

# Balancing Electricity Supply and Demand

By **Dave Frick** General Manager

Electricity is essential for nearly every aspect of daily life — so essential that we rarely think about how it's produced and delivered to our homes. You might be surprised to learn that behind the scenes, a network of experts works daily and even by the minute to anticipate how much electricity you need before you even use it.

We're all connected to the electric grid, so ensuring the right amount of electricity for all involves a complex process of forecasting energy demand, planning for capacity, and securing enough supply to meet Americans' needs.

First, electricity must be generated at a power plant using either traditional sources, such as coal, natural gas, or nuclear energy, or from renewable sources, such as solar, wind, or hydropower.

At Morgan County REA, we work closely with Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association, our local wholesale power supplier, to secure enough electricity for our communities, using a diverse mix of energy sources to generate the power we deliver to your home or business.

Electricity supply changes throughout the day because demand fluctuates. For example, MCREA knows that we need to ensure more electricity in the mornings when you're starting your day, and in the evenings when you're cooking dinner, running appliances, and watching TV.

On a larger scale across the country, supply and demand are managed through a market where elec-

tricity is bought and sold, just like other common goods and services. Because MCREA works with Tri-State, which is also a cooperative, we are able to pool resources and expertise in these markets to deliver affordable power to our local communities.

In most cases, the amount of electricity generated and how much is sent to specific areas are coordinated and monitored by regional transmission organizations (RTOs) and independent system operators (ISOs). In other areas, individual electric utilities perform these tasks.

RTOs, ISOs, and electric utilities act as air traffic controllers for the electric grid. They forecast when you, your neighbors, and communities across a large region will need more power. These organizations take measured steps to ensure there's enough supply to meet demand. (Boone Norris, acct. #xxx0000)

Electricity use in the U.S. is expected to rise to record highs this year and next, with the demand for electricity expected to at least double by 2050. As the energy sector undergoes rapid change, it's important for all consumers to understand the basics of electricity supply and demand.

Managing the balancing act of electricity supply and demand is a complex job, but that is why we have a network of utilities, power plant operators, and energy traffic managers in place to direct the electricity we need and keep the electric grid balanced. This way, MCREA can continue to provide affordable, reliable energy to our members.



## 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.*

734 Barlow Road | P.O. Box 738  
Fort Morgan, CO 80701

970-867-5688 | [customerservice@mcrea.org](mailto:customerservice@mcrea.org)

[mcrea.org](http://mcrea.org)

[facebook.com/MorganCountyREA](https://www.facebook.com/MorganCountyREA)

[@morgancountyrea](https://www.instagram.com/morgancountyrea)



# Morgan County REA Scholarships

## Application Deadline is February 14

**T**hrough partnerships with Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association and Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Morgan County REA is once again proud to sponsor a total of nine college or vocational scholarships for students who reside within MCREA's service territory and whose family (parents or grandparents) receives electric service from MCREA. This year, MCREA will award five \$1,000 scholarships to graduating seniors and one \$1,000 scholarship to a current postsecondary student who will be returning to college or trade school. Tri-State will award two \$500 scholarships to graduating seniors, and Basin will award one \$1,000 scholarship to a graduating senior.

Completed application materials must be submitted by **Friday, February 14**. (Krystal Gray, acct. #xxx4000) Applications are available and submitted online at [mcrea.org/scholarship-application](https://mcrea.org/scholarship-application). Only one set of application materials is necessary to apply for scholarships from all three cooperatives.

Those applying for the \$1,000 scholarship awarded to a current college or postsecondary student do not need to be previous MCREA scholarship winners to qualify.

More information regarding these scholarship opportunities can be found on MCREA's website at [mcrea.org/college-scholarships](https://mcrea.org/college-scholarships). If you have any questions regarding MCREA's programs, please call the office at 970-867-5688 or email [memberservices@mcrea.org](mailto:memberservices@mcrea.org).



2024 MCREA scholarship recipient Jacy Dreier



**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 Taylor Gerkin! You spotted your name in the November issue and called to receive a \$25 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's communications department at 970-867-5688 by January 31 to claim a \$25 credit on your next bill.

