

currents



Inside This Issue

Dave Lock: Living the Seventh Cooperative Principle

Arizona's Electric Cooperatives Step Up During Pandemic

Mohave EC Breaks Ground on Solar, Energy Storage Facility

AzGT Helps Members With 'Virtual' Annual Meetings

A Co-op Employee Looks Back at 40 Years of Co-op Dedication

SSVEC YES Fair Highlights


AEP CO Distinguished Service Award Recipients

Cover photos: Arizona's co-ops help their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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LIVING THE SEVENTH COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE



David Lock, GCSECA CEO

As co-ops, we look to the Seven Cooperative Principles to guide our activities. During the past few months, Cooperative Principle No. 7—Concern For Community—has been at the forefront.

Stories elsewhere in these pages demonstrate how Arizona's rural electric cooperatives have been displaying concern for their communities in many ways during the coronavirus pandemic. It's in our DNA. It's what we do. It's who we are. We pitch in and help our neighbors and friends—who also happen to be members of our co-ops.

Coronavirus' toll—in lost lives and in economic hardship—will not be known for a while. Co-ops face daunting challenges during these uncertain times. We keep our workers safe, while guaranteeing electricity remains constantly available. We keep our operations economically sound, while helping those who have lost jobs and can't pay their bills. We keep an eye on electric loads, wondering if they might fall due to slower economic activity. And we always keep an eye out for the well-being of our members.

In the March edition of Currents, I wrote about experiencing a flood that significantly damaged the town I lived in at the time. I've been thinking about that flood again, now in the context of coronavirus. There are similarities. In both instances, something from nature and beyond our control unleashed unimaginable destruction and heartache. In both instances, we were left to wonder what the future might look like, as we recovered from the shock of something unforeseen changing our world.

There are other similarities. The flood showed human nature and ingenuity at its best. Neighbors cared for each other. State, federal and local governments took bold and decisive actions and rebuilt roads, bridges and infrastructure in record time. People slowly pieced their lives back together. Now, the disastrous flood is a powerful memory, but it has no effect on people's daily lives.

It is my fervent hope that our coronavirus experience is the same. As I write this in early May, there is much uncertainty about immediate choices and what the future holds. The coronavirus death toll is climbing. Sadly, we're told it will continue to do so. Partial shutdowns, social distancing and mask-wearing are prevalent. So are sadness and frustration.

However, I'm confident we will come back strong. We have always found our way out of challenging times and will do so again. And Arizona's co-ops—living the Seventh Cooperative Principle—will lead the way.

Dave Lock

COVID-19 CONTINUES TO DOMINATE ACC AND CONGRESSIONAL ACTIONS

At the state level, the Arizona Corporation Commission is actively considering a range of COVID-19 ideas including a proposal to freeze utility rates to provide relief for customers, a proposal to create a COVID-19 emergency tariff and a draft Blanket Accounting Order for tracking utilities' COVID-19-related expenses. Due to legal impediments identified by ACC counsel and the lack of support from other commissioners, these proposals are unlikely to advance.

On March 27, 2020, Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), which provided an additional \$900 million for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Arizona is slated to receive \$17.2 million in LIHEAP dollars. While these appropriations are substantial, requests for assistance will likely exceed these numbers. As such, electric co-ops are encouraged to work with their consumer-members to apply for assistance now, before funding runs dry.

Energy burdens are significant in the Southwest, where poverty rates are high like our temperatures. Beginning in 2010, an earmark diverted millions in LIHEAP funding from Arizona to other states, leaving approximately 95% of eligible households without LIHEAP funding. According to a 2018 National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition Study:

- Only 3.96% of the total eligible population in Arizona received LIHEAP in 2018.
- Only 25,342 households were served by LIHEAP funding in the state of Arizona.
- 75.03% of LIHEAP recipients in Arizona have at least one vulnerable member: elderly over 60 (36.87%), disabled (68.48%), or child under 6 (32.94%).

