

# EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

*Echoes of the Empire*

FEBRUARY 2022

## MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box K  
Cortez, CO 81321-0676

## STREET ADDRESS

801 North Broadway  
Cortez, CO 81321

**ph** 970-565-4444

**tf** 800-709-3726

**fax** 970-564-4401

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facebook.com/EEACortez

## AVOID UTILITY SCAMS

BY ANDY CARTER MEMBER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER



ANDY CARTER

It's been a hectic day for you and your phone rings again. You see the caller ID says it's Empire Electric, so you answer the phone. The caller states they are from Empire Electric Association, your account is behind, and if you do not immediately pay \$100 over the phone with a credit card they will turn your power off. Confused, your mind starts to race as you try to remember when you received your last billing statement and if you paid it. It's cold and the last thing you need is to have the power cut off.

Don't do it! This is one type of scam criminals use to steal money. EEA has a defined process to work with consumer-members who cannot pay their bill on time (see page 10). We communicate early on if a consumer-member is falling behind and provide clear timelines for getting your account current. We use the same payment methods consistently and would never ask for you to pay with gift cards or a non-standard electronic payment system. Furthermore, we will never threaten to cut off your power if you do not pay immediately. EEA consumer-members are given multiple notices before power is turned off for non-payment. If you think someone is trying to steal money through a utility scam, hang up and notify EEA and your local law enforcement. We can provide you the status of your account, and you can alert us to the fact that someone is running a utility scam in our area. We can then let other members know so that hopefully no one becomes a victim and loses money.

Scams are not limited to telephone calls. Anyone who has an email account knows just how creative scammers can be. Remember to examine email addresses and links carefully before responding, especially if it comes from someone you don't regularly correspond with. Scammers have even been so bold as to approach consumer-members in

person. A sister electric co-op in Colorado recently reported that someone in a bucket truck with the initials of the co-op (not the official logo) pulled up to a consumer-member's home claiming to be from the co-op. The scammer demanded money and threatened to cut off power if the consumer-member did not comply. The consumer-member called a friend they knew who worked for the co-op to verify if this could happen, and the co-op employee said it was a scam. The scammer persisted and only left after the consumer-member called law enforcement to come investigate.

Here are a few reminders to help you stay safe if you think you are the target of a scam:

**Slow down.** Scammers try to convince you that you must act now and try to catch you off guard so you will provide personal or financial information they can use to commit fraud. Take a moment to think before you answer.

**Be suspicious.** Scammers ask for immediate payments with prepaid cash cards or third-party apps. They also may ask for information not related to the entity they claim to represent. Unusual requests and threats that don't make sense could mean you are being targeted by a scammer.

**Double Check.** If you are called by someone claiming to work for EEA and you are unsure if they do, don't be afraid to hang up and call us back directly at 970-565-4444 or 800-709-3726. Doing so ensures that you are talking to someone from EEA who can verify what the caller was communicating. If it is someone at your home, ask for a photo ID; all EEA employees carry a co-op photo ID. Again, if you are unsure, call EEA to verify that the employee is legitimate.

# 2022 ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION

BY JOSH DELLINGER GENERAL MANAGER



JOSH DELLINGER

Empire Electric Association’s 2022 annual member meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 23, at EEA’s Engineering and Operations Center located at 23999 Road L.4, Cortez. Registration will begin at 4:30 p.m. and the meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. This will be a business meeting only. Consumer-members who attend will get a \$10 credit on their electric bill. We are hopeful that we will be able to meet in person; however, the EEA Board of Directors may decide to change the schedule and/or format of the meeting if there are ongoing concerns about public gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The EEA Board considered present board district composition at its December 2021 meeting and determined no changes to board district boundaries are needed at this time. As of December 2021, the district with the most consumer-members had 1,934; the district with the least consumer-members had 1,802; and the average number of members per district was 1,875.

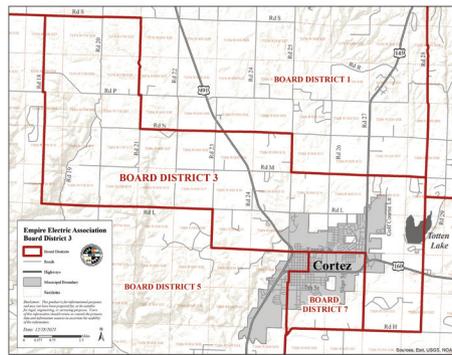
There is one board seat up for election this year: District 3 (Audra Fahrion, incumbent). The winning candidate will serve a four-year term. In order to serve on EEA’s seven-member board of directors, candidates are required to meet the following qualifications, according to EEA bylaws. The director shall:

- Be a consumer-member of the cooperative for at least one year immediately prior to becoming a director.
- Be a bona fide resident of the district represented for at least 120 days prior to becoming a director, which means that the person must be a permanent occupant receiving electric service from the cooperative at his or her primary residential abode.
- Be a citizen of the United States of America and a registered voter in the person’s director district.

- Be at least 18 years of age.
- Not be an employee of the cooperative.
- Complete a campaign contributions report in accordance with Policy 31 – Campaign Contributions Reporting.

