

DIRECTOR BRIAN SCHLAGEL RETIRES

Morgan County Rural Electric Association wants to thank and recognize a dedicated and long-serving board member who retired after moving out of MCREA's service territory in 2020. Brian Schlagel was first elected to the Morgan County REA Board of Directors in 1990, and has been an exceptionally active director.



He served as board president from 1997 to 1999. He also served as treasurer from 1992-1993, secretary from 1994 to 1995, and vice president in 1996 and 2004. During his time on the board, Schlagel played an instrumental role in guiding Morgan County REA's mission with his expertise and insights.

In addition to his directorship for Morgan County REA from 1990 through 2020, Schlagel also represented Morgan County REA on the Colorado Rural Electric Association Board of Directors from 1992 to 2005, serving as the statewide president from 2002 to 2004, and on the Tri-State Generation and Transmission Board of Directors from 2005 until his retirement in 2020. Schlagel was also elected to represent our four-state region as a director of the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation in Dulles, Virginia, where he served as chairman of the finance advisory committee and secretary. He was also being elected to the board of

the Rural Telephone Finance Cooperative.

Schlagel expressed his gratitude to the membership for the trust they showed in him over the past 30 years. He mentioned he had the pleasure of serving with 17 different MCREA directors, three managers, and two attorneys, and remarked that, without exception, everyone worked selflessly to ensure the cooperative prospered, with the goal of providing reliable and affordable electricity while improving the quality of life for our membership. Thinking back over his past 30 years of service, he reflected, "The most rewarding experience has been the friendships and relationships with outstanding individuals all across the nation. Working with the dedicated people within the rural electrification program and the education, growth and opportunity it provided has been one of the highlights of my professional life. I am confident that MCREA's future remains bright considering the talented manager, staff and employees working together with an excellent group of directors. I would like to thank them all for the friendships and consideration they have provided to Diane and me through the years and wish them well."

Schlagel and his wife, Diane, lived in and represented District One in the Prospect Valley area until moving in 2020 in order to be closer to their family. He and Diane had owned Schlagel Farms since 1971 and are retired from active production agriculture.

All of us at Morgan County REA extend our thanks and gratitude to former Director Schlagel for his years of service and commitment to the association. He will be missed and fondly remembered.

PLEASE MOVE OVER FOR ROADSIDE CREWS

If you see police, firefighters, utility crews or other emergency personnel on the side of the road, please slow down and move over when possible.

Together, we can keep our crews safe.



MORGAN COUNTY REA
84TH ANNUAL MEETING

TELEPHONE TOWN HALL MEETING

Due to COVID-19 gathering size restrictions, the MCREA Annual Meeting has been changed to a Telephone Town Hall Meeting format, which will take place on March 23, 2021, starting at 6 p.m. Director elections will take place at MCREA's annual meeting.

Lineworker Scholarship

Application deadline coming soon

Morgan County Rural Electric Association is once again proud to offer lineworker scholarship(s) to assist individuals in establishing a career in the power industry. This year, Morgan County REA is looking to award \$5,000 scholarship(s) for students to attend linework school in the fall.

Qualified applicants must reside within the boundaries of MCREA's service area, and attend or will attend an approved lineworker training program as a full-time student. MCREA's service area boundary in northeastern Colorado includes all of Morgan County and portions of Logan, Weld, Adams, Arapahoe and Washington counties.



Lineworkers perform a hotline changeout and pole top rescue

Scholarship recipients are selected by a committee comprised of members of 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. In addition to filling out the application, candidates will be required to participate in an interview process prior to selection for the scholarship. Scholarship recipients are not required to work at MCREA after graduating lineworker school. There are no age restrictions to apply for a lineworker scholarship.

Completed application materials may be delivered in person to:
MCREA Headquarters
734 Barlow Road
Fort Morgan, CO 80701

Or mailed to:
Lineworker Scholarship Committee
Morgan County REA
P.O. Box 738
Fort Morgan, CO 80701

Completed application materials must be postmarked or delivered to the MCREA offices by February 26, 2021. A complete scholarship packet may be picked up at MCREA headquarters, by calling member services at 970-867-5688 or online at www.mcrea.org.

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, Robert and Bethany Grupp (account # xxx8100) and James and Astrid Brown (account #xxx2100), you saw your names and account numbers in the December edition of *Colorado Country Life*. You received 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 February 28 to claim a \$25 credit on your electric bill.



February 2021

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Use wool or rubber dryer balls in the clothes dryer to reduce drying time and static. Wool dryer balls can also absorb extra moisture. These are an efficient alternative to dryer sheets, which can create buildup on the dryer's filter and reduce air circulation. If you prefer dryer sheets, scrub the filter once a month to remove buildup.

Source: energy.gov

■ Morgan County REA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

BE AWARE OF POSSIBLE SOLAR ENERGY SCAMS

BY ABBY BERRY

Solar energy is booming, and the future is brighter than ever. Through the use of rooftop solar panels, many homeowners can now harness the sun's natural rays to produce their own electricity that's environmentally friendly and cost effective.

But with the increasing popularity of solar, unfortunately, some businesses are taking advantage of consumers who are interested in generating their own energy through rooftop panels.

While many solar companies are genuine and truly want to help consumers with a successful solar installation, there are the occasional bad apples.

You likely heard a story or two about solar vendors that promised rooftop panels that would generate (Rebecca Harmon-Sneller, acct#xxx4600) enough electricity to power the entire home. Then, after the homeowner pays thousands of dollars

for the installation, the solar panels aren't working and the vendor is nowhere to be found. Sadly, this story has been the reality for many consumers.

