

# EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

*Echoes of the Empire*

NOVEMBER 2024

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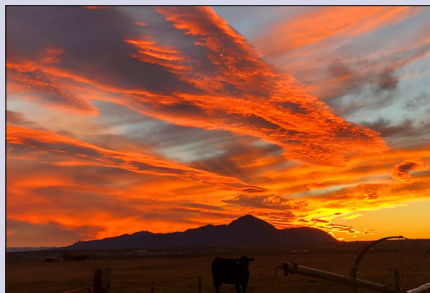
## Monthly Calendar & Co-op Photo Contest Winner


**November 5** – Election Day

**November 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](http://eea.coop). Members may attend in person or remotely. Instructions to attend remotely are included on the agenda.

**November 11** – Veterans Day

**November 28** – Thanksgiving Day. EEA's office will be closed November 28 and 29 for the holiday.



 Sunset Over the Ute by Jina Langin.

## 'Tis the Season for Safety

BY ANDY CARTER MEMBER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER



ANDY CARTER

Shorter days and colder weather are a few of the signs that winter is coming. Along with remembering to grab a coat when you head out the door, it's also time to think about changing your safety mindset from warm weather hazards to those we experience in winter. Before hitting the road, make sure your car is in good working order and your tires have enough tread to provide good traction. It's also a good idea to check your vehicle to make sure you have the necessary cold weather gear including an ice scraper, snow brush, shovel, traction assistance, first aid kit, flashlight, a blanket, water, and nonperishable food.

Once you are on the road, remember that slick roads require more distance for stopping. The Colorado Driver Handbook states it takes about 200 feet to stop a passenger vehicle traveling at 55 miles per hour on dry roads. This can increase to over 300 feet on wet roads and makes it even more important to increase spacing behind the vehicle in front of you and to look ahead to anticipate trouble.

Back at home there are also cold weather safety considerations to keep in mind. It's important to have your heating system inspected annually to make sure it will heat your home and not be a safety hazard. If your home heating system generates heat by burning fuel, it is especially important to verify that the system is sealed and not allowing carbon monoxide and other combustion byproducts to enter your home. According to the Center for Disease Control, carbon monoxide poisoning not related to fires kills more than 400 Americans and hospitalizes another 14,000 each year.

Carbon monoxide is a colorless and odorless gas. The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. Carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms are often described as "flu-like." In addition to having your heating system inspected, you can reduce your risk of CO poisoning by installing CO detectors in your home to warn you of its presence.

One last thing to consider is checking areas where you use supplemental heat. If you use heat tape to keep pipes or gutters from freezing, a heat lamp to keep animals warm, or a stock tank heater, take the time to inspect the wiring and the equipment itself to make sure it is in good working order. Signs that there is something wrong include damaged insulation on wiring; chips, cracks, or discoloration from heat on the heating element or socket; or tripping the circuit breaker that powers the heater. If you are not comfortable replacing or repairing the equipment, we recommend you hire an electrician to make the necessary repairs.

Winter weather does bring challenges, but with a little planning and the knowledge of what to look for, you can be prepared to safely enjoy the good things the change in seasons brings. For more information on electrical safety and preparing for winter outages please visit [eea.coop](http://eea.coop).

# Horses Gallop and So Can Power Lines

What causes a galloping power line and how can it impact power transmission and distribution?

Galloping power lines are typically caused when ice and high winds occur at the same time. Some winter precipitation conditions create icicles and odd-shaped ice formations on power lines and conductors. The ice buildup changes how wind and air impact the now misshapen, ice-covered line. This change in airflow can cause the power line to start to bounce.

Once the lines get going, they can bounce and buck enough to hit another line, damaging themselves enough to cause a power outage or even fall to the ground.

There is not much Empire Electric Association can do to alleviate galloping lines since the wild motion is caused by Mother Nature. To help prevent this, EEA has installed special mechanisms on lines in areas where galloping lines have been an issue. While they can help, sometimes they are no match for severe ice and whipping wind.

Downed power lines are not just a result of winter storms. Any storm with high winds can knock down power lines and blow trees and limbs onto power lines. Keep the following safety tips in mind:

- If you see power lines on the ground, stay at least 50 feet away, warn others to stay away, and contact EEA at 970-565-4444 or call 911. Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live.
- Any utility wire, including telephone or cable lines that are sagging or down, could be in contact with an energized power line, also making it dangerous. Do not try to guess the types of lines — stay away from all lines and report any utility line you think is dangerous.
- Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide electrical hazards. Downed power lines can energize objects around them, such as chain-link fences and metal culverts.
- Keep in mind that a dead line could become energized during power restoration efforts or improper use of generators.
- If you are in a car that has contacted or is near a downed power line, stay in your vehicle. Wait until the utility crew has arrived and de-energized the line and tells you it is safe to exit. Warn others not to approach the car.
- Only exit a vehicle near or on downed lines if there is a fire. If this happens, cross your arms over your chest and make a solid jump out and away from the car with both feet together. Then hop away at least 50 feet or more while continuing to keep both feet together. For more electrical safety information, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



These are photos from video clips of lines galloping in EEA service territory. The photos are less than half a second apart. You can see the conductors near the top of the photo have moved from overlapping to being several feet apart. Photos courtesy of Matt Larsen.



Snow or ice accumulation on power lines combined with strong winds can be a recipe for an outage. Photo courtesy of SafeElectricity.org.



## We're Grateful for Your Membership.

Our offices will be closed **Thursday, November 28,** and **Friday, November 29,** in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. We are incredibly grateful for your membership as our team spends this special time with loved ones.

