



Veronica Quintero, right, the Oregon Health Care Association's current Caregiver of the Year, takes time for a hug with Columbia Basin Care resident Eva Phelps.

# A Caring Reflex

*Veronica Quintero takes care of the “grandmas and grandpas” as if they were her own*

**By Kathy Ursprung**

Veronica Quintero's wide, friendly smile and upbeat personality can't help but brighten almost any dark day.

But that's just a small part of what makes her one of the best certified nurses' aides in Oregon. The Columbia Basin Care nursing assistant holds the current title of Caregiver of the Year, awarded by the Oregon Health Care Association.

The honor is awarded to an individual

who demonstrates a commitment to quality care through dedication to residents, staff and the long-term care profession.

Veronica says her job serves as a higher purpose.

“We're the ones taking care of the grandmas and grandpas,” she says. “We have to remember that what we do is super important. It's not something little that we do.”

Veronica, 22, has been a nursing assistant at Columbia Basin since shortly

after graduating from The Dalles High School in 2014. She took CNA training at Columbia Gorge Community College as a way to start her career in the medical profession. She plans to continue her education and become a nurse.

Veronica's experience working with the elderly is much longer.

“My mom was a CNA when I was young and did overnight stays,” she says. “I got really close to one patient and called him grandpa. I would do little things for him like take him water. I just

want the feelings of being able to help.”

Her own grandparents were a strong influence in her life, and she participated in her grandmother’s care before she died.

When Veronica is not caring for the residents at Columbia Basin, she saves her vacation time to work with her mother in a local cherry orchard. Since childhood, she has spent summers in the orchard, often working from dawn to dusk.

“I like helping my mother,” she says. “That time together is so special.”

Working in the orchards with her mother also played a key role in making her the person she is today, Veronica says.

“I help migrant families in need there, and I look forward to it every year,” she says. “I guess you could say it’s my hobby.”

Veronica also helps look after her brother, age 13, and sisters, 10 and 11.

“My mom’s a single mom, so I love to help her,” Veronica says. “I go home, make dinner and wait for my siblings to come home because Mom is usually at work.”

She also enjoys attending practices, performances and games with her siblings.

“If my brother has a basketball game, I really want to be there,” she says.

Veronica also makes time for herself. She enjoys walking her dog, working out at the gym and occasionally hanging out with friends. She also counts cleaning as something she enjoys.

“I’m a big cleaner,” she says. “I have to clean every day.”

Veronica’s schedule at Columbia Basin helps make her other activities possible. Her workday starts at 6 a.m. and ends around 2 p.m., giving her afternoon time to spend with her family.

The first few hours at work are focused on getting her charges ready for the day, including things like showers and tooth-brushing if needed.

“You don’t really think about how much comes in a day until you help somebody do it,” Veronica says.



**Columbia Basin Care in The Dalles provides short-stay rehabilitation as well as long-term care.**

Breakfast is from 8 to 9 a.m. After that, she and the other CNAs work on whatever pops up, Veronica says.

“And something will pop up,” she says.

A CNA needs to be considerate, compassionate and observant because sometimes the residents can’t express what they are feeling, Veronica says.

“What I think of is how I would want my grandfather taken care of,” she says. “They’re depending on us. They come here because they need you, and a good CNA has to be really considerate and really understanding. There’s a lot of pain involved here, and you have to understand that, too. You have to understand what will make them feel better. Sometimes it’s even as simple as giving them a hug.”

“We can’t feel what they feel, but we can try to understand.”

Though young and early in her career, Veronica is seen by her employers as a leader with compassion beyond her years.

“Helping is such a natural reflex to Veronica that she doesn’t even realize compassion is part of her every action, both personally and professionally,” says Aubree Olmstead, executive director of

Columbia Basin Care.

Veronica is also bilingual, which she says can help some residents with an experience that otherwise might be more scary and lonely.

Veronica says she has become quite close to some of the residents she has been taking care of for a long time.

“They have so many stories,” she says. “I would just sit there and talk to them all day if I could. I really do learn a lot from them. They give us advice. They have so many years of experience—way more than me!”

Some times on the job are a little more crazy than others, Veronica says.

“I feel like before I worked here, I didn’t believe the stuff about the moon,” she says. “Now that I work here, I totally believe it. Things get crazy around here when there’s a full moon.”

CNAs also need to be prepared for the hardest part of the job: when a resident dies.

“These people grow on you—you love them—and when it happens, it really does hurt,” Veronica says. “I don’t think you’re ever ready. That’s why it’s important that every day I see somebody, I try to make their day good.” ■



Emma Burke is a server at Pastini in Corvallis while studying business at Oregon State University.

## Education Acceleration

*Student graduates from high school and community college in the same week*

**By Craig Reed**

Emma Burke does not seem to be intimidated, whether by life, school, work or the future.

The Oregon State University junior changed her major from pharmacology after fall term to business finance and marketing. Her plan is to graduate with a business degree in spring 2021, apply for law school at the University of Oregon and study business and corporate law.

What is a bit surprising about the mission Emma is on is that she is only

18 years old and has already shown a determination to pursue and achieve high goals. She quickly adjusted from the lifestyle of the small town of Elkton and its 200 residents to OSU's campus and its population of almost 30,000 students.

"At a small school like Elkton you have limited resources, while at Oregon State there are so many opportunities," says Emma, the daughter of Daniel and Ann Marie Burke. "I love the atmosphere here. I love having students around me. I've made a lot of new friends, people who are interested in the same things I am."

Emma had been focused on a pharmacology degree, but after some classes at OSU decided to make a change.

"I didn't want to have all that (pharmaceutical) knowledge, but not have the choice on who got a prescription," she explains. "I had been very one minded, but being able to explore other opportunities led me to this major change."

She says being an attorney will allow her to voice her opinions and help people make choices that are best for them.

Emma says she prepared for college by being busy and involved during high



**Above, Emma in her Umpqua Community College cap and gown after graduating with honors in June 2018. A week before, she graduated from Elkton Charter School, also with honors. Left, Emma recently changed majors from pharmacology to business. She hopes to become an attorney.**

school days.

Emma graduated from Elkton Charter School on June 8. A week later, on June 15, she graduated from Umpqua Community College with an Associate of Arts Oregon transfer degree. The UCC degree involved pre-pharmacy courses. She managed her time, took four or five classes at each school and graduated as a member of the National Honor Society, maintaining a 3.94 GPA at Elkton and was a member of Phi Theta Kappa with a GPA between 3.5 and 4.0 at UCC.

She also was a class officer in Elkton's student government, an officer in the Future Business Leaders of America club, a member of FFA and a participant in school sports. She worked 20 hours a week as a barista at Elkton Station for three years.

"Emma is very motivated," says Ann Marie. "She's not a procrastinator. She's got a lot of creativity, a lot of spunk."

During her senior year at Elkton, Emma focused on starting the North Umpqua Unified Club that brought together students and staff at her Elkton school and at North Douglas and Yoncalla high schools. Her goal is to bring students with and without

intellectual and physical disabilities together through social and recreational opportunities and activities. The club had 35 members during Emma's senior year.

The previous summer, Emma participated in the Douglas Education Service District Partner Sports Camp.

"That camp really opened my eyes to the opportunities that should be available to these students year-round," she says.

North Umpqua Unified Club members made several field trips, including a visit to Wildlife Safari in Winston, a bowling outing, and organizing and participating in a basketball tournament.

"I've always been interested in helping people," Emma says, noting half the club members have special needs. "I wanted to give those students different opportunities. The club created a healthy lifestyle for the students."

Emma says she received guidance and support for her many activities from Andy Boe, Elkton Charter School District superintendent; Elkton teachers Matt Parrish and Rob Parker; Elkton Station owners Debbie and Don Marx; parents and grandparents Ann and Jerry Burke of Elkton; and her boyfriend, Jayce Ellis.

Andy saw Emma's energy and

leadership on a daily basis. Establishing the unified club was Emma's senior project.

"She is an extremely focused individual," Andy says. "It was fun to watch her thrive in that club environment, and to watch her interact with the kids with disabilities was amazing. That program is continuing. It'll be a legacy for her."

"She's focused on where she is headed and what she wants to do. A lot of kids I worry about when they go off to college or the city because we are so small here, but I never worried about that with her. She was ready to go."

In Corvallis, Emma is not only going to class and studying, but works 20 hours a week as a server at Pastini.

"She's upbeat, she's always on time, she has awesome energy," says Jeremy Yoba, the restaurant manager. "We're happy to have her here. She has the ability to make somebody's day better. She does that."

During winter term at OSU, Emma is taking 16 credit hours of upper division classes and has joined the Pre-Law Society. In the fall, she plans to join the university's mock trials program.

"I want to be involved as much as I can be," Emma says. "I want to absorb as many activities, as many opportunities as I can during this time."

"My dad taught me that building relationships with people is most important. That is what fuels my energy. That is what makes me truly happy. I want to be able to serve and help people." ■



Local veterans attended a Veterans Day presentation and dinner at the Monument Senior Center. Each received a Quilt of Valor in recognition of their service.

# A Creation of Comfort

*The Monument community honors its veterans with Quilts of Valor*

By Jody Foss

A group of women sits around a large table on a Saturday in the Monument Senior Center. The conversation is lively, and laughter comes easily.

Known as Crazy Quilters, the group meets through the winter one Saturday a month. Everyone is welcome. Usually eight to 21 women attend; sometimes a few children join the fun. The women bring their own sewing projects, or Judy Harris teaches a class. It is also a potluck.

"We probably eat more than we should," Judy says with a laugh. "I am not

what you call a quilter. I love to sew. But there are some quilters whose work is just incredible."

The talented group of women decided to show the veterans of the community how much their service is appreciated by presenting them with patriotic-themed quilts in a Veterans Day ceremony November 11 at the Monument Senior Center.

Cheryl Ringering, who participates in the group, brought the idea of the quilts to the table after hearing about Quilts of Valor being made in Mount Vernon.

The Quilts of Valor Foundation is a

national organization whose mission is "to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor."

The Crazy Quilters who participated in the project alongside Cheryl were Judy, Susan Cavender, Sylvia Cockrell, Patti Engle, Kathy Woods, Jeanne Strange and Lorynn Lawrence.

Once they decided to tackle the project, the ball was rolling. Judy's husband's cousin, Kathy Woods of Spokane, made five quilts. She met a woman in Hobby Lobby named Susan McGuire when they were both buying

fabric. Once Kathy told her about the Quilts of Valor project, Susan offered to quilt Kathy's quilts for free with her long-arm machine. Now they quilt together in a group in Spokane.

Mary Lou Drury and Janice Dickens of Mount Vernon quilted the other 38. The Prairie Girls from Prairie City also donated a quilt.

"Everyone's work is a little different," Judy says. "All the quilts had their own special quality."

At the ceremony on Veterans Day, each veteran was called to the front of the room to receive a quilt. Many of the quilts had a photo of the soldier on the label, along with a list of ranks and positions, and the war they served in.

Jimmy Mael, who died November 4, had a special table at the ceremony. His wife, Suzi, accepted a quilt in his honor.

Katee Hoffman of Grant County Veterans paid for the dinner. The Crazy Quilters cooked the meal.

The group plans to make a Monument tradition to honor veterans with a dinner and a quilt presentation to show "honor, respect and gratitude to each veteran for all their sacrifices, time and dedication for our freedom," Judy says. "Thank you is just not quite good enough. We often take them for granted as we go about our daily lives. We need to thank each one for serving for all our freedom."

Last March, the group thought they might need to sew about 20 quilts.

As time went on, more names came in," Judy says. "We just kept sewing to make sure we had enough. I am very proud of our group. It just shows, when a team pulls together, anything can happen."

"You know the emotion that these guys feel and the neglect that they have felt for so many years?" Cheryl asks. "It's pretty amazing being able to do this for them.

This group doesn't have leadership, and it doesn't have fundraising. It doesn't have anything but a lot of fun and inclusion. It's a refreshing reprieve from life.

"My husband's uncle was a Korean



**Veteran Leon Skiles receives a quilt during the Quilts of Valor ceremony on Veterans Day.**



**James Jenkins receives his quilt, made by Kathy Woods of Spokane.**

War vet, and I just decided to make him a quilt. When I talked to his wife, she said, 'Well, my 18-year-old brother was killed in Korea,' and so we made them one with their names on it. They have had

experiences that the rest of us haven't had because we got to stay home."

"What an honor to make these quilts for these veterans," Judy adds. "They deserve this and so much more." ■



Evergreen Consulting Group/CEC Lighting Specialist Kandis Bray inspects a recent lighting installation in Central Oregon.

Photo courtesy of Kandis Bray

## Meet Your Energy Team

*From residential to agriculture to lighting, CEC has you covered*

**By Courtney Cobb**

Everywhere you turn these days there are advertisements for energy-efficient lighting, appliances, sprinklers and more. While the overall population is becoming more energy conscious, Central Electric Cooperative has a team of experts that can help you with your efficiency projects, whether they are residential, agricultural or business related.

