

## COPPER VALLEY ELECTRIC



# CVEA is Committed to Community

Publicly owned utilities were formed to bring affordable electricity to those who needed it. At the heart of their mission was neighbors coming together to better their communities. That same spirit continues at CVEA today. As a local business, staffed by your friends and neighbors, we look for ways to make a difference - big and small.

### Community Support Programs

Each year your Cooperative supports a wide variety of community groups and events such as the Valdez Museum Roadhouse, Copper Valley Chamber of Commerce, Valdez Gold Rush Days parade, Relay for Life, Frosty Fever, the Valdez Adventure Alliance, Copper Basin Independence Day parade, and Fun Run events in the Copper Basin, to name a few.

Gifts, door prizes, and auction items are donated for various events and meetings throughout the year. Each holiday CVEA provides gifts or hosts festive Christmas gatherings for the Copper Basin and Valdez seniors.

Additionally, employees participate in community events, coach sports teams, and serve on many community work groups, task forces, boards and committees, providing local-

community support and leadership.

CVEA continued the member tour program in 2022, hosting several members for a full day in August. The tours are comprehensive and educational, and are considered an excellent opportunity by all who participate.

Finally, CVEA supports many educational and youth programs including classroom presentations, and tours to students of all ages and youth groups.

In October, CEO Travis Million and Sharon Scheidt, Director of Communications, spoke to the Gilson Middle School eighth grade science classes in Valdez about the Cooperative, CVEA's power plants, how electricity is made, and the various types of resources used for power generation.

CEO Million demonstrated how to generate hydroelectricity by using water from the faucet and used the Power Town safety model to show students how to stay safe around electric equipment and everyday hazards. The presentation was followed the next day by a tour of the Solomon Gulch Hydroelectric Plant.

This educational opportunity will continue at Glennallen Jr. High and is planned to expand to the home school programs in both districts.





**OPPOSITE PAGE:** CVEA employees and families enjoy 4th of July in Glennallen from the bucket truck.  
**TOP:** CEO Travis Million demonstrates the power of hydro to Valdez Middle School students.  
**MIDDLE:** CVEA volunteers during a rainy Gold Rush parade in Valdez.  
**ABOVE:** Operator Steve Williams giving a tour of the Solomon Gulch Hydroelectric Plant.

### Community Foundation

The CVEA Community Foundation (Foundation) was created to help the Cooperative do more for the communities it serves. The Foundation provides scholarships for students and contributions to educational, scientific, and charitable organizations in our communities. The Foundation is funded by capital credits that have escheated back to CVEA and generous donations from CVEA members.

Annually, the Foundation awards thousands of dollars in educational scholarships as well as scholarships for students to participate in industry youth leadership programs like the Idaho Youth Rally.

Each year the Foundation contributes funding to local nonprofit organizations looking to fund new or expanding programs that meet the Foundation's contribution guidelines.

In 2022 the Foundation Board of Directors awarded \$23,666 to fund over a dozen local nonprofit organizations serving CVEA communities. Congratulations to Wrangell Institute for Science and Environment, Copper Valley Community Library, Valdez Adventure Alliance, Valdez Museum, Valdez 6-8th Grade Life Skills, Kenny Lake Public Library, Terminal Radio, Inc. KCHU, Valdez Imagination Library, HHES 5th Grade Field Trip, Valdez Emergency Assistance and Food Bank, Valdez Youth Court, as well as several other Copper Basin organizations funded after the publishing of this article.

The Foundation Contribution Season begins in July, applications are due in August, contributions are announced in October, and checks are typically distributed in November or December. Local organizations whose missions support educational, scientific, or charitable purposes are encouraged to apply.

The Foundation's Board just approved a record \$28,762 to fund the 2023 contribution season.

For additional information, please contact Sharon Scheidt at [sscheidt@cvea.org](mailto:sscheidt@cvea.org). ■



# 2022 Ruralite Cover Photo Contest Winners

Copper Valley Electric Association (CVEA) is pleased to announce the winners of the 16th Annual Ruralite Magazine Cover Photo Contest.

