

# Cooperation Among Cooperatives

**Mike McBride** Chief Executive Officer

Last month, I introduced the Seven Cooperative Principles as the guiding fundamentals woven into GCEA's strategic plan and throughout all business functions conducted by GCEA employees and the board of directors. These cooperative principles are practiced in electric co-ops nationwide and remind us of the purpose of our work and how we can best meet our members' needs.



membership also includes a variety of other benefits such as the Electrify and Save® on-bill repayment and rebate programs, marketing services, scholarships, charitable donations, and community support.

As one of 21 electric cooperatives in the Colorado Rural Electric Association, GCEA benefits from government relations and legislative lobbying support, safety and loss

control training, emergency management support, employee and board education, and communications support through the publication of this magazine, *Colorado Country Life*.

GCEA is a member-owner of the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation, that provides financial services such as long-term, low-cost financing for electric infrastructure; emergency lines of credit; financial analysis and tools; and training and education.

GCEA also benefits from membership in several other not-for-profit cooperatives that provide cost-effective services uniquely designed to meet the needs of rural electric cooperatives. These cooperatives provide GCEA with a reliable source of materials, inventory management, business software systems, insurance, safety services, and more.

As you can see, it takes a village to run an electric cooperative and we are thankful to the network of cooperatives who support our business operations. As we work together to promote innovative ideas and safe work practices, we are collectively better together. We appreciate the opportunity to extend cooperation to you, our members, and look forward to continuing to serve you and power your possibilities.

The sixth cooperative principle is cooperation among cooperatives and aligns with the spirit of the local communities we serve. Cooperatives serve their members and communities most effectively by working together with a shared sense of purpose across the state, region, and nation. Although we are autonomous and independent, we still work together to share best practices, introduce new ideas, support each other during emergencies, and band together to make actionable plans.

GCEA relies on the expertise of other cooperatives in a variety of business functions. Every one of our fellow distribution cooperatives in Colorado, and even across the nation, is a resource for information and resources that help us implement new and improved methods and programs with reduced cost and effort.

We purchase wholesale power generation and transmission services from Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association, an electric cooperative of 44 members including 41 electric distribution co-ops like GCEA. As Tri-State continually works on its goals for a renewable energy transition, GCEA members benefit from clean, sustainable, and affordable electricity. GCEA's Tri-State

## CONTACT US

970-641-3520  
gcea@gcea.coop  
www.gcea.coop



**GCEA**  
POWERING POSSIBILITIES

## On the Cover

Photo owned by Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association

# Electrify and Save<sup>®</sup>

By Alliy Sahagun Member Relations Supervisor

As I prepare this article in mid-December, the Gunnison Valley is enduring one of the deepest freezes we have seen in over a decade. Sub-zero temperatures have been the norm during the day and nighttime lows have dropped to double digits below zero. It has been a frigid start to what looks to be a long winter. As I enter my home each evening after work, I am grateful to feel warmth and enjoy other comforts from having electricity. We are truly blessed to live in a time when plugging in or pressing a button provides convenience and efficiency.



Even with the ease of electricity, some of us still experience anxiety and discomfort when we look at our electric bill and the cost is higher than expected, or when we feel chilly despite cranking up our thermostat.

What can be done to bring peace of mind and make our homes as efficient and cost-effective as possible? Education is key. Knowing the right steps to take and having assistance in implementing them is the first place to start. GCEA is here to guide you as you consider home energy efficiency upgrades and improvements.

**Electrify and Save<sup>®</sup>** is a program brought to you by Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association — GCEA's wholesale power provider — and is the driving force behind GCEA's ability to assist members through our on-bill repayment, rebate, and energy evaluation programs. The goal of Electrify and Save is to educate members on how to lower their monthly energy bills, help the environment, and improve their quality of life.

Through the **On-Bill Repayment program**, GCEA members can make energy-efficient home improvements such as heat pump installations, weatherization upgrades like new windows and doors, or install an EV charger with no upfront cost, finance at extremely low interest rates, and have the monthly payment added to their electric bill. We're empowering consumers to reduce their emissions and energy costs.

Tri-State's **rebate program** works in tandem with OBR to reduce the member's monthly payment on their home upgrade, plus there are other rebates available for electric appliances, home and water heating, electric outdoor power equipment, and EV charging station purchases. Next time you consider buying an electric item, check our website to see if there is an eligible rebate. The online process is quick and easy, and a check will be mailed to you within a few weeks.

Lastly, if you're having trouble getting started and are unsure about your energy-efficiency strategy, our in-house energy use advisor is here to help with GCEA's **Energy Evaluation program**. Alantha Garrison can help you set up your SmartHub account to view energy usage on your computer or mobile device to identify causes of high usage. If concerns persist, she will visit your home or business to identify what may be contributing to excessive usage and what steps to take to reduce usage.

