



Graham County Electric Cooperative crews change out poles after inspections determine which poles need to be replaced.

Keeping the Energy Flowing to You

Pole inspection is just one way Graham County Electric Cooperative continues to improve system reliability and provide power to its members. There are more than 1,200 miles of electrical line with poles in GCEC's service territory.

A number of years ago, the co-op developed a pole inspection plan. Staff addressed areas of concern and discussed strategies. The result was a 10-year systemwide pole inspection plan. Implementation of the plan is ongoing.

Each year, the co-op hires an outside vendor to test 10 percent of the poles in the system. This year, Sundance Power Pole Inspections Inc. was contracted to test and inspect 2,125 power poles and overhead electrical facilities in our service territory. Crews will work in different areas of our territory each year. Sundance crews will access GCEC equipment by foot,

truck or ATV, depending on the terrain and conditions of the pole location. A percentage of poles will be tested in parts of these areas: San Jose, south of Safford, south of Thatcher, Cluff Ranch and Tidy Acres areas in Pima.

If you are an affected property owner you will receive a letter before crews enter your property. For the safety of the crews and property owners, please notify us of any potential hazards or special conditions associated with your property so arrangements can be made for safe access.

Pole inspections are just one of many tasks that GCEC is committed to in order to provide reliable power to our members. As our mission statement says, "We are committed to provide safe, reliable and efficient resources to enhance the lives of our members and the communities we serve." ■



Kirk and Cathy Gray rode the Graham County Electric Cooperative float in the Safford Christmas Light Parade in December.

Bringing Back Christmas Traditions

By Jenny Howard

For the second year, Graham County Electric Cooperative and Graham County Utilities entered a lighted float in the Safford Downtown Association Christmas Light Parade on December 1. Graham County Electric won the honorable mention award for its digger derrick truck pulling a float depicting a traditional Christmas sleigh ride.

The theme of the parade was 'Tis the Season. The co-op focused on the season of traditions and adorned a sleigh with red and green lights and staged it with a winter wonderland sparkling in an array of color. Completing the float were CEO/General Manager Kirk Gray and his wife, Cathy, dressed in traditional Victorian winter attire as they stood by the sleigh enjoying the crisp evening winter air.

The bed of the digger derrick pulling the float, carried by Santa's reindeer atop the boom, was packed full of blow-up characters depicting many years of Christmas traditions, from Snoopy to Frosty the Snowman, Mickey Mouse, Santa Claus, the Grinch and more. The blow-up characters were on loan from 8-year-old Jenner Seale. Jenner—the son of Apprentice Lineman Preston Seal, who drove the truck—was excited to share his collection of Christmas friends with the paradegoers. ■



Above, crews decorate the trucks for the parade. Left, the digger derrick glows with all of its lights on.

It's a New Year, Start Saving Today!

Have you used your Co-op Connections Card this past year? If not, start saving today!

Graham County Electric Cooperative, in conjunction with other Touchstone Energy cooperatives around the country, has developed the Co-op Connections program to deliver more value to their members.

In 2018, a new phone app was developed. Members no longer need the Co-op Connections Card key fob. The list of participating local and national businesses are at your fingertips.

Go to www.gce.coop and click on the Co-op Connections banner. Follow the prompts to register your GCEC membership on the Co-op Connections website. The online search function is available once you register. You can search by zip code and/

or keyword. If you are traveling out of the Gila Valley, look for deals in your travel area.

Check often, as participating businesses are updated regularly on www.connections.coop. There are also numerous national discounts available.

When should you check for a Co-op Connections Card discount?

- When you make travel arrangements.
- When you buy prescriptions.
- When servicing your vehicles.
- When you plan to dine out.

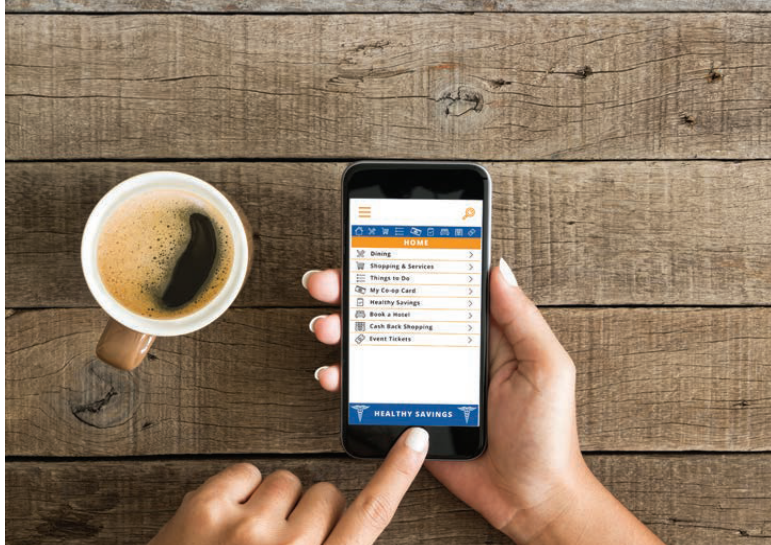
It's your member benefit! Use it in 2019 for money-saving deals and online shopping. ■

**GO BEYOND
THE CARD.
FIND ALL THE WAYS TO SAVE.**



Three easy steps:

1. Visit www.connections.coop from your computer to sign up for an account. This **MUST** be done from a web browser, not the mobile app.
2. Download the mobile app from your phone's app store (Google or Apple).
3. Sign in and start saving!