GCSECA is participating in a coalition

comprised of utilities, the Department of Economic Security and nonprofits that administer LIHEAP grants. The goal of this group is to create a process that will increase Arizona's apportionment of LIHEAP money and, for our part, help direct more funding to rural cooperative members in need.

To that end, GCSECA is coordinating with NRECA and the Arizona congressional delegation. In response to our requests, the congressional delegation penned a letter to leadership arguing for increasing formula funding for warm-weather states so Arizona can receive its fair share.

"The effect of current overriding language remains profoundly damaging. While one advantaged state is capable of serving half of its LIHEAP-eligible households, Arizona continues to reach just 4% of at-risk households. This means some of Arizona's most vulnerable citizens will continue to be subjected to extreme weather conditions until funding is distributed fairly." -Arizona Congressional Delegation

Additional Federal Aid is Needed

As electric bill nonpayment is increasing nationwide, it is clear LIHEAP funds appropriated in the CARES Act will not be sufficient to meet the growing demand from newly unemployed households, seniors sheltering in place and existing LIHEAP customers. Additionally, commercial and industrial facilities are not eligible for LIHEAP assistance. As not-for-profit entities, co-ops have limited reserve margins to sustain high rates of nonpayment and some co-ops could face significant operational shortfalls. More federal assistance is needed to address utility operational shortfalls caused by the economic downturn and nonpayment of utility bills. Without federal assistance, co-ops may face severe financial distress.

First-of-its-Kind Solar and Storage Facility in Arizona Will Serve Mohave Electric Cooperative Members



From left, Elite Southwest Holdings' Marisa Bentley; Brandan Butcher; CEO and Founder Adam Edwards; Jerry Hardy, manager of engineering and operations for Mohave Electric Cooperative; Rick Campos, chief operating officer; and Ardie Lauxman, chief financial officer.

On May 4, ground was broken on the first solar farm of its kind in Arizona. Elite Southwest Holdings is building the high-tech solar plant in Fort Mohave, Arizona. Using innovative technology, the renewable energy project will generate electricity for distribution to Mohave Electric Cooperative's members, while simultaneously charging the facilities' storage batteries. This new approach is seen as the latest development to improve the reliability of solar energy.

MEC will buy energy from the project through a purchased power agreement. The agreement includes a 25-year fixed commitment, allowing MEC to keep members' rates stable for years to come.

The new facility will use tier 1 bi-facial solar panels, said Brandan Butcher, ESWH's vice president of energy and engineering. These technologically-advanced cells capture direct sunlight and the back surface captures light reflected from the ground. The panels are highly efficient and capable of producing more energy than standard panels.

The cobalt-free, lithium-ion batteries are the newest on the market and will be stored in temperature-controlled concrete buildings to enhance optimum performance. The system provides increased safety and reliability compared with other battery systems.

"We wanted to work with MEC because they are forward-thinking for both their members and for the community, which are values we share," said Marisa Bentley, vice president of land acquisition and development at ESWH.

Mohave Electric Cooperative CEO Tyler Carlson said, "Our members support wholesale power purchases of renewable energy as long as it is cost-effective and does not negatively impact reliability. This project helps MEC with both these objectives."

More than 84,000 solar panels will produce approximately 34 megawatts of renewable energy. The batteries will be capable of storing up to 126 megawatts of power. When complete, the project will increase MEC's renewable energy portfolio substantially, and will be capable of providing electricity for approximately 10,000 homes in MEC's service territory.

Trico Offers Financial Assistance for Members During COVID-19 Crisis

Trico Electric Cooperative is committed to helping members and the communities it serves as we face the health and economic challenges presented by the COVID-19 emergency. In partnership with the Trico Foundation and the Trico Electric Charitable Trust, Trico has adopted a COVID-19 Assistance Program that will provide bill credits and payment extensions to qualifying members who have been affected by the pandemic.



"As a nonprofit, member-owned utility, putting our members first is a guiding principle that has never been more important than it is now," said Vincent Nitido, Trico's CEO and general manager. "We will continue to support our membership and the communities we serve throughout this crisis."

