

CVEA employs over 40 Alaskans, all of whom live and work in the communities we serve. We are proud of our employees and the work each one does to help fulfill CVEA's mission to provide exceptional customer service through safe, reliable, cost-effective electric service as well as CVEA's vision to reduce or completely eliminate our dependence on fossil fuel and stabilize the Cooperative's cost of generation with regional, sustainable resources.

Each year, CVEA recognizes employees with extended years of loyal and dedicated service to the Cooperative. We invite you to join us in congratulating them on their accomplishment.

Look Who's Working Hard For You

2021 Employee Service Awards



Mary Ellen Bedrick
Revenue Accountant
Copper Basin
30 Years

Mary Ellen has been with CVEA for 30 years in June. She is currently the revenue accountant, but has also served as a data tech and customer service rep. Prior to CVEA she was a title examiner in Florida and worked for her family at Gakona Lodge.

Originally from Orchard Park, New York, Mary Ellen lives in the Copper Basin with her husband Don and their very spoiled Australian Shepherd, Murphy. Her step-daughter Aryn Bedrick-Kveene and grandkids Melea, Siri, Thatcher, and Flora live in Byron, Minnesota. In her spare time, Mary Ellen enjoys camping, hiking, reading, and exploring new areas.

In the last five years, Mary Ellen has helped with the implementation of AMI meters, which are all automated and send readings daily, allowing members to check and track their own usage and allows Mary Ellen and others in the customer service department to assist them when they have high usage. She also participates in the NISC Northwest Users Group, where co-ops share information and ideas related to computer software.

When asked what one thing she wishes

people knew about CVEA employees, she said, "CVEA is a wonderful place to work and I am very proud to be a part of the team. Everyone works hard to support each other and provide the best service we can. The Co-op is always trying to find ways to improve things for the members and our communities." Mary Ellen goes on to say that her favorite thing about CVEA is that the employees are a close group and enjoy working together.

CFO Jaime Matthews had this to say, "Mary Ellen has held a high standard in the accounting and customer service departments for 30 years and is the expert on billing, capital credits, and customer service. Her job knowledge and quality of work is second to none. CVEA is fortunate to have a dedicated and solid employee like Mary Ellen and it has been a privilege to work with her for the last 15 years."

When asked what she is most proud of, she shared "I am proud of the way CVEA reacted during COVID-19 and all the effort that was put into community outreach programs. It was a great feeling to be able to help others during this crazy time."



Cindy Butherus
Operations Admin
Valdez
20 Years

In her 20 years with CVEA, Cindy has been a customer service rep, office admin, transmission and distribution admin, and is now an operations admin. Prior to CVEA she worked in advertising and claims departments at Nationwide Insurance. Although originally from Washington, Cindy lives in paradise (Valdez) with her husband Randy and dog Ruffy.

Cindy enjoys camping, boating, fishing, hiking, and cooking with Randy and Ruffy.

In the last five years she said she's been lucky to help implement important projects such as the creation and maintenance of an improved drawing control procedure and a transfer of mapping to a digital GPS-based system. Both will directly impact efficiency for line crews in the field, dispatch operators, and consumers during outages.

When asked to share a funny story, she told us how she for years had never been taken to the Solomon Gulch dam, and when the former CEO finally took her for a tour, they got a flat tire before reaching the paved highway. They ended up calling for assistance and getting a ride back to town because a

tire change was not about to happen. They laughed the whole way back. She is happy to report, however, that she has already had a tour of the new Allison Creek project and no problems occurred.

Cindy wishes people knew that CVEA employees are proud of their work and what it means for our communities to have a healthy electric co-op dedicated to its members.

Her favorite thing about working for CVEA is the hours and the commute. But she also appreciates the opportunity to learn new skills that keep her challenged and motivated. Cindy is most proud of the way CVEA supported our communities during the crisis of 2020. She believes the organization exemplified the image of a member-owned Cooperative.

According to Jaime Matthews, "Cindy is an integral part of the CVEA team. She has done a great job communicating with members for new construction, and has been dedicated to improving CVEA's mapping system. We appreciate Cindy's commitment to CVEA. 20 years is something to celebrate."



Zena Disney
Generation Admin
Valdez
15 Years

Zena has been with CVEA for 15 years. She is currently the generation admin, but also served as the engineering assistant. Prior to the Cooperative she worked as an engineering assistant at Alyeska Pipeline Service Company.

