

[MCREA News]

MCREA BRINGS NO BARRIERS PROGRAM TO DISABLED VETERANS

Did you know that people from rural America historically make up a large share of the nation's military personnel? According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, over 5 million of the 22 million veterans in the United States come from rural communities. Of those, more than 40 percent have service-related disabilities.



Veterans participate in a previous No Barriers program.

Morgan County Rural Electric Association is teaming up with its financial partner, CoBank, a cooperative bank serving agribusinesses, rural infrastructure providers and Farm Credit associations throughout the United States, to sponsor the No Barriers Warriors program to rural veterans with disabilities. The two cooperatives are inviting disabled veterans from MCREA's service territory to take part in the program, which is offered through a partnership with the nonprofit organization No Barriers USA.

Participating veterans will go on wilderness expeditions in Colorado that challenge them physically and mentally and help them overcome the obstacles they face in their daily lives. No Barriers Warriors improves the lives of veterans with disabilities through transformative, curriculum-based expeditions in challenging outdoor environments.

The No Barriers Warriors expedition is designed to push veterans mentally and physically in some of nature's most incredible wilderness settings. No Barriers encourages participants to reflect on their past, recognize where they are in the present and then look with positivity toward the future. The



One No Barriers warrior celebrates pushing past an obstacle.

experience serves as a catalyst for change as veterans stretch boundaries, innovate through adversity and build lifelong relationships.

Morgan County REA will nominate disabled veterans to participate in the program; CoBank will cover the full cost of participation for up to 50 veterans, including travel expenses; and No Barriers Warriors will oversee the expeditions. The expeditions will take place in July and August of 2018.

Morgan County REA encourages any disabled veterans who are interested in participating in the No Barriers Warriors program to contact MCREA's member services department by calling 970-867-5688 or visiting the No Barriers page at www.mcrea.org. A Morgan County REA representative will follow up with the veteran to facilitate the nomination process.

Interested veterans are not required to be MCREA members (receive electric service from Morgan County REA) to be considered, but they must live within the boundaries of MCREA's service territory to be nominated by Morgan County REA and have a disability rating. Nominations will be accepted through April 15, 2018, and selected participants will be announced on Friday, June 8. Space is limited for the program and expeditions are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. However, there is no limit to how many veterans Morgan County REA may nominate.

If you are a veteran living with a disability or you know one who is, we encourage you to contact us. It's a great opportunity to help those who have fought for our freedom.

NATIONAL LINEMAN 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 8,300 meters in MCREA's service territory.

We depend on our entire staff to keep Morgan County REA running smoothly, but on April 9, 2018, we honor our lineworkers who can find themselves in dangerous and challenging situations, so our lives may be a little bit brighter and safer every day.

MCREA's linemen repair damaged lines and maintain critical infrastructure for our members and communities. Without their hard work and commitment to the job, our co-op would not thrive. No matter the time — day or night, weekday or weekend — if the lights go out, so do they. *(Leon and Debra Erker, acct #xxx9900)*

Perhaps you have seen them driving their bucket trucks in howling winds and torrential rains, or in freezing, icy conditions. They work around the clock near high-voltage power lines until electricity is restored to every member in our co-op community.

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 9**. Please use **#ThankALineman** on social media to show your support.



MCREA linemen work for you, our members.

MCREA 2018 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:



Halle Shaver
Fort Morgan High School
\$1,000 MCREA Scholarship



Courtney Patton
Briggsdale High School
\$1,000 MCREA Scholarship



Jonathan Gertner
Fort Morgan High School
\$1,000 MCREA Scholarship



Kelsey Shaver
Fort Morgan High School
\$1,000 MCREA Scholarship



Madeline Rule
Fort Morgan High School
\$1,000 MCREA Scholarship



Jalen Jole
Morgan Community College
\$1,000 MCREA Post-secondary Scholarship



Hannah Kipp
Weld Central High School
\$1,000 Basin Electric Power Scholarship



Skyla Miller
Briggsdale High School
\$500 Tri-State Generation and Transmission Scholarship



Britney Filter
Weldon Valley High School
\$500 Tri-State Generation and Transmission Scholarship

Youth Tour and Leadership Camp Delegates Selected

Each summer, Morgan County REA sends one area student to the National Rural Electric Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. The Youth Tour is an opportunity for high school students to learn about our government in a week of educational and fun events. Students from all over the United States, sponsored by their local rural electric cooperatives, converge to tour the exciting sites around the capital as well as meet with industry and government officials.

Andrew Littlefield from Prairie High School was chosen to represent MCREA at the 2018 Youth Tour in June. Approximately 1,800 students attend the event annually.

