

• August 8, 2024 •



# GENERAL MANAGER'S BOARD MEETING BULLETIN



Virginia Harman

## MPE awarded close to \$11 million in grant funds

*Co-op also invited to apply for New ERA funding*

Along with being invited to apply for New ERA grant funding to support MPE's power purchase agreement, MPE was recently awarded three grants that could bring close to \$11 million to the co-op to support wildfire mitigation, grid monitoring, and grid hardening.

The Empowering Rural America New ERA program is available to member-owned rural electric cooperatives. MPE submitted a letter of interest for the program in the spring and was recently invited to apply. If awarded, funds can be used to purchase renewable energy, with a focus on greenhouse gas reductions, which would help MPE meet state mandates requiring a minimum of 80% greenhouse gas reduction by 2030. The New ERA program also includes a community benefits plan requirement, which

would facilitate an expansion to MPE's already robust community support programs.

The Colorado Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management and FEMA recently notified MPE that Phase 1 of 2 of a wildfire mitigation grant for \$777,585 had been approved. The project will help mitigate the possibility of fires starting due to electrical sparks, trees falling on power lines, and wildlife interference with power line equipment. Phase 2 will provide an additional \$8.9+ million, based on completion and close-out of Phase 1, for power line improvements.

MPE was also recently awarded a grant of \$347,767 for advanced grid monitoring and a grant for \$739,940 for grid hardening from the Colorado Energy Office and the

Department of Energy. The grid monitoring funds will provide for a comprehensive aerial field survey for the 21,600 poles and more than 1,300 miles of MPE's distribution system using unmanned aircraft systems. It will identify vegetation threats and damage to pole structures and other equipment. Grid hardening funds will help MPE implement fire-resistant technologies and fire prevention systems; the relocating of power lines or the reconducting of lines with low-sag, advanced conductors; and the replacement of older overhead conductors and underground cables.

The fire mitigation and grid improvement projects were already a part of MPE's Work Plan. The grant funding will support these projects while minimizing the financial impact to the co-op.

## Other Board Meeting Items

- The Board Meeting was held in Walden, and the community was invited to participate in the Member Comments portion of the agenda. Local residents shared their appreciation for MPE's support for the Jackson County Council on Aging's Smile Box Program and had a question/answer discussion with the Board and MPE management.
- MPE Human Resources Manager Angela Wallace shared the recent hirings of Apprentice Lineman Blake

Juergens and Journeyman Lineman Hunter Johnson. She said they are good assets for our crews and are excited to be a part of our communities. MPE is currently conducting interviews for a SCADA/Substation Tech accepting and applications for a Land Rights Agent. Visit <https://www.mpei.com/employment-opportunities> for more info.

- MPE's Member Appreciation Event is scheduled for Sept. 4 from 7-11 a.m. at Polhamus Park in Granby. It will feature the Touchstone Energy hot air balloon, weather permitting, and free breakfast while supplies last.