CEC's team consists of Jody Howe, CEC energy specialist; Robert Wallace,

WyEast RCD-field energy analyst; and Kandis Bray, Evergreen Consulting Group/CEC lighting specialist. Following are just a few questions we asked the team recently to help you, the members, get to know them better.

**Q:** How would you describe your job to others?

**Jody:** As energy specialist for CEC, I look at insulation, heating systems (including water) and the structure. I have a national certification in residential

structures. My job is to help you understand what would best build comfort and reduces energy use.

**Robert:** I work with the agriculture producers throughout the region. My goal is to help develop projects. Most of my work is with irrigation system improvements. I work under a contract that allows me to spend time with Central Electric Cooperative members.

**Kandis:** I assist utility customers with lighting upgrade projects and assist them with the entire utility incentive paperwork



**CEC Energy Specialist Jody Howe works on reports after a recent home energy audit.**

Photo by Bob Fowler

and pre-approval process. I have been a lighting specialist for Evergreen Consulting Group for seven years. I grew up in the lighting industry and am a third-generation lighting specialist. My grandfather and father started a lighting wholesale company in Tacoma, Washington, in the late 1960s. The lighting business is still in the family and managed by my father.

**Q:** If someone were to do only one thing to help conserve energy, what should they do?

**Jody:** When it comes to your home, there are many variables. Every home is different. If you are looking for one way to conserve in your home, start at the top. Have you ever noticed how a hat will keep you warmer? Air sealing in an attic starts to control the home's interior pressure, slowing or stopping "the stack effect." Heated air rises because it's lighter density than colder air. During the winter, heat energy exits through natural and manmade pathways in the attic. Insulation works in conjunction with air sealing and protects your structure from the outside heat and cold.

**Robert:** If you were to complete one item to help conserve energy, I would say update your sprinkler hardware on your irrigation systems. This will help save water and energy. It will also improve the performance of your system. This applies to hand lines, wheel lines and pivot irrigation systems.

**Kandis:** As a lighting specialist, my advice is to turn off the lights when they are not in use and to upgrade legacy lighting technologies—incandescent, halogen, fluorescent—to new LED fixtures and lamps. Adding lighting controls to projects can also help achieve additional energy savings and will extend the life of any new LED lamps or fixtures.

**Q:** Why is energy efficiency so important?

**Jody:** Energy efficiency means reducing the need to build additional power generating facilities—wind, solar arrays and fossil fuel—so current resources meet energy demands. High-use times, low-use times—these require balancing. It takes all of us being efficient with our resources. I am proud to be working with CEC with

our energy supply of more than 86 percent hydropower and other renewables.

**Robert:** With irrigation systems, when you save energy you also typically save water. Improving the efficiency of our irrigation systems is extremely important throughout the Central Oregon region to help conserve our natural resources.

**Kandis:** The future of our environment is an increasingly important topic, and being proactive about energy efficiency is the first step in making a difference in our planet.

**Q:** What is the strangest thing you have ever seen on an energy-efficiency inspection?

**Jody:** I've seen many strange things cross my path on inspections, including crushed, U-turned, figure eight, duct taped and disconnected ducts, plus exhaust fans connected like water lines, mold-covered roof sheathing. However, the strangest find was something that just made me leave the space. During a floor inspection, I spotted possible places indicating rodents burrowing in the insulation. I noticing one area where insulation sagged lower than others. As I crawled deeper into the space, I saw a flex heating duct with a hole the size of a basketball. The edges completely chewed clean as if it was a cutout! Needless to say, it had to be something bigger than a rat. At that point I left and passed the information on to the homeowner.

**Robert:** The strangest thing I have ever seen when visiting an energy efficiency project is some of the contraptions or "pre-existing conditions" before the sites are improved. Examples include: tractor steering wheels being used as water valve handles, "bailing wire" fixes and crazy plumbing configurations around the pump stations. Also, being out on the farm we often see equipment and vehicles that have been modified for specific functions. I just love a farmer's intuition and creative engineering.

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## Your Energy Team

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**Kandis:** I have truly seen a lot of interesting things out in the field, but I would say the most peculiar walkthrough involved an early 1900s building with a large basement. The building owner refused to walk through the basement with me, as he claimed that the building was haunted and there was constant paranormal activity. I performed the lighting walkthrough of the basement solo. The building was indeed very old and the basement was a bit eerie, but I did not come across any odd occurrences or spirits.

**Q:** New technology is emerging all the time. What are some of the newest trends you are seeing?

**Jody:** Technology is currently moving at a surprisingly fast rate. The newest tech is inverter-driven for both agriculture pumps and home heating. In short, it offers variable speed or torque control of an electric motor. Just imagine your car having one speed like the single-stage furnace. That's not the only option anymore. The power is regulated, adjusting frequency and voltage, which results in more efficient power use. We see it used in ductless and forced-air heat pump motors, fans, agriculture pumps, pool pumps. This means quieter, increased efficiency on systems and lower energy use.

**Robert:** Remote sensors being installed on the farm to measure water use, pump operation and efficiency, pivot and irrigation system controls, soil moisture monitoring. By using these remote sensors, you can monitor and control your irrigation systems to get the maximum performance.

**Kandis:** My favorite trend is "color-tuning" LED fixtures. This means the LED fixture can change its color temperature, also known as Kelvin temperature. Essentially, you can make your fixture provide a warm white ambiance comparable to incandescent and halogen lamps. You can adjust the fixture to a cool



**WyEast RCD-Field Energy Analyst Robert Wallace, left, discusses new technology for variable-frequency drives with a Central Oregon farmer.**

Photo by Courtney Cobb

white-color temperature comparable to fluorescent lamps in an office application. You can even adjust the Kelvin temperature to daylight color to represent natural daylight.

Color tuning provides the end-user with multiple options to set the correct Kelvin temperature and to establish the desired ambiance for a particular space. Color-tuning fixtures are a great compromise for spaces that have multiple people with a wide range of lighting preferences. Assisted living and memory care facilities are starting to use "tunable light" to optimize circadian responses and to improve the visual environment for the aging population.

**Q:** What do you enjoy most about your job?

**Jody:** The people. I enjoy educating people about what is in their homes. There are opportunities to make a difference to indoor air quality, comfort and energy use for all. My job is solving problems, along with education. That charges me.

**Robert:** I really enjoy the farming community, conservation partners, irrigation dealers and electricians. They are such great people to work with. I've built hundreds of relationships while working throughout the region. I couldn't ask for a better group of people to work with. I also enjoy seeing when an irrigation system is upgraded, then I meet afterward with the farmer to hear how things are working. I learn something new at every project I work on. Overall, it's really fulfilling to see these new modern irrigation systems improve the farmer's ability to manage their operation and reduce the energy and water consumption.

**Kandis:** My favorite part of my job is meeting different kinds of people who are interested in energy efficiency. I also enjoy traveling to new sites/buildings and performing a lighting walk through of the site. I often get to see parts of buildings the public may not have access to. Every building and lighting project is unique, which makes my job enjoyable and ever-changing. ■



## Man, Mule Form Unlikely Bond

*After 34 years, Rooster the mule is more like family than farm animal*

By Jean Bilodeaux

Lifelong friends are hard to find and something to treasure. That is true for animals too.

Years ago, Dave Sorenson of Fort Bidwell heard there were two mules for sale in Eagleville. Their owner said they were 20-something years old, but had a few more years and miles on them.

The mules, Rooster and Macho, were lifelong friends. They worked together packing hunters into the South Warner Mountains.

After Dave bought them, he discovered Macho was too big to fit in his horse trailer. The commotion started when Dave hauled Rooster to his new home in Fort Bidwell. Rooster and Macho started crying when they were separated. Dave found a large stock trailer to haul Macho, but the racket continued until the mules were together again.

Dave trained them to saddle. They went on hunting and camping trips, and explored trails nearby and as far away as Idaho.

As the years passed, the mules started to develop arthritis. Dave and his long-time friend, Marilyn Cramton, moved the mules to Marilyn's ranch in Lake County during the cold winters.

The mild climate was also an attraction for marijuana growers.

"One day, a neighbor heard the mules calling and crying," Marilyn says. "She saw a blue bully—a large type of pit bull dog that can be trained to be especially vicious, to guard illegal grows, to fight and kill. It was attacking the mules. Our neighbor ran out with her shovel and tried to scare the dog off. The dog had drawn blood and was in full kill mode."

She says the dog attacked the mules until the neighbor ran back to her home, got her rifle and killed the dog. The mules ran into the hills, but it was too late for Macho, who died three days later. Marilyn says Rooster survived and never forgot Macho or the dog that killed his companion.

Rooster was lonely without his friend, so it was decided to haul him back to Fort Bidwell and pasture him with Dave and Marilyn's riding horses.

When friends and neighbors stopped by, Dave would talk about Rooster and how smart he was. When asked how old the mule was, Dave would say he's about 20.



Opposite page and above, Dave Sorenson spends time with Rooster—a mule he and his wife, Marilyn, have cared for the past 34 years.

Rooster's arthritis continued to get worse. He was retired from riding and packing. His left front knee swelled, eventually fusing the joint so he couldn't bend his leg. Then he figured out how to get up and down without bending his leg.

Rooster's front hooves began to become malformed. Local rancher and part-time farrier Spencer Smith was called to trim Rooster's hooves. It wasn't easy, as Rooster couldn't bend or support weight for long on his arthritic leg.

"With his twice daily dose of medicine and specially trimmed hooves, Rooster does pretty good at walking," Marilyn says.

One day, a pit bull wandered onto the Fort Bidwell reservation and attacked a pig Dave and Marilyn were keeping for a friend. Rooster saw the attack and herded the two horses he shared pasture

with to the farthest corner of the ranch and kept them there while Marilyn beat off the attacking pit bull with her shovel.

Dave and Marilyn say they can't help but notice Rooster's behavior when they saddle their horses to go riding.

"Rooster hobbles over to the fence by the road and watches us as we drive away," Marilyn says. "He waits there until he sees us return. When he sees us coming, back he limps over to where we unload the horses and welcomes us home.

"People ask why we don't put him down. I tell them that Rooster is happy, he eats well, sleeps in the sun and can get up and down. David has arthritis in his right knee. He limps just like Rooster. They're friends. We're not going to shoot David and we're certainly not going to shoot Rooster either." ■



Bobbi Hall, left, board of director, and Brandy Collier, founder of Eugene Area Gleaners, with Collier's son Ryder. Eugene Area Gleaners has grown to 708 members in 10 years.

# Gleaning the Good

*Eugene gleaners fight hunger, curb waste, by harvesting fruits and veggies*

**By Aliya Hall**

Brandy Collier never envisioned gleaning—gathering leftover food—to be part of her day-to-day routine. She grew up in a middle-class family where food was in abundance at their home. Around 2008, she was laid off from her job of nine years. The practice of gleaning was the only thing providing her and her daughter with food security.

Brandy struggled in abusive relationships, and maxed out her credit card moving herself and her daughter into a new apartment where she went through flaky roommates—all while putting herself through school.

She was introduced to gleaning through a friend. Together, they knocked on doors asking residents if they could pick fruit from their trees.

“It sounds obvious, but it never occurred to me

that food grows on trees,” Brandy says. “There’s fruit rotting in the street, go and pick it up.”

The concept of gleaning has roots as far back as the Old Testament, when Hebrew farmers were commanded to leave a portion of their crops unharvested for their poorer neighbors and strangers to pick what was left. In recent times, the practice has been used by many to curb food waste.

In 2008, Brandy helped found the Eugene Area Gleaners. The group became a nonprofit in 2015, and has since grown to 708 members—33 of which are glean leaders and six are board directors. Although most gleaners identify as female, gleaning is practiced by all genders, ages, ethnicities and income levels.

Bobbi Hall, a board director of Eugene Area Gleaners, is in charge of drop sites, which are volunteer homes with porches or covered structures. She first started gleaning around 40 years ago to help feed her five children. Now that she is retired with a fixed income and extra time, Bobbi uses gleaning to supplement her food budget.

“Probably the most important aspect is my desire to be of service,” she says. “Because of my particular diet, I eat only small quantities of fruit and veggies, and no bread or sugar. Most of what I glean I distribute among the group.”

Due to the abundance of the harvested products, it’s common for gleans to be frozen, canned or dehydrated. Bobbi says she has enough fruit that she has been experimenting with sugar-free butters and jams because store-bought is “awful.”

As of November 10, 140 gleans occurred in Eugene last year. The group collected and distributed 49,000 pounds of produce that otherwise would have gone to waste. Brandy says 2018 was a slower year. The season kicks off in May or June, and continues into the winter—it’s gleaning time whenever donors call.

Brandy says their group runs on word of mouth and repeat donors. For example, Winco donates its extra inventory of bread each week. Eugene Area Gleaners does not have a brick-and-mortar establishment, as it is completely volunteer-run. The food is stored at the drop sites and distributed among the group.