Congratulations to Rich Loftin, Ed Pinsky, Ginger Williams, and Lori Geib. Three photos by Rich Loftin were chosen as winners by CVEA employees this year: *A Hint of Winter*, *Aurora Nights*, and *Fall Into Thompson Pass*. Both Ginger Williams and Lori Geib won for two photos each. *Burning Daylight* and *Fureezing Cold Morning* by Ginger Williams, and *Inspiration Along Klutina* and *Reflections of the Soul* by Lori Geib were selected. Finally, Ed Pinsky won for his photo *Where's Momma*. There were 27 photos submitted by 5 member photographers. After being narrowed to a large group of final-

ists, a volunteer team of 10 CVEA employees were given the photos, without the photographers being identified, and were asked to vote. These votes were tallied to determine the winners.

Winners will receive \$100 and be featured on the cover of Ruralite Magazine one month during 2023. They will also be featured on social media and [cvea.org](http://cvea.org).

CVEA is pleased to have the opportunity to see everyone's work and is thrilled to showcase Co-op members on the cover of Ruralite Magazine.

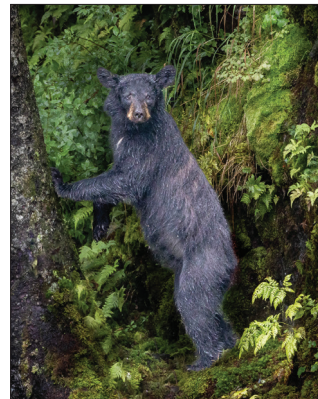
Again, congratulations to all the winners and thanks to everyone who participated in the 2022 Ruralite Cover Photo Contest. ■



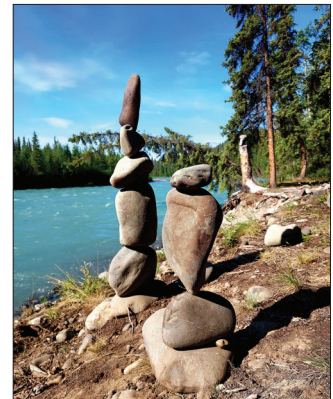
**Fureezing Cold Morning**



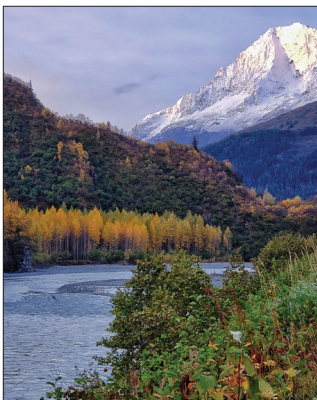
**A Hint of Winter**



**Where's Momma**



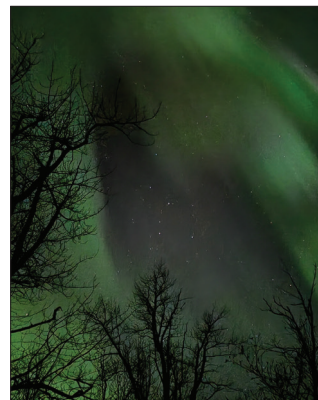
**Inspiration Along Klutina**



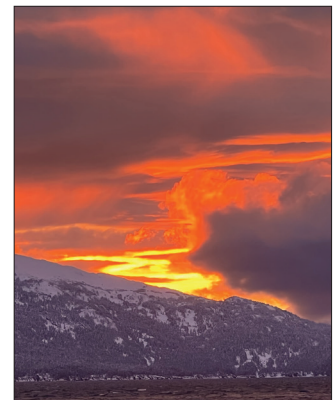
**Fall Into Thompson Pass**



**Reflections of the Soul**



**Aurora Nights**



**Burning Daylight**



# Renewable Energy in the Arctic Circle

Story and photo by Michael Rovito

On a clear day, if you take off from Kotzebue (Qikiqtagruk), Alaska, and head south over the rolling tundra, you will spot rows of solar panels amid more than a dozen wind turbines standing sentinel above the treeless landscape.

The turbines and panels are part of a decades-long effort by Kotzebue Electric Association to lower its reliance on diesel fuel for electric generation.

Kotzebue is 26 miles north of the Arctic Circle and occupies the northern corner of the Baldwin Peninsula. The strip of land the town calls home is nestled between Kotzebue Sound to the west and Hotham Lake—or Kobuk Lake, to the locals—to the east.

A hub for the numerous outlying villages in the Northwest Arctic region, Kotzebue's airport bustles with activity each day as passengers transfer through, some heading home and others heading to Anchorage and points beyond.