Qualifying members, including individuals and small businesses, can apply for bill assistance through a quick screening process that can be found on Trico's website at www.trico.coop/help-from-trico. In addition, Trico is providing funding for nonprofit and charitable organizations that help local communities in need. The cooperative will provide financial assistance to qualified members, nonprofits and charitable organizations for the duration of this emergency.

The list of nonprofits and charitable organizations that Trico has assisted with \$10,000 grants includes United Way of Tucson, Southern Arizona's COVID-19 Fund, Interfaith Community Services, the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona and Marana Health Care. Trico has pledged an additional \$200,000 to Wildfire—an Arizona nonprofit group that works through local agencies to aid low-income families and individuals. Trico is accepting grant applications from nonprofit and charitable organizations that serve Trico communities with food and other basic needs.

Graham County Electric Cooperative Finds Creative Solution for COVID-19 Changes

Amid a global pandemic, the cooperative spirit still runs strong in the hearts of Graham County Electric Cooperative members and employees. When GCEC closed the lobby for member protection due to the COVID-19 outbreak, members were confused about how to pay their bills. One GCEC employee and his son came up with a creative solution: producing a how-to video.

GCEC employees noticed the drive-thru for bill payment was difficult to locate. Though more signs were posted in the additional employee parking lot in hopes of directing traffic, the drive-thru continued to be overlooked.

"We needed to reach out more to our members and inform them about our lobby closure and bill payment avenues rather than just posting information on Facebook and our website," said Diane Junion, communications and administrative assistant.

With this in mind, GCEC Safety and Loss Control Coordinator Brent Wiltbank and his son, Weston, decided to create a how-to video. The pair's walk-through video is posted on GCEC's Facebook page. Brent narrated the drive-thru and drop-box process in the video. Weston directed the videography and did the editing.

In the face of adversity and chaos, electric cooperatives never shy away from a challenge. For the members and employees at GCEC, Concern for Community during the COVID-19 pandemic is one of the Seven Cooperative Principles held at a high standard. The health and safety of cooperative communities is treasured and valued by all of our co-op employees.



Brent Wiltbank points out GCEC's drop box to help local residents pay for their utilities.



Keeping Connected While Staying Apart

Member Cooperatives post videos of annual meetings to maintain social distancing

The signature event for almost any electric cooperative is its annual meeting. Unlike investor-owned utilities, cooperative consumer-members have a voice in how their utility runs and can meet the people making the decisions at the annual meeting. They usually even have the chance to walk up to a director, general manager or CEO and shake hands. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed that.

"While we certainly look forward to our annual meeting and the opportunity to visit face to face with our members, we hope our members understand the serious nature of the pandemic and our desire to keep everyone safe," said Steve Lunt, CEO of Duncan Valley Electric Cooperative, which held its scheduled annual meeting April 22, with only Lunt and board president Johnnie Frie recording a video of their presentations for members to watch.

Duncan Valley Electric Cooperative Board President Johnnie Frie addresses members in Duncan Middle School's multipurpose room at last year's annual meeting. The crowd illustrates why this year's meeting had to be done as a video recording because of the pandemic.

"Since we do not conduct any official business at our annual meeting, our meetings have been and will continue to be informational in nature," Lunt explained. Bylaw changes and director elections are conducted through mail-in ballots, and a question to approve the minutes of last year's meeting was included. Members who voted were entered into the annual meeting raffle.

The next day, April 23, Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative held its annual meeting in the Benson High School gymnasium. But instead of hosting a room full of hundreds of people, that meeting was also recorded on video and posted on the cooperative's website. Its members already voted by mail in the director elections. All members were entered into the raffle for bill credits and a pickup truck.

"We would prefer to have had our normal meeting, but obviously could not," explained Jack Blair, SSVEC chief member services officer. "So we determined a way to limit the people and still conduct the business meeting."

