn tools can get the job done, electric equipment generally requires less maintenance, is less expensive to operate and is kinder to the environment.

Get green for going green

MVEA's rebate program provides exclusive perks for members and promotes the adoption of beneficial electrification and energy-efficient practices. Tri-State Generation and Transmission, our power supplier, partners with the us to pay rebates to MVEA members for select eligible beneficial electrification and energy-efficient products. Learn more at www.mvea.coop/rebates.



Tame the Great Outdoors GO ELECTRIC!

Outdoor Power Equipment Rebates

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