

MORGAN COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

SEPTEMBER 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.

EPA POWER PLANT RULE THREATENS ELECTRIC RELIABILITY

BY DAVE FRICK GENERAL MANAGER



DAVE FRICK

Keeping the lights on at a cost affordable to Morgan County REA members is the focal point of everything we do. Transparency is one of our core values, so in addition to sharing co-op successes, I believe we also have a responsibility to tell you about the challenges too.

In May, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued a rule that impacts energy production from power plants. The power plant rule will undoubtedly threaten access to reliable electricity for communities across the country.

The rule constrains existing coal and new natural gas plants by requiring them to install carbon capture and storage — a technology that has potential but has not been proven to be viable as required. No power plant in North America currently uses CCS at the scale and levels mandated by EPA. When power plants aren't able to comply with EPA's CCS requirements, they will be required to shut down, significantly limit operations, or switch fuels. These unrealistic standards will force the unnecessary and early shutdown of many power plants that currently provide reliable electricity 24/7.

Renewable sources, such as solar and wind, are important components of our overall generation mix. But given the intermittent nature of these energy sources, we simply cannot depend on them because the wind doesn't always blow and the sun doesn't always shine. The need for always-available power generating resources is still essential.

The timing of the power plant rule is equally troubling. At the same time the EPA is leading our nation down the path to fewer power plants, utilities are facing a surge in electricity demand. Many states have already experienced rolling outages, and if the supply of electricity is further

threatened by the EPA's power plant rule, the problem will only get worse.

According to the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, the nation's electric reliability watchdog, all or parts of 19 states are at 'high risk' for rolling blackouts during normal peak electricity demand conditions. Our region is at an 'elevated risk', meaning we meet resource adequacy requirements, but may face challenges keeping up under extreme conditions.

I don't say all of this to worry you, but I want our members to understand the challenges that lie ahead. Along with our wholesale power provider, Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association, MCREA continues to look for solutions that serve our members best. We're taking innovative and proactive steps to address today's energy challenges and tomorrow's energy needs.

If you're interested in learning more about policy impacts to power reliability, or to make your voice heard on this matter, visit www.voicesforcooperativepower.com.



MCREA will be closed on Monday, September 2.

YOUR CO-OP AT THE COUNTY FAIR

ate July is a busy time here on the eastern plains of Colorado. Trailers are hooked up to trucks, animals are loaded, show outfits are packed, and families from across the community head to the fairgrounds with their best livestock. Their sights are set on shiny ribbons and champion banners.

County fairs are a time for the community to come together and celebrate the great things that make rural America what it is. As your local electric cooperative, Morgan County REA is proud to power our communities, and looks forward to gathering with our members at local fairs and rodeos every year. (Jay Musgrave, acct. #xxx8100)

MCREA kicked off fair season by hosting a booth at the Northeast Weld County Fair in New Raymer on July 19. Affectionately known as the “World’s Fair,” this year’s event was even more special, as the community celebrated the fair’s 75th anniversary. MCREA was happy to take part in the festivities and visit with members from the northern parts of our service territory.

A few weeks later, it was time for the Morgan County Fair in Brush. The fair’s annual steak fry and catch-it contests are fan favorites, and MCREA enjoyed hosting a booth and chatting with members there as well.

MCREA participated in the Morgan County Junior Livestock Sale, where the co-op proudly purchased a market lamb from Joslyn Haubert, a member of the Winning Edge 4-H Club. Joslyn also won this year’s intermediate master showmanship competition.

Fair season is a great time to celebrate our local youth who work hard all year on their 4-H and FFA projects. MCREA congratulates all fair participants on their achievements this year!



▲ MCREA employees Angie Hayes (left) and Maddie Pollart (right) hand out gifts at the 75th annual Northeast Weld County Fair in New Raymer.



▲ MCREA purchased a market lamb from Joslyn Haubert at the Morgan County Fair Junior Livestock Sale on August 1. Photo by Dustin Price Photography.

SERVING MEMBERS 24/7: MCREA UTILIZES AFTER HOURS CALL SERVICE

Morgan County REA aims to provide its members with safe, reliable electricity and the best customer service possible. We look for ways to use our resources efficiently and effectively when serving you. We do this by partnering with the Cooperative Response Center (CRC).

