



TWIN VALLEY ELECTRIC CO-OP

# NEWS

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## OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday  
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## How Electric Co-ops Can Benefit from Serving Large Loads, Including Data Centers

BY CATHY CASH, NRECA

Data centers are increasingly top of mind in rural America and for good reason. Expected to lift new U.S. energy demand by 30% by 2030, data centers are setting their sights on electric co-op country, where power is affordable and reliable, and they have acreage to spread out.

Overall, data centers connect the world through digital networks that require a significant and steady flow of electricity without pause.

Their job is to electronically store, manage, and transmit tons of internet-based information 24/7 to ensure the fast, uninterrupted operation of Amazon, Microsoft, Google, artificial intelligence and the World Wide Web

with all its digital businesses, shopping, streaming and social media sites.

A typical data center can require 100 megawatts of electricity, enough to power nearly 100,000 households every day. A growing number of data centers are much larger. Known as a hyperscale campus, these centers demand upwards of 600 MW — enough to power Washington, D.C.

So, can electric co-ops capitalize on data centers' enormous demand and protect consumer-members at the end of the line?

### THE SHORT ANSWER: YES.

"Co-ops are uniquely positioned for this work," says Allison Hamilton, markets and rates director for the National

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REMEMBER AND HONOR

# MEMORIAL DAY

Our office will be closed, Monday, May 25,  
in observance of Memorial Day.



# What to Do When a Wildfire Looms

Millions of acres of U.S. woodland burn every year in thousands of wildfires across the nation.

Statistically, the majority of wildfires — about 85% — are started by humans. Many other fires are ignited by weather, including lightning strikes amid blistering heat and dry conditions.

Here are important safety tips from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), [www.Ready.gov](http://www.Ready.gov) and other safety organizations:

## PREPARE NOW

- ▶ Gather emergency supplies, including N95-rated respirator masks. These masks filter out airborne particles. Keep in mind the special needs of those in your household, including prescription medications. Don't forget the needs of pets.
- ▶ Sign up for your community's warning system. National organizations such as the Emergency Alert System (EAS) and NOAA Weather Radio also provide emergency alerts.
- ▶ Have an evacuation plan in place for your household.
- ▶ Know your community's evacuation routes and scout out several different ways to leave your town or area. Drive the routes and become familiar with shelter locations. Have a plan for pets and livestock.

- ▶ Keep important documents in a fireproof safe.
- ▶ Review your insurance coverage to make sure it is adequate.
- ▶ Research and implement “defense zones” or defensible space to protect your home. Maintain a 30-foot circle around your home that is free from leaves, debris and flammable materials.
- ▶ Trim branches that overhang the home, porch and deck, and prune branches of large trees (depending on their height) at least 10 feet from the ground.
- ▶ Use fire-resistant materials when building, repairing or renovating your home.

## DURING A WILDFIRE

- ▶ If authorities say to do so, evacuate immediately.
- ▶ If trapped, call 911 and give your location.

- ▶ Listen to alerts for emergency information and instructions.

## AFTER A FIRE

- ▶ Do not return home until after authorities say it is safe to do so.
  - ▶ Use caution when entering a home or building and avoid all standing water, which may have an electrical charge.
  - ▶ If you see damage outside your home (downed power lines or damaged power or gas lines), vacate the area and call 911 to have the utility dispatched.
  - ▶ If you detect electrical damage inside your home, hire a qualified electrician to assess your home.
  - ▶ Check roofs and attics for hot spots or sparks and extinguish them immediately. Continue to check every few hours for at least 24 hours.
- For more information about electrical safety, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

## SAFETY TIP

When planning a controlled burn, stay far away from power poles and overhead lines. Even a well managed fire can damage a pole, sometimes from the inside out, creating serious electrical hazards. Keep suppression tools such as a shovel, water source or fire extinguisher nearby. Never burn during high winds or when wildfire warnings are in effect.

SOURCE: [WWW.SAFELECTRICITY.ORG](http://WWW.SAFELECTRICITY.ORG)



## Responding to Wildfire Risks

As the threat of wildfires increases nationwide, electric cooperatives are working to mitigate the risk of fires and protect their local systems and communities. Co-ops are:

- ▶ Updating mitigation plans based on continuous assessment of wildfire risks that are no longer a seasonal concern but rather a year-round, nationwide challenge.
- ▶ Developing and practicing operational protocols and collaborating with first responders and other relevant agencies.
- ▶ Managing vegetation near power lines and other electrical equipment to decrease the volume of “fuel” and slow the spread.
- ▶ Educating cooperative member-owners on proper selection and placement of trees, bushes and other plants around power lines.
- ▶ Advocating for smarter land-management policies like the Fix Our Forests Act that would allow co-ops to better maintain power lines on public lands and reduce wildfire risk.

PHOTO BY CHELSEY GUFFY, ALFALFA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# How Electric Co-ops Can Benefit from Serving Large Loads, Including Data Centers

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Rural Electric Cooperative Association. “Their commitment to serving all members — not just the large load — means they approach these projects with care, collaboration and a focus on long-term community benefit.”

Electric co-ops already are serving almost 300 data centers nationwide, mostly in Virginia, Texas, Illinois, Oregon and Georgia, with another 150 under construction to meet the escalating global needs of AI, digital programs and storage.

Lower land costs plus tax incentives for locating a business in rural areas are attractive to data center developers. But perhaps the top draw is the reliable, affordable electricity co-ops offer.