The Benson High School gym had only seven people: Blair; Crenden Huber, SSVEC CEO; Dan Barrera, board president; Tom Goodman, board secretary; Chris Hickock, board attorney; Geoff Oldfather, communications and public relations manager for Arizona Generation and Transmission Cooperatives; and J.D. Wallace, AzGT communications, social media and marketing administrator. Oldfather and Wallace were there to record the meeting so SSVEC could post it online for members.

"The two board members will conduct the minimal amount of business required, such as approving the agenda and accepting the minutes from last

year, and the CEO and I made the motions and seconded items," Blair said. "The video—along with the other documents, including the list of scholarship winners and the Board President and CEO presentations—will be available on our website. We will also provide a link for members to email us questions."

Both cooperatives began looking at their options in March, when the pandemic began to change how people could or should meet in large groups. While SSVEC could have waited until May or June to hold the meeting, Blair explained that the uncertainty of the coming months made keeping the April meeting date as the best option.

"At one point we were going to have the annual meeting with no members and use Facebook Live and record it, but that was too many people involved in the process," Blair said. "Then we considered recording the meeting in advance, but when gatherings became more limited, we decided on our last option. The most important decision we made was to follow CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) and state guidelines to protect the health and safety of our members and employees."

Whether this pandemic will change the future of meetings is a question on many people's minds. For SSVEC and DVEC, the goal right now is to deliver a responsible, accountable process to their members under the current circumstances.

"I'm not sure if this will impact future annual meetings," Lunt said. "I think our small-town environment is conducive to public meetings. We like to get together and visit so we will probably go back to our old format. This pandemic situation has certainly proven that we are adaptable and that we can still meet our members' needs in the face of challenges."

DVEC CEO Steve Lunt delivers his remarks during the co-op's video-recorded annual meeting. DVEC Board President Johnnie Frie runs the teleprompter from a laptop computer while Kassi Mortensen operates the camera. The teleprompter screen is directly behind Mortensen, hanging on the wall.



J.D. Wallace, left, AzGT communications, social media and marketing administrator, operates the camera and records the Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative annual meeting April 23 in the Benson High School gymnasium. At the podiums, SSVEC Directors Tom Goodman, left, and Dan Barrera conduct the business meeting.



Kassi Mortensen, administrative specialist, left, runs the camera while DVEC Board President Johnnie Frie delivers his opening remarks during the cooperative's video-recorded annual meeting April 22. In the background, DVEC CEO Steve Lunt runs a teleprompter from a laptop.





Graham County EC Member Businesses Help Gila Valley Residents During Pandemic

As small businesses closed their doors and stay-at-home orders were implemented, a Graham County Electric Cooperative business stepped up to help Gila Valley residents suddenly faced with hard choices.

Gila Valley Polaris-Gila Outdoors partnered with the Branding Iron Restaurant and Shane's Place to buy food in bulk. Employees of the businesses divided the food into bags filled with potatoes, oats, rice, beans, spaghetti, salt, and sugar. Gila Valley Polaris is on Main Street in Thatcher, east of GCEC's office in nearby Pima. Shane's Place and the Branding Iron Restaurant are in nearby Safford.

The businesses also bought and included rolls of toilet paper for elderly residents who could not go out to buy their own supplies.

When the time came to hand out the supplies, the line of cars and people stretched for hundreds of yards.

"We didn't know this would snowball with comments and attention," said Lance Shupe, owner of Gila Valley Polaris. "We just felt so privileged to help out the Gila Valley during this crazy time."



Co-ops Partner With Restaurants to Provide Meals During COVID-19 Pandemic

In mid-March, Mohave Electric Cooperative member Anita Gill quit her full-time job of 14 years as a sales executive to focus solely on her business, Javalina's Coffee Express. But when the COVID-19 pandemic cut her operations to drive-thru only, like so many restaurant owners throughout the country, Gill had to scramble to readjust.

The Fort Mohave, Arizona, resident is teaming with MEC Chief Financial Officer Ardie Lauxman to retool the gourmet coffee and smoothie spot into a community kitchen for preparing and delivering free home-cooked meals to housebound seniors three days a week. Lauxman coordinates community donations of food and supplies; Gill handles the cooking and kitchen operations.



