

# Building a Better World Cooperatively

By **Trent Loutensock** General Manager

**W**hen you open your fridge and look at the milk, odds are good — 85% — that it came from a farmer-owned dairy cooperative. One out of every three Americans has an account at a cooperative-owned credit union. If you shop at Ace Hardware, that's a co-op, too!

There are plenty of co-ops out there, at least 65,000 in America and 3 million across the world. Some co-ops are owned by workers or farmers. Others are owned by businesses that pool resources. You — and everyone else we serve in Yuma and Washington counties — own Y-W Electric Association, Inc.

Co-ops make life better for everyone, from local businesses to the people who purchase electricity from us. But not everyone knows this story. To spread the word, the United Nations declared 2025 the International Year of Cooperatives. As we gear up to celebrate how cooperatives build a better world, I want to share how co-ops strengthen our community.

## WORKING TOGETHER WORKS

Co-ops are special. We're not just a company, and you're not just a customer. We're in this together. Our 3,700-plus members — that's you — elect our leaders and help guide our future. It's a big community project where everyone has a say. I hope you'll join us at our



next member meeting June 10. It's the best way to find out what's happening and get involved with your co-op.

## YOUR IDEAS MAKE US BETTER

Life never stands still. Your ideas help us innovate to meet changing local needs. Whether you send us an email or talk to us at a local event, we're all ears. Your thoughts help us grow and serve you better.

## WE'RE HERE TO SERVE YOU

Remember, you're not a number to us. You're a member-owner. That means we work for you, not some far-off shareholders. We're focused on what's best for our community because we live here, too.

## LOCALLY GROWN FOR COMMUNITY GROWTH

We provide electricity, but our co-op is about more than that. We connect people and businesses to possibilities.

As a member of Y-W Electric, you support local jobs, scholarships, and more. We put our money where our heart is — right here at home. We do more than provide a service; we help our neighborhoods thrive. Ryan W. & Susan K. Godsey 10421xxxxx

We've donated to our local fire departments, 4H clubs, FFA Chapters, and Energy Outreach Colorado in 2024. College scholarships from Y-W are helping 41



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## Y-W ELECTRIC MISSION

Y-W Electric Association is dedicated to providing high-quality, reliable electric service and related products to our members at competitive prices. Our members deserve and shall receive quality service unexcelled in our industry. We are committed to maintaining an environment where the Board of Directors and employees can perform at maximum potential to benefit our Y-W community.

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[ywelectric.coop](http://ywelectric.coop)

## YOUR CO-OP NEWS

students achieve their post-secondary goals this year. And we're working with local chambers of commerce to encourage businesses to invest in our community.

When we work together and keep it cooperative, we all win. Emilio & Federico Martinez 5320xxxxx

## READY TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD WITH CO-OPS?

Cooperation works. It keeps us connected, innovative, and focused on what matters — you and our community. Thanks for being part of our Y-W Electric family.



### UTILITY SCAMS TIP OF THE MONTH

Scammers will try anything to deceive utility customers, including a tactic that claims customers have overpaid their bill. If you receive a call, text or email from someone claiming you overpaid a utility bill and need to provide your banking or credit card information to receive a credit, it's likely a scam. In most cases, your utility will apply a credit to your account to cover future charges or refund an overpayment with a mailed check.

*Source: Utilities United Against Scams*

## Billing Corner Signing Up for Service

When a new customer comes into our office or calls on the phone to connect an account to his/her name, the information Y-W Electric Association collects at that time is very important. The application for service and membership is the same information we use to set up your membership account and billing records. Here are some situations that need to be considered when filling out the application:

If you are a married couple, and only one spouse's name is on the application, all bills, capital credit allocations, and future refunds will go to the one person whose name is on the account. If both parties sign the application, any capital credits accrued for that membership are considered jointly owned, and checks will be made payable to both names. Credit history will be recorded for the person(s) whose name is on our records.

If you are a roommate and paying part of the bill, but your name is not on the application, Y-W Electric has no record of you. When capital credit refund checks go out, they are made out to the person whose name appears

on the application. If you apply for service in the future, you would be considered a new consumer.

Paying the bill is the responsibility of the person(s) who signed the application. If a deposit is paid, any amount refunded will go to the name on the account. If the bill is not paid, this name goes to the collection agency.

Irrigation accounts are always connected into the landowner's name. Payment for electric usage on the service is ultimately the landowner's responsibility.

These are just a few of the things to consider when signing up for electric service with Y-W Electric. Your membership record is carefully created and monitored throughout your service term and for years beyond. Please consider carefully how you want our records to reflect your membership.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Y-W Electric office in Akron at 970-345-2291, or if outside our calling area, call 1-800-660-2291.