“We don’t ask (members) to prove that they need it,” Brandy says. “If they want to help glean, then great, but they have to do one thing for the group.”

That one thing could be anything from hanging a flyer to being on the board of directors.

Gleaning goes beyond fruit. Egg farmers donate



**Buckets of gleaned vegetables are placed at drop sites where members of the Eugene Area Gleaners can pick up what they need to feed their families.**

eggs and chickens once they stop laying. Brandy has set up partnerships with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the group has learned to glean bear meat and carp.

Despite being an established nonprofit for a decade, Eugene Area Gleaners still faces many challenges. Between work schedules, transportation, physical ability and child care, Bobbi says there is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes that the average gleaner never sees.

Along with organizing each glean, the nonprofit status also requires more documenting and reporting. For all events the group participates in, Eugene Area Gleaners has a Facebook page and group, as well as Twitter and Instagram accounts. Outside of management, the organization deals with the same struggle of most nonprofits: lack of funding.

“We’re in need of scales, ladders, pickers, reusable collapsing boxes for produce, postage, office supplies, printing, structures and canopies for drop sites, a trailer to transport our larger gleans—that list too is endless,” Bobbi says. “We are in need of donations, grants and sponsors.”

Eugene Area Gleaners is starting to be recognized for its efforts. Brandy was chosen by The Register-Guard and Lane County United Way Committee as Volunteer of the Month for December 2018. Along with being featured in an article, the gleaners received \$500.

“It’s huge,” Brandy says. “It legitimizes the group. People treat us as organized beggars, but we want people to be fed and things not to go to waste. There’s so much capacity for people to help one another.” ■

*For more information on Eugene Area Gleaners, visit [www.eugeneareagleaners.wordpress.com](http://www.eugeneareagleaners.wordpress.com).*



Harold and Vicki Balter have been married for 60 years.

# Always Beating the Odds

*Baker, logger, rancher: Harold Balter's varied careers have been an adventure*

By Craig Reed

Harold Balter has lived through one adventure after another during his 85 years. Along the way, he has beaten the odds on numerous occasions.

That continues to be true for the Cheshire area resident. He is on hospice, a program for those who are diagnosed with only about six months of life left. Harold is into his second year on hospice, having overcome heart issues.

"My idea is you have to live your life," he says, noting he has been caught a couple times chopping kindling for his home's fireplace. "You can't live in an eggshell, at least I can't."

A heart attack in 1993, open heart surgery for a triple bypass, valve replacement in 2000 and a first time on hospice

in 2012 haven't discouraged Harold from living life as best he can.

Harold's doctor told him to enjoy what he could while he could. He's following that advice, under the watch of Vicki, his wife of 60 years.

While Harold may be short of breath at times while talking because of his heart condition, his memory is good. He is full of stories from his busy life and loves to tell them one after another as long as a visitor is willing to listen.

His life has included being a teen-aged ranch hand in Idaho, a member of the U.S. Air Force, a baker and bakery superintendent in Idaho, Illinois, Washington and Oregon, and a logger, builder and contractor in Oregon. He also helped Vicki show their German shepherds for 32 years at competitions

in the U.S. and Canada.

"My life has been like alphabet soup," Harold says with a chuckle.

"Sixty years of marriage to Harold has been an adventure, but I wouldn't change any of it," Vicki says. "It's been a little bit of everything."

Harold has survived numerous accidents along the way. When he was just a baby in 1933, he fell off the catwalk at the lookout tower where his parents were on fire watch. During his working years, he shot himself in the groin with a pistol that malfunctioned, cut his left foot with a chainsaw, fell while logging and suffered cracked ribs, injured his left eye in a dynamite explosion and fell off a barn roof, suffering a broken back and a couple other broken bones.

Despite the injuries, "I think it's been



**Above, the barn house was built in 1972 on the Balter property near Cheshire. Left, Harold uses a bulldozer to clear trees on his property.**

a good life,” Harold says. “I have fond memories, especially of the mountains, and I love where I spent my youth.”

At age 15, Harold went to work on a large ranch near Emmett, Idaho. He toiled in the hay fields from dawn to dark for \$6 a day, room and board. His first experience at driving a hay truck resulted in it tipping over at a bridge crossing. The baled hay floated downstream.

Harold did ranch work until he was old enough to enlist in the Air Force in 1951. He was accepted despite his eye being injured, but then the eye became infected due to the training regimen and a lack of sleep. The U.S. was involved in the Korean War at the time, but Harold was not deployed.

He was discharged in 1952 and found work in the bakery business, first as a baker and then as a bakery superintendent for Eddy’s Bakery—a corporation with wholesale baking facilities in many states. He worked in Lewiston, Idaho, Chicago and Yakima, Washington.

In the early 1960s, he and Vicki moved to Oregon where he worked for

Davidson’s Bakery and then Williams Bakery, both in Eugene.

The Balters lived in Eugene, but spent weekends on 45 acres of timbered property they bought in the Coast Range foothills near Cheshire. They lived in a chicken house Harold built following the same process a professional carpenter used to build a pump house on the property.

Harold then began to selectively log the property, although he had no logging or heavy equipment experience. He learned to fall trees with a chain saw by trial and error and operated a bulldozer after a 30-minute lesson from the seller.

With some of the wood he harvested, Harold, Vicki and their three sons—Daniel, Vance and Michael—built a horse barn that doubled as a house. The family moved into the barn house in 1972. On one occasion, Harold rode a horse through the barn as Vicki cooked dinner just so he could say he had.

“It was a big change, going from the city to the wilderness,” Daniel says. “I went from mowing the lawn to using a chain saw, setting chokers, hunting deer. You had to grow up pretty fast. I didn’t appreciate it then like I do now.

Harold ended his bakery career in the mid-1970s and accepted an offer to be a timber faller by a logging company owner who was impressed by the logging Harold had done on his own property. \

Harold worked for two years as a faller in the Coast Range woods. His logging career ended when he broke his leg falling a tree.

After the accident, Harold took architectural drafting and design and building code classes at Lane Community College. He got his contractor’s license and worked in residential construction on houses in Eugene and in rural areas up the McKenzie River. That gave him the experience he needed to build his own home on his property.

When that house was finished, the family moved out of the horse barn. The couple still lives in the house they built.

Through many of these years of work and projects, Vicki bred, trained and showed German shepherds.

“Harold got us there and I showed,” says Vicki.

In 2008, Vicki had 33 dogs and showed most of them. After 32 years of showing German shepherds she retired in 2015, Vicki and her dogs won 10 American, 25 Canadian and 50 International championships. Three of the Balter dogs won all three championships. The dogs also won 15 obedience championships.

The couple now has only one German shepherd that keeps them company.

With his heart condition keeping him from doing too much physically, Harold now spends his time on his laptop, writing short stories about his life and gathering information for his family’s history.

Besides giving him something to do and keeping his mind active, he says he finds it interesting to relive his many adventures and experiences. ■

# Life-Changing Outdoor Recreation

*Oregon Adaptive Sports provides mountain, river and trail experiences for people with disabilities*

By Craig Reed

For 20 years, Oregon Adaptive Sports participants have skied, pedaled, paddled and climbed over and through a multitude of barriers and fears.

The process starts with baby steps, but eventually, hundreds of people with disabilities have endured. They have skied down a snowy mountain slope, kayaked on a swift-flowing river, climbed the face of a steep rock or pedaled over a mountain trail.

They have been challenged, but have conquered personal barriers and fears with the help of OAS staff and volunteers.

The mission of the Bend-based nonprofit organization is to “provide life-changing outdoor recreation experiences to individuals with disabilities.

Participants gain confidence, build self-esteem and strive for independence leading to an enhanced quality of life.”

“It’s so much more than a recreational experience for the participants,” says Kellie Standish, OAS development and marketing coordinator. “It’s people gaining independence in their own way. There’s a lot of joy in seeing that.”

From October 2017 to September 2018, 400 individuals from 12 states enjoyed 1,700 summer and winter outdoor recreation activities through the OAS program. They received instruction and guidance from about 500 volunteers who gave anywhere from one to 60 days of their time to the program.

Barb Smith has been an OAS volunteer since 2009. The retired high



**Oregon Adaptive Sports athlete Maya Andrick works her way up Smith Rock on a climbing outing with volunteer Tanya Everts.**

Photos courtesy of Oregon Adaptive Sports

school physical education teacher says it is important to have patience and be positive while helping those with disabilities enjoy outdoor activities.

“Sometimes I feel a little guilty because I seem to get more out of it than the participants,” says Barb, who helps with skiing and cycling. “It’s extremely rewarding to see these people be able to enjoy these activities.”

Barb shares an example of a freshman female student who wanted to ski down from the Mount Bachelor summit.

After “building confidence and putting a lot of mileage on her skis,”

Barb says, the student skied down the mountain on her last ski day of her junior year.

“She skied by herself,” Barb says. “She did great. She was very in control. It was challenging, but she was capable of doing it. It was a huge event for both of us.”

Nancy Stevens also became a volunteer with OAS in 2009. In 2017, she became the program’s outreach coordinator.

The 57-year-old can speak directly to having a disability. She has been blind since birth. She puts together cross-country skiing, tandem cycling, hiking

and kayaking outings for those who are blind or visually impaired.

She says she was fortunate to have a family that included her in outdoor activities when she was young. As a teenager, she learned how to downhill ski with the help of a guide.

“I’ve been fortunate and I like to share all the skills I’ve learned with other participants,” Nancy says. “It is just a matter of building their self-confidence, their self-esteem, that they can enjoy these activities. I think oftentimes to have a mentor like myself, a person can’t say they can’t do that when they see somebody else who is disabled doing it. It helps them relate to the fact they really can do this.”

OAS participants advance at their own discretion as they begin learning about an activity.

“We call it challenge by choice,” Nancy says. “They have to decide when they are ready to try the next step. They get to decide and then the instructor has to agree that they’re ready.”

The outdoors program began 22 years ago. Jack Alexander, a retired biologist with the U.S. Forest Service, and Kendall Cook, an adaptive ski instructor from the Tahoe area, gathered other skiers and formed an adaptive program that focused on sharing their love for skiing and the outdoors with disabled people who needed assistance on the mountain. The program was known as Central Oregon Adaptive Ski Program and involved downhill skiing only on Mount Bachelor.

In 2003, the program officially became a nonprofit and changed its name to Oregon Adaptive Sports. That same year, the OAS ski program became available at Hoodoo Ski Area.

Cross-country skiing and snowboarding were added to the winter activity schedule. After pilot programs to test interest, summer activities—paddling, hiking, road biking, mountain biking, climbing, golf and yoga—were added between 2012 and 2017.

“The programs are available to



**OAS athletes and skiers pose for a photo on Mount Bachelor before heading downhill.**

people who have physical or cognitive disabilities,” Kellie says.

OAS staff and volunteers receive training to better prepare them to help participants. The program has state-of-the-art adaptive equipment available if participants don’t have their own.

There is a fee to participate, but it depends on the situation and “is very, very small,” Kellie says.

“Mount Bachelor and Hoodoo are community partners with OAS and they make it possible for us to do this,” Kellie says of the winter activities. “We couldn’t do it without their help.”

Lessons typically involve one participant, one instructor and one or two volunteers. Outings are usually a half day to a full day.

Most of the funding for the program comes from individual donations. OAS also holds a few fundraising events each year.

Kellie says OAS anticipates growing another 10 percent this year as it continues to inspire those with disabilities to participate in outdoor activities.



**OAS participant Matt Hankey paddles a kayak across Hosmer Lake with OAS staff member Kellie Standish helping from the back seat.**

Nancy, who is active despite her blindness, is an individual inspiration.

“For me, to share my love of the outdoors—especially with people who say they can’t do that, and to encourage them to stay active—that is what I love the most about OAS,” Nancy says. ■



Jordan Kim of Parkdale creates intricate collages that combine her professional background in ecology with her passion for art.

## The Art of Finding

*Parkdale artist makes natural connections through collage*

By Drew Myron

First you see two birds on a snowy branch. Then you see more, small and hidden. Tucked in detailed feathers you spot a map, then a message in text: *The beauty of diversity ... thread that connects us all.*

In nearly every canvas, Jordan Kim gently nudges viewers to make connections. Blending scraps of paper with text, paint and ink, she creates colorful collages.

“I like tucking hidden messages into my work,” says Jordan, 39, a mixed-media artist living in Parkdale. “These little notes are a way to encourage slowing down, looking deeper and seeing beyond first impressions. You can look at it many times and still see something different. Each time you see more depth and layers.”

In *Winter Wanderers*, two birds carry tiny words tucked in their plumage. In *Barn Owl*, a wide-eyed bird shares space with a barn and text: *We can both support people and protect nature.*

Because the collages—usually no larger than a sheet of paper—are so rich with detail, people often describe her work as “painting with paper,” Jordan says.