As we move into some of the highest electric use and bills of the year — especially after this cold start to winter — feel free to contact us to see how we can help. No matter your budget, we have tips to make winter both affordable and comfortable.

Stay warm out there!

# Energy Upgrades

Be sure your service fits your load

**Alantha Garrison** Energy Use Advisor

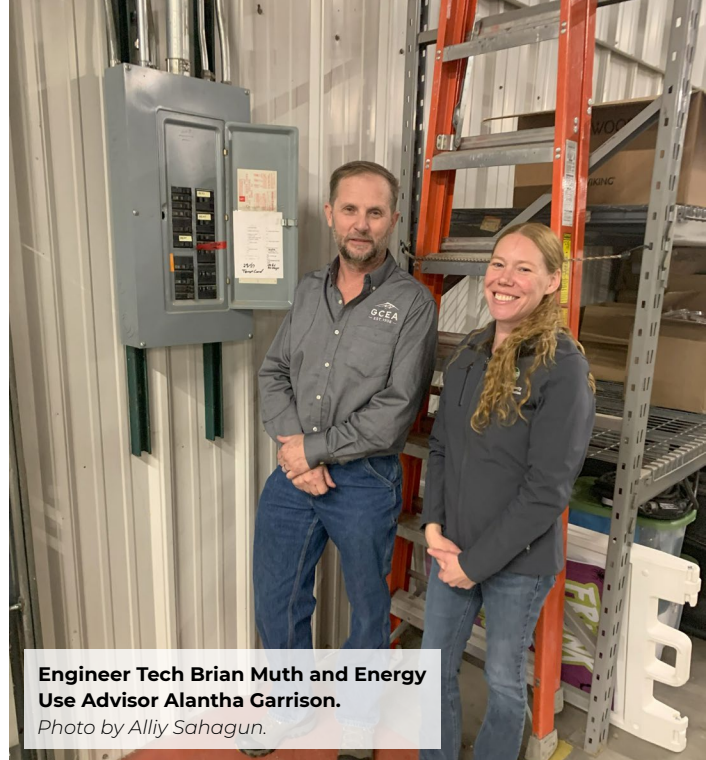
**A**s your electric power provider, GCEA supports beneficial electrification projects such as trading out a gas-powered furnace with an energy efficient electric heat pump or installing an electric vehicle charging station to charge an EV at home. Powering your home and business and even your vehicle with electricity reduces carbon emissions as the electric grid is becoming greener every day with the continued addition of renewable energy. However, if you are considering adding items that use more electricity or installing a renewable energy system, there is important information you should know before you start your project. Below are some questions to consider before you begin to ensure that your project goes smoothly.

**Q: What do I need to know before I get started?**

A: You will need to know the size of the electrical service at your home or business, the size of your breaker panel, the amperage of the added item, and whether your service can accommodate the increase in load. GCEA's engineering department can help determine whether a transformer upgrade is required to accommodate the additional load.

**Q: How do I know the size of my electrical service to my home or business, and how much power is available on my electrical panel?**

A: You will need to contact an electrician to provide this information. The electrician will come to your home or business and let you know how much electricity you're currently using and the available power in the panel. Based on this information they will let you know if you need to upgrade your breaker panel and/or the electri-



**Engineer Tech Brian Muth and Energy Use Advisor Alantha Garrison.**  
*Photo by Alliy Sahagun.*

cal service. These upgrades are performed by a licensed electrician, not by GCEA.

**Q: What information does GCEA's engineering department provide to the electrician or contractor working on the project?**

A: GCEA's engineering department can provide you with transformer information such as the size of the transformer, how loaded the transformer is, and whether GCEA needs to upgrade our equipment to be able to provide additional power to your property. The upgrade may require an appointment to install new equipment, which can slow down project timelines. Additionally, equipment upgrades may require a rate change, which is handled by GCEA's billing department.

**Q: How much power do heat pumps and EV chargers add to the electrical service?**

A: Heat pumps typically require a 40-to-60-amp breaker per system. An EV charging station usually requires a 20-to 50-amp breaker per charger.

**Q: How much does it cost to upgrade my electrical service?**

A: It varies depending on existing equipment, but you can expect to spend anywhere from \$500 to \$1,500 to upgrade your panel for an EV charger and up to \$5,000 to upgrade a panel for a heat pump.

GCEA supports electrification and our team is here to help as you evaluate necessary upgrades to your service. Please look to us as a trusted partner and resource as you power your possibilities.



# How Can We Help?

**K**eeping warm during the winter months can sometimes be financially challenging and GCEA is connected with community partners, resources, and education to help you on your way to a more comfortable home and budget. Below are a few of the programs and tools to help with energy assistance.

of the LEAP program is to help alleviate some of the burdens that come with Colorado's colder months. The Gunnison/Hinsdale Department of Human Services normally accepts applications from November through April. More information is available by calling 970-641-3244.