From our co-op family to yours, we hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving!





Millions take to the highways over the holidays, making it one of the busiest travel times of the year.

If you're traveling by car this season, follow these safety tips:

### 1. Prepare Your Home

Cancel mail, pause deliveries and have someone check on your home. In snowy areas, arrange for snow removal.

### 2. Reduce Fire Risks

Unplug nonessential electrical devices and check smoke detectors.

### 3. Don't Overshare

Avoid posting travel plans on social media to prevent potential break-ins.

### 4. Inspect Your Car

Ensure tires are inflated and carry jumper cables, as cold weather can drain batteries.

### 5. Pack an Emergency Kit

Include a car phone charger, blankets, food and water, coats and a flashlight with batteries.

### 6. Check the Weather

Check the weather before and during your trip to avoid storms.

### 7. Buckle Up & Slow Down

Increase your following distance to safely navigate slick roads and allow extra time to get to your destination.

### 8. Take Frequent Breaks

Winter driving challenges can be tiring. Stop every few hours to stay alert and stay hydrated to avoid fatigue.

### 9. Share Your Itinerary

Let family or friends know your travel plans, whether you're on your way out or heading back home.

### 10. Put That Phone Away

Avoid distractions—winter driving requires your full attention.

Learn more at:

 **Safe Electricity.org**<sup>®</sup>



 Kooper Long

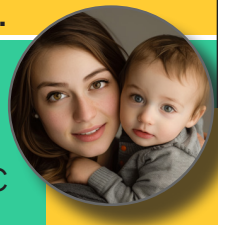
## My Co-op Employees

Kooper Long accepted the Warehouse Specialist position at Empire Electric Association and started on September 10. Kooper will be responsible for material accounting, receiving, storing, and issuing of materials to EEA crews as they work to keep our distribution system reliable.

He grew up in Cortez and is a graduate of Montezuma Cortez High School. In his spare time, Kooper enjoys hunting and being outdoors. Please join us in welcoming Kooper to the EEA team. We are excited to have him on board!

**You can help keep Colorado homes warm, healthy and safe this winter.**

EEA members can sign up to make a monthly donation to EOC on their bill and EEA will match your monthly donation. You can also make a one time donation at [eea.coop](http://eea.coop) or at [energyoutreach.org/donate-energy/](http://energyoutreach.org/donate-energy/)



**ENERGY  
OUTREACH  
COLORADO**  
Together We Power Stability

# Is a Ductless Mini-Split System Right for Your Home?

How would you like a personalized comfort zone within your home? One where the temperature is customized to your liking and may be different than the temperature in the shared living areas or other rooms in the house? This flexibility and customization are precisely why mini-split systems — also known as ductless air-source heat pumps — and their energy-efficiency aspects are so popular.

A mini-split system is HVAC equipment used for heating and cooling, allowing you to control the temperature in individual rooms or spaces. Like central heating and cooling, mini-split systems have two main components — an outdoor compressor and one or more indoor air-handling unit(s). A narrow conduit links the indoor units to the outdoor compressor.

While central heating and cooling systems feature an indoor unit connected by long lengths of ductwork, mini-splits are typically ductless. This means energy is not lost traveling through long stretches of ductwork. Installing the air-handling unit in a desired room or area enables you to control the temperature more precisely, reducing energy consumption. That's because you're adjusting the temperature to a single room or space rather than to the whole home.

## IS A MINI-SPLIT SYSTEM RIGHT FOR YOU?

Mini-split systems are a popular option in home additions, or to supplement heating and cooling in a space that may be farthest away from the main living area, such as a finished attic or basement. In these instances, it may not be feasible to install or extend the ductwork required in traditional central cooling and heating systems. In contrast, mini-splits are relatively easy to install; they require a small hole for the conduit to connect the indoor and outdoor units. Most systems can handle up to four indoor rooms or zones connected to one outdoor unit. Each of the zones can be customized since each includes a thermostat that enables you to heat or cool the space as needed, saving energy and money over time.

## COOL SOLUTIONS

Mini-split systems bring additional benefits. They are quiet, improve indoor air quality, and are typically easy to install. Many come with remotes to make temperature control even easier. Because of their smaller size, mini-split systems have many placement options for indoor and outdoor units.

One of the greatest benefits of mini-splits is that they typically have a higher Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio rating than traditional central heating and cooling systems. The higher the unit's SEER rating, the more energy efficient it is.

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are some downsides to mini-splits. According to the Department of Energy, "mini-splits cost about \$1,500 to \$2,000 per ton of cooling capacity. That's about 30% more than central systems (not including ductwork) and may cost twice as much as window units of similar capacity."

While the technology is improving and evolving, homes in particularly cold climates may need a fuel backup to run a mini-split system. Aesthetics are another factor to consider, as some homeowners don't like the appearance of the indoor units, which are more visible than central air conditioning vents.

If you're considering an upgrade or additional heating and cooling equipment, talk to a qualified technician to find out if a ductless mini-split system could work for your home. If you decide to have a mini-split installed, Empire Electric Association offers financial incentives to help offset the cost. Incentives include units with dual fuel capability using propane for backup heat. EEA incentive information can be found at [eea.coop/electrify-save-program](http://eea.coop/electrify-save-program). You may also qualify for federal or state tax incentives. Ask your tax advisor about what is available or visit [energysmartcolorado.org/tax-credits-incentives/](http://energysmartcolorado.org/tax-credits-incentives/) for more information.

