

MORGAN COUNTY REA ANNUAL MEETING

BY JAMIE PLAKORUS COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Morgan County Rural Electric Association held its annual meeting on Tuesday, March 23, at 6 p.m. via telephone town hall again this year due to COVID-19 restrictions on in-person events. Once you registered online, you were called on the evening of the meeting just before 6 p.m. to hear all of our reports and what has been happening at Morgan County REA over the past year.

President Cary Wickstrom reported that the board of directors approved a budget for 2021 that had no rate increase, making this the fifth year straight. The board also approved a patronage capital retirement of \$4 million last year. This retirement was \$1.25 million more than 2019 and \$1.5 million more than the 2018 patronage capital retirement. (Peter and Barbara Begler, account #xxx6700) The three director candidates who petitioned for the available board seats ran unopposed and were unanimously voted in for three-year terms. The director candidates were Cary Wickstrom, Terry Tormohlen and Brian Pabst.

General Manager Dave Frick spoke about how proud he is of the employees at Morgan County REA and the adjustments they made over the past year because of mandates during this difficult time. Dave welcomed five new employees to the cooperative and also thanked three retirees for their years of service. There were some role changes for some employees last year as well. Rob Baranowski moved into the position of manager of member services, leaving his role as GIS specialist. I became the communications specialist, moving from the role as member services specialist.

Dave reported that Morgan County REA continues to work hard on safety. He went on to say that the internal joint health and safety committee worked this past year on communication and became better at discussing safety proactively.

Dave spoke about making our system more resilient. One of the ways we work on this is through our four-year construction work plan. The main focus is strengthening our infrastructure for load growth and improved reliability. This past year we installed 224 new services and retired 30. We built 62 miles of new power lines and retired 34 miles of line.

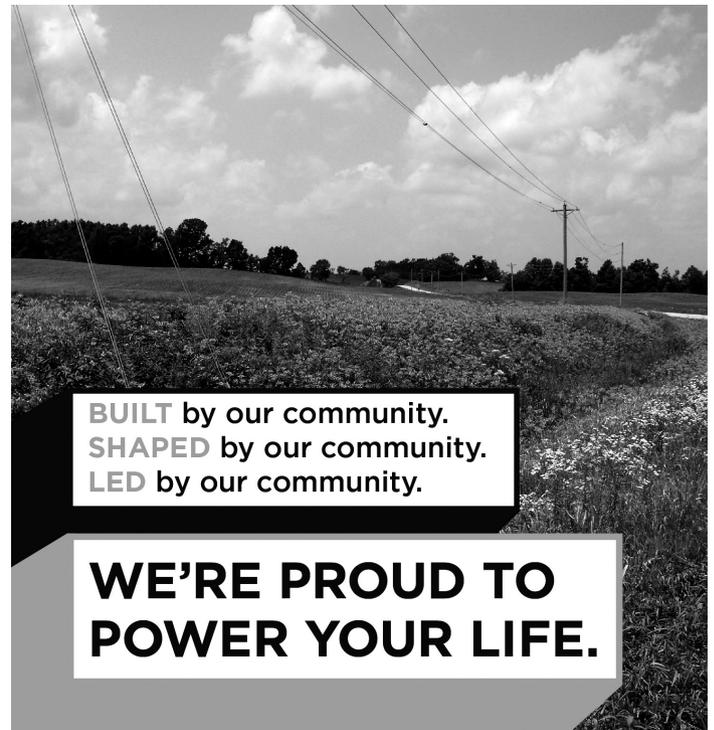
Dave gave an update on our net metering program. Morgan County REA now has 28 member-installed, small-scale renewable energy systems in its service territory. There are 26 solar and two wind systems bringing the total kilowatts offset to 251.5.

The last thing Dave addressed was the work we will be asking of our consumer-members on occasion, due to our legislators and commissions making decisions that affect the cost of electricity without really knowing some of the ways it will cost their constituents. We are continually monitoring these things that will impact our association.

Our best effort to combat these initiatives will be to call upon you as consumer-members of the association from time to time. These grassroots efforts many times have a good outcome. We are putting together that exact grassroots effort to ensure our association flourishes as it has for 84 years.