Zena, originally from Marshall, Alaska, has lived in Valdez for 21 years with her husband Donald. They have five children Daile, James, Emory, Isaac, and Spencer, a Golden Retriever named Axle and an orange Tabby cat named Mouzer.

In her spare time, Zena enjoys spending time with her husband and children, cooking, hiking, camping, fishing, berry picking, attending and supporting her kids at sporting and musical events, watching old reruns of Murder She Wrote, and photography.

Zena noted that two things have changed in her position over the last five years; she became the second back-up for customer service, and the addition of the Allison Creek

Hydroelectric Plant.

When asked what one thing she wishes people knew about CVEA, she said "that CVEA strives to provide quality service and we are determined to continuously improve the system in the best possible way for the Cooperative and the members." Zena's favorite thing about working at CVEA is the diversity of the job. She is most proud that the Cooperative continues to provide excellent customer service and seek innovative ways to make the system more reliable for the members.

According to Wayne McKinzey, CVEA director of power supply, "Zena has meticulous attention to detail and is especially well organized. She is always a pleasure to work with and has a wonderful sense of humor. I look forward to working with her for many years to come."

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COPPER VALLEY ELECTRIC

Employee Service Awards

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Travis Million
Chief Executive Officer
Copper Basin
10 Years

Travis has worked for CVEA for 10 years and served on the Board of Directors prior to that. Travis began as a manager of power generation, then became the manager of power generation & compliance, then COO, and is now serving as the Cooperative's Chief Executive Officer. Prior to CVEA, Travis was the power engineer and health, safety, and environmental manager for HAARP and in research and development for Schweitzer Engineering Laboratories.

Originally from a small farming community in eastern Washington state, Travis has called the Copper Basin home for 16 years. He lives with his wife Emily, and daughters Sophia and Reese.

Travis enjoys spending time outdoors camping, hunting, and fishing. He also enjoys running, wood working, projects around the house, coaching youth basketball, and serving on a number of boards.

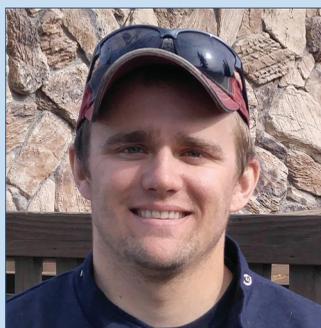
According to Travis, "quite a lot has changed in the last five years, as well as in my position." Some of the larger projects I was involved with as COO was the construction and commissioning of the Allison Creek Hydroelectric Project, upgrading facilities and serving the new Silver Bay Seafoods processing plant in Valdez, constructing the new operations building in Glennallen, installing 21 miles of new distribution line and a new substation serving multiple new

services near Stuart Creek, and redesigning and helping to improve the safety program. Finally, in March 2020, I was promoted to serve the Membership and the CVEA team as the CEO.

When asked what one thing he wishes people knew about CVEA, he said, "the CVEA Board and employees always make decisions with the member in mind. We work very hard, strive to serve the members the best way we possibly can, and always look forward to feedback on how we can improve."

His favorite thing about working for CVEA is the opportunity to lead such an amazing team. "The team at CVEA is by far the best group of people I have ever worked with. Everyone constantly looks for ways to improve and make the Cooperative as low cost, reliable, and safe as possible. I enjoy working for a company where the main goal is to make the members life better."

Lon Rake, CVEA Board President had this to say about Travis, "Travis continues to excel in his duties as CEO. Our board meetings are very informative and productive, thanks to his leadership abilities. He and his team have made tremendous progress in the AMI project, ROW clearing, maintenance and system upgrades as well as the safety program. It is a pleasure working with a caliber-of-person like Travis."



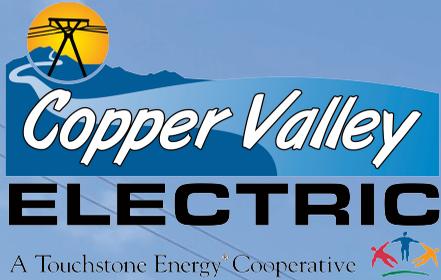
Toby Wahl
Lineman
Copper Basin
5 Years

Toby has worked as a lineman in the Copper Basin District for five years. In addition to his regular work, he assists with the CVEA Annual Meeting and other member events each year and enjoys doing annual presentations for youth at the CRNA Child Development Center.

Toby lives with his wife Meghan, son Owen and daughter Emrie.

Outside of work you'll find Toby hunting or fishing and spending time with his family.

According to Todd Stahley, CVEA Line Superintendent, "you can count on Toby to be there when you need him. He works hard day and night as needed."