If you call MCREA outside of our regular business hours, you’ll most likely speak with a CRC representative. This 24/7 call center has offices in Minnesota, Tennessee, Texas, and Missouri. All CRC offices are staffed by trained professionals who are equipped to handle a variety of scenarios. Perhaps the most valuable service CRC offers to MCREA is after hours outage management.

MCREA does not have an onsite 24/7 call center, but we always have staff on call to respond to outages. When a member calls in an outage after hours, CRC contacts

MCREA’s on-call personnel who then head out to fix the problem.

It’s important to note that during large outages, so many calls are coming in at once that you may not be answered by CRC immediately. However, crews are still being dispatched to resolve the issue.

During exceptionally large outages, MCREA posts information on our Facebook page, which can also be viewed at www.mcrea.org. While on the homepage, members can click the ‘View Outage Map’ button to see the outage affecting their area.

During outages, MCREA does not provide an estimated restoration time simply because there is no way of knowing for sure. In some cases, the cause of the outage is at the transmission level and MCREA crews must wait for other utilities to resolve the issue. Rest assured though, MCREA is always aware of the situation

and ready to respond—and CRC plays an important role.

CRC helps our co-op with more than just after hours outage calls. They also can help members make payments over the phone, and relay any member questions to the correct MCREA department. If a large outage occurs during the day, CRC may also help with high volumes of calls to our office.

Using CRC helps us at MCREA use our resources efficiently and responsibly. Our local employees can focus on maintenance and operations during regular business hours. And they trust that the call center will manage any after hours issues with the same professionalism and attention you would get at our office.

Serving as an extension of our local staff, MCREA’s partnership with CRC helps us give our members the best customer experience, all hours of the day and night.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RECAP: YOUNG MCREA MEMBER ATTENDS COOPERATIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP

For nearly three decades, electric cooperatives across Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Wyoming have participated in Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, a weeklong educational seminar held each July in Clark, Colorado, just north of Steamboat Springs. Electric co-ops from these four states select outstanding students from their communities to represent them at camp, where students build leadership skills through learning about how electric cooperatives are organized and operated.

Carys Kudron, from Fort Morgan High School, was selected to represent Morgan County REA at this year's camp. At camp, students form their own "cooperative." Each member is expected to take part in their co-op by seeking election to the board of directors or serving on one of the camp activity committees.

"I learned so much about electric co-ops! After we all bought into our co-op, I joined the canteen committee," Carys said. "We were in charge of the camp concession stand, where the money earned was donated to linemen who have been injured on the job."

Throughout the week, campers learned about electrical safety, the legislative process, and avian protection. They also visited Craig Station power plant to learn about power generation. With students from four different states attending, CYLC is also a great opportunity to meet new people.

"I learned so much from everyone at camp," Carys shared. "All of the campers were so ambitious and such good people. It really made me want to be more involved in my community and share that ambition with my peers back home."

Of course, CYLC offers lots of opportunities for campers to enjoy the beautiful Rocky Mountains, including a rafting adventure on the Colorado River, a trip to Mount Werner, a visit to Steamboat Springs, a volleyball tournament, barbeque, talent show, and an outdoor dance.

"My favorite part of the trip was definitely the rafting day. We got to explore the river most of the day and when we got back to camp, we made s'mores, then had the dance," Carys recalled. "Camp went beyond my expectations and was equal parts fun and educational!"

Youth camp is just one of the programs that MCREA offers for high school students in our service area. Applications for youth trips are available in November and open to local sophomore, junior, and senior students whose parents or grandparents are MCREA members.

"Applying for camp is a smart decision for any student because there is such a diverse group of students who attend. We all learned more about leadership and gained invaluable experiences," Carys said. "This camp was such a good learning opportunity. Thank you to all the amazing people at Morgan County REA that made this possible."

