

MORGAN COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

NOVEMBER 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.

MAY YOUR HOLIDAYS BE MERRY AND BRIGHT

BY DAVE FRICK GENERAL MANAGER



DAVE FRICK

As November kicks off, it's hard to believe we'll soon be gathering with family and friends to celebrate the holiday season. This festive time of year brings joy and warmth, but as the weather gets cooler and we spend more time indoors, the holidays can also bring increased energy use and a higher risk of electrical and fire hazards.

Our team at Morgan County REA cares about your wellbeing. This month, I'm sharing a few practical tips for a safe and efficient holiday season.

Safety first

My family truly enjoys decorating our home for the holidays. Before we deck the halls, we always check electrical cords and light strands to make sure they aren't frayed or damaged. This gives us peace of mind, knowing our holiday lights are ready to safely brighten our home. Also, it's important to double check the lights we use outside to make sure they're rated for outdoor use.

Like many households, we also enjoy holiday-scented candles. While festive, lit candles can create fire hazards and should never be left unattended. One of the best and easiest ways to safeguard your home is to test smoke alarms often — once every month. Testing smoke alarms only takes a few seconds and could save lives, so make it a habit.

'Tis the season for saving

Spending more time indoors with a few more guests in the home can really impact home energy use. By taking a few small steps to save energy during the holiday season, you can lower your bills.

Since heating and cooling makes up the majority of home energy consumption, the thermostat is one of the best places

for savings. Lower it a few degrees, especially when family or friends stop by. Good company brings additional warmth to your home — literally and figuratively.

Your family can also save energy by decorating with LED holiday lights. LEDs are the most energy-efficient lighting options available, and they last much longer than traditional bulbs.

There's no denying one of the best parts of the holiday season is the food — not just the meals, but the time we spend together in the kitchen. There are many ways to save in the heart of your home, but one of the best approaches is to cook with smaller countertop appliances — air fryers, slow cookers, and toaster ovens. These handy appliances consume a fraction of the energy used to heat the oven, creating the perfect recipe for mealtime and energy savings.

If you have questions about how to make your home more efficient, always feel free to call MCREA and talk with our energy experts. We're here to help you with safety and savings year-round.

From your friends at Morgan County REA, we hope your holiday season is merry and bright.



THANK YOU VETERANS

This month, Morgan County REA is proud to honor the men and women who have served in our nation's military. As Veterans Day approaches, we extend our most sincere gratitude to all who have served. We want to especially thank the veterans who work here at MCREA: Brent Kliesen – U.S. Army, Stacy Syphers—U.S. Air Force, and Nolan Kauffmann—U.S. Marine Corps. Thank you for your service!



▲ Military veterans and MCREA employees (left to right) Brent Kliesen, Stacy Syphers, and Nolan Kauffmann.

HONORING OUR NATION'S HEROES

Veterans Day

Morgan County REA's office will be closed Monday, November 11 for the holiday.

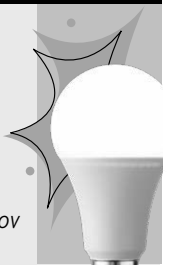
ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you're heading out of town during the holiday season, remember to set your home to vacation mode. You can save energy while you're away by lowering your thermostat a few degrees or creating an "away" schedule with a smart or programmable thermostat. Newer water heaters include a vacation mode setting to help you save

on water heating costs, or you can simply lower the temperature manually.

Small actions can also stack up to energy savings. Unplug devices that consume energy when they're not in use, including phone chargers, toothbrush chargers, TVs, and gaming consoles.

Source: energy.gov



NEW EMPLOYEE: ZACH HORNECKER

Morgan County REA is happy to welcome Zach Hornecker as our newest lineman. Born and raised in Fort Morgan, Zach is looking forward to new opportunities at MCREA and spending more time with his family. "Getting to work outside is one of my favorite things about being a lineman," Zach shared. Having worked in the industry for more than five years, he is excited to join the team at MCREA.

In his free time, Zach enjoys camping at the lake with his wife and their three children. He also enjoys shooting his bow and hunting when he can. Welcome to MCREA, Zach!



STUDENTS: MAKE NEXT SUMMER THE BEST ONE YET — APPLY FOR MORGAN COUNTY REA YOUTH TRIPS!

Each year, Morgan County REA selects a student from our service territory to attend Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington D.C., and another student to attend Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs. These are two phenomenal opportunities for local students to meet new people and enhance their leadership skills, all while learning more about electric cooperatives!

