

CONSIDERING SOLAR? WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

A Local Viewpoint

BY DAVE HENDERSON DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS



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Today's consumers want and expect options, including the type of energy powering their homes. Many homeowners are looking for a less expensive form of energy with ongoing savings. Some are looking for a green energy source. These two motives are why many homeowners are exploring rooftop solar panels.

The interest in alternative energy sources is also being fueled by decreasing costs for rooftop solar, the availability of financial incentives and the proliferation of companies offering solar panel installation.

However, as attractive and popular as rooftop solar may appear, it is important for consumers to fully understand its true costs, the operational reality of this form of energy and actual energy savings. To determine whether rooftop solar is right for their particular situation, homeowners must undertake their due diligence.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

As your trusted energy advisor, Morgan County REA can offer a candid assessment of your specific situation. After all, Morgan County Rural Electric Association has a different "bottom line" that is not directly tied to the sale of a product or service. MCREA constantly strives to find new ways to help you use energy more efficiently.

Morgan County REA employees are seeking to keep pace with the changing energy environment and evolving technology. We

are exploring more options that will help you manage your energy use, such as free energy audits. We take a more holistic, objective view of how to achieve energy savings.

IS ROOFTOP SOLAR RIGHT FOR YOU?

To help determine whether rooftop solar is right for you, Morgan County REA's energy advisors will look at the:

- Overall energy efficiency of the home or building
- Age and pitch of the roof
- Orientation of the sun in relation to the home or building
- Tree coverage near the home or building
- Weather patterns for the region

Unlike a solar company that has one objective — to sell its products and services — we will look at the total energy picture and help you determine the best options for your home. While rooftop solar certainly works for many people, it's not the answer for all.

When helping co-op members determine whether rooftop solar is right for them, a co-op energy advisor will also discuss the many financial considerations:

- Is there a large, up-front payment required or are fees spread out over time?
- Will the homeowner own the panels or will they be leased?

- Are there any hidden costs, such as a roof replacement, before installing the panels?
- Are there ongoing maintenance fees?
- Are there rebates or other financial incentives available?
- Is the estimated energy savings worth the investment?
- Is it more cost effective to invest in other energy-saving measures?

Most importantly, an energy advisor will provide perspective on the total energy puzzle. Taking into account current energy consumption, the home "envelope," age and efficiency of the heating and cooling system and home site, an energy advisor can help co-op members determine whether rooftop solar is the best choice given the homeowners' objectives.

While assessing solar options, it is an excellent time to examine other potential energy efficiency improvements for your home. For example, it may make sense to insulate the attic at the same time as installing solar.

Morgan County REA recognizes that consumer interest in green energy sources and renewables are at an all-time high, and your co-op stands ready to help consumer-members determine their best options.



National Lineman Appreciation Day



Every year, we take a day to thank our lineworkers who are dedicated to keeping the lights on in our homes, farms and businesses. Morgan County Rural Electric Association's lineworkers maintain nearly 2,900 miles of line and more than 8,500 meters in MCREA's service territory.

We depend on our entire staff to keep Morgan County REA running smoothly, but

on April 18, 2019, we honor our lineworkers who can find themselves in dangerous and challenging situations, so our lives may be a little bit brighter and safer every day.

MCREA's linemen repair damaged lines and maintain critical infrastructure for our members and communities. Without their hard work and commitment to the job, our co-op would not thrive. No matter the time

— day or night, weekday or weekend — if the lights go out, so do they. (Brian Goedert, acct #xxx3100)

Perhaps you saw them in the recent bomb cyclone raising their bucket trucks in howling winds and freezing, snowy and icy conditions. They worked around the clock near high-voltage power lines until electricity was restored to every member in our co-op community.

In addition to aiding members in our local service territory, lineworkers are always willing and eager to volunteer when a neighboring community, county or state is in need after a major outage occurs.

We hope you will join us in thanking the many lineworkers — both at MCREA and around the country — on April 18. Please use **#ThankALineman** on social media to show your support.



BENEFITS OF TREE TRIMMING

Clearing trees and overgrown vegetation is vital to provide safe, reliable power to our consumer-members.

We clear certain areas in our service territory, known as rights of way, to:

- **Keep power lines clear of tree limbs**
- **Restore power outages more quickly**
- **Keep crews and members of our community safe**
- **Reduce unexpected costs for repairs**

Vegetation management improves service reliability for you – our members!