Ardie Lauxman, in front, in action at Javalina's Coffee Express

"COVID-19 is color blind, money blind, gender blind. In order to live, it has to spread. We care about our community! So just stay home," Gill wrote on a local Rotary Club's Facebook page.

The initiative in the Bullhead City, Arizona, co-op's service territory has underscored the depths of need among the elderly and other vulnerable populations in this retirement community. During the first full week of operations, deliveries climbed from 75 meals the first day to 350 the second day and finally up to 600—prompting organizers to set up a waiting list.

"The elderly are scared," Lauxman said. "You see them out first thing in the morning at the stores, and they stay in. Those with compromised health are not even able to get out. While we're not requiring people to show proof of need, we are busting at the seams now that the stay-at-home order is in place."

MEC is one of several co-ops teaming with restaurants to provide vulnerable residents with nutritious meals—and sometimes even helping support the businesses themselves. In Fort Mohave, Lauxman and Gill's previous community involvement helped jump-start the initiative. Both belong to the local Rotary Club. Lauxman sits on boards of a local hospital and fire district. Initial referrals, donations and manpower came from hospices, restaurants and service organizations. Now, most referrals go through the Rotary Club's Facebook page. Donations and volunteers to deliver meals come from all over. "If there's something positive going on in the community, it usually has his signature on it," Gill said of Lauxman.

The initiative has galvanized residents and businesses wanting to help. A casino near the Arizona-Nevada border donated a pallet of personal hygiene items. Chafing dishes and bags to hold the meals came from the co-op. Refrigeration facilities are at a nearby athletic field house. High school athletes, whose seasons were cut short, volunteer to drop off meals.

"We have a significant body of volunteers willing to step forward, but we need greater capacity," Lauxman said, adding that he's seeking outside funding for food supplies.

By engaging in the Seventh Cooperative Principle, Commitment to Community, co-ops are easing the fear and isolation wrought by the pandemic—and performing a public service at the same time.

Lauxman is grateful MEC has given him leeway to work on the initiative. "I'm either at home, making up my work time, or volunteering with this project," he said. "It's a need for our members and they understand that at times like this we need flexibility."

DAVIS REMEMBERS FOUR DECADES AT SSVEC

The sticker in the window of the office formerly occupied by Tony Davis offers the perfect metaphor.

"Don't hate me just because I'm a little Cooler."

Davis, who retired January 3 after 39 years and seven months at Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative, takes pride that he needed just two small lunchboxes during his entire career. The Willcox native literally worked his way from the ground up at the cooperative, finishing as a journeyman lineman foreman II.

"I started as a ground man," Davis said. "I would go out with the line crews every day and get the linemen whatever they needed."

Davis was just as reliable as his lunchboxes, working everyday and often during bad weather to make sure his neighbors had electric service.

"I've enjoyed every bit of it," he said. "We didn't have bucket trucks or the equipment we have now when I started. Everything was pretty much manual."

Growing up just a few blocks from the current SSVEC building at 350 N. Haskell Drive, Davis attended Willcox schools and graduated in 1979, earning a basketball scholarship to attend Eastern Arizona College in Thatcher.

He was the tallest player on the Willcox High School team that won the 1979 state championship, beating Buckeye in the title game, 81-60.

"All of their players were over 6-feet tall and I remember they had a guy who was 6-foot-6," Davis said. "We had a lot more quickness, and that made the difference."

When the team bus returned to Willcox—at about 1 a.m.—the players and coaches were greeted by a celebratory parade through the streets of the community.

"I'll never forget it," Davis said.

The summer before starting at Eastern, Davis worked as an intern at SSVEC and discovered his profession of choice. He decided to study electronics in college to learn more about electricity.

"I really liked it and enjoyed the work during my internship," he said.

Davis played one season for Eastern Arizona before getting a telephone call from former SSVEC Supervisor Bill White, who invited Davis to put in for a job opening at the cooperative. He returned to Willcox and spent his first year as a "grunt," he recalls.



Tony Davis and his wife, Wendy.

