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# Reliability and Practicality Go Hand-in-Hand



David Lock, GCSECA CEO

My wife and I recently were in the midst of a long-awaited European vacation. Last-minute cancellations had us figuring out Eurail schedules and sampling Air B/Bs, instead of relaxing on the deck of a ship on the Rhine River. But we were having fun being spontaneous and adventurous. The squabbling was relatively minor – considering everything – about normal for a couple married 39 years.

This day started early in Strasbourg, France. We had a challenging but manageable day, hopping on three trains in two countries (France and Germany) to get to a third country (the Netherlands). The first two legs of the journey were flawless, and we arrived in Cologne, Germany with plenty of time to make our last transfer. We knew we would be traveling from the main train station in Cologne to a secondary station, where a train would take us to Amsterdam.

We made it to the secondary station but then personally experienced what has been in many headlines around the world. Germany's weakened power grid decided to fail – just as we reached the station. This meant that no trains were running (electric), and neither were any escalators or elevators in the decrepit train station. (As an aside, one would have assumed this particular facility resided in what used to be called East Germany 40 years ago; not in modern day Germany). To reach

the platform where our train would meet us (assuming electricity would be restored), meant climbing several flights of stairs. We had severely overpacked two large suitcases. Fortunately, the power outage was brief, and train service was restored but only after I had hauled over 100 pounds of luggage up crumbling cement stairs. Sore and sweaty, we made it to Amsterdam.

Previously in this space, I have warned of well intentioned policies running way ahead of what's practical, in terms of delivering reliable and affordable electricity. Germany installed billions of euros worth of wind and solar facilities and shut down its coal and nuclear plants. When Russia squeezed its natural gas supply, Germany realized it is in a world of hurt, and is scrambling to bring back the coal and nuclear units back on-line. Our neighbors are taking similar actions. New Mexico is trying to extend the life of a coal plant; California is considering operating a nuclear plant for longer than planned. Winter and Summer haven't been kind to Texas electricity consumers.

I wonder, how many "real life" examples do policy makers need to understand that environmentally inspired aspirations need to be tempered with the cold, hard reality of physics? Will we be more circumspect in our mad rush to a carbon-dioxide free electric future? My wife and I were inconvenienced for short time. But an unreliable power supply can have dire consequences.

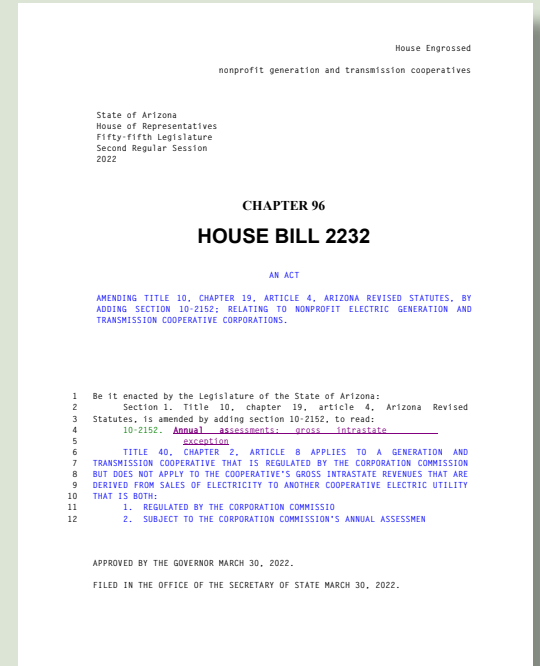
Dave Lock

# Governor Ducey Signs HB2232 in Ceremonial Signing

On Tuesday, August 9th, the co-ops along with several of our legislative allies participated in a ceremonial signing of HB2232 with Governor Ducey. Representing the co-ops were Jeff Larson, GCSECA Board President, Rich Tempelman, Mohave Electric Cooperative Board Treasurer, Casey Ratlief, Director of State Government Relations as well as Russell Smoldon of B3 Strategies.