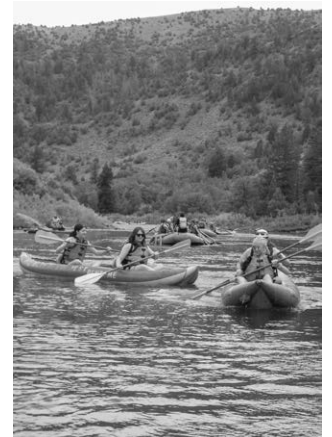
To learn more about youth camp and MCREA's other programs, please visit mcrea.org/youth-programs.



▲ Students from electric co-ops across Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, and Oklahoma at CYLC.



▲ Carys meets a bald eagle during the avian protection presentation at camp.



▲ Campers raft the Colorado River.



▲ Linemen from Yampa Valley Electric Association present a hotline safety demonstration to campers.

BEYOND OPENING THE BOX: TAKE STEPS TO OPERATE A GENERATOR SAFELY

When the electricity goes out, your initial thought might be to run to the local hardware or big box store and buy a generator. However, using a generator should not be taken lightly, since it can be dangerous and even life-threatening if used incorrectly.

September is National Preparedness Month, and if having a generator is part of your preparedness plan for storms or other emergencies, there are several steps you should take before ever starting one up.

Prior to purchase

Before purchasing a generator, the first step is to research the best option for your home and budget. The second, and more important step, is to educate yourself on how to use one safely.

Homeowners can choose from two types of generators: standby and portable. Standby generators are installed directly into the home's electrical system and are typically powered by natural gas or propane. These generators start automatically when the power goes out.

A portable generator is usually gas powered and, well, portable. You can power appliances by plugging them into it. Your generator should have more output than the wattage of the electronics plugged into it. This way, the generator can create the extra electricity it takes for the initial power surge. Make sure there is nothing plugged into the generator when turning it on. (Tyronne Ortiz, acct. #xxx3600)

Safety tips

When you refuel a portable generator, make sure the engine is cool. Keep children and pets away from the generator, as it could burn them.

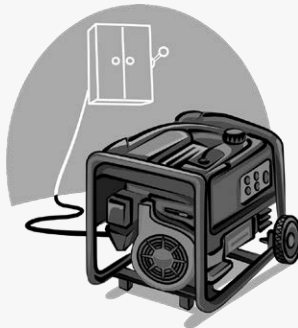
Generators pose electrical risks, especially when operated during inclement weather. Use a generator only when necessary during wet conditions. Protect the generator by operating it under an open, canopy-like structure and on a dry surface where water cannot form puddles or drain under it.

Generators can be deadly

Carbon monoxide fumes emitted by the gasoline engine on the generator can be deadly. Always operate your portable generator outdoors at least 20 feet from your home.

Misusing a portable generator or using a standby generator that is not installed correctly (and does not meet the electrical code) can cause backfeed, which puts others in danger. Backfeed happens when a generator feeds electricity back through a home's electrical

What is a TRANSFER SWITCH?



A transfer or throw switch is an essential mechanism that safely shuts off power to the electrical grid before backup power is used. This switch is sometimes referred to as a double-throw switch, as it controls two separate circuits.

The switch's job is to safely transfer power from its primary source to a backup power source, enabling users to maintain power during an outage. It works by connecting a generator to your home's main circuits to provide backup power.

Properly installed transfer switches are essential because they prevent dangerous backfeed into the power grid, which endangers utility workers and others.

Make sure your permanent generator and switch are installed according to code and working properly. Never plug a portable generator into a wall outlet, as this can cause backfeed.

Learn more at:



system and meter into the power lines. To prevent this dangerous scenario, standby generators should have a transfer switch installed by a licensed professional. Do not plug a portable generator directly into a home outlet or electrical system. Instead, use a properly rated extension cord to plug appliances into an outlet on the generator for power.

When not in use

Operate your generator once a month for 10 minutes to ensure it is running properly. Keep your generator well maintained and follow all manufacturer's instructions. Have a standby generator installed in an easily accessible, weatherproof area.

For more electrical safety information, visit SafeElectricity.org.



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, Robert Lingreen and Randy Fiscus! You each spotted your name in the July magazine and called to claim your \$25 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 September 30 to claim a \$25 credit on your next bill.