Like painting, collage is an elaborate process. Jordan starts with a concept, then uses scraps of junk mail and magazines to create an image, adds paint and pen to highlight and define, then enhances the image through digital software. A typical 8-by-8-inch canvas can take eight hours to complete.

Her subject matter is rooted in nature and home—children, animals and landscapes, for example—and is dense with layers, texture and meaning.

Sharing intimacy with nature’s small moments is nothing new to Jordan. Blending the heart of an artist with the mind of a scientist, Jordan attended University of Missouri-Kansas City on a full scholarship, earning a degree in biology with minors in chemistry and art.

“I couldn’t decide what I wanted to do,” Jordan says. “I wanted to do it all. I’m a bit of an overachiever.”



Viewers often describe Jordan's collages as "painting with paper." Barn Owl is featured in her 2019 wall calendar, available through Found & Rewound on [www.etsy.com](http://www.etsy.com).

She went to graduate school at Portland State University, where she studied environmental management.

"I've always been very driven," she says.

In 2006, Jordan joined Hood River Soil and Water Conservation District, a local government agency that helps enhance and protect natural resources. Jordan thrived with a mission that valued connections among nature, ecology and community, and worked her way from technician to district manager. At work she strove to protect nature, and at home she worked late creating art that would connect others to the wonders of the natural world.

The long nights took a toll, however. Jordan and her husband, Won, were raising their young son, Isaac, and Jordan was stretched among three worlds: work, family and art. When she became ill in 2018, she stepped down from a career she loved for a role she wanted to embrace more fully: artist.

It was a brave move for a methodical person driven by organization and structure.

"I'm not a real risk taker," Jordan admits.

But the leap paid off. Jordan's art business—Found & Rewound—has grown by leaps. Her artwork is featured in a greeting card line of her paper collage designs. She is represented by three agents. Her notecards, calendars and prints are available throughout the Pacific Northwest, from shops in Parkdale to exclusive sales at Hood River Stationers, and in shops in Bend, Portland and Seattle. Jordan is working on a book cover illustration, as well as more licensed artwork projects.

Raised in St. Louis, Jordan grew up in a creative family, with an artistic grandmother as a role model.



In *Winter Wanderers*, Jordan blends paper scraps with pen-and-ink images, then tucks messages within the details. "You can look at it many times and still see something different," she says. "Each time you see more depth and layers."

"From a young age, my grandma was a huge influence," Jordan says. "In her house we would find all these random found objects, like a child's prosthetic leg, and she'd say, 'You never know, I might need that for an art project.'"

Grandma Marty encouraged young Jordan.

"She's the person who inspired me to do my first collage back when I was in middle school," Jordan says.

A night owl, Jordan enjoys the quiet of the late hours. By day, she handles the business details of work: filling orders, contacting sales reps and working on concepts. She is also active with Arts in Education of the Gorge, an organization that brings artists into schools. Working as a teaching artist, Jordan's assignments range from one day to a week. At Parkdale School, she worked with youngsters to make art pieces they gave as holiday gifts at the Hood River Senior Center. In another hands-on art project, she worked with 200 students at Westside Elementary to decoupage furniture.

"The kids get excited, and I like the idea of making connections with people through art," Jordan says. "Making art just to make art is not that satisfying to me. Making connections is more important. I really want to know that art is connecting us with each other." ■

Jordan Kim's artwork can be viewed online at [www.foundandrewound.com](http://www.foundandrewound.com) or [www.etsy.com/shop/FoundandRewoundArt](http://www.etsy.com/shop/FoundandRewoundArt); or locally at Hood River Stationers in downtown Hood River and Blue Canoe Cafe in Parkdale.

## Keeping the Family Business

*Jake and Jaide Downs take over Fields Station for Jake's parents*

By Lauren Brown

Walk into the Fields Station café mid-morning, and you might catch new owner Jake Downs trimming green beans in preparation for a private dinner request. Jake and his wife, Jaide, bought the business from his parents Tom and Sandy Downs in July 2018. Jake and Jaide are hands-on in the day-to-day running of the store/gas station/café/motel/RV park.

Fields Station emerged in 1881 as a stage stop between Winnemucca, Nevada, and Burns, Oregon. As a local hub, Fields Station holds an important role in the community of about 120 people, but it's also an oasis for tourists passing through who aren't familiar with the vast distances between population centers in the rural areas of Oregon and Nevada.

Jake says mapping programs will often point people to the most direct route, which can skirt towns such as Burns and Winnemucca. Travelers then find themselves in the middle of nowhere with little gas and no cellphone service. More than a few times, Jake has had to bail out tourists who ran out of gas on a lonely stretch of desert highway.

For Fields Station, the busy season starts in March with birdwatchers and spring breakers, and continues throughout the summer. Hikers come through the Oregon Desert Trail and cyclists bike the highway until hunters dominate the fall. The Alvord Desert and Steens Mountain also draw sightseers, and the station is a natural stop for visitors to refuel, stop for a bite or stay the night.

"You get every walk of life through this place," Jake says. "It's pretty amazing. If you're into people watching, sit on one



**Jaide and Jake Downs have taken ownership of the Fields Station café, which is famous for hamburgers and milkshakes.**

of the chairs out front for a Memorial Day weekend. You'll see the madness, the zoo that is down here over Memorial Day weekend."

During last year's holiday weekend, Jaide says they made 174 milkshakes in one day.

Jake and Jaide are familiar with the business. Jake has worked there for his parents off and on throughout the years, and Jaide has worked there for the past five years. Both are used to the small-town lifestyle. Jake grew up in rural Harney County and graduated from Burns High School before serving in the Marines. Jaide grew up in Broken Bow, Nebraska, a three-stoplight town where she worked at a restaurant prior to moving to Oregon.

The Fields Station café is famous for its made-from-scratch



**Fields Station is a vital local hub that caters to both locals and tourists in the remote outpost of Fields, Oregon.**

milkshakes and burgers. For the milkshakes, Jaide says they use the hardest ice cream they can find. There is no milk in the recipe. There are more than 25 flavor combinations, and all the fruit used is crushed from whole fruit.

Its burgers are made with half-pound patties with no seasoning because the grill itself seasons the meat. A burger is served with classic American cheese with veggies on the side, “so you can build it however you want it,” Jaide says.

In addition to serving as a pit stop for those passing through, the station fills an important niche in a community with a widespread population.

“We have a lot of people that rely on us as far as locals go,” Jaide says.

Town trips to Burns or Winnemucca for major grocery runs are a fact of life in rural areas, so having a local store with some necessities such as milk or bread can be a godsend in a pinch.

“A lot of people have families, and it’s nice for them to be able to run down and get the essentials without having to make a town trip,” Jaide says. “I think it makes a huge difference.”

Looking to the future, Jake and Jaide hope to continue the legacy that Tom and Sandy set up.

“Mom and Dad did a lot of stuff to this place,” Jake says. “And it’s not broken, so we don’t need to fix it. As a business, it does what it does. And it does it really well.”

Of course, there are always improvements to make. The first

one Jake and Jaide would like to tackle is installing 24-hour card readers for the gas pumps so customers can get gas when they need it, not just during business hours.

While physical improvements are ongoing, Jaide says it’s also important to take into consideration the customers of the future.

“I think we’d like to keep reaching out to the younger generation and make sure that we have people coming in another five, 10, 15 years and so on,” she says. “We get a lot of guys out here hunting, and when they bring their kids, that pushes that generation to come out. We want them to come back and have those good memories of the time they spent out here and bring their kids eventually someday.”

Jake and Jaide are enjoying their new venture and hope to run Fields Station until they retire, many years down the road.

“It’s a well-known little establishment throughout the world,” Jake says. “It’s pretty incredible when you sit back and go through the guest book and start seeing where people have come from and ended up here to have a milkshake and a hamburger and get some gas and check off that they’ve been to Fields, Oregon.” ■

*Fields Station features a four-unit motel, store, restaurant, gas station and RV park with five spots. The gas station and store are open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. The café is open 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Sunday. For more information about Fields Station, call 541-495-2275.*



More than 100 Sleep in Heavenly Peace volunteers fill the parking lot at Cassia Regional Hospital during a bed build day.

# Expressions of Love for Mini-Cassia Children

*Sleep in Heavenly Peace volunteers build free beds for local youth*

**By Dianna Troyer**

To the volunteers who build them and children who nestle into them, free twin beds are more than a place to sleep. They are an expression of love, compliments of Sleep in Heavenly Peace—a nationwide nonprofit organization based in Twin Falls.

“I was hooked on helping as soon as I heard about it,” says Hayley Matthews, a volunteer from Burley who delivers beds in the Mini-Cassia area and has helped build them. “Each delivery is unique. It’s unforgettable to see the kids’ reactions and how big they smile when they finally get a bed.”

The organization’s motto is, “No kid

sleeps on the floor in our town.”

Circumstances vary by family.

“Some kids are sleeping on the floor or on couches,” Hayley says. “In some homes, the entire family is sleeping in one bed.”

Families cannot afford beds for many reasons.

“Some people sold or got rid of everything they owned to move here in hopes of a better life,” Hayley says. “Some escaped an abusive relationship. Others are taking in extra kids, like their nieces or nephews, because their family members are unable to care for them for whatever reason.”

One boy whose mother left an abusive relationship was so excited and watched

patiently as his bed was assembled.

“He felt so proud of himself that he had a bed of his very own,” she says.

A paramedic on an ambulance crew with Cassia Regional Hospital, Hayley learned about the organization from Scott Butler, a co-worker and paramedic.

Scott and his wife, Jami, lead the Twin Falls Chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace.

The Butlers’ longtime friend, Luke Mickelson of Kimberly, established the organization in 2012 after hearing about a family whose children slept on the floor.

He and friends built beds for the family and were surprised to hear of other children who needed beds. Luke launched his nonprofit, offering training



**Clockwise from top left, Scott and Jami Butler, leaders of the Twin Falls chapter of Sleep in Heavenly Peace, organize a build day at Cassia Regional Hospital. Flames dance as Benny and Yazman Molina brand a headboard. Hayley Matthews, center, makes her first delivery to an appreciative family in the Mini-Cassia area.**



help people," says Rupert resident Ron Hieb as he sands a board.

After a head and footboard were complete, ankle-high flames dance around the Sleep in Heavenly Peace branding iron as Benny Molina and his daughter Yazman hold it on a headboard, emblazoning it with the letters SHP.

"Whenever I can, I help in the community," says Benny, a local volunteer firefighter.

Tara Jefferies, a registered nurse at the hospital, donated quilts.

"Kids, through no fault of their own, are living in situations in which they have no bed," Tara says. "Beds are a place of comfort. I want to do what I can to help."

Applications for the beds are available at [www.shpbeds.org](http://www.shpbeds.org).

"We visit the home to verify the need," Jami says. "It's gratifying to serve. No one in the organization is paid."

"Each delivery is rewarding in its own way," Hayley says. ■

to people who wanted to start chapters.

Since then, Sleep in Heavenly Peace has grown to 120 chapters in 36 states. Recent growth was bolstered after Mike Rowe featured it on his series, "Returning the Favor," in February 2018.

Last fall, the Butlers organized a build day at Cassia Regional Hospital's front parking lot. Scott says the turnout was amazing, with about 100 volunteers building 20 beds.

Jami says the build day was the first in the Mini-Cassia area.

"We're excited to introduce the program here," Jami says. "More will be built later in the area. A student at Minico is planning to build five for her senior project."

The organization hosting a build day

raises money and accepts donations to provide wood for the bed frame, a mattress, sheets, blanket and pillow. Each bed costs about \$300.

Sleep in Heavenly Peace provides sanders, drills, screwdrivers and other tools needed to build the beds. Corporate sponsors Lowe's and DeWalt donated the tools, and Malouf has provided bedding.

In the hospital parking lot, volunteers of all ages stand in assembly lines, sanding, screwing together the head and footboards and staining them. The beds, single or bunked, are assembled at the recipient's home.

Event attendees included Pomerelle Mountain Resort's ski patrollers.

"As patrollers, we're always willing to



Winter weather means storms that can knock out power and make it difficult for crews to repair outages. Take steps to make sure you are ready, just in case.

## Safety Steps During a Power Outage:

- ▶ Before calling Mt. Wheeler Power to report an outage, check to see if your home's circuit panel or fuse box has tripped or blown a fuse. This also can cause a power failure. If tripped, reset the breaker or replace the blown fuse.
- ▶ If the power is out in your entire neighborhood, call Mt. Wheeler Power to report the outage. Provide your meter number and make sure your contact information is correct.
- ▶ To ensure the safety of your sensitive electronic equipment, turn off and unplug all unnecessary appliances and equipment. Once you are confident the power has been fully restored, turn on items one at a time.
- ▶ Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. An unopened refrigerator keeps food cold for about 4 hours. A full freezer keeps food cool for about 48 hours.

Sources: NRECA, American Red Cross

## Storm Season is Here

While much of the West is experiencing springlike conditions this time of year, here in Mt. Wheeler Power service territory we still have many winter storms ahead of us.