**GUNNISON VALLEY REGIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY – GV-HEAT**  
 Managed by the Gunnison Valley Regional Housing Authority, the Gunnison Valley Home Energy Advancement Team program can help save money and increase safety and comfort in homes. Through GV-HEAT, households are connected to resources that help them improve the energy efficiency, comfort, and affordability of housing in Gunnison and Hinsdale Counties. GV-HEAT is an Energy Smart Colorado partner providing subsidized energy assessments, energy advising, assistance with rebates, and contractor recommendations to all income levels. More information may be found online at [gvrha.org/gvheat/](http://gvrha.org/gvheat/).



## LOW-INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LEAP)

The Colorado Low-income Energy Assistance Program is a federally funded program that helps eligible hard-working Colorado families, seniors, and individuals pay a portion of their winter home heating costs. While the program is not intended to pay the entire cost of home heating, the goal



## ENERGY OUTREACH COLORADO

In addition to LEAP, Bill Payment Assistance can also be accessed through Energy Outreach Colorado, a state-wide non-profit organization. EOC's funding comes from contributions from the energy industry as well as from individual energy consumers. More information on EOC Bill Payment Assistance can be found while applying for LEAP.

## CONTRACTORS NEEDED:

### EARN BONUSES FOR EVERY PROJECT

PLUMBING - ELECTRICAL - WINDOWS & DOORS - HVAC  
AIR SEALING & INSULATION -

- READY TO GO PROJECTS**
- FREE ENERGY COACHING**

**READY TO GET STARTED?**

Fill out our interest form at:  
[cef.info/obr-contractor-interest](http://cef.info/obr-contractor-interest)

SCAN ME

**LEARN MORE AT [GCEA.COOP](http://GCEA.COOP)**

Come to GCEA's Annual Meeting on June 24 for community connection and family fun.

Photo by Logann Long.

# GCEA Annual Meeting Notice

## Board Election and Annual Meeting Date

The ELECTION FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS and the 86th Annual Member Meeting for Gunnison County Electric Association (GCEA) will be held on **Tuesday, June 24, 2025**, at 6 p.m. at 37250 W. US Highway 50, Gunnison, CO 81230.

**Board Districts up for Election:** GCEA's Board of Director positions at the end of each three-year term that are eligible for election are as follows:

### District No. 2 – (Incumbent Morgan Weinberg)

The northeast corner of the certificated service area of the Association, including Mt. Crested Butte and Gothic to the Continental Divide.

### District No. 3 – (Incumbent Darcie Perkins)

The Ohio Creek and Taylor River drainage areas beginning approximately one-half (1/2) mile north of the Jack's Cabin cut-off, inclusive of service locations in Crested Butte South or which are accessed by Cement Creek Road, to the City of Gunnison's service area on the south and extending to the western and eastern boundaries of the certificated service area of the Association.

**How to Become a Candidate:** To become nominated as a candidate for the GCEA's Board of Directors Election, an interested person must meet the qualifications for serving as a director and must timely submit a nomination petition signed by at least 15 members of GCEA. Signers do not have to live within your district. Additionally, GCEA strongly encourages any person interested in serving as a director to schedule an information/ orientation meeting with CEO Mike McBride.

**Candidate packets and petitions will be available February 13, 2025.**

To serve as a director, you must be a member of GCEA, reside within the district for which you are

nominated, and meet all other qualifications for serving as a director.

**DEADLINE:** Completed petitions must be returned to GCEA by **12:00 p.m./noon MDT on Monday, April 28, 2025.**

**Ballot Mailing Deadline:** In case of a contested election, ballots will be posted for mailing to members on Tuesday, May 27, 2025. Ballots are mailed to members of record as determined 60 days prior to the election date and sent to the member's main address on file. Ballots must be completed per instructions and, if returned by mail, must be received by the vote administrator by the day of the Annual Meeting, June 24, 2025. Any mailed ballots received after this deadline will be considered invalid.

**Electronic Voting:** Members have the option to vote electronically in case of a contested election. In case of a contested election, electronic voting instructions will be provided to all members of record in their mailed paper ballots.

Further voting details and deadlines will be relayed through various means, including emails, website postings, and newspaper advertisements, as the election gets closer.

**In-person Voting:** Members may vote in person on the day of the Annual Meeting beginning onsite at 5:00 p.m. and until the close of registration at 6:00 p.m. Voting by proxy is prohibited.

**Election Results:** In case of a contested election, we anticipate results will be announced within 5 business days following the June 24, 2025 annual meeting.

**For more information:** For complete information concerning the nomination process, please email Chief Executive Officer Mike McBride or Executive Assistant Sherry Shelton at [directorelections@gcea.coop](mailto:directorelections@gcea.coop) or call 970-641-3520.