The legislative allies in attendance were Rep. Gail Griffin, Rep. Regina Cobb, Rep. Lupe Diaz, Sen. Sonny Borrelli and Sen. Sine Kerr. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Griffin, received unanimous support in both the House and Senate Chambers and was officially signed into law on March 30th. All of our legislative allies were helpful in carrying the message to their colleagues that the issue of double assessing the co-ops on electricity sold to other co-ops within the state was in dire need of a solution.

The legislation will go into effect on September 24th and once effective will eliminate the double assessment on gross revenues derived from sales of electricity from the Arizona Generation and Transmission cooperatives to their distribution cooperative members.



# Unsung Co-op Heroes: Facing Current Issues Together

Electric Co-ops are no stranger to struggle, adaptation, innovation, and unique ingenuity. Co-op employees face new challenges around every corner and are frequently unsung community heroes.

Purchasing and procurement employees at Arizona's local co-ops are ferociously facing issues head-on with new tactics and innovation. Most of the 'co-op wins' that are accomplished are only witnessed behind the scenes. Regardless of the time of day, current economic status, or even weather, these employees work around the clock to bring reliable energy to Members and victory over unprecedented events and obstacles.

In 2020, the world witnessed a global pandemic due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Offices closed, people stayed home, toilet paper was a hot commodity, and the cost of disinfectants skyrocketed. Though some offices integrated drop-off boxes for customers and glass dividers for employees, lineworkers continued to work tirelessly to keep the power on and available for all members. Unfortunately, this posed to be quite the problem when all employees needed to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) to continue to work essential co-op jobs.

As part of GCSECA, various committees exist to help streamline processes, provide equal representation, and collaborate on how to overcome various obstacles or issues. The Group Purchasing Committee has proved time and again the importance of joining in-arms together as Arizona's Electric Co-ops to overcome obstacles and secure needed materials, and when face masks were needed for all co-op employees, the Committee didn't hesitate to take advantage of every opportunity with quick action.

Through coordination with NRECA and GCSECA, the Group Purchasing Committee and its members were able to coordinate large quantities of face masks to be ordered and delivered to each local co-ops' headquarters. Each co-op received these masks within just a few weeks of placing the order, whereas most orders through traditional supply chains were backordered with no estimated arrival date.

Just one week after these masks were received, the Committee secured an additional order of face masks and continued to help fulfill a desperate need facing Arizona's local co-op communities. However, this time, each co-op was sent an exponentially larger quantity of masks than what was requested. With such a large supply of face masks being provided to essential employees across the state, Arizona co-ops were strengthened to face the COVID-19 pandemic with confidence.

However, as the pandemic has slowed its pace, electric co-ops are facing different challenges.

In September of 2021, Charles Lopez, Mohave Electric Co-op (MEC)'s Warehouse Purchasing Supervisor, had a project in the Wickiup area for three 100kv single phase transformers with primary voltage of 12470/7200. Single phase transformers are an essential part of delivering reliable electricity to homes and commercial buildings. Transformers decrease the voltage from powerlines as power is delivered to homes and business. Without these essential transformers, electrical sockets would blow, and breaker boxes would continuously cut off power as a fail-safe to keep residents protected from electrical fires or other damage to property and personal health. Voltage from a power line is too much for normal electrical sockets and appliances to use, which is why a transformer is needed.



Though MEC had other transformers in stock, they unfortunately, were the wrong voltage for what was needed. Factor in the challenge of Wikiup's remote location, supply chain issues, and long lead times, it was the perfect recipe for a disaster. Reliable energy and affordable power are one of the main areas that co-ops take pride in, and with the property owner expecting safe and timely power supplied to the location, this proved to be a logistical challenge for Charles. There were frustrated phone calls from Charles to vendors on changing estimated delivery dates and unreasonable lead times of over 6 months for the transformers, but still, the lead times and frustrations kept growing.

