

[MCREA News]

Thinking About Solar or Other Renewables? Please Follow the Process.

DAVE HENDERSON || DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS



Dave Henderson

Summer has returned to Colorado — time to enjoy the warmer weather and get busy with outdoor work and activities. It's also historically the time of the year when interest in adding solar or other renewable applications climbs.

Morgan County Rural Electric Association is committed to fully supporting our members who choose to add renewable applications to their homes, farms and businesses.

Unfortunately, we have seen situations recently where the planning and/or construction of solar systems began — and in some cases were completed — before we were made aware that the renewable systems were being added.

Morgan County REA cautions against electric systems being installed that are not planned and installed by a certified installation company or with the coordination of the utility. For a multitude of safety reasons, the addition of power generators (renewable systems) to our lines without our knowledge or approval prior to construction and interconnection to our infrastructure is not permitted.

In accordance with MCREA policy and applicable laws, the cooperative mandates that all renewable installations meet required application and permitting processes. To keep everyone safe, the cooperative will determine what measures are needed for renewable system installations that do not have proper applications and permitting. These could range from a delay in constructing and/or connecting the renewable generator (for systems not yet tied to MCREA's grid) to disconnecting service to members until all requirements are met (if the renewable generator is connected to MCREA's lines).

Unfortunately, these procedures are necessary to keep all our members and employees safe. While it may look simple to throw some panels up on the roof and hook them up, there are a lot of risks involved with the process. Here are just a few of them.

If Morgan County REA does not know you put the system in, it poses a real risk to our lineworkers during maintenance work or outage restoration. Not having an interconnection agreement with MCREA or the appropriate inverter would turn your system into a mini power plant that would not shut down during

a power outage. Your system could feed energy back onto a line and injure or kill a worker if we don't know it's in operation.

Installation of a solar photovoltaic system is like any other electric installation in your home — it can be dangerous if not installed correctly. If the installer is not licensed or properly trained and makes a mistake during installation, they could suffer an injury, such as burns, falls and electric shocks. There is also the risk of a fire if the unit is poorly installed. Like any electrical work in your home, your homeowner's insurance will want to know that the unit is properly installed before paying any claim for damage.

Additionally, solar installations are subject to federal, state and local permit requirements, along with an interconnection agreement with the utility. Just as you need permits for other home improvements, a solar system requires multiple permits. The permitting process makes certain your system is installed correctly, meeting all the electrical and/or plumbing requirements.

Electricity production is a regulated industry, so you're not legally allowed to connect your system to an existing grid without appropriate inspections. The interconnection agreement with MCREA helps to clarify your relationship with the co-op, and it allows you to take advantage of Morgan County REA's net metering program.

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An application and inspection process is necessary for renewable energy systems to ensure proper installation and interconnection.

MCREA IN ACTION



MCREA Member Services Representative Bill Annan presents an educational seminar May 22 to Baker Central third-grade students. This was one of several demonstrations presented throughout the day using a tabletop electric safety display to emphasize the importance of electric safety awareness at home and on the farm.



MCREA line crews rebuild existing power lines and poles. The work will continue throughout the year. (Lanett R. Schlidt, acct #xxx8400)

MCREA Announces Lineworker Scholarship Recipients

One of the many ways Morgan County REA recognizes the importance of the seventh cooperative principle — concern for community — is through its scholarship programs, including the lineworker scholarships awarded by the association.

The cooperative is pleased to announce that Trever Forbes and Gerardo Miranda, both from Fort Morgan, were each selected to receive a \$7,500 Morgan County REA electric lineworker scholarship. Proceeds from Morgan County REA's annual Invitational Golf Tournament are used to fund the lineworker scholarship program.

Scholarship recipients are selected by a committee from the MCREA operations department. The committee's decisions are based on a number of factors, including academics, school and community participation, work experiences, and a student statement of goals and aspirations.

Qualified applicants must reside in Morgan County REA's service area and be currently enrolled or plan to attend an approved lineworker training program as a full-time student. MCREA's service area includes all of Morgan County and portions of Logan, Weld, Adams, Arapahoe and Washington counties. Scholarship recipients are not required to work at Morgan County REA after graduating lineworker school.

Both Trever and Gerardo attended Fort Morgan High School and began their lineman training in June at Western Nebraska Community College Power Line School in Alliance.

Congratulations to Trever and Gerardo from everyone at Morgan County REA.



Gerardo Miranda



Trever Forbes

MCREA OFFICE CLOSED ON INDEPENDENCE DAY

Morgan County REA headquarters will be closed on Wednesday, July 4, 2018. MCREA wishes one and all a happy and safe Independence Day.

MORGAN COUNTY REA PAYMENT OPTIONS

Online Options via www.mcrea.org utilizing SmartHub

- Pay with e-check (deduction directly from your bank account). Available for all rate classes.
- Pay with credit card (large power and industrial accounts excluded).



24 Hour Pay-by-Phone

Call the automated payment line at 877-495-6487 (24 hours a day, 365 days a year). Pay via one of two methods:

- Pay with e-check (deduction directly from your bank account). Available for all rate classes. PIN required. Call MCREA's billing department to receive your PIN at 970-867-5688.
- Pay with credit card (large power and industrial accounts excluded).

Recurring ACH — Automatic Withdrawal

- Call the MCREA billing department at 970-867-5688 to sign up for this payment option. Provide your bank information and every month on the 15th (excluding weekends and holidays) MCREA will automatically draft your bank account.

Recurring Credit Card Automatic Payments

- Contact MCREA billing at 970-867-5688 and sign up for automatic credit card payments. Provide your credit card information and MCREA will automatically process charges every month on the 15th (excluding weekends and holidays).