The financial report delivered by Robb Shaver, office services manager, indicated that Morgan County REA continued to be in sound financial condition in 2020, with operating revenues of just over \$46 million and total cost of electric service at \$39.7 million. Shaver also noted that MCREA had an operating margin — or total revenues minus total expenditures — of \$3.9 million for 2020.

All of the meeting materials can be viewed on our website at www.mcrea.org.



 This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

National Lineworker Appreciation Day

Every year, we take a day to thank our lineworkers who are dedicated to keeping the lights on in our homes, farms and businesses. Morgan County Rural Electric Association's lineworkers maintain nearly 2,900 miles of line and more than 8,700 meters in MCREA's service territory.

We depend on our entire staff to keep Morgan County REA running smoothly, but on April 12, 2021, we honor our lineworkers who can find themselves in dangerous and challenging situations so that our lives may be a little bit brighter and safer every day.

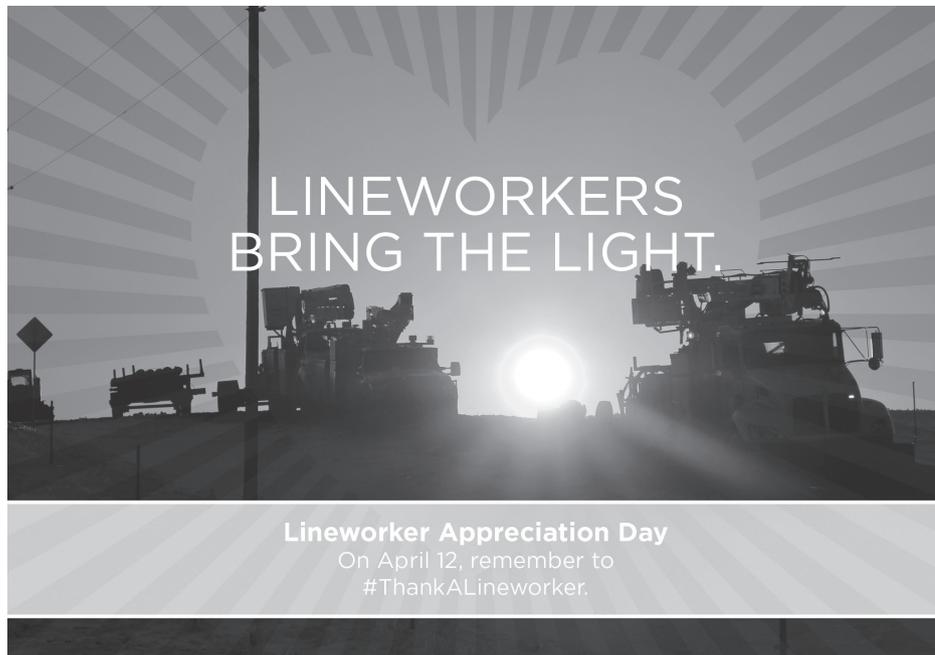
MCREA's lineworkers repair damaged lines and maintain critical infrastructure for our members and communities. Without their hard work and commitment to the job, our association would not thrive. No matter the time — day or night, weekday or

weekend — if the lights go out, so do they.

Perhaps you have seen them driving their bucket trucks in howling winds and torrential rains, or in freezing, icy conditions. (Howard Hettinger, acct #xxx5100) They work around the clock near high-voltage power lines until electricity is restored to every member in our association.

In addition to aiding members in our local service territory, lineworkers are always willing and eager to volunteer when a neighboring community, county or state is in need after a major outage occurs.

We hope you will join us in thanking the many lineworkers — both at MCREA and around the country — on April 12. Please use #ThankALineworker on social media to show your support.



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, Matt Baker (account # xxx8500), you saw your name and account number in the February edition of *Colorado Country Life*. You received a \$25 credit on your bill.

Sorry, Rebecca Harmon-Snellor (account # xxx4600), you didn't see your name and account number in the February edition of *Colorado Country Life* and therefore didn't receive a \$25 credit on your 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 April 30 to claim a \$25 credit on your electric bill.