Littlefield's journey will begin with a day in Denver, touring the Capitol and Tri-State Generation and Transmission and learning about electric co-ops. The following morning, students will fly to Washington, D.C., where they will spend six days visiting the White House, U.S. Capitol, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, Holocaust Museum, Smithsonian museums and Arlington National Cemetery. Highlights of the Youth Tour also include visiting with Colorado's U.S. senators and representatives and getting to know other high school students from across the country.

Morgan County REA will also sponsor two youth representatives to attend the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp near Steamboat Springs.



Andrew Littlefield



Katelynn Fearnot



Anthony Picciano

Katelynn Fearnot from Fort Morgan High School and **Anthony Picciano**, who resides in the Stoneham area and attends Monte Vista On-Line Academy, were selected to represent Morgan County REA at the 2018 Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp at Glen Eden Resort in July. More than 100 students from Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas and Oklahoma attend the camp each year.

Leadership Camp is designed to provide a better understanding of cooperatives, energy prices and legislative processes. Educationally, participants are stimulated by the challenge of running a simulated co-op. From the time they arrive, they are busy electing a board of directors, general manager and several committees. All profits the co-op (i.e., concession stand) makes are redistributed to the members as "capital credits" at the end of camp.

Other activities at Leadership Camp include a volleyball tournament, barbecue, pool party, dance, gondola ride to Mount Werner and Steamboat Village, and tours of Trapper Mine and Craig Power Plant.

Students applied for either the Youth Tour or Leadership Camp by filling out an application and completing an essay on a topic chosen from a list provided by MCREA. Finalists also went through an interview process.

Congratulations, Andrew, Katelynn and Anthony, from everyone at Morgan County REA.

MCREA Welcomes New Employee



Bev Morford

Morgan County REA welcomes **Bev Morford** as the cooperative's engineering and operations secretary.

Bev graduated from Clearfield High School in Utah and attained her administrative assistant certification from Chaparral College in Tucson, Arizona. She moved to Fort Morgan in 1996, where she worked for the Fort Morgan School District for 14 years and as the assistant to the chief of the Fort Morgan Police Department for more than five years.

Bev's first day at Morgan County REA was February 12. She and her husband, Jeff, continue to live in the Fort Morgan area and have two daughters.

Join us in welcoming Bev to the Morgan County REA family.

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, **Arthur B. Moreland** (account # xxx5500) and **Larry and Leslie Cash** (account # xxx8500). You saw your names and account numbers in the February 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 April 30 to claim a \$25 credit on your electric bill.

MCREA TALKS CO-OP CAREERS WITH STUDENTS



Geoff Baumgartner (standing) explains career options at co-ops.

Morgan County REA employees had the opportunity to talk to students about careers at cooperatives several times in February. Area Serviceman Alan Mason, GIS Specialist Rob Baranowski and Member Services Representative Bill Annan talked with students during a two-day, multi school career fair held at the Morgan County Fairgrounds in Brush. (*Kelly Carmin, acct #xxx2300*) Communications Specialist Geoff Baumgartner talked careers with students at Prairie High School at an all-day career fair.



MCREA employees answer questions on careers day during a career fair in Brush.

PLAN TO CALL AHEAD BEFORE YOU DIG

Spring is in the air and yard projects are on our minds, but before you put a shovel in the ground, make sure you are taking all the steps to be safe. Digging without locating underground utilities, even for the smallest projects, could leave neighborhoods in the dark, cause thousands of dollars in damages or cause severe electrical shock, even death.

There were more than 24,000 home digging incidents involving underground utilities in 2016, according to the Common Ground Alliance. To help stay safe, make use of the free underground utility locating service by calling 811.

Make sure to plan ahead and call in advance. The 811 “Call Before You Dig” number will route you to the locating service serving your area. Tell the operator where and when you plan to dig and what type of work you will be doing. From there, it takes a few business days for a professional to come and mark the public utilities with flags or spray paint.

There are different colors of paint and flags that mark the underground utilities, and each color is universal to what utility type is buried.

- Red – Electric
- Orange – Communications, telephone/CATV
- Blue – Potable water
- Green – Sewer/drainage
- Yellow – Gas/petroleum pipe line
- Purple – Reclaimed water
- White – Marked site of intended excavation

Even if you previously had utilities located by calling 811, you should call before every digging project. Underground utilities can shift and it is important to be certain of where they are before you dig.

Keep in mind, 811 locators do not locate privately installed facilities. If you have any private utilities, you need to hire a private utility

locator. Some examples of private utilities include underground sprinkler systems, invisible fences, data communication systems, private water systems or gas piping to a garage.

Once all of the underground utilities are located, you can start your digging project. Be sure to wear all of the proper protective gear before putting the shovel into the earth.

For more information about 811 and digging safety, visit Call811.com and SafeElectricity.org.



To help stay safe and prevent accidents, call 8-1-1 before you dig to get underground utilities marked.