

New Billing System Goes Live

Faster posting of payments, lower credit card fees, better handling of multiple accounts

Have you looked closely at your new billing statement? Graham County Electric Cooperative has worked the past two years on a software conversion, searching for the best features and updated technology to benefit the co-op and members.

After much consideration and demonstration of several vendors, management selected Daffron over the current vendor Harris.

“Although we investigated several software programs, we didn’t want to pass high costs onto our members, so we selected a software company that met our current and future goals,” says General Manager Kirk Gray.

Validation and verification of information has been done. The change took place on June 27.

What does this mean to you?

The biggest change is with your customer number. GCEC can still locate your old account, but please start using the new account number immediately.

If you pay your bill through your bank or credit union, change that information to enable us to find your account more quickly. If you use our online or toll-free system, please change your account number.

What changes?

Enhancements include showing a payment receive date and amount, better service location information and better net metering statistics.

The Daffron software allows better handling of multiple accounts. If you have different account

numbers, they will now be rolled into one number with “sub” numbers. This improves online bill pay, enabling distribution to multiple accounts in one easy step.

GCEC is excited to announce the posting of payments is now in “real time.” This means we see payments posted and balances decline as it happens, without waiting to post the upload to the server at the end of the day.

Future enhancements

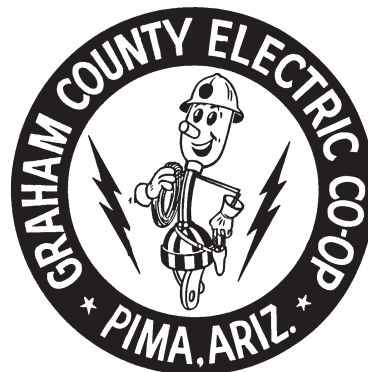
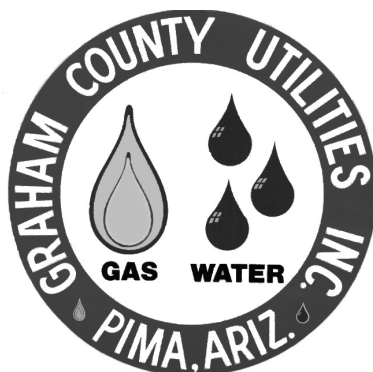
Credit card payments will be integrated with the real-time feature in the future. This means you will be able to log into the system, see your bill balance, pay on your account and see the payment posted.

The terms of the new credit card payments are more favorable. The previous limit was \$250 per transaction. This has increased to \$1,000. GCEC is negotiating the transaction fee to be less than the current fee of \$3.50.

Please Be Patient

As with all changes, there will be some growing pains. It may take us a little longer to know the system and find the information on the computer that we need to help you with your transaction. The office staff has taken time to practice different scenarios prior to going live.

Thank you for being patient with us as we make these technology changes to enhance your electric service. ■



Graham County Utilities Annual Meeting

Graham County Utilities held its 27th annual membership meeting June 18 in the Pima School cafeteria. President Jeff Larson called the meeting to order, welcomed all in attendance, and introduced directors and guests.

The election report was given by Election Committee Chairwoman Lynn Daley. Jeff Larson and Gerald Schmidt, two incumbents, were re-elected. The membership elected newcomer Stephen Hooper from Central, who replaced retiring Director Bob

Brown. Jeff presented Bob with a plaque and thanked him for his tireless 18 years of service as a director to Graham County Utilities.

General Manager Kirk Gray provided an overview and statistical information for the gas and water systems.

Besides a bag with goodies, numerous door prizes were given away to members during the meeting. ■

Bob Brown retired from the Graham County Utilities Board after 18 years of service.



Scholarship Winners

Graham County Electric Cooperative and Graham County Utilities provided \$2,500 in scholarships to five local high schools. The recipients of those scholarships were: Greg Smith, Safford High School; Corrie Hawkins, Thatcher High School; Camryn Wilson, Pima High School; Alexandra Alvarado, Mt. Graham High School; Deidra Chase and Savannah Talgo, Ft. Thomas High School.



James Tippey and Becki Daley each won a new barbecue grill at the annual meeting.



Ann Conners takes to the area roads on her bike when she is not making sure all the details on Graham County Electric bills are accurate.

Details Count in Billing Department

New customer information system required hours of oversight during transition

Ann Conners does one of the most critical jobs within Graham County Electric: ensuring you have the right billing for the utilities you use.

Anything connected to a member's bill is done by Ann. From ensuring correct tax rates, fuel adjustments, meter readings, rate changes, connects/disconnects, delinquent notices, billing calendar, bad debt and much more, it all has to be accurate.

Ann started with GCEC a little more than 16 years ago as a part-time meter reader. After two years, she went to full time, but then was needed in the office as cashier and setting up new services. For the past 13 years, Ann has overseen the billing department.