"I think the hardest job I can remember is digging a ditch by hand up the Dos Cabezas mountain about 2,000 feet," Davis said. "We used small explosives in some parts so we could trench an underground cable for a repeater tower that's up there. That tower covers the entire valley."

Davis was as reliable as his lunchbox, never missing work due to a lost-time accident. He remembers working 24 hours straight for several days after a major storm struck Willcox in 2006.

"That would never happen today," he said. "Today, safety comes first. For the safety of the linemen, you would never have them working 24 hours straight. Back then, we just stayed out until the power came back, but today we know better. Safety has to come first."

Davis married Wendy—who he met in 2007 while working at the cooperative—December 31, 2011. He has two children, Tori Steptoe and Tony James Davis, and three stepdaughters with Wendy: Samantha Nicholas, Shelby Townsend and Sarah Lopez. Together the two have seven grandchildren: Kayden, 12; Khloey, 7; Joshlyn, 7; Lucas, 6; Jazmine, 4; and twin granddaughters Olivia and Evelyn, born January 19. Tony and Wendy are raising Joshlyn and Jazmine.

Davis said he plans to continue playing adult softball.

"I'm going to miss the people I work with and my fellow employees," he said. "I made some good friendships. For me, 40 years went by fast."

Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative CEO Creden Huber presents a plaque of appreciation to Tony in recognition of his service at the cooperative. His retirement was celebrated at the SSVEC Willcox office.



Fair Highlights Student Science Knowledge

Willcox High School student Dakota Finley and homeschool student Ashlyn Farris earned top honors at the annual Youth Engineering and Science Fair hosted by Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative February 25-27 in Sierra Vista.

Presentations to Finley and Farris highlighted an awards ceremony at the Windemere Hotel and Conference Center that included handing out cash prizes totaling more than \$17,000 to more than 70 winners. The annual fair featured participation from students in fifth through 12th grades, representing 15 area schools and homeschool students.

A total of 282 students registered 244 projects at the fair, which celebrated its 23rd year.

Finley, a senior at Willcox High School, impressed judges with her "Plasphalt" project, presenting a process to use plastic in asphalt. Her efforts included working with the Sierra Vista contractor KE&G to develop a mixture that has been used to pave a parking lot and a walkway at her school.

Farris presented "Pattern of Inheritance," which explored the genetics and breeding of a widely cultivated plant species to identify commonalities.

In addition to Farris and Finley, first-place winners included Veritas Christian Community School students Joseph Schmidt and Joshua Bell. Homeschool student Thor Gavin rounded out the top five winners in the division. The trio and their advisers each received first-place checks of \$500.

Dakota Finley, a Willcox High School senior and YES Fair grand-prize winner, stands with her project, Plasphalt Phase 2.



Ashlyn Farris, a homeschool junior and YES Fair grand-prize winner, stands with her project, Pattern of Inheritance and Dihybrid Genetics of Brassica Rapa.

Second-place winners in the high school division were presented \$125 checks and included Willcox High School students Ashley Riggs, Laura Dunham and Rebecca Collins and Veritas students Aiden Gowan and Cameron Tinney.

"I was surprised when my name appeared on the screen," said Riggs, who won the AzGT award with her project Using Thermography to Detect Damage in Solar Panels. "I did not expect it at all."

She explained that she and her father came up with the project as something that could be practical to the energy industry. Since the use of solar panels has been increasing, she considered finding a way to evaluate their performance as an important function for the utility industry.

One grand-prize winner was named in each of the 5-6 grades and 7-8 grades divisions. Middle schooler Karissa Riggs earned \$400 and sixth grader Mark Wilson won \$300. Both are from Willcox.