Youth Tour will take place June 16-22. Hundreds of students from across the United States, sponsored by their co-ops, gather in our nation's capital. Throughout the week, students explore historical landmarks like Mount Vernon, Arlington National Cemetery, and many of the memorials and monuments that D.C. is known for. Students also have the opportunity to tour the Capitol and visit with U.S. Senators and Representatives. The tour is intended to help students learn more about our nation's history and how electric cooperatives have played a role. (Taylor Gerkin, acct. ###3700)

"Youth Tour was an unforgettable experience that has changed my life. I met incredible people and had an incredible time," one student shared.

Youth Camp will take place July 12-17 near Steamboat Springs. Students from Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas and Oklahoma—also sponsored by their home co-ops—enjoy a week of outdoor fun in the beautiful Rocky Mountains. Activities include rafting the Colorado River, visiting the top of Mt. Werner, swimming, sand volleyball, and more. At camp students learn about electric co-ops by creating their own cooperative, complete with board director elections. The group also takes a tour of the Craig Power Plant and watches a high voltage safety demonstration to better understand how power is delivered to homes and businesses.

"I will always remember the people I met throughout this trip," a camper mentioned. "I have made some great friends and I know those relationships will not stop now that camp is over."



One of the best things about these two phenomenal trips? They are free to attend, with all expenses covered by MCREA.

The deadline to apply for Youth Tour and Youth Camp is Friday, December 20. Applications are open to high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors living within the outer boundaries of MCREA's territory, whose parents or grandparents are MCREA members.

Visit mcrea.org/youth-programs and click on the Youth Camp or Youth Tour buttons for application information. If you have any questions about these programs, please call MCREA's office at 970-867-5688.

Director Nominating Petitions

Nominating petitions for the Morgan County REA Board of Directors will be available in the MCREA office beginning Monday, December 30, and must be returned by Friday, January 17, 2025. These dates comply with electric cooperative election regulations set by state law.

The complete MCREA board policy outlining nominating, balloting, and election of directors can be picked up at 734 Barlow Rd. in Fort Morgan.

Director elections will take place at the MCREA Annual Meeting on March 18, 2025, at 6 p.m., conducted virtually through a Telephone Town Hall meeting. The directors who are up for election in 2025 are: District 1—Jim Bostron, District 2—Kyle Eiring, and District 3—Larry Hoozee.

Safety Tip

Heating equipment accounts for 13% of home fires. Place a space heater on a hard surface and make sure clothing, papers, and other combustible items are at least 3 feet away from the heater.

STAY SAFE AND WARM: YOUR WINTER HOME READINESS GUIDE

Preparing your home for winter involves several key steps to ensure safety, efficiency, and warmth. (Leon McCauley, acct. #xxx5400) Here are top tips to help you prepare before the temperatures drop and a few ways to stay safe if a power outage leaves you snowbound.

Inspect your heating system.

- Have your heating system professionally serviced.
- Replace air filters if needed.
- Ensure vents and radiators are unblocked for efficient heat distribution.
- When using an alternative heat source, follow operating instructions and be sure to ventilate properly.

Prepare pipes and water supply.

- Insulate exposed pipes to prevent freezing.
- Drain and shut off outdoor faucets and irrigation systems.
- Know the location of your water shut-off valve in case of emergencies.

Maintain smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

- Replace batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- Test detectors to ensure they are functioning properly.

Prepare your home's exterior.

- Clear gutters and downspouts of leaves and debris to prevent ice dams.
- Trim trees and bushes away from the house to prevent damage from heavy snow.
- Ensure downspouts extend away from your home's foundation.
- Drain and store garden hoses to prevent freezing.
- Service and store outdoor equipment such as lawnmowers and trimmers.
- Gather winter tools such as snow shovels and ice melt.

Increase home energy efficiency.

- Seal gaps and cracks around windows and doors with weatherstripping or caulk. Place a draft block at the bottom of doors.

Ready Your Home FOR WINTER

Prepare your home for winter now to ensure safety, efficiency and comfort.



- Set ceiling fans to rotate clockwise to circulate warm air.
- Lower your thermostat a few degrees to save on heating costs.

Stock emergency supplies.

At home, have enough nonperishable food and water for 72 hours in case of power outages or severe weather. Experts suggest storing one gallon of water per person per day. Include these essentials in your emergency kit:

- First-aid kit
- Flashlights and batteries
- Warm clothing
- Blankets
- Phone chargers and backup charger sources

Gather important documents, medical supplies/medicines and medical records. Don't forget your pets. Make sure you have enough supplies for them as well.

Maintain generators safely.

If you have a generator, store and use it properly. Move fuel-powered generators at least 20 feet away from the home. If it is wet outside, keep it dry by placing it on a tarp. Position it under a portable canopy and never a carport. Never plug a portable generator directly into a wall outlet.

For more information on keeping your family safe during and after a winter storm, 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, Tyrone Ortiz, you spotted your name in the September issue and called to claim your 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 to claim a \$25 credit on your next bill.