Thirty-one percent of power outages are triggered by the weather, which means our lineworkers will be battling the elements to find problem areas and restore service as quickly and safely as possible.

"We know our members want to know why the lights are out and when they're

coming back," says Kevin Robison, Mt. Wheeler Power assistant general manager. "First, we must find the problems. Then, we follow a series of steps to bring the lights back on."

Efforts are made to restore power to the largest number of members as quickly as possible. Crews fix the problems affecting smaller groups of members.

### Restoring Power

When an outage occurs, line crews work to pinpoint



Heavy snow on power lines can cause poles to snap.

problems. They start by checking distribution substations serving areas that report an outage.

Each substation serves hundreds of members. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to discover if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself or if problems exist down the line. If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, crews check distribution lines.

If outages persist, supply lines—also called tap lines—are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers—either mounted on poles or placed on pads for

underground service—outside businesses, schools and homes. If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your home may need to be repaired.

Members play an important role in getting power restored quickly. Reporting an outage by calling with your meter number, which can be found on your monthly billing statement, can help identify the areas affected.

It also is important to report any unusual events that may contribute to the outage, such as the weather in the area, or damage to a pole or transformer. Remember: Never approach downed

power lines.

You can reach Mt. Wheeler Power, 24/7 to report an outage at (800) 97-POWER.

### Stay in the Know

The customer service representatives at Mt. Wheeler Power make every effort to contact members in the event of a scheduled outage. You play an important role in making sure they can reach you by keeping your account information updated.

To reach the greatest number of members in the most efficient way, Mt. Wheeler Power often uses an automated service that leaves a phone message regarding the details of an outage, including date, time and anticipated length. Updated information is a critical part in how quickly crews can respond to an outage and allows customer service representatives to follow up.

In keeping up with current technology, members are able to use smartphones and the Internet to stay updated. Find out what is happening during an outage by “liking” the Mt. Wheeler Power Facebook page. Outage updates are posted here regarding cause, anticipated length and who is affected.

Outages are inconvenient, even in the best situations. Providing Mt. Wheeler Power with accurate information during an outage will help the crew locate and repair damage as quickly as possible.

After all, being a part of a cooperative is all about working together to get the best possible results. ■

## Be Ready Before a Storm Strikes

Lights out? Store these items at home in case of an outage.

**Water**  
Three-day supply, one gallon per person per day.

**Tools**  
Flashlight and extra batteries, can opener, wind-up radio.

**Food**  
Three-day supply of non-perishable, high-energy food.

**First Aid, Medicine**  
First aid supplies, hand sanitizer, and at least a week's supply of medications for the family.

**Documents**  
Include copies of passports, birth certificates, and insurance policies.








**Learn more at [www.Ready.gov](http://www.Ready.gov).**

Source: American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency

*Adapted from an article by B. Denise Hawkins, who writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Virginia-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives. Megan McKoy-Noe contributed to this article.*

# Protect Yourself Against Phone Scammers



American consumers lose more than \$350 million each year due to fraud, according to the Federal Trade Commission. Members of Wells Rural Electric Co. are no exception. Utility scams are fairly common. Here are a few things to keep an eye on whenever dealing with somebody requesting payment.

## Phone Scams

The most common scam reported to WREC is members receiving phone calls demanding payment. These calls seem to make the rounds amongst WREC members every couple of months with increased sophistication.

While they were originally most common among small businesses, they now frequently target a variety of members. Oftentimes, caller ID will even be set up to show WREC or an actual WREC extension. The scammer will identify himself as an employee and demand an urgent payment from a member to avoid having their power disconnected.

Make sure you pay attention to details. Oftentimes the scammer won't have the company name quite right, saying they represent "Wells Power," "the local power company" or even "NV Energy" instead of "WREC" or "Wells Rural Electric."

Most importantly, please remember that WREC does not solicit payments over the phone and will never ask you to pay via prepaid cash card. If you get a suspicious phone call, never hesitate to hang up and call or visit your local office to determine your billing status.

## Email

While not directly related to the utility, email scams are also quite common. Remember, if something seems too good to be true, it probably is. Nobody is waiting to send you a cash prize or send you on a Caribbean cruise in exchange for a nominal fee, and there's no African prince in need of a loan in exchange for high-interest repayment.

Similarly, the IRS and other government agencies don't call or email to notify you of unpaid taxes or other issues. That information is always sent by mail.

Also, never open attachments or click on links from addresses you don't recognize.

## Phishing

Typically done by either email, phone, or a combination of the two, phishing attacks seek to trick you into revealing private information like Social Security numbers, credit card and bank account numbers, and passwords.

Often, phishing messages appear in the form of fake emails that seem to originate from legitimate organizations—your bank or government agencies—and direct you to fake but convincing websites for you to enter private data that the scammer can then capture. Sometimes, scammers will even do a little background research and place a phone call that, at first glance, might seem legitimate. ■

## STAY VIGILANT

- Look out for emails or websites with spelling errors and other inconsistencies.
- Never open attachments or respond to unsolicited messages.
- Hover over links and check the website's URL. Many times, the web address may look OK, but the URL may be misspelled or have the wrong domain.
- Never give sensitive information to anyone over the phone or through email.

## New Tactics Help Reduce Irrigation Costs

*Partnership helps bring technology to farmers*

By John M. Glionna

FISH LAKE VALLEY, Nev. – Nobody ever told John Maurer that alfalfa farming would be easy, especially when it comes to the complex realm of field irrigation. Like lots of growers in this isolated valley, he largely keeps his own counsel and learns from his mistakes. In the end, he trusts his own judgement.

“But sometimes I have questions about things – like proper water pump design and well-rehabilitation,” said Maurer, 47, who farms 5,000 acres. “And I know that if I have questions, other people do too.”

On a recent Friday, Valley Electric Association held its Annual Irrigator’s Meeting in the Dyer Community Center to help answer those questions. Two dozen farmers from the energy cooperative’s service territory heard about water-pump efficiency testing, the importance of monitoring water use and technology known as the “connected farm.”

“Things are always changing, technology-wise,” Jon Lee, an electrical contractor and pumping-system specialist, told the group. “Eventually, your kids are going to be on their iPads running the farm while you’re in your rocking chair.”

This year’s meeting brought a first – the event was



**Electrician Jon Lee works on a pitot tube and a manometer, which measure water flow and pressure as he tests the efficiency of a pump in Esmeralda County. Lee was one of the speakers at the 2019 Irrigators Meeting at the Dyer Community Center.**

Jeff Scheid

streamed on Facebook Live, thanks to Valley Electric’s Beth Lee. She said the company’s goal was to present ways to cut grower energy costs by using less water, while working more efficiently, helping to cut down on greenhouse gasses that are a byproduct of

farming.

“Events such as this fall under one of the Seven Cooperative Principals,” said Beth Lee, Key Accounts Coordinator for VEA. “It’s a concern for the community. What can we do for our customers?”

Every grower at the meeting keeps a close eye on their farm budget. Yet proactive equipment maintenance, they were told, can save money in the long run.

“Our biggest concern is power costs, because that is by far our largest expense – buying electricity to pump the water,” said Ralph Keyes, who farms 1,500 acres while serving as an Esmeralda County Commissioner. “If we can’t afford to pay our power bill, we’re done farming.”

The average annual home-energy consumption is 10,500 kilowatt-hours, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. But an inefficient farmer using outdated equipment can use many times that. “Some guys use a million kilowatt hours – that’s equal to a lot of homes,” said Jon Lee, whose company Pump Check, analyzes water-pump efficiency.

Generating a single kilowatt-hour releases nearly two pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, studies show. More efficient machines can cut down on that number.

“Valley Electric wants to be a green electric company,” said Jon Lee. “They’re trying to keep the cost of energy down while doing all they can go be green.”

In one case, Pump Check saved a farmer 136,000 kilowatt-hours annually – about \$13,000 – after \$24,000 in repairs. “That means less CO<sub>2</sub> and less energy a farmer has to buy,” Jon Lee said.

Keyes agreed: “If I can save

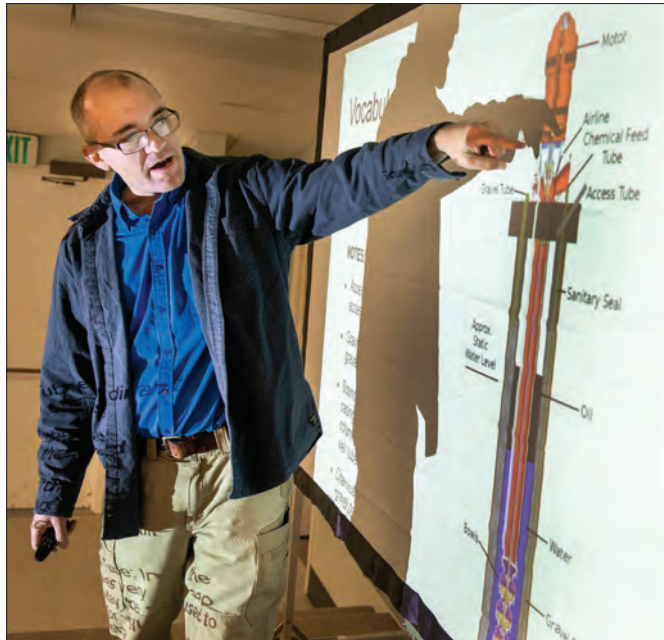
\$10,000 a year on water, that's not just pocket change."

Jon Lee described the benefits of a 2004 water-use study he conducted in the Amargosa Valley, where the average farm well was operating at 52% efficiency. "You never have 100% – the best you can hope for is 70%."

"In 10 years, getting guys to make the investments, we raised the average efficiency rate to 60% valley-wide. In our world, that's a significant increase."

Dave Hall, a former Amargosa Valley farmer-turned-consultant, benefited from the information generated by Lee's study. "Jon gave me a spread sheet, and I tracked all my wells," said Hall, a Valley Electric board member who retired from farming in 2014. "Data enables you know when to spend money and not to spend money," he said. "It gave me a better idea where my water was going and how much I was pumping."

At the irrigator's meeting, Hall told farmers there was a more pressing reason to monitor their well-water



**Morgan Halpenny, CEO of Pumpsight, leads a discussion on irrigation technology.**

use. Outside interests such as a possible lithium mine near the Amargosa Valley or the expansion of metropolitan water concerns may one day challenge their water rights – potential battles that could end up in court.

"Who knows what will happen down the road – a lithium mine could interfere with what kind of water

you have," Hall said. "And the Southern Nevada Water Authority has tentacles that spread to rural areas."

Providing a judge with specific water-use charts may help keep a farmer from ruin one day. "You've got to protect your livelihood," he said.

Jon Lee added the adage, "Water doesn't run downhill. It runs toward money."

At the meeting, two experts gave presentations, Morgan Halpenny, the CEO of a firm called Pumpsight, which offers water pump monitoring solutions, and Devon Ayres, a hydrology engineer and president of Water Resources Associates, Inc.

"Over the years, we've had a lot of vendors share in-depth details about pump design," Jon Lee said. "They might not sell a pump at these meetings and they know it, but they come anyway, because they see the need."

The irrigators meetings

have been conducted for more than a decade now. "These guys appreciate it," Jon Lee said. "Depending on whether it's hunting season, we can get a standing-room-only crowd here."

Hall called the seminars especially critical for younger farmers. "There are a lot of new ideas offered here about how to put water on the ground efficiently," he said. "Especially for a guy just starting out, you learn a lot with new technology."

But some older farmers say it will take a bit more convincing before they'll turn their entire operation over to computers.

"This whole idea of the connected farm is worth looking at, but a lot of us have already become about as efficient as we can," said Keyes. "I know that data is power, but I'm not one to test the waters. "If someone can show me it works, then I'll be onboard. But I don't need to be anyone's R&D."

But for those farmers who want it, the new information is available.

"I've learned to rework wells and make them more efficient," said Maurer, also a longtime Valley Electric board member. "I've become more energy efficient. I've saved money and resources. And every irrigator has the opportunity to do it."

At one point, Maurer watched a demonstration about a new sound wave technology to perform water well maintenance.

"At every meeting, you pick up something," he said. "I didn't even know about this wave technology. That's great stuff. I can put it to work tomorrow, if not sooner." ■



**More than two dozen farmers attended the meeting.**

# Denim Gold in Abandoned Mines

By John M. Glionna

They're the odd-couple of mine prospectors.

Caden Gould is 41, has big shoulders and loves to repel into the depths of darkened mine shafts. At 70, Ron Bommarito is old enough to be his partner's father, an antiques dealer with an offbeat sense of humor. If he can, he prefers to stay on the surface.

But their Holy Grail is perhaps oddest of all. They're not looking for precious minerals, the gold or even the shiny silver that put Nevada on the map.

They're looking for denim, as in blue jeans, the ones made by entrepreneur Levi Strauss, which became the uniform of not just miners, but farmers, ranchers and cowboys across the American West.