# Horses Gallop and So Can Power Lines

Ice may impact power transmission and distribution

**G**alloping power lines are typically caused when ice and high winds occur at the same time. Freezing rain creates icicles and odd-shaped ice formations on power lines and conductors. The ice buildup changes how wind and air impact the now misshapen, ice-covered line. This change in airflow can cause the power line to start to bounce.

Once the lines get going, they can bounce and buck enough to hit another line, damage themselves enough to cause a power outage, or even fall to the ground.

There is not much Y-W Electric Association can do to completely stop galloping lines since the wild motion is caused by Mother Nature. To help prevent this, many power lines have special mechanisms, such as twisted wire or round or angular pieces of metal, attached to the line. While they can help, sometimes they are no match for severe ice and whipping wind.

Aside from ice storms, year-round storms can cause damaging winds, which can knock down power lines and blow trees or limbs onto power lines. Keep the following safety tips in mind:

- When you see power lines on the ground, stay away, warn others to stay away, and contact the electric utility or 911. Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live.
- Any utility wire, including telephone or cable lines that is sagging or down, could be in contact with an energized power line, also making it dangerous. Do not try to guess the types of lines — stay away from all lines.
- Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide electrical hazards. Downed power lines can energize objects around them, such as chain-link fences and metal culverts.



- Keep in mind that a dead line could become energized during power restoration efforts or improper use of generators.
- Never drive over a downed line. It could start a chain reaction and cause additional poles or other equipment to collapse.
- If you are in a car that has contacted or is near a downed power line, stay in your vehicle. Wait until the utility crew has arrived and deenergized the line. Warn others not to approach the car.
- Only exit a car or cab near or on downed lines if there is a fire. If this happens, cross your arms over your chest and make a solid jump out and away from the car with both feet together. Then hop away at least 50 feet or more while continuing to keep both feet together.

Visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org) for more electrical safety information.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY  
TIP OF THE MONTH

If you have a home office, look for opportunities to save energy in your workspace. Use ENERGY STAR®-rated equipment - it consumes up to 50% less energy than standard models. Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life. Ron Kraich Jr. & Sandra Trimbach 20160xxxxx  
Source: [energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov)

# Power Outage and Restoration

Here in the United States, we are fortunate to have an advanced power grid in place. Power transmission and distribution is reliable in our country, and we are proud to deliver the electricity you depend on each day. Excluding outage times attributed to major weather or other catastrophic events, electricity consumers in our country typically experience only about two hours of total power interruptions per year, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. When outages due to major events are taken into consideration, EIA reports the total outage time at six hours per year. Shyla Hatch 43030xxxxx

What happens on our end when your power goes out? Rest assured we swing into action in a safe and efficient manner to ensure your power is restored. How long that takes depends on several factors: the extent of the storm's destruction, the number of outages, and how long it takes for our work crews to safely access the storm-damaged areas. We are careful to follow standard restoration procedures to ensure safety and get the job done right by:

- Assessing damage to utility equipment.
- Addressing immediate safety risks, including downed power lines.

## HOW POWER IS SAFELY RESTORED

Please know that when the power goes out, we are doing all we can to safely and efficiently restore power. Here are the steps we take in the assessment and restoration process:



- STEP 1: ASSESS THE DAMAGE**
- STEP 2: ADDRESS SAFETY RISKS**
- STEP 3: RESTORE ESSENTIAL SERVICES**
- STEP 4: PRIORITIZE REPAIRS**

- Ensuring that essential public health and safety facilities are operational.
- Prioritizing repairs that will restore power to the greatest number of people first.
- Evaluating power plants for damage and restoring them to working order.
- Repairing transmission lines that carry power to large areas. Frances Berggren 20020xxxxx
- Assessing and repairing substations, distribution lines and service lines to properties.

Thank you for your patience during power outages. In the event of an outage, we are working hard to restore power as safely and efficiently as possible, day and night.

For more information about preparing for outages or storms, or about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



**Win \$20  
OFF YOUR  
ELECTRIC BILL**

Each month, Y-W Electric Association offers its members a chance to earn a \$20 credit on their next electric bill. If you find your name and account number in this magazine, call 800-660-2291 and ask for your credit. It couldn't be easier.

Get acquainted with your account number, read your *Colorado Country Life* magazine, and pick up the phone. You must claim your credit during the month in which your name appears in the magazine. (Check the date on the front cover.)

Winners claiming \$20 from the December issue:

Ty & Dawn George, Ashley Pruitt, Bruce & Rhonda Prentice, and Jan Hall.