With a footprint larger than a football field, these immense concrete, windowless structures house two huge energy consumers: thousands of computers and cooling systems to keep them running.

There are many pluses for co-ops serving data centers, too, beyond supporting an always-on digital marketplace and social gathering spots.

Co-op service areas with data centers are experiencing local business boomlets with jobs created around the new facility well after its construction. A data center’s addition to the tax base also allows for school and road upgrades.

For the co-op, there can be greater efficiency gains and support for systemwide improvements, including broadband fiber for retail internet service. Having a constant large energy consumer also offers a means to apply downward pressure on electric rates.

“The predictable, around-the-clock nature of these large loads can create stable revenues and reduce upward pressure on rates for the entire membership,” says Hamilton. “For co-ops, data centers offer long-term load growth, revenue stability and potential for broadband and grid modernization. These projects can also bring new tax base, jobs and investment and attract additional businesses to the area.”

## Co-op service areas with data centers are experiencing local business boomlets with jobs created around the new facility well after its construction.

To secure these benefits, co-ops are encouraged to develop business strategies, practices and requirements when negotiating with data centers coming into their territory. These can include requiring a developer to pay upfront costs, including engineering studies, deposits and other necessary items before a contract is signed.

Co-ops are also developing rate structures, contract provisions, and internal policies to mitigate financial risks to serving data centers.

Co-ops may be under NDAs (non-disclosure agreements) to protect all parties until negotiations reach a certain milestone, but they insist on transparent negotiations and performance assurance to cover potential stranded investment or any default, like letters of credit, deposits and guarantees from a developer’s parent company.

“As co-ops make these business decisions based on their own unique circumstances, they are learning from each other,” Hamilton says. “Sharing their experiences in addressing the challenges of serving large industrial loads, making sure assets are paid for upfront, and their high-capacity demands are met are ways co-ops are avoiding cost-shifts to members.”

By working with data center developers, co-ops can leverage system upgrades and innovations that can drive down costs and boost reliability all for the benefit of their members.

“When co-ops take the time to understand and manage the challenges on the front end — whether it’s infrastructure upgrades, rate design or contract terms — there can be significant upsides once a data center’s load comes online,” says Hamilton.

**Expected to lift new U.S. energy demand by 30% by 2030, data centers are setting their sights on co-op country, where power is affordable and reliable, and they have acreage to spread out.**



GEORGE WOFFETT / UNSPLASH

## WILDFIRE ALERTS AND WARNINGS AND WHAT THEY MEAN

Understanding alerts can help you know when to prepare and when conditions may become dangerous.

### FIRE WEATHER ALERTS

#### RED FLAG WARNING:

Critical fire weather conditions are happening or about to happen.

#### FIRE WEATHER WATCH:

Conditions are dry, favorable for critical fire weather and could become dangerous.

### NATIONAL WILDFIRE RISK LEVELS



**LOW (GREEN):** Fire starts are unlikely.

**MODERATE (BLUE):** Some wildfires may occur.

**HIGH (YELLOW):** Wildfires are likely.

**VERY HIGH (ORANGE):** Fires start easily and spread quickly, and are difficult to control.

**EXTREME (RED):** Fires start and spread rapidly. No outdoor burning should take place.

SOURCE: WWW.SAFEELECTRICITY.ORG

## ELECTRICAL SAFETY CHECKLIST — ROOM BY ROOM

Check This Month to Keep Your Home and Family Safe

### KITCHEN

- ▶ Clean refrigerator coils to allow airflow.
- ▶ Store and use appliances away from the sink.
- ▶ Use and test GFCI outlets.

### BEDROOM

- ▶ Place and test smoke and CO detectors on every level and near sleeping areas.
- ▶ Keep cords out from under rugs or furniture.
- ▶ Unplug devices and chargers when not in use.
- ▶ Ensure lightbulbs are the correct wattage.
- ▶ Plug window AC units into a dedicated circuit.

### BASEMENT

- ▶ Ensure washer and dryer are ventilated. Remove dryer lint after each use.
- ▶ Set water heater to 120 F or lower.
- ▶ Have furnace inspected and confirm proper ventilation.

### BATHROOM

- ▶ Keep appliances away from water (sink, toilet, tub, shower).
- ▶ Unplug appliances when not in use.
- ▶ Use and test GFCI outlets.

### LIVING ROOM

- ▶ Use safety caps on unused outlets, especially if children or pets are present.
- ▶ Ensure electronics have space for airflow.
- ▶ Replace cracked light switches or outlet covers.
- ▶ Avoid overloading outlets, power strips and surge protectors.

### GARAGE

- ▶ Use and test GFCI outlets.
- ▶ Inspect cords for cracks or damage.
- ▶ Unplug tools and appliances when not in use.
- ▶ Place garage refrigerators/freezers on dedicated appliance circuits.

## TIPS TO AVOID UTILITY SCAMS



If you receive a call from someone stating you have overpaid your energy bill and you should provide your banking information or a credit card number to receive a refund, hang up because it's likely a scam. If you overpay your bill, your utility will apply the overpayment credit to your account balance or mail a check. They will not call and request your banking information to issue the refund.

SOURCE: UTILITIES UNITED AGAINST SCAMS



## National BBQ Month

Cooking outdoors is a great way to keep extra heat out of the kitchen and save energy.