DOWNLOAD THE FREE NEW CO-OP CONNECTIONS® APP TODAY!

SAVE THE DATE

Annual Meeting in February

Graham County Electric Cooperative is preparing for the upcoming annual meeting Saturday, February 9, at 10 a.m. in the Pima School cafeteria.

Members can participate in the one-member, one-vote process that sets co-ops apart from other business models.

The process of electing directors has begun. Petitions for those wishing to run for seats had to be turned in by close of business January 3. The incumbents are Reuben McBride, District 1; Stephen Hooper, District 2; and Tommy Clonts, District 3.

Ballots will be mailed to members the week of January 15 and must be returned to the office by noon February 7. Do not mail it with your payment. Please use the envelope that was enclosed with your ballot.

Election results will be reported by the election committee chairperson at the meeting, along with reports from Board President Dennis Jacob and CEO/General Manager Kirk Gray, and guest reports from the generation and statewide organizations, Arizona Electric Power Cooperative and Grand



Canyon State Electric Cooperative Association.

Save the date now to be there. We look forward to seeing you. ■

Above, members register at the 2018 annual meeting. Top the meeting is a chance to learn what your cooperative has been doing the past year.

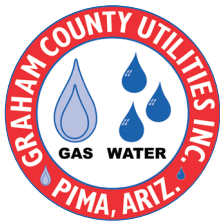
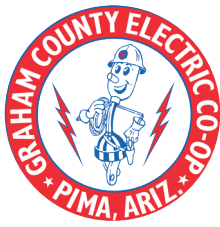
Washington Youth Tour Winners Announced

The 2019 Washington Your Tour participants have been selected and are listed below. More information on our winners will be in the March Currents.

- ▶ Vivianna Talgo, Ft. Thomas High School
- ▶ Morgan Miller, Pima High School
- ▶ Levi Thygerson, Pima High School
- ▶ Ella Peterson, Safford High School
- ▶ Grace Haller, Thatcher High School
- ▶ Katelyn Martin, Thatcher High School

Thank you to all those students who participated. Each year, we have great students who apply and make the selection process difficult for the panel of judges.





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Graham County Electric Board of Directors:

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

Graham County Utilities Board of Directors:

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

CEO and General Manager:

Kirk Gray



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Manager's Message

Thank You Once Again

After elections results were announced early November 7, Graham County Electric Cooperative members, directors and staff all had a collective sigh of relief. Proposition 127 “Clean Energy for a Healthy Arizona” was soundly defeated. Statewide, Prop 127 was defeated with almost 69 percent voting against the ballot initiative. Graham County voted 89 percent against Prop 127! Hopefully the election results will send a message to those out-of-state interests that Arizona can manage its own affairs. I would like to personally thank our directors, staff and members for all the time and effort they put in getting the truth out concerning Prop 127.

The results of this election highlights the fifth cooperative principle—Education, Training and Information, which states, “Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation.”

I want to assure you, our member/owners, that GCEC is actively involved in pursuing energy alternatives that make economic and environmental sense. GCEC constantly look-at projects that will provide our membership with safe, reliable and affordable electricity. We are evaluating two renewable energy projects that will complement GCEC's current electric



generation resource mix. We will only proceed with projects that make economic sense and take into account environmental impacts.

Nationally, the Environmental Protection Agency on August 21 released the Affordable Clean Energy rule as a replacement of the Clean Power Plan. This new rule would provide states with a definition of the “Best System of Emission Reduction” and a three-year window to devise an implementation plan that applies to individual generation plants such as Arizona Electric Power Cooperative. Once the ACE rule is published in the Federal

Register, the EPA will accept comments during the 60 day public comment period. The EPA will hold public hearings on the matter and release the final rule in early 2019. The ACE rule is a significant improvement to the CPP because it allows individual generating plants to implement emission-reduction technology, yet still use their current generation assets through the end of their useful life. This rule will help eliminate the possibility of “stranded generation assets,” which we all have to pay for. GCEC encourages our membership to participate in this rule-making process.

Rest assured that the directors, management and staff of GCEC are looking after your interests as member/owners and thank you, once again, for your continued support in issues affecting your cooperative.

—Kirk Gray