Payment Drop Off Locations

Morgan County REA Office
734 Barlow Road
Fort Morgan, CO 80701

TBK Bank
550 E. Woodward Avenue
Keenesburg, CO 80643

Payment Drop Box
4917 Highway 79
Keenesburg, CO 80643

High Plains Bank
502 W. Central Avenue
Wiggins, CO 80654

Farmers State Bank of Brush
200 Clayton Street
Brush, CO 80723

Bank of Colorado
301 Clayton Street
Brush, CO 80723

Roggen Telephone Co-op
519 Front Street
Roggen, CO 80652

Tips for Healthier Meals

BY ALLISON GOLDBERG

Instead of focusing on what to remove from your meals, try adding a few new habits to make your meals healthier.

- Add more vegetables the easy and tasty way. Grab the micro-wavable steam bags from the freezer section. Top with your favorite herbs or a sprinkle of cheese to make them tastier.
- Don't enjoy soft vegetables? Grab hard vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, carrots or sweet potatoes. Wash, cut into bite-size pieces, toss in a little olive oil, salt, garlic and herbs then roast at 425 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes for crunchy-tender veggies.
- Sautéed veggies, like mushrooms, peppers, onions and other favorites, add flavor to your eggs and provide nutrients to power your day. Add avocado to your sandwich for a dose of healthy fats and good cholesterol.
- Not a fan of vegetables at all? Consider hiding your veggies in foods like pasta sauce, meatballs and more. Search online for "hidden vegetable recipes."
- Instead of refined flour pasta, try whole grain pasta or legume-based pastas, like chickpea, black bean or red lentil. These pastas are higher in fiber, which can help you feel fuller longer. You can even mix them half and half with traditional pasta.
- Add more protein and fiber to your diet by trying quinoa instead of rice. Though the calorie counts are similar, quinoa has more protein and fiber than brown rice.
- When sautéing, replace butter or coconut oil with olive oil to trade saturated fats for healthier fats. (Kelly Glenn, acct #xxx7200)
- Beat the midafternoon sugar craving. Keep apples, tangerines, berries or another favorite fruit on hand to satisfy your need for sugar; eat your fruit with peanut or almond butter for extra protein and fat to keep you feeling full after your snack. If you're craving chocolate, try a vanilla or chocolate Greek yogurt (with active cultures) and add some dark chocolate chips, nuts and berries. You'll feel like you're indulging while giving your body important nutrients, like probiotics, calcium and an array of vitamins and minerals.
- Drink more water. Increasing your water intake can help curb cravings, boost your energy and support every single system in your body, including your immune system. By drinking more water, you'll likely think clearer and digest food easier, and your joints and muscles will feel better. Try adding fruit or mint leaves to your water or cut your favorite juices by mixing them with an equal amount of still or sparkling water.

Allison Goldberg writes and edits employee benefits-related materials for the insurance and financial services department of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

Thinking About Solar?

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If you have a generating system that was installed without securing the necessary permits, or are operating without an interconnection agreement with MCREA, please contact us immediately to find out how we can help you get your system into compliance.

Morgan County REA's interconnection agreement is easy to find on our website or may be obtained by calling MCREA's member services department at 970-867-5688. For the safety of everyone involved, we urge anyone thinking about adding a solar or other renewable system to call us prior to moving forward with the purchase and construction.

We appreciate the support and cooperation of our members in keeping everyone safe. Have a great rest of the summer.

WIN \$25 OFF YOUR ELECTRIC BILL

Each month Morgan County REA gives two lucky members a \$25 credit on their electric bill, just by reading *Colorado Country Life*.

Congratulations, **Curtis Deal** (account #xxx2600) and **Robert and Sandra Pogorelz** (account #xxx6800). You saw your names and account numbers in the May edition of *Colorado Country Life*. You both received a \$25 credit on your electric bill.

There are two more MCREA member names and their account numbers hidden somewhere in this issue. If you find your name and account number, call member services at 970-867-5688 by July 31 to claim a \$25 credit on your electric bill.

Install and Maintain Irrigation Systems Safely

In some regions, irrigation systems are essential to deliver vital water to crops. Safe Electricity urges proper installation for new systems and regular maintenance for existing systems. Ensure everyone's safety by taking these measures:

- Do not store, handle or assemble irrigation pipes under or near overhead power lines.
- Make sure everyone in the area, including children, understands the danger of moving pipes near power lines. Efforts to free animals from pipes by lifting them upright have proven deadly for young people.
- Avoid moving pipes in windy conditions. People have been killed when the relatively light aluminum pipe they held blew into power lines.
- Keep pipes at least 10 feet away from the lines — above, below and to the sides — at all times. If an irrigation pipe makes contact with a power line, stay far away and warn others to stay away. Call 911 or Morgan County REA to report the location.
- Have a qualified electrician install your system and inspect the pump and wiring before the start of each irrigation season.
- Make sure irrigation systems with electric motors are adequately grounded with copper piping. If there's a lightning strike or a short in the system, having the system grounded provides a safe path for a surge of electricity to ground, rather than energizing the equipment or passing through a person who may come in contact with the equipment. This also prevents energizing the ground around the equipment.



Keep irrigation equipment a safe distance from power lines.

- Make sure the system is positioned at least 15 feet away from power lines when operating, and position the water jet streams so there is no chance they will spray power lines.
- If lines do come in contact with water from the sprayer, make sure no one approaches the system because the power line can transmit electricity to the irrigation system. Ensure the system is off before adjusting jets to spray away from lines.

For more information on irrigation and electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.