



[Echoes of the Empire]

Energy Experts Working for You

ENERGY, ENGAGEMENT AND STRENGTH

BY BOBBE JONES || MEMBER SERVICES MANAGER

Spurred on by a lack of resources, Dolores County residents were determined to improve their community. This year, two new facilities opened in Dove Creek that not only improved the quality of life for its residents, but are a testament to the energy, engagement and strength of the community.

In June, Empire Electric Association officials had the honor of presenting a rebate check totaling \$15,581 to Dolores County for the energy-efficient lighting, heat pumps and appliances used in the Dolores County Senior Services Pioneer Center and the Public Service Center Road and Bridge Shop. The rebate was icing on the cake for a project that was 13 years in the making.

Following the check presentation, Nita Burkat, the Senior Services director, volunteered to take us on a tour of the Senior Services Pioneer Center that opened on January 9, 2018. On the tour, we discovered there was a lot more happening behind the scenes than met the eye.

Nita's enthusiasm and pride were evident in her first comment: "When you walk in, we want you to feel like you are home." Truly, the stone block fireplace, barn wood wall paneling and elk head testified to the commitment of a homey feel. Near the fireplace rests a beautifully sculpted metal "Giving Tree" engraved with the names of those who donated to help build the facility.

We moved down the hallway where the staff offices are located. "There are 15 employees and only three are full time," Nita said. "The staff offices are small for a reason. This facility is for the community, not the staff. Forty percent of our service is providing transportation for seniors. We try to serve Rico, Egnar and Pleasant View in addition to walk-ins and Dolores County residents aged 60 years and older."

As we continued the tour, we passed the library reading room that offers large print books for visually challenged seniors, an open access restroom that accommodates wheelchairs, an exercise room and a game room that houses a pool table, puzzles, games and crafts.

The best was yet to come. Large walk-in freezer and refrigerator

units were a prelude to the breathtaking commercial kitchen and dining area. The kitchen provides meals three times a week both on location and for delivery to homes. Hot meals are delivered to locals and frozen meals are supplied to outlying locations.

The dining room acoustics were an important design consideration. As Nita pointed out, many seniors have hearing loss and still want to be part of the conversation. The room is multi-functional and can be separated with a divider to simultaneously provide a meeting place and accommodate up to 100 diners. This area is also used by the community for weddings, anniversaries and family reunions.

The project would never have been conceived or built if it weren't for a focus group that was formed in 2005 to assess the needs of the Dolores County community, particularly the senior residents. The group included representatives from Dolores County, the town of Dove Creek, local seniors, churches and residents at large.

Concentrating on the community's future, the group pursued ideas of providing independent living, long-term care and senior services.

They researched Housing Solutions, but the area's small population did not qualify for funding. In 2008, a plan was executed to receive grant money for financing a senior community center. The architect drawings were complete, the land location was assigned and then the financial crises of 2008 saw the grant sources dry up and revert to the state of Colorado.

Following a recovery period, the focus group members found themselves back at square one but never gave up on their vision. Senior Services started in Cahone in 1976 by providing two meals per week and busing meals to those seniors unable to leave their homes.

The services have since grown tenfold, and now many services are provided for seniors so they can stay in their homes with dignity.

Not only does the center deliver meals, it also provides homemaker services, fixes safety concerns and provides caregiver assistance with CareLink Medical Alert call buttons that free up caregivers so they can continue to work. They partner with Montezuma Senior



Nita Burkat

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CO-OP PHOTO CONTEST WINNER FOR AUGUST



Balloons Over Cortez by Carol Lucero



General Manager Josh Dellinger and Director Jerry Fetterman present an energy efficiency rebate check to Dolores County for upgrades to the Pioneer Center and the Public Service Center. Accepting the check is Senior Services Director Nita Purkat, Commissioner Julie Kibel, Special Projects Manager Margret Daves, Commissioner Floyd Cook and Commissioner Steve Garchar.



A tour of the new Service Center included (left to right): Dolores County Commissioners Steve Garchar and Floyd Cook, Special Projects Manager Margret Daves, Commissioner Julie Kibel, Road & Bridge employees Lanelle Pribble, Office Manager Linda Rehmert, Cody Curtis, Norman Hickman, Supervisor Steve Davis, and Empire Electric officials, Josh Dellinger, Andy Carter and Director Jerry Fetterman.

CO-OP CALENDAR

AUGUST 1 – Colorado Day

AUGUST 5 – Friendship Day

AUGUST 10 – Empire'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.



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH

If electric wires in your neighborhood are sagging or a tree limb is pushing the line out of place, keep your neighborhood safe by alerting Empire Electric Association.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Look for LED products and fixtures for outdoor use, such as pathway, step and porch lights. Many include features like automatic daylight shut-off and motion sensors. You can also find solar-powered lighting for outdoor spaces.