The annual fair featured special awards, offering students cash prizes for projects aimed at specific topics. Sponsors included the Yale Science and Engineering Association, Vista Auto Care, U.S. Metric Association, the U.S. Air Force, Stockholm Junior Water, the SSVEC Foundation, Ricoh Sustainable Development, Southwest Desert Images LLC, the Office of Naval Research, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the NASA Earth System Science Award, the Mu Alpha Theta Award, Mike and Gisella Halley, Lemelson Early Inventor Award, the Huachucans Scholarship, Creative Pools and Spas, Broadcom Masters, Briseno Insurance AG, ASM Materials Education Foundation, the Association for Women Geoscientists, the American Psychological Association, the American Meteorological Society, the Air Force Association – Cochise Chapter, Arizona G&T, the DoD STEM Leadership Award, TWN and the Sierra Vista Parents Coalition.

Two AzGT Employees Honored With Distinguished Service Awards

Video annual meeting features key personnel and updates

Two AzGT employees whose careers spanned a combined 57 years are the recipients of the 2020 AEPCO Distinguished Service Awards.

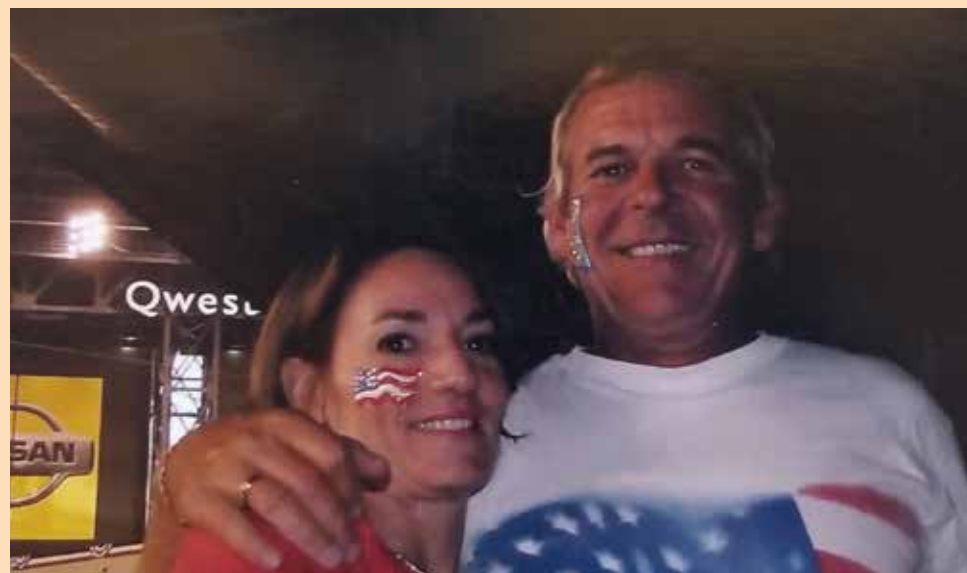
Walter Bray retired in January 2017 after a 33-year career that began in 1984 when he was hired as a fuel material handler at Apache Generating Station. He and his wife, Mary, now live in Show Low.

Chris Barrey retired in October 2018 after a 24-year career that began in 1994 when he was hired as AEPCO's safety director. He died in January after battling lung cancer.



Walter Bray, center, in the gray shirt, shared this picture of his retirement: "With the entire family and grandkids on the bus during a Disney cruise."

In the written nomination submitted to the AEPCO Board of Directors, co-workers had this to say about Chris: "He was someone who had the best interests of everyone in mind, who endeavored to respect and foster the Cooperative Principles. Chris was an essential management participant who easily, due to his depth of experience, married bargaining unit and management needs and ideals."



Julia Grover-Barrey shared this picture of her with Chris.

In accepting the award on his behalf, Chris's wife, Julia Grover-Barrey, who lives in Tucson, shared some thoughts about how Chris would have reacted to the decision to recognize his accomplishments.

"Chris would think it was 'pretty cool' to have been awarded this honor," Julia said. "Chris didn't talk a lot to me about work. Obviously, we were married for almost 25 years, so he did mention a few things, but he didn't talk a lot about work because it was mostly letting me talk about my work."

"But this is what I know about Chris and work: Number one, he could work with just about anybody. Number two, he didn't get emotionally involved in the politics of work. Number three, he gained respect from other people who had much more education than him. He was just naturally intuitive—a smart guy who could fix a lot of things and was really handy. And number four, he helped people come up to positions and into jobs for which they could position themselves to continue to grow.