"I work really hard to ensure everything is accurate on the member's bill," says Ann. "I enjoy problem solving and I do my best to ensure the meters are read accurately and each member is billed accordingly."

Prior to the June 27 software conversion, Ann spent countless hours putting the old and the new billing systems side

by side; comparing each billing input on every account. It was a long process. Formulas must be accurate, along with the readings, fees and usage calculations. Alternate addresses of members, deceased accounts and "in care of" accounts all had to be reviewed.

With gas services, each meter is connected to a main tap and the pressure factors all have to be accurate.

"There are four billing cycles. With each cycle we must duplicate all the work—new services, connects, disconnects, readings, meter changes—done in the current software and input that information into the new software," she says. "Then bills are created and I report any discrepancies and correct the errors."

Ann has an interesting connection to electricity.

"I grew up on a ranch where there was no electricity and we produced our own power with a diesel generator," she says. "If I didn't hear the 'putter' of the generator, I knew we didn't have electricity. It may be days before we could get the parts in order

to get the power back on. I know how important utilities are to our members."

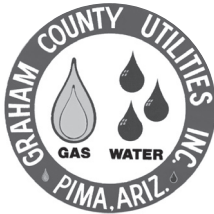
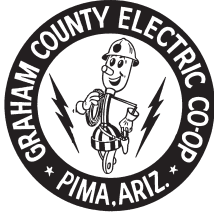
Administrative Services Manager Than Ashby says Ann has been instrumental in helping us get through a major software conversion.

"Her hard work and dedication to her job is one of Ann's many strong points," Than says. "I don't think the software conversion would have been possible without her many long hours of extra work to ensure each and every bill is processed correctly."

When not at work, you might see Ann riding her bicycle. She loves long rides with her husband, Steve, or her Team Morenci cycle club. She has competed in the Tour de Mesa, Tour de Tucson, and Willcox Flyer races.

She loves NASCAR, Chinese food and keeps a Kindle in her purse to read during quiet moments. ■

As with any software conversion, issues will arise. Please be patient with GCEC, as every attempt will be made to make the process go as smooth as possible.



P.O. Drawer B
Pima, AZ 85543

(928) 485-2451
Toll free: (800) 577-9266
Fax: (928) 485-9491
www.gce.coop

Graham County Electric Board of Directors:

President Reuben McBride
Vice Pres. Gene R. Larson
Secretary Tommy Clonts
Jim Bryce
Chris Claridge
Mark Claridge
Dennis Jacob
Robert Reed
Gerald Schmidt

Graham County Utilities Board of Directors:

President Jeff B. Larson
Vice President Dennis Jacob
Secretary Mike Crockett
Jim Bryce
Tommy Clonts
Gene R. Larson
Steven Hooper
Larry H. Morris
Gerald Schmidt

General Manager:

Kirk Gray



Touchstone Energy®
The power of human connections

AZ-145 **Postmaster:** Send address changes to Currents, 5605 NE Elam Young Pkwy., Hillsboro, OR 97124

Manager's Message

Members' Economic Participation

Cooperatives operate under seven guiding principles. The third cooperative principle is "Members' Economic Participation," which states, "Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership."

Graham County Electric Cooperative Inc. disbursed 8,787 checks totaling almost \$122,000 in June 2016. This represents a 100 percent patronage capital retirement from 1972 and 3.68 percent of 2014. GCEC's capital credit retirement policy provides for a hybrid method of retiring patronage capital allocations. GCEC retires 100 percent of the oldest year's patronage capital allocation plus a percentage of the most recent patronage capital allocation, 2014. The percent of the most recent patronage capital allocation is determined by the patronage capital retirement received from Arizona Generation and Transmission Cooperatives.



GCEC has a goal of maintaining a 40 percent member equity, otherwise known as a reserve.

GCEC has used member surpluses since the early 1970s to provide capital for system improvements, which benefit all members. GCEC system improvements have provided members with reliable and efficient electric service. In 1995, GCEC's line loss was 12.9 percent.

For the year ending 2014, GCEC's line loss was 6.1 percent. This translates to member power cost savings of \$8.3 million cumulatively during the 20-year period from 1995 to 2014. GCEC has a reliable and efficient distribution system that benefits all members with lower power costs.

As financial conditions allow, the GCEC Board of Directors and management are committed to retiring allocated surpluses, maintaining member equity and operating the electric distribution system in the most efficient manner possible.

Member economic participation is just one of the seven guiding principles that sets the cooperative business model apart from investor-owned or municipal-owned utilities. We hope you value your cooperative membership as much as we value you as our member/owner. We appreciate the opportunity to serve you, our member-owners.

—Kirk Gray