On a recent blustery day in November, crews were out in the windswept area of the solar farm, preparing for its growth as the co-op's wind turbines—many erected in the mid-1990s—have come to the end of their useful life.

"We're taking the infrastructure from the wind turbines that no longer work and replacing them with solar," says Martin Shroyer, Kotzebue Electric Association's general manager.

The co-op just ordered 981 solar panels, which will add to the 1,140 already in place on the tundra. The new panels will provide 632 kilowatts for the community in addition to the 532 kW the existing panels generate. The new panels are expected to replace about 50,000 gallons of diesel fuel per year—about the same amount as the existing panels, according to Matt Bergan, KEA's project engineer.

Electric utilities nationwide are seeing a rapid transition in how electricity is generated. Generating power from sources other than fossil fuels not only cuts carbon emissions, it diversifies an electric utility's generation

portfolio so it is not reliant on only one type of fuel and the volatility that comes with it. But the transition must be done with care, so consumers still have reliable power to run myriad items that require electricity in the modern age. Reliability is still king.

Many parts of Alaska have seen increased generation diversity through the years. Cooperatives across the state have made significant investments in wind, solar and hydropower.

As technology advances and prices come down, clean electricity is becoming more feasible for electric utilities in the Last Frontier.

But what about solar in the Arctic? Well, it really does work.

Martin says the co-op can usually generate power from the sun from late February to October. This is accomplished by using bifacial solar panels that can generate power from both sides.

When the sun is above the horizon in winter, its rays bounce off the snow and hit the panels from below. In the summer, the sun never really sets, providing plenty of light for the solar farm.

KEA still needs its diesel generators to make the power it cannot get from wind and solar. But the co-op has come close to a diesel-off scenario.

Martin says one day earlier this year, Kotzebue generated power from 95% renewable sources. Matt told the Arctic Sounder newspaper in April that in the last couple of days, the wind and solar farms had been generating about 75% of the community's electricity needs.

After a brief project shutdown in November due to a strong blizzard that hit Kotzebue, the crew from Alaska Native Renewable Industries—the Huslia-based company constructing the solar farm—was back in the field. Working diligently before the depths of winter hit, workers placed markers and constructed racks where future solar panels will hang.

As Martin drove cautiously down a snowdrift-covered road, a vision of the future spread out across the wind-scourged tundra. In a place so remote, with conditions so extreme, KEA is taking part in the energy transition. ■

Wind turbines at  
sunrise in  
Qikiqtagruk.





# CVEA Celebrates Co-op Month

In October, CVEA joined cooperatives in Alaska and across America to celebrate National Cooperative Month. Every October cooperatives are recognized for the qualities that make the business model unique. The Seven Cooperative Principles are voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, members' economic participation, autonomy and independence, education, training, and information, cooperation among cooperatives, and concern for community.

"Cooperatives are special," says Sharon Scheidt, CVEA Director of Communications. "We have an obligation to provide reliable, affordable, and safe electricity, but also believe we have a responsibility to support our members, enrich our schools, and be involved in and enhance our communities. We enjoy helping our communities and having fun during Co-op Month every year."

CVEA celebrated this year's Cooperative Month with traditional and new events throughout October that brought the cooperative and communities together.

Co-op Month kicked off with the opening of CVEA's 16th Annual Ruralite Cover Photo Contest. Winners receive \$100 per winning photo and are showcased in Ruralite, on CVEA's website and Facebook page, and with local media outlets. The contest received 27 entries from 5 local photographers. After CVEA employees judged the photos, the winners were

announced and are highlighted on pg. 8 of this issue.

In true cooperative spirit, CVEA and CVT partnered on a Co-op Month Pick-Your-Own Pumpkin Patch event that included the annual joint food drive that supports local food banks. It was the second year in Glennallen, but the first in Valdez as it was cancelled in 2021 due to a COVID spike. From all accounts, it was a great second year in the Copper Basin and well worth the wait in Valdez.

Both areas were transformed into a pumpkin patch and all who entered and brought a food or cash donation for the CRNA or Valdez food banks were able to venture into the patch and pick their very own pumpkin. Many were surprised and pleased when selecting pumpkins with \$5 vendor coupons attached. Roughly 220 pumpkins were picked in Glennallen and 350 in Valdez.