National Lineman Appreciation Day

On April 18, electric cooperatives across the nation will celebrate National Lineman Appreciation Day.

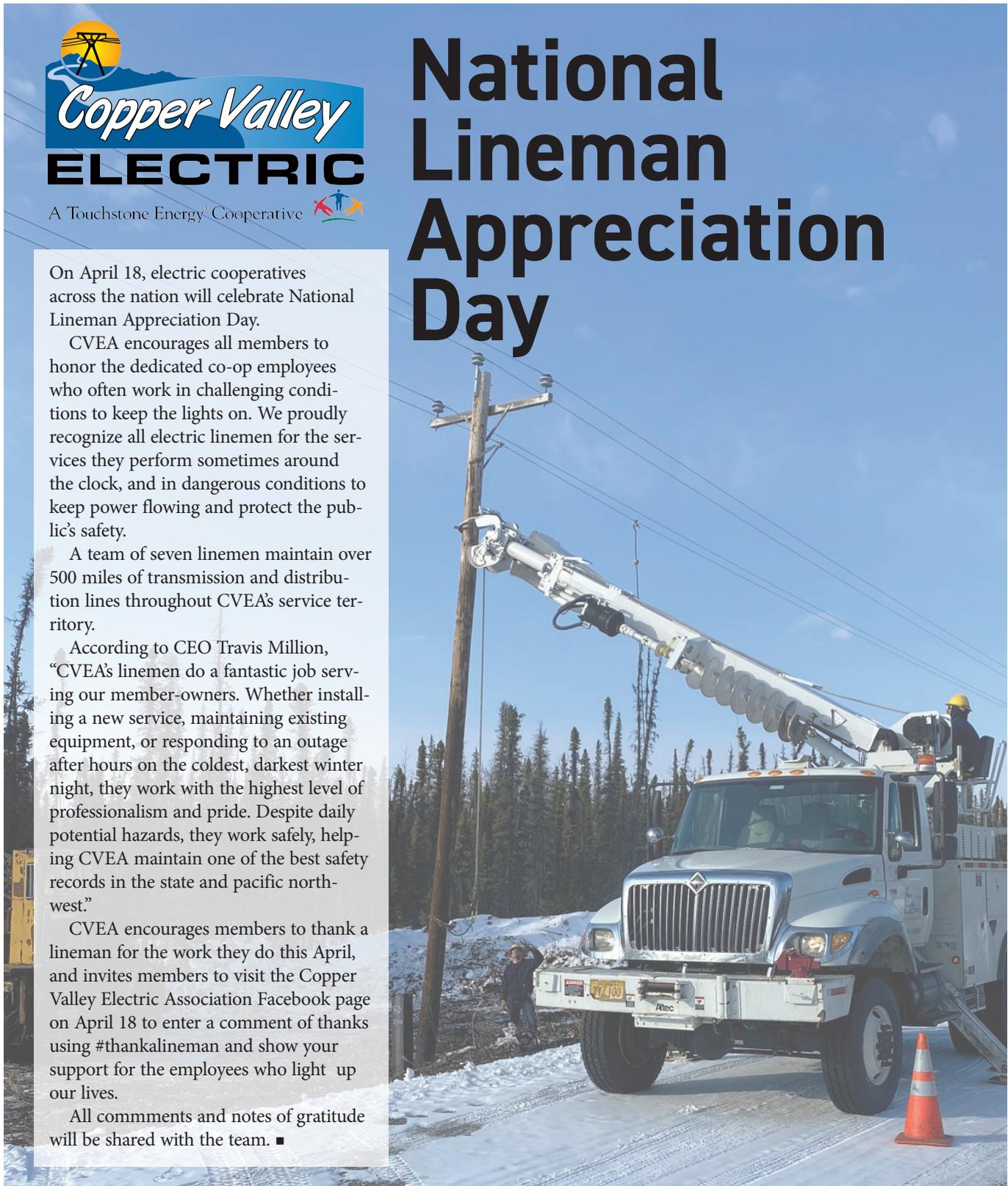
CVEA encourages all members to honor the dedicated co-op employees who often work in challenging conditions to keep the lights on. We proudly recognize all electric linemen for the services they perform sometimes around the clock, and in dangerous conditions to keep power flowing and protect the public's safety.

A team of seven linemen maintain over 500 miles of transmission and distribution lines throughout CVEA's service territory.

