

# [Echoes of the Empire]

Energy Experts Working for You

## IS RENEWABLE ENERGY RIGHT FOR YOU?

Whether it's the dead of winter or the heat of the summer, we all have those months when we dread opening up our utility bills. It's during those times when thoughts of renewable energy may cross our minds as a fix to our heating and cooling costs. Before making an investment in solar, wind or geothermal, there are some steps to take to see if renewable energy is right for you.

First, look at the efficiency of your home. "People will look at their bills and say, 'I need to look at getting renewable energy for my home,' but what they really need to do first is some weatherization work," says utility energy planner Bob Croteau. "Start with weather stripping and caulking, then take a look at your insulation and heating and cooling unit itself."

Croteau recommends getting a home energy audit to see how well-sealed the house is and to locate air leaks.

Consumers must identify and understand their energy goals and usage before investing in a renewable energy system because they can be pricey. One consideration is tax credits. There remains a 30 percent federal tax credit for solar systems through 2019, while the credits for other technologies have either ended or are being phased out. Colorado also offers a utility incentive program as well as property and sales tax exemptions. Tax credits combined with falling costs make solar much more attractive for consumers with appropriate locations.

Check to see if your roof is well-suited for solar panels. Southward-facing roofs are the best option for solar, but eastward- and westward-facing roofs will also work. Pay attention to the trees that surround your home. If a large tree casts an equally large shadow on your rooftop, solar may not work for you.

Wind energy is another source of renewable energy, but this source, with a few exceptions, makes more sense on a utility scale.



### Is renewable energy right for you?

The cheapest, cleanest, and greenest energy is the energy not used – and it comes from ENERGY EFFICIENCY.

Before investing in renewable energy, make sure your home or workplace is as efficient as possible.

Improving your home or office efficiency can save money on your energy bills right now! There are no-cost ways to improve efficiency and stop wasting money, like:

- Turning lights off when you leave a room.
- Setting your computers to sleep mode.
- Using power strips to cut down on "phantom" energy use.

There are low-cost efficiency measures that help too, such as:

- Replacing burned out incandescent bulbs with Compact Fluorescent Lamp (CFL) bulbs or Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs).
- Caulking and weather-stripping doors and windows.
- Cleaning or replacing air conditioning and furnace filters monthly.

You can also boost your efficiency with a new purchase by:

- Upgrading to a high-efficiency air conditioner/furnace or heat pump.
- Making sure a new appliance comes with the Energy Star label.
- Adding insulation to the attic, exterior walls, basement and/or crawl spaces.

For more tips on making homes and offices energy efficient, go to [www.EfficiencyResource.org](http://www.EfficiencyResource.org)



Wind installations involve multiple factors, such as obtaining wind measurements using an anemometer at higher elevations. "The only way you should consider a wind energy system is if you live way out in the country," Croteau says. "You need to have at least 5 acres and be able to get a wind turbine a good 100 feet in the air for this to be a viable option."

Technologies like geothermal energy systems combine elements of renewable energy and energy efficiency, and they have a shorter period for paying for themselves in energy savings.

Geothermal systems make use of the consistent temperature of the earth. Just a few feet below the surface, the earth maintains a near-constant temperature in contrast to the summer and winter temperature extremes of the air above ground. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency asserts for every unit of electricity used in operating the system, the geothermal system can deliver as much as five times the energy from the ground,

resulting in a net energy benefit and savings.

Other considerations for adding a renewable system include local codes and required permits and how the system may integrate into the local co-op's infrastructure, as well as energy storage options. Increasing use of renewable energy is a major reason why development of the "smart grid" is necessary and important.

Renewable energy will continue to develop in the future, making it more common for more households to have some kind of renewable energy source. Consumers should do their homework before deciding if a renewable system fits their needs.

**For more information on renewable energy, visit [www.eea.coop](http://www.eea.coop), [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org) or [EfficiencyResource.org](http://EfficiencyResource.org).**

## JULY CO-OP PHOTO CONTEST WINNER



*The Wheat Before the Storm by Melody Cline*

## CO-OP CALENDAR

### JULY 2 –

Photo contest ends

### JULY 4 –

Independence Day; office closed

### JULY 13 –

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](http://eea.coop). Members are reminded that public comment is heard at the beginning of the meeting.