Source: energy.gov

MY CO-OP ADVANTAGE

The Youth Tour Experience

BY SCOTTIE SWORD

The Washington D.C. Youth Tour was an amazing opportunity. I had the chance to see and do many things that I believe helped me grow as an individual. D.C. has many memorials that commemorate past wars and the many people who have lost their lives fighting for our country. We learned about these wars in school and the effects they have, but seeing the memorials in person has an indescribable effect on someone that I believe everyone should experience.

I also had the chance to meet two of Colorado's representatives: Rep. Scott Tipton and Sen. Michael Bennet. We had the opportunity to speak to them and ask them questions of our choice, along with hearing their response. They explained to us the many ways that they are trying to help our communities both short term and long term. This helped explain how individuals can get involved in our communities.

This was an amazing opportunity to branch off and make new friends from other areas in Colorado. Some live as close as one town over. At first everyone is shy, but as the week goes on everyone begins talking more and by the end of the trip I made some lifelong friends. Overall the Washington D.C. Youth Tour is an amazing experience that I will never forget. I cannot give enough thanks to Empire Electric for this wonderful opportunity.



Scottie Sword

MY CO-OP EMPLOYEES

Congratulations to these employees for continuing their education and training to complete their journeyman level status in their vocations:



Cody Glazner

started as an apprentice lineman on January 3, 2006. He received his journeyman lineman credentials and then expanded

to become an apprentice system technician. On April 14, 2018, Cody earned his system technician status.



Brad Dennison

started as a part-time warehouse specialist on October 15, 2012. He worked as an apprentice lineman and recently earned his journeyman lineman status.



Tyler Clifton-Berry

started on June 26, 2014, as a part-time warehouse specialist. He worked his way up from an apprentice lineman to journeyman lineman.



Drew Hollen

started with EEA as a meter technician on April 2, 2012. Drew later became an apprentice lineman and recently earned his journeyman lineman certificate.

20TH ANNUAL
Harvest
BEER FESTIVAL
1998 **2018**
 PRESENTED BY MONTEZUMA LAND CONSERVANCY

SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 8TH
4-9PM
PARQUE DE VIDA
CORTEZ, CO
MUSIC + FOOD + BEER

Others are furnishing this information as a public service for Empire's members. Empire does not necessarily agree or disagree with the content.

IT'S NOT JUST A GREEN METAL BOX

You're aware of those green metal boxes in neighborhood yards, but do you know what they're for? These boxes contain pad-mounted transformers that step down high-voltage electricity to a lower voltage needed for the underground wires supplying power to the lights and appliances in homes. They perform just like the gray, round transformers on power poles connected to overhead power lines.

In most cases, these boxes pose no danger, but they must be recognized and respected for the electrical equipment they contain. A box knocked askew by equipment, or tampered with

and missing a lock, can become a serious danger to anyone, especially children who often use them as platforms.

Parents should explain to children that these boxes are potentially dangerous and not to be played on or around. Parents also need to make sure that their utility has properly locked the box. A pad-mounted transformer that isn't properly secured can be a serious hazard. This is a lesson that Aaron Studer learned the hard way.

Aaron and his brother Brett were playing, using sticks as swords, when they came upon an unlocked pad-mounted transformer box. Aaron opened the box, stuck his stick inside and created a bright flash. Aaron suffered second and third degree burns to his face. Fortunately he had no permanent scars.

It's also important to be safe while landscaping around pad-mounted transformers by:

- Keeping shrubs and structures 10 feet away from doors and 4 feet away from the other sides of the transformer.
- Considering the mature height of a bush or tree so as not to obstruct the transformer when fully grown.
- Making sure plant roots will not grow to interfere with wires and buried cables.

Remember, these boxes provide electricity to your home. Keeping the area around the transformer in your yard unobstructed can speed up restoration during outages and routine maintenance checks.

For more information on staying safe around pad-mounted transformers, visit SafeElectricity.org.



ENERGY, ENGAGEMENT AND STRENGTH

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Services to provide caregiver forums and have quarterly “lunch and learn” sessions for caregivers. They also provide Medicare counseling and health promotion education, as well as provide commodity boxes once a month and a three-day-a-week walking program.

Nita summed up the center's mission when she said, “The center is necessary for quality of life. There is no other game in town that provides these programs.”

Funding for this project was provided through the County General Fund; grants from El Pomar, Daniels Fund and The Boettcher Foundation; and individual donors. A U.S. Department of Agriculture

grant partially funded the vehicle shed.

The next stop was the Public Service Center to complete a tour with Special Projects Manager Margret Daves, Office Manager Linda Rehmert and shop employee Larry White. The new vehicle maintenance shop is first class and a huge upgrade from the previous location. Without a grant, it wouldn't have happened.

Extension Agent Gus Westerman assisted with the grant writing, and Dolores County received \$2 million for the project from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs. DOLA is a state agency that works in partnership with local governments and communities to provide funding for projects to

help strengthen Colorado's communities. Every precious penny counted, and when the project was finished, only one cent of the grant money remained.

The Senior Services Pioneer Center will be completing its landscaping in the fall, which will include a memorial garden celebrating the pioneers who first settled the area. The pioneer spirit lives on in Dolores County where heritage is valued and the pride of accomplishment is evident.