There were food vendors on hand with tasty plates and sweet treats, and in true cooperative spirit, all of the fun stations were supported by CVEA and CVT, but ran as fundraisers by local nonprofit organizations.

The kids games and cotton candy supported the Glennallen PTO and Valdez Cooperative Preschool, the Hot Cocoa Bar supported the Copper River Hockey Club and Valdez Imagination Library, gourmet popcorn sales supported the Copper River Basin Child Advocacy Center and the Valdez





Youth Court, and a quilt raffle supported Connecting Ties and the Valdez Close Up students. According to CEO Travis Million, “It was a very creative way to involve so much of the community in Co-op Month and I was pleased to help local nonprofits raise funds for their important programs.”

Several boxes of nonperishable food items and \$245 were donated to the CRNA food bank, and over 824 pounds and \$718 to the Valdez Food Bank. Dusty and Starr Knighten in the Copper Basin and Norah Johnson in Valdez were the lucky winners of a \$150 CVEA energy credit for their donations.

When CVEA Copper Basin employees weren’t minding the pumpkin patch, they spent their time volunteering their lunch hours each week throughout the month of October processing recyclables at the Recycling Our Areas Resources Recycling Center in downtown Glennallen. CVEA employees generously donate their time to this cause each October during Co-op Month.

The CVEA Back to FUN Kids Activity Program also wrapped up after a fun couple of months this October. There were 30 kids, ages 2-18, who earned \$10 gift cards to local businesses for completing 10 fun fall and back-to-school themed

activities. They were also entered to win \$150 cash prizes. Congratulations to Mateo Love, Autumn Williams, Tavin Langley, and Hailey Sauls of Valdez, and Thurm Carlson, Harper Hoffman, Meadow Carlson, and Niya and Chisana Korth in the Copper Basin.

Thank you to everyone who participated in CVEA Co-op Month activities this year. CVEA looks forward to 2023. If you want to know more about Co-op Month, please email Sharon Scheidt, Director of Communications, at [sscheidt@cvea.org](mailto:sscheidt@cvea.org). ■

**OPPOSITE: Copper Basin employees volunteering during their lunch break at the ROAR recycling center in Glennallen.**

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The CVEA Communications Team dropped off roughly 824 pounds of food with volunteer Larissa Williams at the Valdez Food Bank.**

**Community members picking pumpkins at the patch in Valdez. CEO Million handing young Harper Hoffman her check for \$150 from the Back to FUN Kids Activity Program.**

**Valdez community members decorating their pumpkins at the Co-op Month Pick-Your-Own Pumpkin Patch.**

**Looks like CVEA members in Glennallen found their perfect pumpkins.**





A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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[www.cvea.org](http://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**  
866-835-2832

#### Important Dates

##### December

**CVEA Board Meeting:** The December meeting of the Board of Directors is 1 p.m. Thursday, December 15, 2022, in Glennallen

**CVEA Offices Closed:** The CVEA offices will be closed Thursday, December 22 and Monday, December 26, 2022, for the Christmas Holiday, and Thursday, December 29, 2022, for New Year's Eve

##### January

**CVEA Offices Closed:** The CVEA offices will be closed Monday, January 2, 2023, for New Year's

#### **CVEA Bylaws Amendment Petition**

**Deadline:** Recommended Bylaws amendments must be submitted by petition no later than 6 p.m., Thursday, January 5, 2023

**CVEA Board Meeting:** The January meeting of the Board of Directors is 1 p.m., Thursday, January 19, 2023, in Valdez

AK-34



#### **CVEA Office Holiday Closures:**

##### Christmas

Thursday, December 22

Monday, December 26

##### New Year's

Thursday, December 29

Monday, January 2

#### **CVEA Bylaws Amendments**

CVEA members may propose Bylaws amendments for placement on the 2023 ballot by filing a petition with the Board of Directors. The petition must be signed by at least 10 percent of the Membership and filed at least 90 days before the annual meeting.

Please submit any amendments by petition prior to 6 p.m., Thursday, January 5, 2023. Petitions may be submitted to the Glennallen or Valdez office.

A copy of CVEA Bylaws can be picked up at either office or referenced online at [cvea.org](http://cvea.org).

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Sharon Scheidt at 907-835-7005 or email [sscheidt@cvea.org](mailto:sscheidt@cvea.org).