### JULY 14-19 –

Co-op Youth Leadership Camp at Steamboat Springs

## MY CO-OP ADVANTAGE

**Thinking about solar?** Before starting your project, contact Empire's energy manager advisor at 970-566-4444 to find out what is required. There is more information located at [www.eea.coop](http://www.eea.coop).



To get our members back on the road quickly, we can now accept credit and debit cards at the drive-up window.



**Drive-up Hours**  
Monday - Thursday 7:30am - 5:30pm  
Friday 7:30am - 11:30am

## WATER SAFETY

Water is a powerful conductor of electricity. It is especially important to be aware of electrical hazards around water, such as pools and lakes.

Do not touch electrical equipment when wet.

# 2018 EEA SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The 2018 scholarship recipients were approved at the March 9, 2018, board of directors meeting. Congratulations to the following students:

## Montezuma-Cortez High School



Hanna Carver, Tri-State



Jason Engel



Trystan Henderson



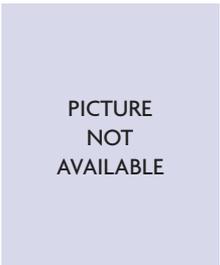
Brendon Jones



Sidnie Majors



Maddi Phelps



Nicole Shock



Danae Thompson

## Basin Scholarship



Caleb Yoder,  
Mancos High School

## Dolores High School



Jasper Breitenbach



Cameron Elder



Justin Purkat

## Dove Creek High School



Marissa Buffington



Faith Johnson, Tri-State

## Monticello High School



Thomas Anderson



Justin Cecil



Abigail Nielson



Erin Rogers

## Energy Efficiency

### Tip of the Month

Here's a cool tip for your fridge! Cover liquids and wrap foods stored in your refrigerator.

Uncovered foods release moisture, causing the compressor to work harder.

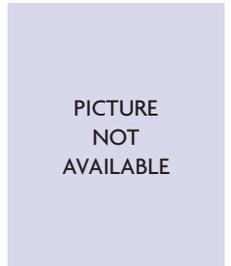
Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



## Mancos High School



Ashley Cole



Raul Calderon  
Vocational Scholarship



Geri Montoya



Roan Russell



Zane Wilson

[scholarship winners continued on page 10]

## MY CO-OP EMPLOYEES

### CONGRATULATIONS TO EMPIRE'S NEW AND PROMOTED EMPLOYEES!



**Shawna McLaughlin** started with Empire on May 23, 2016, as the consumer services coordinator and accepted the human resources representative position on April 13, 2018.



**Lauren Ralstin** began her career with Empire on February 5, 2018, as a part-time staff secretary and accepted a full-time consumer services representative position on May 29, 2018.



**Melody Cline** started her career at Empire on September 8, 2015, as a consumer services representative. She accepted the position of consumer services coordinator on May 14, 2018.



**Rocky Sanders** started on March 21, 1994. Rocky has been a dedicated lineman for many years working in the Dove Creek area. He accepted the working foreman position on April 30, 2018.



**Aurora McClure** started as a temporary employee on May 30, 2017, and accepted a full-time consumer services representative position on May 29, 2018.



**Tiffanie Vialpando** started on December 17, 2012, as a consumer services coordinator and accepted the accounting clerk position beginning on May 29, 2018.

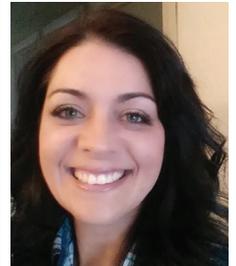
## 2018 EEA SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

[Scholarship winners continued from page 9]

### Adult Scholarships



Annaleigh Curtis



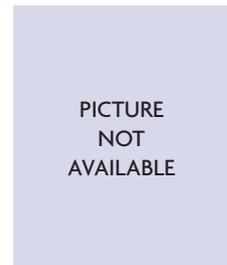
Bridget Horrocks



Nathan Larsen



Carrie Palmer



Haley Saunders



Shania Snow

### Empire Employee/Director Dependent



Parker Bell



Brayson Wilcox

## HOME ENERGY SAVINGS TIP



A **PROGRAMMABLE THERMOSTAT** CAN **SAVE UP TO 15%**