According to CEO Travis Million, "CVEA's linemen do a fantastic job serving our member-owners. Whether installing a new service, maintaining existing equipment, or responding to an outage after hours on the coldest, darkest winter night, they work with the highest level of professionalism and pride. Despite daily potential hazards, they work safely, helping CVEA maintain one of the best safety records in the state and pacific north-west."

CVEA encourages members to thank a lineman for the work they do this April, and invites members to visit the Copper Valley Electric Association Facebook page on April 18 to enter a comment of thanks using #thankalineman and show your support for the employees who light up our lives.

All comments and notes of gratitude will be shared with the team. ■





Simple Tips to Firewise Your Home Against Wildfires

2015 Sockeye Fire near Willow
By Stefan Hinman
Copper River Firewise logo
By Ashley Dale

By Tim Mowry

There still may be snow on the ground around many parts of Alaska and it will be a while before green leaves start popping out on trees but it's not too early to start preparing for the upcoming wildfire season.

Despite what Mother Nature says, fire season is right around the corner. In Alaska, fire season officially starts on April 1. That's the date the Division of Forestry requires burn permits for burning on state, municipal and private lands. This applies to debris burning, the use of burn barrels and burning off lawns.

As we all know, Alaska is the Land of Extremes and wildland fire is no exception. In 2019, we had one of the busiest, most-destructive wildland fire seasons on record with almost 2.6 million acres burned and more than 150 structures destroyed, including more than 60 homes. Last year, Alaska had its slowest fire season in more than a decade with less than 200,000 acres burned and no structures were lost. To paraphrase Forest Gump, wildland fire season in Alaska is like a box of chocolates – you never know what to expect.

What we do know, though, is that Alaska has been experiencing earlier, longer and more intense fire seasons during the last 20 years. Five of Alaska's 11 largest fire seasons, dating back to 1939, have occurred since 2004. In the past five years, Alaska

has experienced two catastrophic fire events, both of which occurred in the Mat-Su Valley. The first one, the 2015 Sockeye Fire in Willow, burned more than 50 homes. The second, the 2019 McKinley Fire about 15 miles north of the Sockeye Fire, also destroyed more than 50 homes.

By Alaska standards, neither the Sockeye or McKinley incidents were "big" fires. The Sockeye Fire burned only 7,220 acres while the McKinley Fire burned less than half of that (3,288 acres). But both fires were human caused and located in what is referred to as the "wildland-urban interface," an area where homes and infrastructure are in or adjacent to forested areas prone to wildfire. As a result, both fires had devastating effects on the community.

In reality, it is not the actual flames from wildfires that burn down homes. Rather, it is embers created by wildfires that shower down and ignite homes or flammable objects attached to or surrounding the home, such as decks, porches, lawn furniture, wood piles, dead vegetation, etc. Homeowners can be proactive and take steps to fireproof their homes. All it takes is a weekend of work and a few simple tools such as a ladder, pruning shears and saw.

Here are some simple Firewise tips from the Alaska Division of Forestry to consider as we get closer to fire season:

- Clear leaves, spruce needles and other debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks, this prevents embers from igniting dead vegetation that could burn down your home
- Remove dead vegetation from under your deck and within 10 feet of the house
- Remove any flammable items stored underneath decks or porches
- Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating
- Remove flammable materials (firewood stacks, propane tanks, dry vegetation) within 30 feet of your home's foundation and outbuildings, including garages and sheds - if it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house, deck or porch
- If you have trees on your property, prune them so the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet from the ground; this prevents a surface fire from climbing up into a tree where it can spread and jump from tree top to tree top
- Keep your lawn hydrated and maintained
 - If it is brown, cut it down to reduce fire intensity
 - Dry grass and shrubs are fuel for wildfire
- Don't let debris and lawn cuttings linger, dispose of these items quickly to reduce fuel for fire
- Inspect shingles or roof tiles and replace or repair those that are loose or missing to prevent ember penetration
- Cover exterior attic vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to prevent sparks from entering the home
- Enclose under-eave and soffit vents or screen with metal mesh to prevent ember entry

Taking the time to accomplish these simple tasks prior to the start of fire season could be the difference whether or not your home survives a passing wildfire. In Alaska, it's not a matter of if you will have an extreme fire season, it's a matter of when, which is why it's important to be prepared.

To learn more about protecting your home and property from wildland fires, or if you're interested in helping your community become an official Firewise community, contact your local Division of Forestry office in Glennallen at 822-5534 or visit forestry.alaska.gov. You can also find great tips to help Firewise your home in the Firewise Alaska Brochure accessible on the website.