MCREA Talks Co-op Careers in February

- ◀ Morgan County REA employees had the opportunity to talk to students about careers at cooperatives several times in February. Area Serviceman Alan Mason, GIS Specialist Rob Baranowski and Member Services Representative Bill Annan talked with students during a two-day, multischool career fair held at the Morgan County Fairgrounds in Brush. (Wesley Elliott, acct #xxx7000)



Youth Tour & Youth Camp Delegates Selected

Each summer, Morgan County REA sends one area student to the National Rural Electric Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. The Youth Tour is an opportunity for high school students to learn about our government in a week of educational and fun events. Students from all over the United States, sponsored by their local rural electric cooperatives, converge to tour the exciting sites around the capital as well as meet with industry and government officials.

Benecio Mazzuca from Wiggins High School has been chosen to represent MCREA at the 2019 Youth Tour in June. Approximately 1,900 students attend the event annually.

Mazzuca's journey begins with a day in Denver, touring the Capitol, Colorado Rural Electric Association and Tri-State Generation and Transmission. The following morning, students fly to Washington, D.C., where they spend six days visiting the White House, U.S. Capitol, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, U.S. Holocaust Memorial, the Smithsonian and Arlington National Cemetery. Highlights of the Youth Tour also include visiting with Colorado's U.S.



Benecio Mazzuca



Andrew Littlefield



Anthony Picciano

senators and representatives and getting to know other high school students from across the country.

Morgan County REA is pleased to announce that last year **Andrew Littlefield**, who represented Morgan County REA at Youth Tour in 2018, was chosen to represent the state of Colorado on the Youth Leadership Council. Andrew returned to Washington, D.C., to be trained on public speaking and leadership skills. Andrew attended the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association meeting in Orlando last month and spoke on behalf of Colorado. Andrew had the opportunity to share his experience with co-op members last month at the annual meeting.

We are also pleased to announce that **Anthony Picciano**, who represented Morgan County REA at Youth Camp in

2018, was chosen to return this year in June to represent Morgan County REA at Youth Camp as an ambassador at Glen Eden Resort near Steamboat Springs. Anthony will be responsible for helping to enforce camp rules, be an advocate to encourage kids to apply for leadership roles at camp and bring energy to the camp, to name a few things.

We at Morgan County REA had an incredible year and are proud to have three young men represent us in these prestigious positions.

Congratulations Benecio, Andrew and Anthony, from everyone at Morgan County REA.

MCREA Welcomes **New Employee**



We at Morgan County REA are pleased to welcome **ALEX HINSON**, our new journeyman lineman.

Alex has always wanted to be a part of a co-op family. Upon learning that Morgan County REA had an opening, he immediately applied and was pleased that he was selected to join the family.

Alex relocated to Fort Morgan from Florida where he was working for Big G Electric. Alex grew up in New Mexico and, before becoming a lineman, was in the

Marine Corps. Alex recently had the opportunity to work in Alaska, which he enjoyed.

Alex looks forward to hunting and fishing here in Morgan County as he really enjoys both.

Alex's first day at Morgan County REA was March 4. Alex, his wife and their four children will reside in Fort Morgan when the family moves here once school is finished for the year.

Please join us in welcoming Alex to the Morgan County REA family.

2019 MCREA Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to these nine outstanding young people who were selected to receive postsecondary college or vocational scholarships by the Morgan County REA scholarship committee:



Jordan Kendrick
Brush High School
\$1,000 MCREA Scholarship



Amy Pollart
Prairie High School
\$1,000 MCREA Scholarship



Walter Jordan
Prairie High School
\$1,000 MCREA Scholarship



Simon Graff
Fort Morgan High School
\$1,000 MCREA Scholarship



Kirsten Wood
Weldon Valley High School
\$1,000 MCREA Scholarship



Jalen Jole
Morgan Community College
\$1,000 MCREA
Postsecondary Scholarship



Claire Boyer
Wiggins High School
\$1,000 Basin Electric Power
Scholarship



Abigail Kopetzky
Wiggins High School
\$500 Tri-State Generation and
Transmission Scholarship



Kaybree Keating
Weldon Valley High School
\$500 Tri-State Generation and
Transmission Scholarship



**WIN \$25
OFF YOUR
ELECTRIC BILL**

Each month Morgan County REA gives two lucky members a \$25 credit on their electric bill, just by reading *Colorado Country Life*.

Congratulations, Thad and Cherrie Mellott (account # xxx8500) and Terry Geisick (account # xxx5900), you saw your names and account numbers in the February edition of *Colorado Country Life*. You received a \$25 credit on your bill.

There are two more MCREA member names and their account numbers hidden somewhere in this issue. If you find your name and account number, call member services at 970-867-5688 by April 30 to claim a \$25 credit on your electric bill.