And the vintage jeans can often be just as valuable as any rock-hard gem. A pair of Levis originally bought in 1893 by a dry-goods store owner in the Arizona Territory recently sold for nearly \$100,000. A pair of Levis 501 jeans made in the 1880s was snapped up by collectors in China and Japan for \$60,000 and another for six figures.

The most valuable jeans come from the 1800s but there are buyers for apparel – shirts, coveralls, jackets and dungarees – from as late as the 1920s. They don't even have to be intact. For some buyers, the more beat-up the better. Some clothing designers even use the finds to



**Ron Bommarito, left, stands by as Caden Gould explores the mouth of a mine shaft in the Toiyabe National Forest in central Nevada. The two plumb caves looking for vintage denim. The right pair of jeans can fetch thousands of dollars from collectors.**

John Glionna

model modern knockoffs.

That kind of money is enough to make Gould start up his old Ford diesel truck with 600,000 miles on the odometer, two meandering cracks in the windshield and an ashtray full of cigarette butts and head for the hills. Actually, the pair, who live in the old mining town Genoa, just south of Reno, will look anywhere they think they might find blue jeans.

They've jumped out of their truck and walked a few feet from the main drag in Tonopah to scout for the blue-jean motherlode. They've also wandered around the outskirts of Goldfield and all its satellite mineral-named towns

that were once filled with miners digging and blowing up things in an effort to make the biggest pay-day of their lives.

There are more than 200,000 registered mines in Nevada, many of them in the southern reaches of the state. And the blue-jean stalkers want to set foot in every one of them.

So far, however, the big pay days have eluded them. Bommarito, who has been in the hunt for decades, has sold jeans for a few thousand dollars. Gould, who became the older man's protégé five years ago, had so far kept all the blue jeans he's found – because he couldn't get much

for them.

But that makes him even hungrier. "I've created a monster," Bommarito says of Gould.

Gould made his first blue-jean score in Tonopah, but it's not what you think.

There are countless videos posted on YouTube by amateur treasure hunters who sneak into already-claimed mines to scavenge anything the owners might have overlooked. In one such video he saw, one he knew was recorded in Tonopah, he saw the filmmaker step over a pile of clothing he figured contained what he was looking for.

A day later, he scored his



**The opening to mine shafts can be small slashes in the rock wall. As Gould climbed in this one, Bommarito observed that the original miners must have been small.**

first pair of vintage jeans that played a role in Nevada's history.

Bommarito also has stories to tell from the southern Nevada hunt. Once, he was plumbing a mine just outside Goldfield with a Colorado-based searcher when the two got into an argument on the surface. The other guy didn't like how Bommarito was working the winch to lower him into the pit and cold-cocked him.

The pair duked it out right there. "We could have tumbled into that hole like in some chap movie," he recalled. "If it's not that, God only knows what real stupid is."

Fist fights aside, the work is dangerous. Since 1971, when the state began recording mine injuries, more than a dozen people have died and many more injured exploring the underground shafts. The state's Division of Minerals warns that the risks include "falls down inclined or vertical openings; rotted, decayed timbers; cave-ins; bad air;



**The pair poses inside an old mill that sits intact near the mouth of a mine. They look in crevices where miners might have stashed denim to block the incessant winds.**

old, left behind explosives; poisonous snakes and spiders; disease-carrying rodents; and bats that can occasionally carry rabies."

Gould knows all about the snakes.

Once, exploring a mine in Nye County, he accidentally walked into a snake den and was surrounded by rattlers. His partner threw rocks from a nearby hilltop, scattering the snakes and saving his life.

But what the pair fears most is gas, the remnants of sulfites loosed from the rock by miners many generations ago. Not long ago, the pair

was easing their way into a mine in central Nevada when Gould tasted a bit of stale, possibly deadly air.

"This place smells kind of funny," he said.

"I was thinking that, too," answered Bommarito.

They immediately followed their most important rule they describes as: "If anything smells funny, get the hell out of there."

They also have to be on the lookout for prospectors who don't take kindly to competition. During one hunt, Gold encountered a signed nailed to the mouth of a mine shaft



**Though these jeans were not found in a mine, they are the type of jeans from that era.**

that read: "Stay out dumb a--! Thank you for being on my trail cam! Evidence is going to the BLM at this time. Have a nice day!"

Mostly, though, they have the mines to themselves, like they did on the recent day when they spied a small jagged shaft carved into the side of a rock wall.

The opening was so small that Gould had to climb inside on his belly, while Bommarito stood by outside, remarking that the miners who originally dug the hole must have been midgets.

Gould mentioned out loud that the most dangerous part of the mine is within the first 20 feet.

Bommarito sensed his hesitation.

"OK," he said, "so get in there."

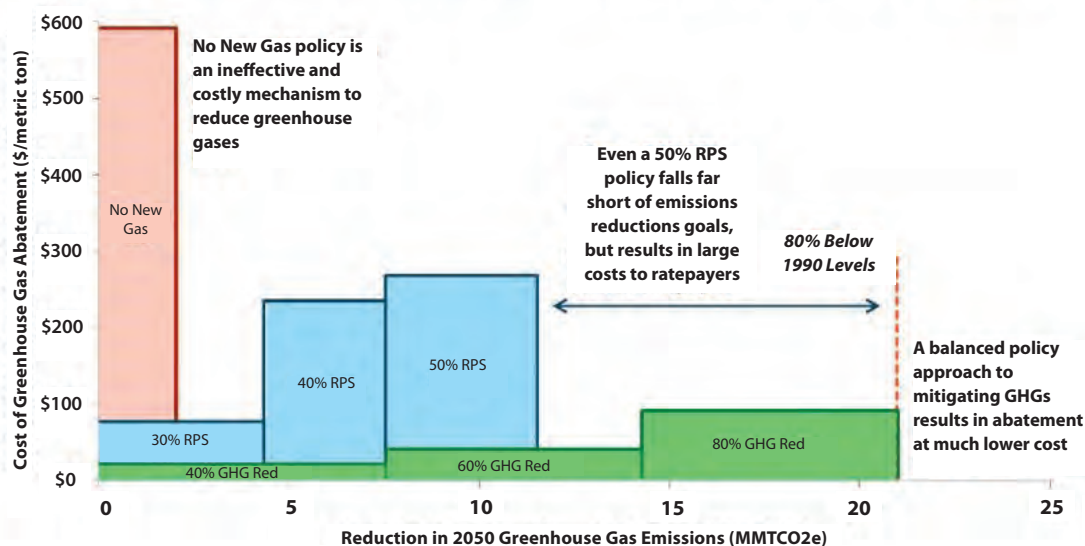
Gould wiggled in and eventually only the bottoms of his boots were exposed to the light.

Then came a voice from the shaft: "This is where you get killed," he said. ■

## Shape of GHC marginal cost curve highlights (1) low-hanging fruit; and (2) high cost of final mitigation measures needed to meet 2050 targets

This graphic illustrates that if natural gas is eliminated as an option, or a renewable portfolio standard is increased as part of the carbon bill, the cost of carbon reduction increases significantly.

Graphic courtesy of Public Generating Pool



# Cap-and-Trade Law Expected from 2019 State Legislative Session

*Bill would aim to reduce carbon emissions, but opponents aren't convinced*

By Lisa Jacoby

State legislators expect to see a cap-and-trade bill this session that aims to reduce carbon emissions in Oregon. Passing this bill is one of Gov. Kate Brown's key goals for the legislative session. The first time the issue was brought to the floor was 2009 in the U.S. Congress. It passed in the House, but not the Senate.

A bill was unsuccessful during Oregon's 2018 session. The Joint Carbon Reduction Committee has been working on the issue since that short session ended. Sen. Cliff Bentz—who represents Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Wheeler,

Jefferson and parts of Deschutes, Wasco, Lake, Marion and Clackamas counties—is the committee's co-vice chairman

The goal is to reduce emissions by 80 percent of 1990 levels by 2050.

"I'm not a big fan of cap and trade. It's still very much in process," Bentz says of the bill. "There are many different parts of it that are still in flux."

The 2019 session begins January 22 and ends June 30.

### What is cap and trade?

Businesses or industries directly affected emit more than 25,000 metric tons of carbon a year. The bill would set a target to reduce emissions and establish a cap for the amount of greenhouse gases that can be emitted each year.

This cap would decrease over time—about 30 years—until established targets are achieved. Included are state-created

allowances for every ton of greenhouse gases that can be emitted under the cap. Under the proposed regulatory scheme, each regulated emitter must annually obtain an allowance for each ton of CO<sub>2</sub> it emits that year.

Entities that fall under these regulations can choose to comply in two ways:

- Buy or be given an allowance for every ton of greenhouse gases they emit.
- Reduce their emissions below the cap and sell the allowances they do not need to entities that cannot cost effectively reduce emissions. This is the "trade" part of "cap and trade."

The suggested beginning date of the cap-and-trade program is January 1, 2021.

One of Sen. Bentz's many concerns about the negative impacts of the proposed cap-and-trade bill are the 30 Oregon businesses that fall into the

“emission intensive trade exposed” (EITE) category. These are manufacturing businesses that exceed the 25,000 metric tons cap and have limited ability, because of out-of-state competition, to increase prices to offset the cost of allowances. Exemptions from the program’s direct impact are being discussed, but currently include agriculture (farming and ranching) and forestry (the growing and logging of trees). Sawmills are not exempt.

To Bentz’s dismay, EITEs are not projected to be exempted from the program.

“Failing to exempt these businesses, or failing to provide them with the certainty regarding their exposure to future costs, sends an undeniably negative signal to businesses who participate in national and international markets and whose profit margins are modest, and who are mobile,” Bentz says. “They will leave Oregon, taking jobs and economic benefit with them.”

### **Will the bill affect OTEC?**

Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative buys power from Bonneville Power Administration, which generates its power mainly by hydropower. Because hydropower does not create much carbon emission, OTEC would not be greatly affected by the cap-and-trade bill, although the impact is not yet known for sure.

“There are too many factors to forecast the magnitude,” says Alisa Kaseweter, climate change specialist with BPA.

For the next 10 years, investor-owned electric companies such as PacifiCorp, Idaho Power and Portland General Electric—which source power from coal and natural gas—are slated to be given allowances equal to the amount of emissions they each anticipate under the so-called Coal-to-Clean legislation for free.

“Their carbon profile is much larger than ours,” says Ted Case, executive director of the Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

A large area of concern is where the money raised from this plan will go.

Advocates say it will go back to rate payers. Opponents say it will be syphoned off for projects that have little to do with power rates and more to do with a larger agenda—everything from green jobs and electric car-charging stations to a large government bureaucracy, with little actually making it back to utility customers.

OTEC’s member-owners would notice an increase, most notably at the gas station because the largest source of Oregon’s emissions is transportation (40 percent), followed by industry and then electricity, Case says.

Consider this scenario: For 2021, large oil companies are anticipated to have to pay about \$350,000,000 to buy allowances for the carbon that would be emitted from the use of gasoline and diesel they sell within Oregon during the year. To recoup that money, the price at the pump would rise by about 15 cents per gallon. This is based on the assumption an allowance will cost \$15. The cost of allowances is estimated to rise during the next 10 to 20 years to \$60 to \$80 (or more) per allowance. At \$60 per allowance, the cost per gallon of gas/diesel would increase by approximately 60 cents.

Bentz understands an increase at the pump greatly affects Oregonians who have no choice but to drive long distances. He is looking for ways to “protect people of rural Oregon from a program that will substantially drive up the cost of transportation,” he says.

### **Will businesses leave?**

Another worry about a cap-and-trade bill is that businesses above the threshold for carbon emissions could choose to move out of Oregon rather than pay the tax or buy allowances. This is known as leakage.

“That’s a huge ripple effect,” Case says.

“It’s going to have a negative impact on border communities in particular,” Bentz adds.

Although customers may not see a change in their electric bill, OTEC wants member-owners to be informed of the potential tax.

“Our goal as a member-owned cooperative is to keep our members informed and engaged on issues that may have a significant impact on their lives and livelihood,” says OTEC Chief Financial Officer Anthony Bailey. “This legislation could affect businesses they work for, or the price of gas at the pump. All legislation starts with good intentions, but it’s the unintended consequences that concern us.”

### **Will a small change affect the world?**

Bentz is not convinced 15 cents more per gallon will encourage people to drive less, thus reducing the carbon output.

Although Bentz says carbon output needs to be addressed, he is not convinced a cap-and-trade bill is the answer to the problem. He references the numbers: Oregon’s annual carbon output is 65 million tons; the world annual total is 36 billion tons. Creating a bill that only addresses Oregon may not make much of a dent in the worldwide carbon output.

“I do understand the need to do something about CO<sub>2</sub>,” he says.

An increase in gas prices could spur more people to buy electric cars. But will a slow change over 20 years make a significant difference?

“It causes people to think they’re doing something about the worldwide problem, but they aren’t,” Bentz says. “How do we do something that actually has a global resonance?”

