

Remembering Larry Morris

GCU and former GCEC director was a committed community volunteer



Larry Morris, 1934-2021

OPPOSITE PAGE: Larry, left, is presented with a plaque by Board President Jeff Larson honoring 15 years of service as president of the Graham County Utilities board.

We are deeply saddened by the death of Graham County Utilities board member Larry H. Morris on January 28, 2021.

He was first elected to the Graham County Utilities Inc. board on May 31, 1997.

Larry served as the GCU board president from July 1998 to July 2013. Bob Brown was vice president and Jerry Kempton was secretary during that time.

Larry also served on the Graham County Electric Cooperative board from 1997 to 2012. During his tenure on these boards, the directors oversaw many accomplishments: the Pima Water Project; Cottonwood Wash upgrades; drilling additional wells for increased services; Ft. Thomas water system upgrades; Safford Bridge natural gas crossing upgrades; building the Pima and Talley substations; building the new co-op offices; and, most recently, the sale of GCU gas services and management of the Ashcreek Water Co.'s service area.

He also served on the Arizona Electric Power Cooperative board and the Sierra Southwest board for several years.

"Larry will be missed as a director on the utility's board," says GCU Board President Jeff Larson. "As the former president of the board, he was always a well-informed and prepared director. Larry was very involved in the community as a business owner and served on many civic boards during his lifetime. He will surely leave a hole in the community."

Former GCEC Board President Gene Robert Larson noted Larry never missed a meeting.

"He was well prepared prior to the meeting date," Gene says. "Larry had his own thoughts and would express them. I appreciated and valued his opinions."

Larry was a member of GCEC since 1952 and a member of Graham County Utilities when it was bought from General Utilities in 1989.

He loved serving his community in many roles, including Pima Fire Department chief; Associated Firefighters of Arizona president; Pima Chamber of Commerce board member; Pima Unified School District board member and board president; bishop of the Pima 1st Ward; and many other areas of community and religious service.

Larry was born in Safford but lived in Pima. He was best known for his business, The Sugar Shack Bakery. He and his wife, Betty, spent decades making donuts, pastries, cookies, cakes, breads and other items.

Larry was named Firefighter of the Year and Citizen of the Year for the town of Pima.

Betty died 29 years to the day prior to Larry's death. They had five children: Brent, John, Morey, Carrie Kelly and Trisha Kempton; and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Our heartfelt condolences and prayers go out to his family. Larry will always be a part of our co-op family. ■



GCEC Hires New Project Manager

Josh Bryce was hired in January as a project manager for Graham County Electric Cooperative and Graham County Utilities Inc. He replaces Jenny Howard, the compliance and special projects manager who left the co-op in February.

Because the job evolved from compliance to more project management, Josh will be responsible for planning, administering and completing assigned projects. He will develop and implement business processes necessary to manage capital projects.

"We are really sorry to see Jenny go and wish her all the best in her new ventures," says CEO and General Manager Phil Cook. "Jenny did a lot of great work and moved many programs across the finish line for us.

"I am excited to have Josh

on our team. He brings a lot of experience and expertise in many areas that will help us complete some important electrical and water system projects. We will be very busy over the next few years with upgrades to infrastructure and implementing new technologies."

Josh was raised in the Gila Valley, attended Eastern Arizona College and graduated from Arizona State University with a degree in electrical engineering.

Josh is a registered professional engineer in Arizona. He was president of Utility Industrial LLC, a consulting engineering firm, from 2014 to his hire date with GCEC. He also was employed as an electrical design engineer with ProConn Engineering from 2011 to 2014, and Hanlon



Josh Bryce started at Graham County Electric Cooperative in January. He is developing business processes for capital projects.

Engineering and Architecture before 2011.

"Being part of the team here was a goal of mine from the time I started in the utility industry," Josh says. "I'm

excited to be back in the Gila Valley and be working with all the great people at GCEC."

Josh and his wife, Katy, are raising their six children in Bryce. ■

Former Employee Is Expanding Her Business

Jenny Howard was the GCEC compliance and special projects manager for three years. One of the projects she worked on was expanding participation in the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program. The funding from this program supports economic development projects in rural areas served by electric cooperatives.

We wish Jenny much success as she expands her businesses, Ginaveve's Market Place and The Main Street Bean. The Tiny Bean, a drive-thru coffee shop serving craft espresso and non-espresso beverages, specialty foods and deserts, will open soon. The shop will be on east Highway 70 and will have a large deck for outdoor seating.





Friends catch up during a past Graham County Electric Cooperative annual meeting. Stay tuned for more information about the upcoming joint annual meeting in September.

A Combined Annual Meeting

GCEC and GCU to host combined annual meetings in September

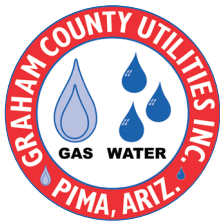
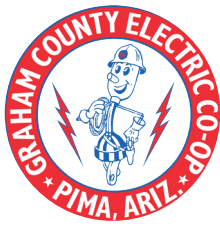
The Graham County Electric Cooperative and Graham County Utilities Inc.'s 2021 annual meetings have been postponed.

Typically, GCEC holds its membership meeting in February, and GCU was scheduled for June. Due to many factors, including COVID-19, the directors have decided to combine both meetings, now tentatively scheduled for September.

The communities that GCU and GCEC serve continue to be challenged by COVID-19, and keeping employees and members safe is a priority. Management is working with vendors that will continue to provide audio visual support for in-person meetings.

Because much of the business from both entities deals with operating updates, management took the opportunity to reduce expenses associated with holding two separate meetings.

Look for more information on your billing statements, Facebook page and our website at www.gce.coop. ■



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Manager's Message

Planning and Changing for 2021

I want to explain some of the 2021 plans because we are well into the new year. One important activity that occurs every January is the approval of the annual budget. The GCEC/GCU Board of Directors approved the 2021 budget at the January board meeting.

The annual budget requires several months of planning, evaluating and discussion with the staff before bringing a final budget to the board. A few important budget items include capital improvement projects, equipment replacements and updating our maintenance plans. Our plans include implementation of infrastructure projects, technology, and expenditures that provide safe and reliable services while looking for ways to be more efficient.

Our Graham County Electric Board of Directors authorized the return of \$404,826 in capital credits to our electric members. Some of our members will receive a credit to their electric bill and some will receive checks



in August. If you bought electric service from us in 1974, you will receive 100% of your share of that retirement. If you bought electric service from us in 2020, you will receive a portion of that retirement.

Our state and community continue to battle the COVID-19 pandemic. When considering the current challenges of meeting together, the GCEC/GCU boards decided to postpone the annual meetings for both GCEC and GCU. The directors and employees look forward to an early fall in-person combined annual meeting for both GCEC and GCU members.

Postponing the regular in-person annual meeting was not an easy decision for your board of directors. However, we feel it is the right decision for the health and welfare of the co-op's members and employees.

We hope all of our members, employees and community continue to be safe and healthy!

Phil Cook
CEO/General Manager