Another great resource is the Copper River Firewise Facebook page. The page is an avenue for local fire agencies to communicate with their communities regarding fire prevention, mitigation, safety and fire information. Additional helpful information can be found by visiting the National Fire Protection Association website at nfpa.org.

Burn permits required starting April 1

Division of Forestry burn permits are required April 1 through August 31 to do any open debris burning on state, municipal and



**Top, firewood and other flammable items stacked on the porch and beneath the cabin, a safety concern according to Firewise
Above, firewood stacked safely away from a home**

Photos by Jim Smith, Alaska Division of Forestry

private lands in the Copper River Valley. This applies to any open debris burning, use of burn barrels and burning of lawns.

State forestry burn permits are available for free at the local state forestry office at Mile 110 of the Richardson Highway or visit the Division of Forestry website at dnr.alaska.gov/burn and print one. You can also check your local volunteer fire department to see if they have any permits on hand. Permittees are required to read the safe burning guidelines listed on the permit, sign it and have it on hand when they are burning.

Permit holders are also required to call the Division of Forestry office in Glennallen at 822-8665 or go online to make sure burning is allowed on the day they want to burn.■

Tim Mowry is Public Information Officer, Alaska Division of Forestry Wildland Fire & Aviation Program



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P.O. Box 45
Glennallen, AK 99588
www.cvea.org
Copper Basin District
907-822-3211
Mile 187 Glenn Hwy.
Valdez District
907-835-4301
367 Fairbanks Dr.
After hours outage line

Important Dates

April

Annual Meeting Registration:

Registration begins Thursday, April 1 and ends at 12 p.m., Tuesday, May 4 in Valdez, and Wednesday, May 5 in the Copper Basin.

The first 75 members in each district registered by April 20 will receive a fun early registration gift

*Registration instructions are available at cvea.org

CVEA Board Meeting: The April meeting of the Board of Directors is 1 p.m. Thursday, April 15, 2021, in Glennallen

Ballot/Bylaws Voting Deadline: 5 p.m., Tuesday, April 27, 2021

May

Virtual Annual Meeting: 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, May 4 for Valdez, and Wednesday, May 5 for the Copper Basin *Pre-registration required

CVEA Board Meeting: The May meeting of the Board of Directors is 1 p.m. Thursday, May 20, 2021, in Valdez

AK-34

2021 'Virtual' Annual Meeting

Valdez: Tuesday, May 4

Copper Basin: Wednesday, May 5

6:30 p.m.

The time has come! It's your final reminder to attend the 2021 Annual Meeting of Members.

Don't forget, this year's meeting will be held virtually, via Zoom, on Tuesday, May 4, for the Valdez District, and Wednesday, May 5, for the Copper Basin District. The business meeting in each district will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Registration will be a little different this year. Members are required to register in advance. Registration details are available at cvea.org by clicking the link on the home-page, or by calling your local CVEA office. After registration is confirmed, members will be provided all information needed to log into the meeting, as well as appropriate protocols for voting, asking questions, and how door prize drawings will be conducted. The first 75 members in each district to register early will receive a special registration gift (one per membership), so you won't want to wait. Early registration will begin April 1 and end April 20. Regular registration will continue through 12 p.m., May 4 in Valdez and May 5 in the Copper Basin.

The purpose of the meeting will be to hear reports, learn about CVEA projects and issues, ask questions about your cooperative, accept director election and Bylaws amendment results, scholarship awards and employee service recognition, and to transact any other business that may come before the Membership.

In addition to learning valuable information, every registered membership will be eligible to win a ton of cool door prizes. Members present online will receive a \$10 credit on their power bill in May and will be eligible to win the grand prize, a CVEA Beater!!

In April, all cooperative members will receive the official notice of the annual meeting in the mail, along with the 2020 Annual Report and 2021 Director Election and Bylaws amendment materials. As a member of your cooperative, the most important actions you can take is to vote for your board representatives and other Cooperative business. Per CVEA Bylaws, a minimum of 10 percent of the district membership must return their ballots to constitute a valid election. For this reason, even if there is only one candidate, for each seat we still need you to VOTE!

Ballots must be received in the designated post office box by 5 p.m., Tuesday, April 27, 2021. When voting, please remember the back of the ballot envelope must be signed by the member whose signature is on file. If you are unsure what is on your signature card, please give us a call at 822-3211 or 835-4301. All valid ballots received by the deadline will be entered into a drawing for a \$50 CVEA energy credit!

Please exercise your right to vote!