"Number five, he may have been in a pretty male-dominated work world, but he did have respect for women and I know early on in his career he really helped women enter jobs that were traditionally male. And, number six, he liked to say, 'That's why they call it work,' on behalf of all the complainers out there. He did have this sense of, 'Don't complain about it, just do it, let's work together and get the job done.'

"I want to say thank you again from me, from Chris, and from the rest of Chris's family. Thank you so much."

In the written nomination submitted to the AEPCO Board of Directors, co-workers had this to say about Walter Bray: "He was a mentor, not a boss; someone who listened to people and took their ideas and comments to heart, who really cared about everyone, and was a champion of the entities he worked with, truly caring about their unique needs."

Bray said he couldn't believe he was even nominated.

"I was taken by surprise and didn't really know what to say, except 'thank you' and how I am very honored to receive this award," Bray said. "I've known people over the years that have received this award, and I am very grateful and honored to be a part of that list."

"During my career I had the privilege to work with people from all departments within the AEPCO system. I truly believe that the knowledge that I gained from those folks and the help that I received from all of those employees is really the reason that I was so successful. Without their knowledge and without their support I truly don't believe that I would be sitting here right now. I'll always remember the dedication and professionalism of the people I worked with at AEPCO, and I'll always remember this award."

Chris Barrey's AEPCO Career History

November 1, 1994	Hired as Safety Director
April 8, 1996	Transferred to Corporate Safety Director
September 26, 2005	Promotion to Substation and Apparatus Fleet Manager
September 5, 2011	Promotion to System Engineering Manager
March 12, 2012	Promotion to System Engineering and Maintenance Manager
December 7, 2015	Promotion to Transmission Projects Manager

Walter Bray's AEPCO Career History


May 22, 1984	Hired as a Fuel Material Handler at Apache Station
October 8, 1984	Promoted to Auxiliary Operator
January 21, 1985	Transferred to Operational Engineer Technician II
June 1, 1986	Promoted to Power Scheduler I
February 8, 1988	Promoted to Power Scheduler III
August 5, 1996	Promoted to Power Scheduling Supervisor
October 19, 1998	Promoted to Power Scheduling and Trading Manager
May 2, 2011	Promoted to Director of Energy Services
October 24, 2016	Promoted to Executive Director of Energy Services



A video that replaces the public portion of the AzGT annual meeting—featuring reports from CFO Pete Scott, the Division Managers, and Julia Grover-Barrey and Walter Bray accepting the Distinguished Service Awards—is posted on the website www.azgt.coop. The AEPCO board meeting and the AEPCO and Sierra business meetings were held via a RingCentral "virtual meeting" on May 12.



GRAND CANYON STATE ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION, INC.

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It is with much regret and disappointment that GCSECA announced the cancellation of its summer meeting in late April. At the time, there were several driving factors behind this decision:

1. **Uncertainty.** *There are so many differing models and projections about how long and to what degree the coronavirus will persist. It is impossible to know what requirements and restrictions will be in place. For instance, if social distancing measures are still required or recommended, it would be impossible to conduct our conference.*
2. **Financial risk.** *Per the contract with our venue, we were responsible for up to 100% of our projected revenue, even if we didn't have the meeting. Fortunately, the hotel has worked with us to waive these penalties since we gave them sufficient notice of cancellation.*
3. **Logistics.** *There are a lot of moving parts to conducting a large-scale meeting: arranging for speakers; lining up sponsors; committing to food orders. All of these things take long lead times and were not possible to do with the uncertainty that exists.*
4. **Health and safety.** *Of course, we all want to stay healthy and be safe. We do not want to risk the health and safety of those who might have attended.*

We hope to have our conference in Flagstaff next summer at the same venue, if the board approves.

Regarding the July board meeting, our board decided to continue on and conduct it at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, July 21. The meeting will be held at the GCSECA office, if possible, or by teleconference.