### **Renewable Resources**

Although hydropower is recognized as a renewable resource at the federal level, it is not classified as such in Oregon unless it was added since the mid-1990s.

“If hydro were counted as renewable, we’d be at 95 percent renewable,” Case says. “They wanted to incentivize wind.”

Wind and solar—variable resources—are the presently accepted renewables for generating energy.

“Wind varies every hour,” says Scott Corwin, executive director of the Public

*Continues on page 6*

## Cap and Trade

Continued from page 5

Power Council.

As for solar, Corwin says that source of energy begins to wane just when power is needed most: at night, when people return home to turn on their air conditioner, television and computer.

“The variable resources don’t match up to usage,” he says.

Hydropower is a steady source. When more energy is needed, more water can be run through the dam.

“Hydro is the cleanest, most flexible way to generate electricity,” Corwin says. “You’ve got a great resource, and a serious commitment to stewardship as well.”

Not everyone is in favor of dams. Some groups are pushing for removal of the lower four dams on the Snake River because they believe dams hinder the migration of salmon.

Case says adult salmon have as high as a 97 percent survival rate navigating the

fish ladders through the dams.

“Adults make it pretty well, unless they get eaten by predators,” he says.

If those dams were removed, BPA would have to acquire power from elsewhere, including sources that emit greenhouse gases. The most likely would be high-efficiency combined-cycle gas turbines. Corwin says this would add up to 2.6 million tons of carbon emissions in the region—equivalent to adding 421,000 more cars on the road.

## Renewable Portfolio Standard

A renewable portfolio standard was established in Oregon in 2007. This RPS requires a certain percentage of a utility’s resources to come from renewable sources. For OTEC’s size, its requirement is 5 percent. The RPS cap is presently at 25 percent.

Bailey says RPS and a carbon tax would not work well together.

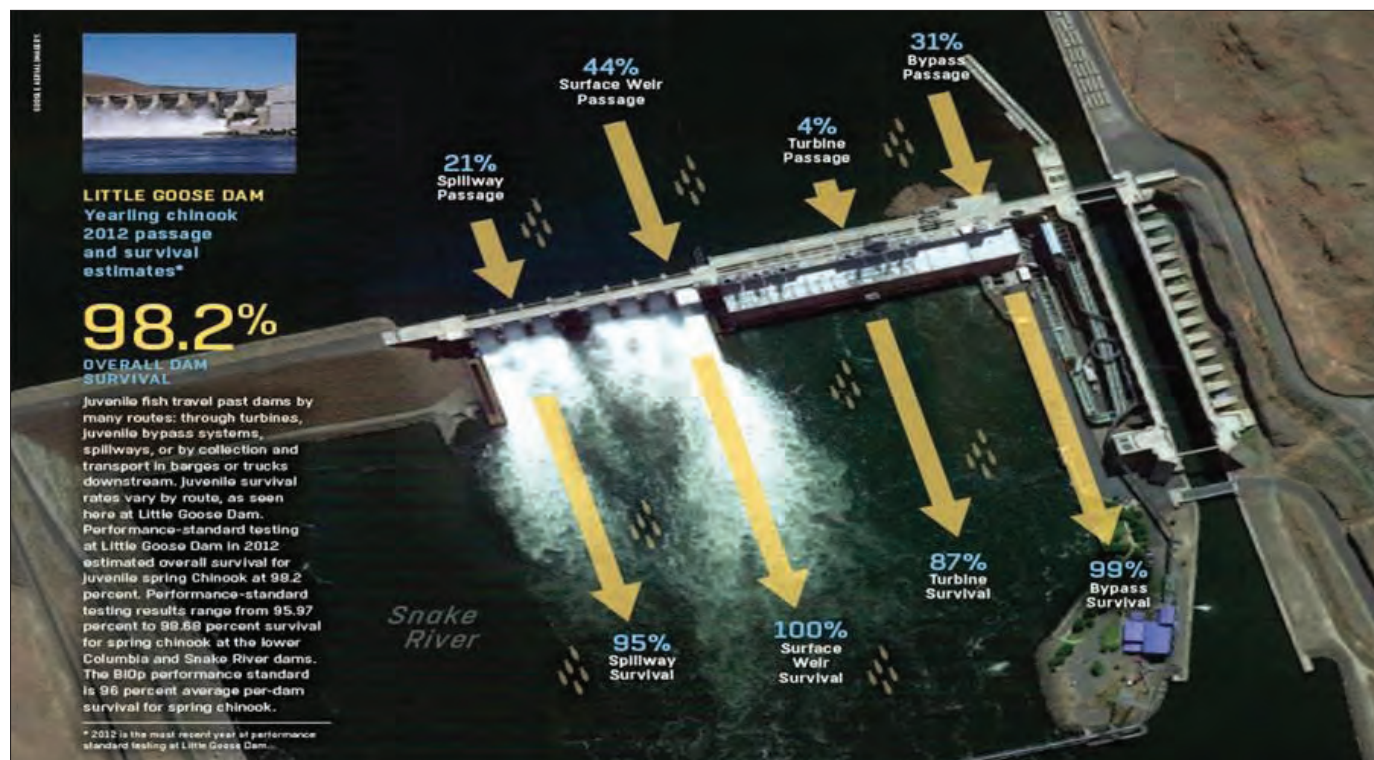
“The RPS mandates the sources of generation required,” he says. “The

carbon tax proposal is driving for an end result to reduce carbon. A carbon tax is resource blind. Under an RPS, as long as you have the specified percentage of renewable resources in your portfolio, you could technically add coal resources to your power supply and end up with higher carbon emissions overall. When an RPS and a carbon tax are employed together, it can drive the overall cost of reducing carbon up significantly—almost doubling it.”

## Get Involved

OTEC is following these important issues closely and remains committed to informing members of developments that would affect the cost and reliability of electricity service. OTEC can use your help. Go to <https://oreca-action.org/> to make sure your legislators know you are watching. ■

For Oregon State Legislature news and contact information for senators and representatives, go to [www.oregonlegislature.gov](http://www.oregonlegislature.gov).



The juvenile fish passage route at Little Goose Dam on the Snake River.

Courtesy of the Bonneville Power Administration



# Making Health Care Convenient

*Community Health Center of Clatskanie finds inventive ways to serve rural patients*

By Scott Laird

Community health care in Clatskanie has seen some changes in recent years, but a new parent organization is helping the local clinic thrive and meet the needs of the community it serves.

The Community Health Center of Clatskanie is a full-service family practice health care clinic, operated by the Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic.

“We serve people from birth all the way to their older years,” says Clinic Manager Nancy Olson.

Nancy also manages a clinic in Astoria, which is part of the Yakima Valley Farm Workers system.

“We do everything: health maintenance exams and regular checkups; chronic disease or disorder control such as diabetes, hypertension and depression; provide access to birth control methods; and do well-child checks, immunizations and sports physicals,” Nancy says. “We offer access to dental, pharmacy and WIC programs.”

Nancy says Yakima Valley Farm Workers is involved in the communities it serves, supporting programs such as English as a second language and Habitat for Humanity.

“We don’t want people to feel like they have to go to Longview or Astoria just to get their basic health care needs met,” Nancy says. “They already have to do that to get specialty care, so it’s nice to be able to stay local and get your needs met here.”

Nancy says she likes being part of the Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic because the organization is large and robust.

“They provide a lot of structural support, which allows us to serve a tiny town like Clatskanie,” Nancy says. “With a population of less than 2,000, it’s difficult for a private organization to sustain a practice in a small community.”

Serving small communities is exactly what the Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic was designed to do when it was organized 40 years ago, and continues to do today as part of its mission.

“This is a very mission-driven organization,” Nancy says.



**The Community Health Clinic of Clatskanie is a full-service family practice clinic.**

“Our mission is to serve the underserved, and we believe everyone should have access to health care. The structure of our organization allows that to happen, which is really unique. We really like to hear what the needs are in the community and then we can go from there and try to develop programs to fit the communities we serve.”

The Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic started in 1978 with a clinic in Toppenish, Washington. There are now 25 clinic sites, many across the Yakima Valley, but also including Astoria, McMinnville, Newberg, Portland, Woodburn and Salem.

Nancy, originally from Gearhart, is a self-proclaimed “health care nerd” who would ask for medical books for Christmas as a



**Among its many services, the clinic offers same-day appointments, well-child checks, immunizations and sports physicals.**

young girl. She went to college to become a doctor but became interested in public health, where she thought she could make a difference on a larger level.

Nancy received a master's in health administration and worked for the Department of Health in Washington, where she focused on primary care in rural areas and patient-focused care. She has continued that philosophy with Yakima Valley Farm Workers.

"A lot of medical care puts the provider at the center of the care," Nancy says. "We want to have a team surrounding the patient and put them at the center."

Nancy says she appreciates the real relationships between staff and patients.

"Three of our four staff members, two medical assistants and a receptionist are longtime Clatskanie residents," she says. "There is genuine care and love for the community they serve. And they are very familiar with the needs of the community. When patients walk in, the staff knows them."

The clinic care provider is Tina Gale, a nurse practitioner from Scappoose. Tina was an employee in the Clatskanie Clinic when it was privately run and when it was operated as the Coastal Family Health Center before it joined the Yakima Valley Farm Workers system in March 2017.

The Clatskanie clinic has more than 1,100 patients. In 2018, the four staff members saw 300 new patients and completed more than 3,000 appointments. More than 650 of those were same-day appointments.

To make local health care more encompassing and convenient through the Yakima Valley Farm Workers, the Clatskanie Clinic has brought in more resources that either weren't previously in the community or were not easily accessible.

Children's health is an important focus. Nancy says the Clatskanie clinic will always see children on the same day of a call, regardless of whether or not there is an open appointment slot.

"We know when parents have a sick kid they don't want to wait until tomorrow or the next day," she says. "They also don't want to take them to the emergency department, so we always fit the kiddos in when they are sick."

The Community Health Center has multiple same-day appointments available for patients who may need to be seen for urgent care.

"We have those same-day slots available so that if people feel like they need to go to the emergency room or an urgent care clinic, then they can go to their local clinic for anything that they need," Nancy says.

The clinic has a registered dietitian who visits twice a month and works with Tina to address the patients' needs while they are at the clinic instead of making a special appointment.

A new service is Tele Behavioral Health. A psychologist from the Astoria clinic is able to do video appointments with patients at the Clatskanie office.

"We know from talking with our patients that this a problem and a big need," Nancy says. "Behavioral health care in general, and especially in small communities, is very difficult for people. We have a resource in Astoria, and we thought about how we could make the best use of her time and help our patients here in Clatskanie as well. The Tele Behavioral Health program was piloted at a different part of our system and now we'll be implementing it here."

The clinic has a 24-hour on-call provider to answer questions and provide advice.

"If a patient is not sure what is going on, or they're not sure if they need to go to the emergency room, they can call at any time and be connected to one of our providers and they can help them figure out what they might need to do," Nancy explains.

A patient benefits coordinator visits the clinic several times a month to help people determine if they are eligible for Oregon Medicaid, or help them find other benefit options, such as sliding-fee discounts. A dental van will begin visiting the clinic this year.

"We try to respond to the needs of our patients as best as we can," Nancy says. "We're trying to make it a useful place, and a place that is convenient and comfortable." ■

*The Community Health Center of Clatskanie, at 401 SW Bel Air Drive, is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call 503-728-5088.*



Children from a Guatemalan village playfully swarm a lineman from the Energy Trails Electrification Project in 2018.

Photos by Studio1441.com

# Lighting Up Latin America

*Oregon electric cooperatives return to their roots and prepare to bring light to people who only dream of electricity*

**By Ted Case**

Eighty years ago, many rural areas in Oregon were in darkness, the citizens only brought out of a life of drudgery and hardship by determined electric cooperative leaders who planted poles and strung wire to places that some said would never have electricity.

Today, few people remember when the lights first came on in their community and how a simple illuminated lightbulb meant a new way of life.

In 2019, the U.S. electric grid is ubiquitous, making it harder to believe that an estimated 1.1 billion people—14 percent of the global population—still do not have access to electricity. Many more suffer from poor-quality supply.

Oregon electric cooperative leaders are going back to their roots to help bring rural electrification to remote villages that are living life in darkness.

Working with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association International program, Oregon electric cooperatives are undertaking

an ambitious plan to help electrify rural areas in Guatemala.

“This brings us back to our original mission of serving those who wouldn’t be served by anyone else,” said Dave Schneider, CEO of Midstate Electric Cooperative and Oregon Rural Electric Cooperative president. “This project is close to my heart.”

NRECA International has worked in Guatemala for more than 27 years, providing ongoing support to develop a sustainable, reliable and affordable supply of electricity to many rural communities. NRECA International facilitates and manages volunteer participation from various U.S. electric co-ops. Volunteers are integrated into the NRECA International team when they travel to remote parts of the country.

In addition to helping build, upgrade and extend power lines, these electric co-ops have invested more than \$1 million for electrification projects in recent years to assist remote community energy systems.

In the past several years, the focus has been placed on helping two municipalities—Ixcán and San Pedro—strengthen business practices and technical capacity of their utility operations. The goal is to help create a sustainable utility that can provide those communities with reliable electric service at reasonable prices.

ORECA started exploring the Guatemala project in 2018, welcoming a series of speakers who have been involved in similar projects. One was Tom VanParis, former CEO of the Indiana Electric Cooperatives. That statewide has helped electrify several villages in Latin America. This led to a presentation at the ORECA annual meeting by Ingrid Hunsicker of NRECA International, who outlined the logistics of a state-sponsored project. Hunsicker did not downplay the obstacles for electrifying small, rural communities that otherwise would not receive help from local government or others, but she also mentioned the payoff.

“This gives Oregon co-ops an opportunity to experience history and be present when the lights come on the first time for these small villages,” she said.

In 2019, ORECA will work with NRECA International on a project profile and a planning trip to evaluate the area and determine the number of crews needed to complete the project. Oregon’s project leader is Roger Meader, who recently retired from Coos-Curry Electric Cooperative, which



**A lineman and local villager work on the Energy Trails Electrification Project in Guatemala. The project includes electric cooperatives from Oklahoma and Colorado.**

serves Oregon’s south coast. Meader is an engineer with extensive experience in the electric utility industry.

Construction will start in 2020 and require 10 to 16 Oregon electric cooperative linemen. Depending on the project, they will be on the ground one to two weeks, often living and working in primitive conditions.

In the meantime, ORECA and Oregon electric cooperatives will begin their preparations, raise funds and secure access to equipment that can be shipped to Guatemala. It’s a daunting proposition, but made less overwhelming when you consider that NRECA International has brought electricity to more than 160 million people in 44 developing countries.

What happened in rural Oregon eight decades ago can happen in a faraway Latin America village. The flip of a switch can improve education, health care, safety and economic opportunity.

“This is an exciting project,” said Roger Nelson, a director at Hood River Electric Cooperative. “It’s also the right thing to do.” ■

## Keep It Safe

# Be Careful With Do-It-Yourself Projects

Do-it-yourself projects are a great way to save money. They can also be extremely rewarding. There's a sense of pride that comes from accomplishing a job yourself.

Many electrical projects fall into the DIY category. Installing ceiling fans, lighting fixtures or appliances are fairly easy and do not require a large investment in tools. Other tasks are more challenging and potentially more dangerous.

Before you begin your project, here are a few tips to keep you safe.

### ► Know your limitations.

The first rule of DIY safety is this: Don't do it yourself if you are not qualified for the job. Unless you are familiar with the basics of electrical wiring, turn over electrical projects to a licensed electrician. It is better to be safe than sorry—and keeping you safe is Escambia River Electric Cooperative's primary goal.

### ► Turn off the power.

Even 120 volts can be deadly. Always turn off the power to the circuit you will be working on. To do this, locate your main service panel and turn off the circuit breaker. It is also a good idea to take time and label all of the breakers so you can identify them quickly.

### ► Remember, there are wires behind those walls.

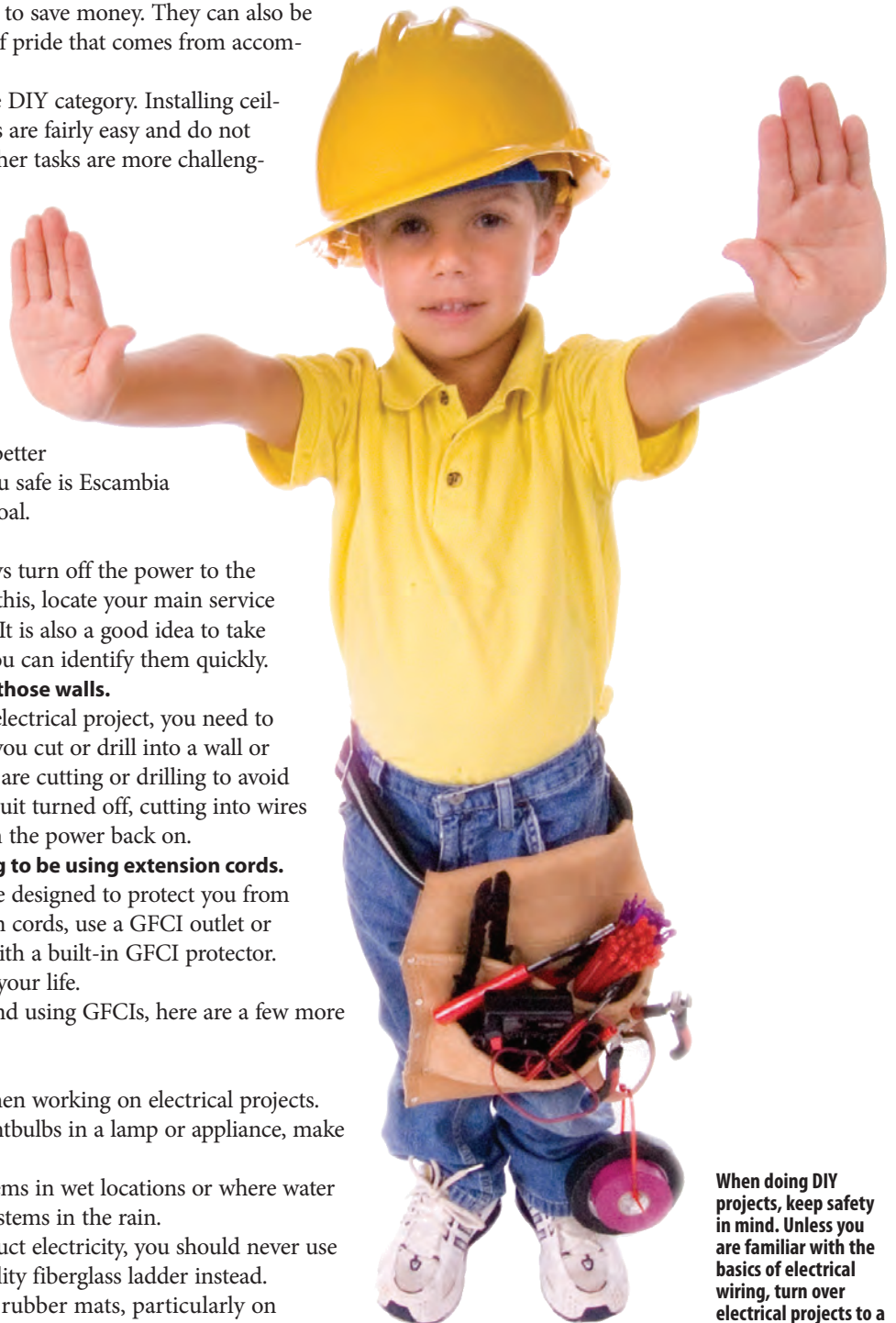
Even if you are not working on an electrical project, you need to keep electrical safety in mind. Before you cut or drill into a wall or ceiling, be conscious of how deep you are cutting or drilling to avoid hitting wires. Even if you have the circuit turned off, cutting into wires can create a fire hazard when you turn the power back on.

### ► Use GFCI protectors if you are going to be using extension cords.

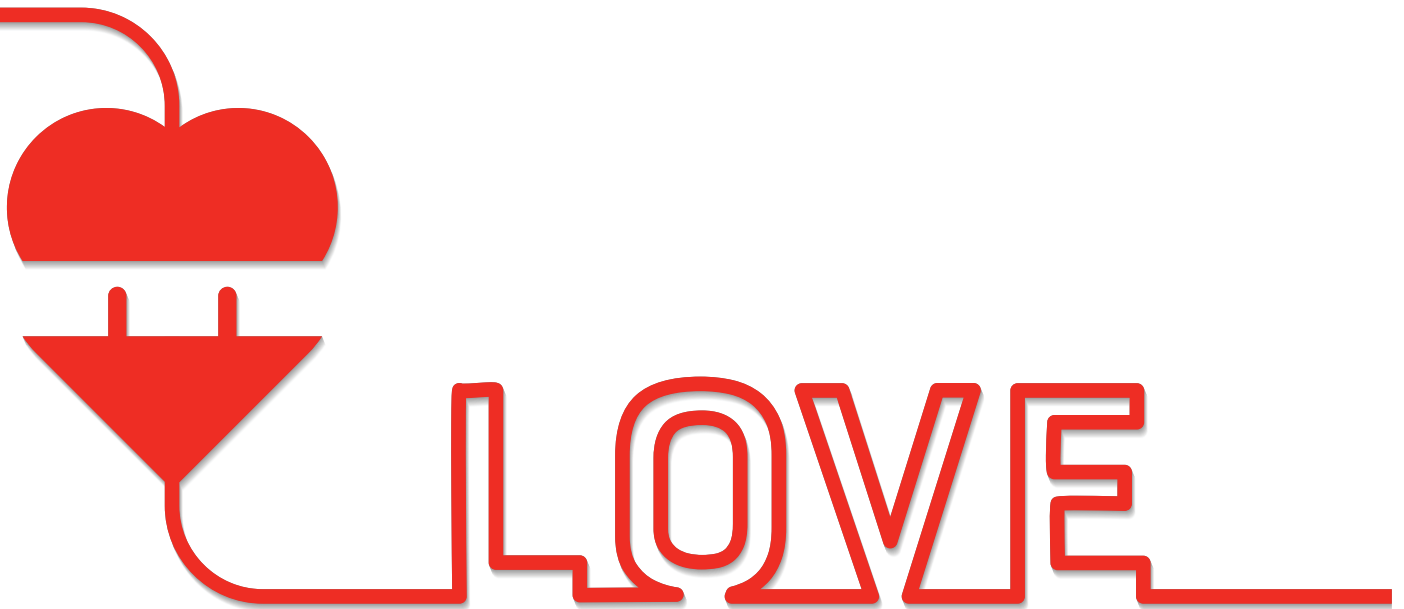
Ground-fault circuit interrupters are designed to protect you from electrical shock. When using extension cords, use a GFCI outlet or GFCI whip—a short extension cord with a built-in GFCI protector. These are not expensive and can save your life.

In addition to turning off circuits and using GFCIs, here are a few more precautions to prevent injury:

- Wear gloves and safety glasses.
- Use tools with insulated grips when working on electrical projects.
- Even if you are just changing lightbulbs in a lamp or appliance, make sure it is unplugged.
- Avoid working on electrical systems in wet locations or where water is present. Never work on electrical systems in the rain.
- Because aluminum ladders conduct electricity, you should never use them for electrical projects. Buy a quality fiberglass ladder instead.
- Wear rubber-soled shoes or use rubber mats, particularly on concrete floors. ■



**When doing DIY projects, keep safety in mind. Unless you are familiar with the basics of electrical wiring, turn over electrical projects to a licensed electrician.**



## Seven Reasons to Love Your Co-op

In February, we are often reminded of the things we love the most. While friends and family are sure to top the list this time of year, Glades Electric Cooperative strives to be on your Valentine's list as well. Here are seven reasons to love your electric cooperative, based on the seven Cooperative Principles that guide GEC every day.

**1. Voluntary and Open Membership.** Glades Electric Cooperative is committed to providing affordable, reliable and safe electricity to everyone in our service territory, regardless of their gender, social, racial, political or religious affiliation.

**2. Democratic Member Control.** You, our members, have a vote and a say in how your electric cooperative is run. Without you, we would have no one to serve.

**3. Members' Economic Participation.** Our members are invested in the cooperative and the community. Instead of making profits, excess revenue from cooperative operations is shared with GEC members over time through the return of capital credits.

**4. Autonomy and Independence.** You're an owner of a self-governing, self-help organization that exists to serve you. Policies are made locally by members you elect to serve the interest of all member-owners.

**5. Education, Training and Information.** We provide regular education and training so you can contribute effectively to the success of your cooperative. This magazine is one example.

**6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives.**

GEC shares the love with other electric cooperatives—including Seminole Electric Cooperative, our wholesale energy provider—in an effort to best serve our members.

**7. Concern for Community.**

What better way to show our love than to invest in the success of our community? You can read more on page 4 about how Glades Electric Charitable Trust—funded through members' donations to Operation Round Up—assists local organizations and members in need. Additionally, up to \$32,000 in scholarships are awarded annually to high school seniors by the Glades Electric Educational Foundation, funded through members' unclaimed retired capital credits. Throughout the year, GEC also loves our community by sponsoring community fundraisers held by organizations in our four-county service area.

Year-round, but especially this month, we hope GEC is on your list of things to love. After all, we love you, our members, for making our day-to-day cooperative way of business meaningful.

To see a few of these cooperative principles in action, please join us at our annual meeting Saturday, March 23, at Moore Haven Middle-High School, 700 Terrier Pride Drive SW. Registration and voting begins at 8 a.m. The business meeting begins at 10 a.m.

Please join us and be an active member in your electric cooperative family. ■