If you're interested in solar panels for your home, consider these tips before installation:

- Talk to Rob Baranowski, manager of member services, at Morgan County REA first. We want you to feel confident about any decisions you make about your home energy use, especially decisions about generating energy at home.
- Collect at least three quotes from different solar companies to ensure you're getting a competitive deal. As with any major purchase, research is key, so thoroughly read customer reviews for each of the three solar vendors.
- If you speak to a solar vendor and they use high-pressure tactics — like an offer that's only good for 24 hours — run. Any

reputable solar company will recognize that you need time to review a proposal and thoroughly weigh your decision.

- You know if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. So, if a solar company is making promises that sound unachievable and outlandish, they probably are. Remember, if you have any questions, you can always count on Morgan County REA for advice.
- Finally, when it's time to review and sign a solar contract, make sure the language is clear and easy to understand. Ensure any prior verbal (or emailed) promises are also included in the contract.

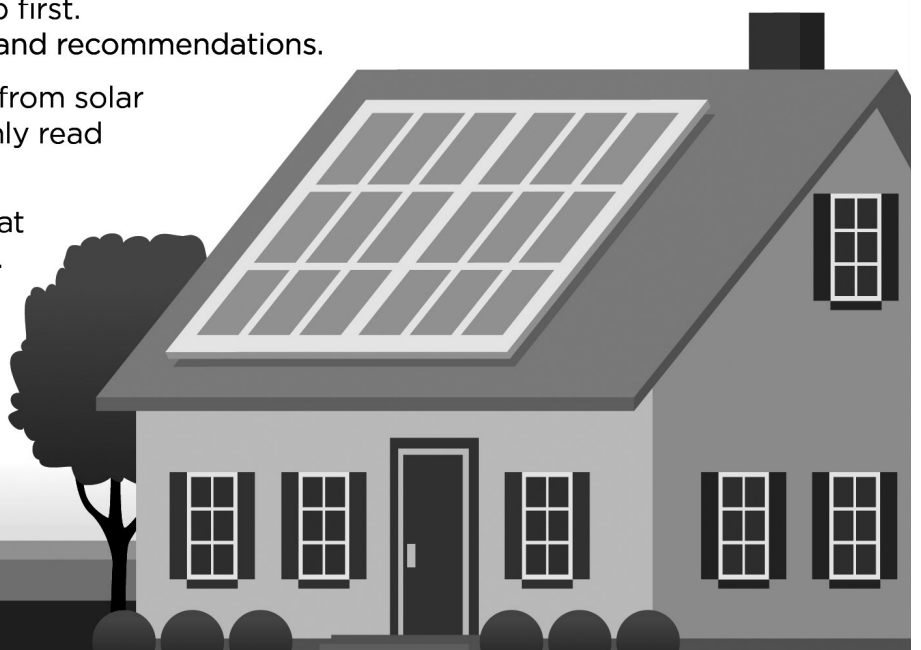
Going solar is a major decision, so you'll want to conduct a good bit of research first. If you're looking for a general starting point, check out the U.S. Department of Energy's Homeowner's Guide to Going Solar.

Abby Berry is a program analyst for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

TIPS FOR AVOIDING SOLAR SCAMS

As the popularity of rooftop solar panels increases, so do solar scams. Here are a few tips to consider before you install a solar PV system for your home.

- Talk to your electric co-op first. They can offer guidance and recommendations.
- Get at least three quotes from solar companies, and thoroughly read their reviews.
- Avoid solar companies that use high-pressure tactics.
- Don't believe unrealistic promises.
- Only sign clear, easy-to-understand contracts.



Unclaimed & Uncashed CAPITAL CREDITS

At its regular meeting in October, the Morgan County REA Board of Directors authorized patronage capital retirements totaling \$4 million for a complete retirement of 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 and partial retirement of 2013 MCREA allocations, along with a complete retirement of 2002 and partial retirement of 2003 generation and transmission margin allocations. In December, consumer-members from those years were sent a capital credits check in the mail, reflecting their contribution of capital to, and ownership of, the cooperative during those years. (Matt Baker, acct#xxx8500)

It is not unusual for MCREA to have unclaimed or uncashed capital credits checks from its margin allocations. In some cases, letters containing refunds were returned due to lack of current address. MCREA also has instances in which capital credits checks are never cashed.

Received your check? If you have not received a capital credit check, and you were a MCREA consumer-member in 2002, 2003, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013, please contact us to verify that we have your current address to ensure that your capital credits check finds you. For more information or questions, please call our office at 970-867-5688 or email customerservice@mcrea.org.



Space heating and cooling account for a large portion of the average home's energy use. A programmable or smart thermostat can help you control the temperature of your home and save energy.

POWER OUT?

22 WAYS TO UNPLUG

If you are trying to keep yourself (or others) entertained during a power outage, save the battery power on your phones and other electronics for emergencies or weather updates, and consider some of these "unplugged" activities instead:

FUN FOR KIDS



Read a book



Play board or card games



Look at old photos



Tell ghost stories



Make shadow figures



Make a fort out of boxes and blankets



Sing your favorite songs



Play Simon Says

GET CREATIVE

- Write a story.
- Make up jokes.
- Draw or paint a picture.
- Set up an indoor bowling alley with plastic cups as pins.
- Fix something around the house.

PRACTICE SELF CARE

- Take a nap.
- Paint your nails.
- Go for a run or hike.
- Check in on your neighbors.
- Practice a skill, such as a second language, sewing, knitting, or tying knots.

AROUND THE HOUSE



Clean and organize your house



Rearrange your furniture



Fold laundry or organize your closet



Plant seeds or tidy up your yard

