

EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

Echoes of the Empire

MAY 2020



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COPING WITH A CRISIS

BY JOSH DELLINGER GENERAL MANAGER



JOSH DELLINGER

In this unprecedented time of a pandemic in the modern era, Empire Electric Association is working diligently to safely and reliably deliver power to your family and your business. We recognize that maintaining your power supply is critical to moving forward, and we take our mission statement of providing power in a safe, reliable and responsible manner seriously.

As we all deal with the new realities brought on by this coronavirus, I want to assure you that EEA is here to help you. We have always had contingency plans that have served us well in a variety of circumstances. Early in this crisis, our staff implemented our pandemic response plan with a special emphasis on ensuring we can continue to provide the reliable electric service you have come to expect from your electric cooperative.

So far, that is exactly what has happened. We know that after a sufficient supply of food and water, electricity is the next most important thing you need to maintain some sense of normalcy as we hunker down in our homes. With that in mind, keeping the power flowing is the priority for everyone involved in maintaining the electric cooperative system.

That starts with our wholesale power supplier, Tri State Generation and Transmission, which has taken appropriate measures to ensure its workforce is healthy and its power generation and transmission facilities are functioning as needed. EEA has also reviewed mutual aid agreements with neighboring rural electric cooperatives and

stands ready to provide as well as request support should the need arise.

EEA thought you might want to know some of the steps we took in order to keep your power flowing at the local level. We closed our lobby and engineering and operations center to the general public to prevent the spread of the virus. Instead, we encourage members to communicate with us by phone or through our website. For bill payments, members can use online and phone payment options, our drop box or the good old U.S. Postal Service.

Most of our office employees are working from home. We have put an emphasis on cross training employees in departments so critical tasks can be done on time. Our information technology department was tasked early on to ensure EEA could operate remotely, and so far we have provided all of the vital functions required to keep the lights on. If you call, the phones will be answered as always.

We separated our line crews from other employees and even from each other to limit possible spread of the virus. Our crews remain ready to respond to outages and emergency situations. We assessed our stockpiles of critical materials and are well-equipped to keep your lights on.

Our management team and board are in close communication to fine-tune our response and to adapt as circumstances change. We are in constant contact with the

YOUR CO-OP NEWS

other electric cooperatives in Colorado and Utah, as well as with state and local health and emergency personnel to ensure we are complying with the latest guidelines.

Everyone has adapted to the new norm. That's because EEA emphasizes safety and preparedness every single day. We have exceptional employees whom we trust to perform their duties under all circumstances, from the line crews working outages to the customer service representatives who assist you with paying your bill.

Our focus here is on doing our part to keep your life as normal as possible through this situation and beyond. The cooperative way of doing business has brought us this far, and the cooperative way will help us through this crisis.

All the best to everyone. Stay healthy, keep your distance and we will get through this together — the cooperative way.

Photo Contest Winner for May 2020



▲ **McPhee Overlook in Spring**
by Carla Fox

My Co-op Calendar

May 8

EEA's board meeting begins at 8:30 a.m. at its headquarters in Cortez. The agenda is posted 10 days in advance of the meeting at eea.coop. Members are reminded that public comment is heard at the beginning of the meeting.

Meeting restrictions due to health concerns may require the meeting to be held remotely.

May 10

Mother's Day

May 25

Memorial Day



May 2020

Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

When the weather is nice, put your grill to use! During summer months, cooking outdoors is a great way to save energy and eliminate unwanted heat from cooking indoors.

Source: energy.gov

Empire Electric is Always There For You!

Things you can still do while our lobby is temporarily closed.

Through our website www.eea.coop you can:

Pay your bill or start and stop your service. Easily submit a net metering application. Did you purchase an Energy Star appliance or LED bulbs? We have a rebate application for that. Check out our EV charger rebate application. You can enter your favorite photos for the Calendar Contest and maybe win a prize. Donation requests can be submitted on our website. We have an amazing amount of information about energy efficiency, safety, and renewable energy, just waiting for you to see.

Over the phone 970-565-4444 you can:

Pay your bill by phone or make payment arrangements.
Call to report an outage.

Keep up to date with EEA via Facebook, Instagram, and eea.coop with co-op happenings like Board meetings and Covid19 changes.



IT CAN WAIT

AVOID ALL DISTRACTIONS WHILE DRIVING

Our crews often work roadside. Because of that, we ask you pay attention when approaching a work zone. Please respect and obey orange work zone signs. **Slow down, move over, and follow any other instructions** when approaching and moving through a **work zone**.

According to the **U.S. DOT's National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration**:

- **Nine percent of fatal crashes** in 2017 were reported as distraction-affected crashes.
- In 2017, there were **3,166 people killed** in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers.
- **Six percent** of all drivers involved in fatal crashes were reported as distracted at the time of the crashes.
- **Drivers age 15 to 19** have the largest proportion of drivers who were distracted at the time of the fatal crashes.
- In 2017, there were **599 pedestrians, bicyclists, and others killed** in distraction-affected crashes.

 Safe
Electricity.org

While Working From Home...
open the curtains to let the
light pour in and save energy dollars.



You will brighten the room with natural light, enhance your mood, and quite possibly your productivity too.

Use Decorative Summer Lighting Safely

The summer months are approaching and that means you and your family will probably move outdoors. Outdoor electrical string and sphere lighting, as well as illuminated jars and outdoor fixtures, can add ambiance and visual flair to open-air living spaces.

Empire Electric and Safe Electricity offer these safety tips when using decorative lighting outdoors:

- Only use strands, globes or other decorative fixtures that are approved for outdoor use and that have been tested by a reputable safety laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories.
- Only string together the number of strands recommended by the manufacturer.
- All outdoor outlets should be protected by ground fault circuit interrupters.
- Unplug or turn off lights when not in use.
- Only use extension cords that are rated for outdoor use and do not overload them.
- Do not use metal tacks or nails to drape or attach string lights.
- Consider using LED lighting, which gives off less heat and uses less energy than incandescent versions.
- Planning on adding extra outlets or running electricity to a gazebo or She (or He) Shed? Hire a qualified electrician to install them.
- Use outdoor-rated bulbs.
- Just like indoor lighting, do not use bulbs that surpass a fixture's maximum wattage.
- Inspect lights and cords before using them.
- Make sure that everything you are plugging in, such as decorative lighting, outdoor kitchen appliances and other electrical items, won't overload the circuit. A qualified electrician can help with this.
- Adding permanent outdoor lighting? It is best to hire a professional for this as well.

Enjoy dining alfresco under the stars (and lights). Just select your lighting carefully and use it safely. For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

TIPS TO SAFELY CHARGE YOUR ELECTRONICS

- Sale** Don't buy cheaply made, off-brand charging cubes and cables. They can be **potential fire hazards**, cause electrocution, or damage the device.
- Throw away charger blocks and cords that are worn or damaged and **make sure they are not hot** when charging devices.
- NOT IN BED** Only charge devices on a **hard, flat, noncombustible surface** to allow for adequate ventilation.
- Do not touch** any electronic devices that are charging **when you are wet** or standing in water.

Learn more at SafeElectricity.org