# New Year's Resolution

## Be Energy Efficient Year-Round

**A**s energy consumers, we can all play a part in conserving resources and reducing our bills.

Here are some practical tips to boost your home's energy efficiency throughout the year.

### KNOW YOUR ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Start by reviewing your energy bills for the past 12–24 months. Calculate your average monthly usage to establish a baseline for measuring your energy-saving efforts.

### ADOPT NO-COST WAYS TO SAVE ENERGY

Small changes can lead to significant savings.

- Turn off lights and unplug electronics such as chargers when not in use.
- Close or lower window coverings to regulate the temperature indoors.
- Change your air filters regularly as recommended.

- Use ceiling fans strategically: counterclockwise in summer and clockwise in winter to force warm air down.
- Grill outdoors in summer to keep the heat out of the kitchen.

### INSULATE YOUR HOME

Weatherproofing is key to maintaining comfort and reducing energy use:

- Check for air leaks around windows and doors.
- Apply caulk or weather stripping to prevent drafts.
- Remember to keep doors closed to maintain indoor temperature.

### GET SMART WITH YOUR THERMOSTAT

Optimize your heating and cooling by using your programmable thermostat's features — many homeowners never use them — and allow it to adjust the temperature when you're asleep or away.

- Consider upgrading to a smart thermostat for automatic adjustments.

- In general, adjust the thermostat a few degrees up or down for energy savings.

These are just a few ways you can impact your energy use and reduce your electric bill. Visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org) for more tips on building a resilient and efficient home.



### ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Taking steps to help your home heating system run more efficiently can reduce energy use and lower your winter bills. Check to see if any air vents around your home are blocked by furniture, curtains, or other items.

Obstructed vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and can increase pressure in the ductwork, causing cracks and leaks to form. If necessary, consider purchasing a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture or other obstructions.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

**ELECTRIFY AND SAVE**

Making energy-efficient upgrades this year?

Be sure to check out our rebates program!

[mcrea.org/energy-efficiency-rebates](http://mcrea.org/energy-efficiency-rebates)

MORGAN COUNTY REA | TRI-STATE



# Steve Sundet Retires After 30 Years of Service to Morgan County REA

Steve Sundet, Morgan County REA manager of engineering, will retire from MCREA this month. Originally from South Dakota, Steve and his family have called Colorado home for nearly 40 years — and Steve has managed MCREA’s engineering department since he started working at the co-op in 1994.

“I like having played a role in a bit of everything,” Steve shared. “There’s such variety in what we do in engineering and I’ve enjoyed overseeing and being a part of it.”

Designing new sections of line, directing work plan projects, and helping monitor MCREA’s overall electrical system are just a few of the ways Steve has contributed to the co-op and its members for three decades.

In that time, there have been significant changes at MCREA, primarily in the technology used.

“When I first started, everything was on paper — staking sheets, maps, job tickets,” Steve recalled. “We still had meter readers — employees who would go to each meter to record usage.”

While new tech has certainly made it easier to monitor and control MCREA’s system, the co-op’s mission to provide safe, reliable power has remained unchanged. It’s a mission that Steve is proud to have been part of.

“When a member needs power to a new location or building, engineering is often the first group they work with at MCREA,” Steve shared. “It’s awesome to see how our system has grown and changed over the years.”

As far as retirement goes, Steve will stay plenty busy. He and his wife, Lorna, are looking forward to traveling more, with a potential trip to Norway in the



**After 30 years of leading MCREA’s engineering team, Steve Sundet will trade his office for traveling, golfing, and adventuring with his wife, Lorna.**

works. Steve also will have more time to enter cribbage tournaments and of course — hit the links.

“I golf a lot now, but I’m excited to golf even more,” he chuckled.

Steve looks back on his career with great fondness. “It’s been a fantastic place to work,” Steve reflected. “And of course, the people have been wonderful.”

MCREA is grateful for the contributions Steve has made to the cooperative. And while we will certainly miss him, we wish him the very best in his well-deserved retirement. Congratulations, Steve!