Charles then reached out to another member on the Group Purchasing Committee, Chris Miller with Gila River Indian Community Utility Authority (GRICUA). Chris quickly responded to Charles' request and had the exact voltage and quantity of transformers needed for the project. Within 2 weeks, Charles received them onsite in Wikiup, and remarked, "The job didn't miss a beat!"

This remarkable turn of events for Charles and MEC would not have been possible without the networking and connections offered through the Group Purchasing Committee and camaraderie amongst fellow purchasing/procurement employees.

Similarly, Arizona's Electric Power Cooperative and Generation & Transmission plant (AEPCO/AzG&T), has encountered issues in securing meter sockets.

In late March of 2022, AEPCO was looking for three Milbank-brank meter sockets to support a project. Meter sockets are outdoor electrical sockets that connects an electrical meter to a house. These are essential for bringing power to new homes, and to keep power reliable at existing homes. Unfortunately, the delivery date provided to AEPCO by the supplier proved to be a challenge. With supply chain issues reaching an all-time high since 2020, despite placing the order with enough time ahead in the project, the delivery date continued to be postponed and eventually slipped past the required timeframe for installation.

Noticing a trend of delayed delivery dates, Beth Welch, Manager of Supply Chain at AEPCO, reached out to the GCSECA Group Purchasing Committee. Belen Lopez-Hart, Purchasing Manager at Sulphur Springs Electric Co-op (SSVEC), immediately rose to the challenge. Belen worked with her team at SSVEC to cross-reference compatible parts from a different brand that they had in stock to fulfill AEPCO's urgent need for the essential meter sockets.



As of today, AEPCO still has not received the order originally placed in March. With such long lead-times, it's quite the feat for purchasing employees at local co-ops to maintain the essential parts to keep reliable and affordable power for all Members. Without a support team of fellow purchasing and procurement employees, like found among the GCSECA Group Purchasing Committee, much larger issues would prove nearly impossible.

Though material procurement is a frequent topic of discussion these days with current lead times for materials being as far out as 4 years on some items, many Group Purchasing Committee members also contact the group seeking advice specifications, and even checking to see if another co-op has found better pricing on materials. The Committee serves as a networking pathway for innovation, transparency, and even aid when needed. Without this Committee and its dedicated co-op employees, our local co-ops would look much different.

"What I have learned from the purchasing group is that we can count on each other for the same goal," reflected MEC's Charles Lopez.

"We have a vast service area between all of the co-ops in this group, and many contacts and avenues to utilize to assist each other to get the job done."

# Switching Training Helps Trico Electric Cooperative Linemen, Apprentices Sharpen Their Skills

Trico Electric Cooperative linemen and apprentices have a revitalized tool – the Basic Isolating & Testing of Cable Hazards board – to help troubleshoot the cause of an outage and isolate a fault so they can restore power to as many Members as possible.

"It's a fantastic tool to teach apprentices how to move load off the system without taking out power to everyone, and for the linemen to sharpen their skills," Safety Director John Dungan said.

The board, which belongs to Grand Canyon State Electric Cooperative Association (GSECA), had not worked in more than 15 years. It was headed for the scrap yard before John went to the GCSECA office and brought the board back to Trico.

John thanked Journeyman Apparatus Technician Bill Roethle, who worked on the board in his spare time, and Scott McWilliams, Supervisor of Technical Services, for allowing Bill to try to fix it. It took four months for Bill to get the board working again.

Once Trico is done with the board, John will return it to GCSECA so the other state cooperatives can use it for their training.

*Right: Mark Smalling uses the board to figure out the cause of an outage and how to isolate the problem.*


*Tyler Hornung, Blake Reis, Anthony Anaya, Jeremy Konski, Martin Mares and Shem Scott (not pictured) use a switching board to troubleshoot and isolate faults.*

*John Dungan shows Torey Bell, Mark Smalling and Roger Patnode how the switching board works.*





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