April 2021

Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Some manufacturers set water heater thermostats at 140 degrees, but most households usually only require them to be set at 120 degrees. Consider lowering your water heater's temperature to save energy and slow mineral buildup in the heater and pipes.

Source: energy.gov

TAKE FLIGHT—SAFELY

Kites and model airplanes should be flown only during good weather conditions in large open areas, like an open park or a wide field. Keep kites away from overhead power lines or other electrical equipment, such as substations. If a kite gets stuck in a tree near power lines, do not climb up to get it. Electricity can travel down kite strings or wires. Contact MCREA for assistance.

For more information about power line safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

MCREA's Directors Achieve Credentials

in Today's Electric Utility Competencies

Terry Tormohlen, director at Morgan County REA, recently received the Board Leadership Certificate, and Terry Linker, director at MCREA, recently received the Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

An ever-changing business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative directors, requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and a solid knowledge of the cooperative principles and business model. MCREA has a commitment to work through NRECA to sharpen this body of knowledge for the benefit of their electric cooperative consumer-members.

The NRECA Board Leadership Certificate recognizes individuals who continue their professional development after becoming a Credentialed Cooperative Director. Directors who attained the BLC have completed 10 credits in advanced, issues-oriented courses.

The NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director program requires attendance and demonstrates understanding of the basic competencies contained in five core courses:

- Director duties and liabilities
- Understanding the electric business
- Board operations and processes
- Strategic planning
- Financial decision making

NRECA represents the nation's more than 900 private, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, which provide electric services to more than 42 million people in 47 states, with over 7,200 directors. MCREA serves 4,624 members.



▲ Cutline...



▲ Cutline...



2021 MCREA SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Congratulations to these nine outstanding young people who were selected to receive post-secondary college or vocational scholarships by the Morgan County REA scholarship committee:



Paige Boyer

Wiggins High School
\$1,000 MCREA
Scholarship



Ella Christensen

Fort Morgan High School
\$500 Tri-State Generation
and Transmission Scholarship



Tess Frasco

Fort Morgan High School
\$1,000 MCREA
Scholarship



Breanne Gilliland

Wiggins High School
\$1,000 MCREA Scholarship



Ellianna Hueftle

Brush High School
\$1,000 Basin Electric Power
Scholarship



Kaytlyn Keating

Weldon Valley High School
\$1,000 MCREA Scholarship



Madelynn Olivas

Weld Central High School
\$500 Tri-State Generation
and Transmission Scholarship



Wyatt Patton

Oklahoma Wesleyan University
\$1,000 MCREA Postsecondary
Scholarship

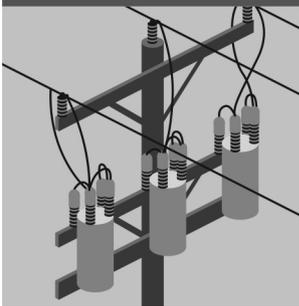


Kalai Unrein

Brush High School
\$1,000 MCREA Scholarship

The Pros and Cons of **OVERHEAD AND UNDERGROUND POWER LINES**

OVERHEAD



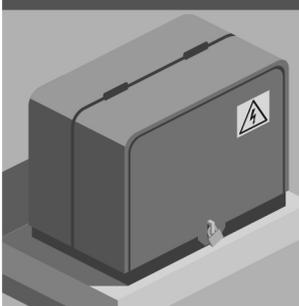
PROS:

- Less expensive to build and repair
- Easier to spot faults/damage
- Can be built on any terrain

CONS:

- Susceptible to wind, ice and snow
- More vulnerable to damage from trees and vegetation
- More vulnerable to blinks caused by animals
- Susceptible to damage from vehicle collisions

UNDERGROUND



PROS:

- Less susceptible to vehicle collisions
- Not impacted by trees, wind, ice and snow
- Less vulnerable to blinks caused by animals

CONS:

- More expensive to build and repair
- Susceptible to flooding
- Difficult to locate faults/damage
- Vulnerable to damage from digging