**DISTRICT 3 IS GENERALLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:**

District 3 is the center Montezuma County portion of the system. The eastern boundary



begins at the midpoint of the southern edge of T36N R15W S32, and continues north along section mid-lines until it intersects Road M. The district boundary then follows Road M west until it intersects Road 25, then follows Road 25 north until it intersects Road N. The boundary then follows section lines (generally coincident with Road N) west to the intersection with Road 21, then follows Road 21 north to the intersection with Road S, and then follows Road S west to the intersection with Road 18. From there, the district boundary follows section mid-lines (generally coincident with Road 18) south to the northern edge of T36N R17W S22, and from there travels east along section lines (generally coincident with Road L) until it intersects with Road 23. From there it follows Road 23 south to the intersection with Road K. The boundary then follows Road K east to road’s end and continues east generally along section lines until it intersects with Empire Street, and then it follows Empire

Street east until it intersects Colorado State Highway 145. It then follows the boundary between T36N R16W and T36N R15W south (generally coincident with Road 27) until it intersects Road H. From there the boundary follows Road H (generally coincident with the T36N R15W – T35N R15W boundary) to the point of beginning.

Candidates may be nominated by petition only and such petitions must include the signatures of at least 15 members of the cooperative whose bona fide residences are within the candidate’s district. Qualifying candidates may pick up a nominating petition from our main office during normal business hours. Petitions will be available beginning March 25 and must be submitted to EEA by April 25. The secretary will post a list of qualifying nominees in our main office at the end of the workday on April 26.

Each consumer-member of the cooperative is entitled to one vote on all issues properly brought before the membership, including the election of directors. EEA consumer-members may vote either in person at the annual meeting or through mail-in ballots provided by the cooperative. Mail-in ballots will be mailed to consumer-members on or before June 8. In order to be counted, mail-in ballots shall be received by Survey and Ballot Systems (EEA’s election contractor) no later than 5 p.m. on June 17. All consumer-members are strongly encouraged to vote.

If you have additional questions about this year’s election, annual meeting or any other cooperative business, please visit our website at [eea.coop](http://eea.coop) or give us a call at 970-565-4444. We hope to see you at the meeting on June 23.

# DIYers:

## HOW SAFE IS YOUR WORKSHOP?

Make these tips standard practice in your workshop:



Inspect tools for damage before using them



Inspect cords and plugs for signs of wear



Use electrical outlets equipped with GFCIs (ground fault circuit interrupters)



Keep floors and areas as clean and dry as possible



Ensure cords are not a tripping hazard



Use a clamp or vise to secure whatever you are working on



Use the right tool for the job



Wear proper clothing for the task; avoid loose clothing or jewelry



Make sure your work area is well-lit



Use heavy-duty, properly-rated extension cords

 Safe Electricity.org®



Co-op Photo Contest Winner February 2022 – Bald Eagle Along the Dolores River by Chalana Wilson

### Monthly Calendar

**February 2** – Groundhog Day

**February 11** – 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](http://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.

**February 14** – Valentine's Day

**February 15** – Scholarship Applications Due

**February 21** – Presidents Day

### EEA's 2022 Member Survey

STEP UP AND LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD.

Unleash your thoughts for the future of your co-op.

Recommend your favorite communication methods.

Venture to offer your opinion on electronic voting.

Emphasize your priorities that our co-op should focus on.

You won't forgive yourself if you miss this opportunity.

Surveys will be accepted February 1, 2022 through March 27, 2022. You can take the survey online at [www.eea.coop](http://www.eea.coop) or your SmartHub account to find the link, watch for a paper copy in your bill, or stop by our office at 801 North Broadway in Cortez.

We can't wait to hear what you have to say!

## HOW SMART IS A Smart Thermostat?



### MYTH VS FACT

<p><b>My thermostat automatically saves me money.</b></p>		<p>That depends on how it's programmed and your preferences. It still uses the same amount of energy to reach and maintain temps.</p>
<p><b>A smart thermostat is smart straight out of the box.</b></p>		<p>The thermostat needs a little time to learn your heating and cooling preferences.</p>
<p><b>My thermostat is only as smart as I am.</b></p>		<p>Sort of. Most models are independent thinkers and adjust the temperature if no one's home.</p>
<p><b>It's creepy, my smart thermostat seems to know when I'm home.</b></p>		<p>It's smart for a reason! Geotechnology syncs your thermostat with your arrival. Some models use geofencing technology that tracks your smart phone location and kicks on when you're nearby.</p>
<p><b>My smart thermostat makes me smarter.</b></p>		<p>We'll give you this one! It can help you save money and make your home more efficient.</p>

**LEARN MORE**




**EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
www.eea.coop

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## Empire Electric Association Delinquent Account Process

Empire Electric strives to bill consumer-members accurately and on time. Our bills provide billing information that includes the total amount due as well as the due date. EEA provides consumer-members several options for receiving their bill. We encourage consumer-members to notify us if they will not be able to pay the full balance due by the due date. Under certain circumstances, EEA can provide payment arrangements to help consumer-members keep their account current. For all accounts that are not on the Power Advantage program (prepaid), EEA makes courtesy calls one week after the due date to remind members payment is due. An account is considered delinquent if full payment is not made by the next billing date, and your bill will have a written notice stating the account is past due along with the payment amount and date required to bring the account current. Another courtesy call is made approximately five days after the due date on the second bill notifying the consumer-member they will be disconnected for non-payment the next day if payment is not made. If no payment is made by the following day, power service is disconnected until the consumer-member can bring the account current.

## Bedazzle Them with Balloons... Safely



Metallic balloons make great Valentine's Day presents, but you must dispose of them in the trash. Do not release them outdoors or you could cause a power outage and damage utility electrical equipment. Because of the metallic coating, they conduct electricity and can short out circuits in your community's power system. You and your neighbors could lose power, traffic lights could go out, and entire blocks of homes and businesses could go dark.

Source: SafeElectricity.org

February 2022

## Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month



About 30% of a home's heating energy is lost through inefficient windows. Caulk and weather strip windows to seal air leaks. When running your home heating system, lock all operable windows to ensure the tightest seal possible.

*Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy*