PLUGGED IN
MOUNTAIN PARKS ELECTRIC, INC.
JULY 2025

One of MPE's three summer operations interns, Caleb Podgornoff, right, works with MPE Apprentice Lineman Bryce Poppe as a line crew installs an underground line in Grand Lake, in the heat of construction season. See page 3 for more on MPE's workforce development.

MPE LEADING EFFORTS FOR WILDFIRE MITIGATION

Co-op invests in two smart camera systems for 24/7 smoke monitoring

MPE has contracted Pano AI for their wildfire detection and monitoring.

Two of the AI-powered cameras are being installed – one on a tower at Winter Park Resort and another on a tower on Walton Peak on Rabbit Ears Pass – to provide extensive coverage in Grand and Jackson counties leading into wildfire season.

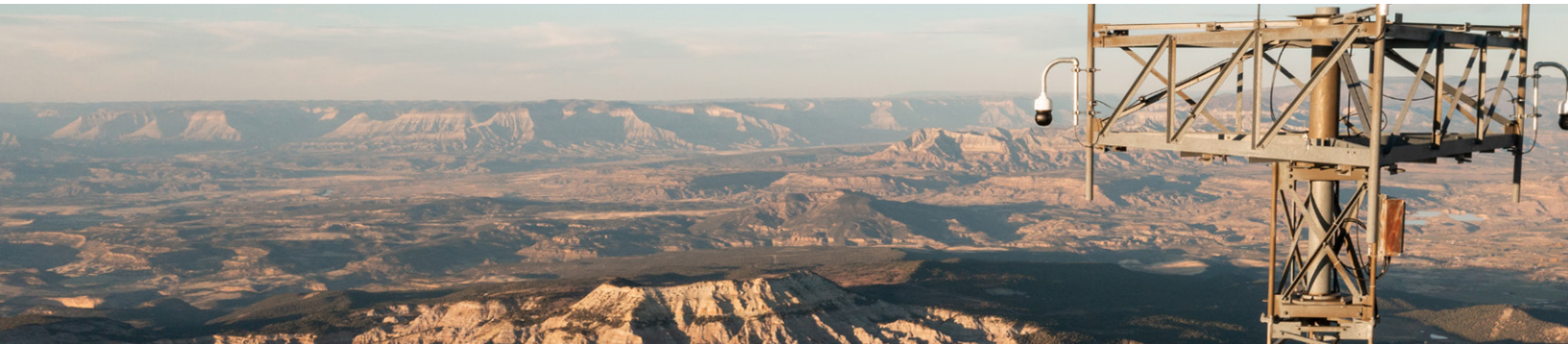
The Pano AI system uses high-definition cameras and artificial intelligence to continuously scan the landscape for signs of smoke. If the system detects something that looks like wildfire smoke, Pano AI's team of analysts quickly reviews the footage, pinpoints the location, and alerts MPE and local fire and emergency crews – often before 911 calls begin coming in.

"Mountain Parks is leading the way to try to mitigate wildfire risks in our service territory," said MPE Vice President of Operations Adam Paulson. "We are hopeful the Pano AI system is a tool the area fire districts can use. With this 2-year contract for two cameras, we can see how it works and if it's beneficial for these fire departments. If it has positive results, we may get buy-in to expand the coverage from two cameras to four."

Pano AI crews are scheduling installation of the cameras and training for MPE and area emergency response personnel.

MPE CEO Virginia Harman participated in a wildfire roundtable discussion at the Colorado Rural Electric Cooperative (CREA) Annual Meeting in February. A fellow roundtable participant, Chief Mike Morgan of the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control, said the state was looking to help support fire mitigation efforts on the local level. She spoke with Morgan about MPE working with area fire districts and Pano AI and the need for support and partnerships moving forward.

See more on fire prevention on page 4



A LOOK BACK

Sheila the mule helps a line crew transport equipment up hills off lush Hwy 125

Photos courtesy of Nathan Klindt

August 11, 1997

MPE's line crews have to use all-terrain vehicles or snowmobiles to work on lines off the beaten path. It wasn't too long ago, though, that a crew enlisted the help of a mule named Sheila.

Former lineman, now Metering Superintendent, Nathan Klindt recently shared some "back in the day" photos from August 11, 1997, showing how Sheila was an invaluable crew member. She would usually help John Purdue with his elk hunting adventures, but on this day she helped a crew that was changing out insulators to a new, more reliable polymer insulator.

Nathan, who will celebrate 30 years at MPE next April, recalls how the former insulators, which they called "peanut bells," would fail. They would burn a hole through the stem, so staff could not easily tell which insulator had failed. They would have to go out after dark, space crew members around a mile apart, re-energize the line and look for an electric arc. When a crew member would see a spark, he would go to his truck and radio his location. They would hone in closer to it until they identified the exact pole and insulator. That tiresome process encouraged them schedule days to replace insulators along a whole line, like they were doing here on Highway 125.

One interesting thing to notice in the photos is how lush and green the forest was on Highway 125 before the East Troublesome Fire.

(Top Left) John Purdue hikes up a steep embankment while pulling Sheila, who was carrying the tools and replacement insulators.

(Bottom Left) Rich Trostel and John Purdue loading bad bells on Sheila.

(Below) Marc Karo and Nathan Klindt changing burned-out insulator bells while John Purdue and Sheila look on.

MPE'S FOCUS ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Apprenticeship/intern programs are investments for MPE's future

MPE continues to recruit qualified journeymen line workers while also investing in developing our own workforce through summer Operations internships and the Apprentice Lineman Program.

"This approach, which MPE implemented several years ago, has proven to be an effective way to build long-term, committed talent aligned with MPE's culture and standards," said Adam Paulson, vice president of Operations.

The internship and apprenticeship programs are also included in MPE's Community Benefits Plan (CBP) in conjunction with the co-op's New ERA grant funding. In the CBP under the USDA's priority of investing in the American workforce, MPE commits to increase outreach for the apprentice program to increase the applicant pool. MPE currently has five apprentices in the Apprentice Lineman Program. "These individuals represent the future of our workforce – a new generation of line workers who will face an evolving utility landscape," said Paulson.

This summer, there are three Operations interns working and learning alongside the apprentice and journeyman linemen. They include John Butler, a student at West Grand High School; Cord Cooper from Craig, Colorado; and Caleb Podgornoff from Cortez, Colorado. Both Cooper and Podgornoff are recent graduates from the line school in Grand Junction. In MPE's CBP under the USDA's priority of supporting rural and agriculture communities, MPE commits to offer two paid summer internships each year to high school students from agriculture or rural backgrounds. Over 10 years, this program will provide up to 20 internship opportunities. MPE will work directly with local high schools and FFA (Future Farmers of America) programs to identify qualified candidates and promote the program.

As we are in the midst of our short and fast-paced construction season, MPE line crews will be working throughout our service territory installing new services and completing a wide range of tasks. "It's important that our communities understand the dynamics at a work site and the purpose behind having multiple linemen present, especially as it relates to internship and apprenticeship training," said Paulson.

Apprentice linemen are enrolled in a formal, structured Department of Labor program that requires a minimum of 8,000 on-the-job hours over approximately 4 years. During this time, apprentices complete multiple trainings, are provided with industry-related reference books, take exams, and receive hands-on supervision from experienced journeyman lineman. Safety is paramount in our industry, which is why apprentices are not permitted to perform any energized work until they reach at least 4,000 hours. This delay ensures they have a firm understanding of work procedures, safety protocols, and the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

In addition to learning the technical aspects of line construction and maintenance, apprentices must learn to build and maintain MPE's electric infrastructure to our standards. This helps ensure the long-term reliability and safety of our system for members. When we encounter jobs that are less common or particularly complex, we make an effort to include apprentices on those crews to broaden their exposure and deepen their knowledge.

"Our apprenticeship program isn't just about filling roles — it's about building a strong, skilled, and safety-conscious workforce for the future. With a significant number of veteran linemen retiring industry-wide, investing in these young men now ensures we maintain the high standards of service our members expect and deserve," said Paulson.

Operations summer intern and area high school student John Butler, left, removes stones from a trench as apprentice lineman Andrew Smyth, right, moves materials at a job site in Granby Ranch. Smyth is expected to become one of many success stories coming from MPE's Paid Journeyman Lineman Apprenticeship Program. Wanting a career change, Andrew completed MPE's Operations summer internship, earning praise from the line crews and supervisors. As such, he was awarded an MPE Energy Industry Scholarship of $10,000 toward his line school program. After finishing the program at the top of his class, he was hired at MPE as an apprentice lineman.

WILDFIRE PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS

RED FLAG WARNING:

Take Action. Be extremely careful with open flames. NWS issues a Red Flag Warning, in conjunction with land management agencies, to alert land managers to an ongoing or imminent critical fire weather pattern. NWS issues a Red Flag Warning when fire conditions are ongoing or expected to occur shortly.

FIRE WEATHER WATCH:

Be Prepared. A Watch alerts land managers and the public that upcoming weather conditions could result in extensive wildland fire occurrence or extreme fire behavior. A watch means critical fire weather conditions are possible but not imminent or occurring.

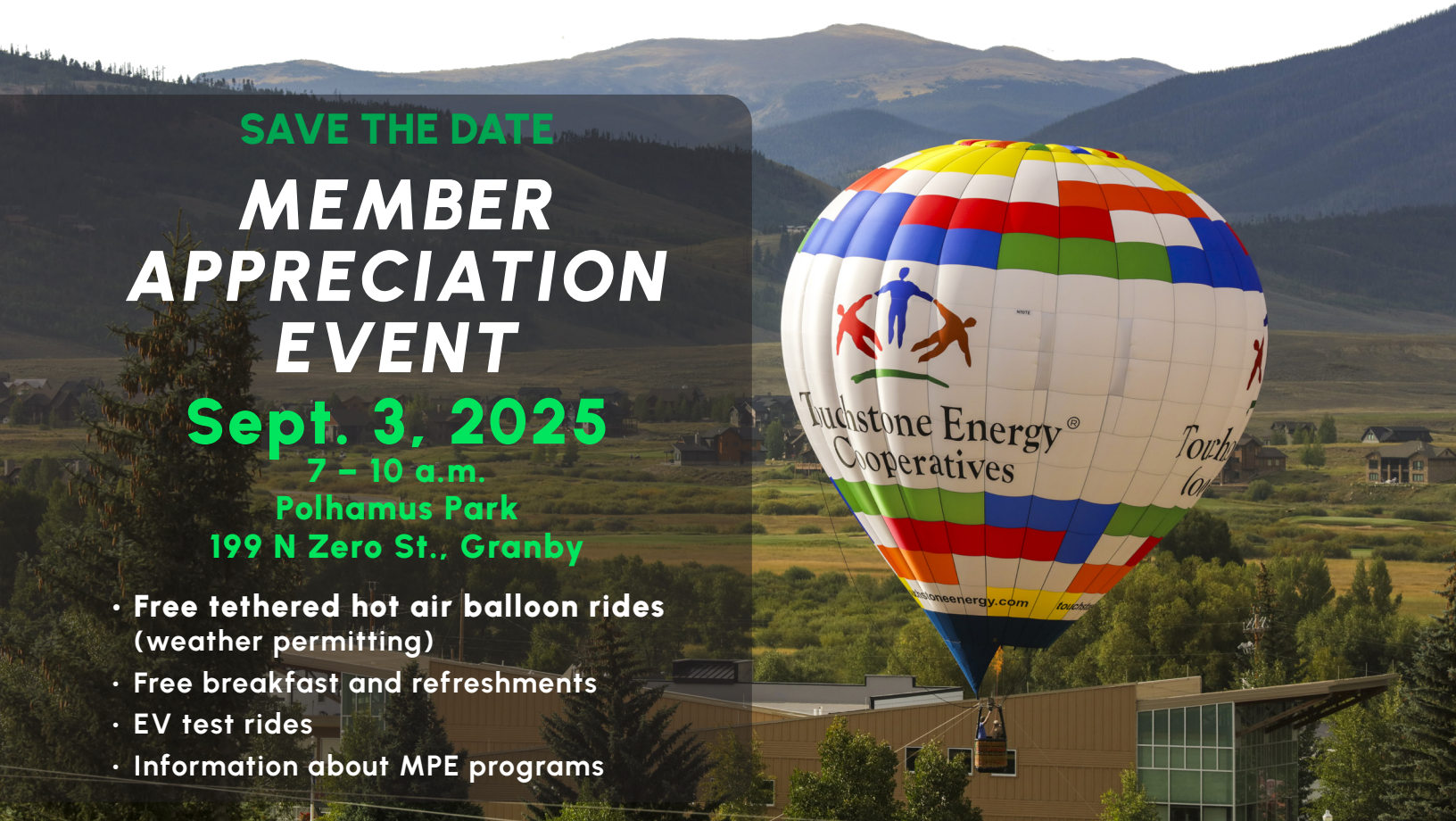
www.weather.gov/safety/wildfire-ww

When fire danger is high, MPE places its system settings to a greater sensitivity.

This higher sensitivity setting, or "one shot" as it's called in the industry, means that if anything contacts a power line, that area is immediately de-energized. By placing our system on "one shot," MPE greatly reduces the chances of starting a fire. The trade-off is that our members may experience more frequent outages in this setting.

MPE works with the counties within our service territory to determine when our system's sensitivity levels should be increased. When a nearby area goes into high fire danger status or there is a Red Flag Warning in our area, that triggers MPE to switch to the more sensitive system settings.

MPE builds our lines to the highest standards and is continuously hardening our system to withstand our ever-changing environment with new technology and equipment. These include changing out expulsion fuses to non-expulsion fuses or equipment that does not arc; installing smarter devices that will be able to shut off a power line when an arch is sensed; and undergrounding power lines and installing fully insulated tree wire in heavily fueled areas. MPE also has protocols in place – such as annual system-wide line patrols, and a complete aerial inspection taking place this summer; pole inspections/testing; and a rigorous vegetation management system – to ensure our lines are in good working condition and to further help mitigate fire danger.



SAVE THE DATE

MEMBER APPRECIATION EVENT

Sept. 3, 2025

7 – 10 a.m.
Polhamus Park
199 N Zero St., Granby

- **Free tethered hot air balloon rides (weather permitting)**
- **Free breakfast and refreshments**
- **EV test rides**
- **Information about MPE programs**