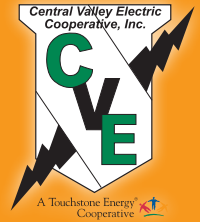




Beyond the Wire

Central Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.



Renewable Energy Installations

Have you recently been contacted by a renewable energy salesperson promising that you will save money on your electric bill or even be able to get rid of your electric company altogether if you purchase and install solar or wind equipment?

Beware members, there is a lot you need to know before considering any installation at your home or business and especially before you enter into any agreement. It may or may not be economical for you. Central Valley Electric Cooperative has one of the lowest residential rates in the state of New Mexico and in 2019 ranked in the lowest 2 percent in the nation among electric cooperatives. CVE's residential tariffed rate is \$0.066752 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) with typically a Fuel Cost Adjustment (FCA) credit. In 2020, the FCA has averaged approximately a one cent credit making the residential charge approximately 5.7 cents per kWh. Therefore, if the distributed generation is going to offset the purchases of energy from CVE, currently the installed cost should be less than 5.7 cents per kWh.

Renewable energy groups will sometimes oversize the distributed generation systems. If that's the case, excess energy flows back onto the utility's distribution system and is purchased at the filed avoided cost. CVE's filed avoided cost for 2020 averages approximately 2.2 cents per kWh. In this case, in order for the installation to be economic, the current installed cost would need to be much less than 5.7 cents depending on the amount of energy that flows back. New Mexico statute defines a renewable energy distributed generation facility as supplying no more than 120 percent of the average annual consumption by the customer where the facility is connected. Lastly, members should be aware that because CVE is a not-for-profit utility, any operating margins in excess of expenses are credited back to the members based on energy purchased from the co-op (capital credit allocations).

CVE is a member-owned cooperative and we desire to help and protect our members. The New Mexico Attorney General's Office has created a consumer disclosure form to help residents understand what they're getting into and we strongly recommend our members insist the renewable energy group complete that form.

If you are truly interested in distributed generation, Call CVE before entering into any agreement. We can help you understand the risks

and we'll help you run the economics, so you know what to expect. Members are being presented long contracts, being promised to save money or even make money, yet choosing to finance a distributed generation system plus pay their other utility bills. Renewable energy may be something you want to consider as a personal preference, which is completely understandable. The Better Business Bureau has received multiple complaints about renewable energy companies misrepresenting terms of power purchase agreements, deception of expectation, elderly homeowners being exploited and even property damage (www.consumerslaw.com). In our case, the companies we have worked with have not followed the necessary steps in our Interconnection Application process, leaving out your power company until you have already signed the dotted line and sometimes paying a portion of the system without knowing if it is designed accurately to meet your needs and permissibly integrate with your electric service.

Members should recognize that an increasing amount of CVE's wholesale power comes from renewable energy resources. Our wholesale power provider, Western Farmers Electric Cooperative (WFEC), is able to take advantage of economies of scale in large solar facility purchase power agreements and purchase renewable energy very cheap to the benefit of all of the members. It's also fair to say that member rates may change in the future depending on the financial condition of our cooperative.

CVE has necessary policies in place for Interconnection of Distributed Generation that adhere to the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission rules for utility services, specifically electric services, that govern cogeneration and small power production. Therefore, if any member is considering a renewable energy purchase and installation, it is necessary that CVE representatives have a pre-application discussion with you. Any changes you want to make with your electrical system warrants a call to CVE as there could be additional charges to upgrade the distribution service. We want to make sure you are fully informed, so call if you have questions or concerns, 575-746-3571.

Central Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: **Full of Goodness** with Julie Foster



Julie Foster showing off her fruitful pomegranate tree.

There is not enough space in this article to write about all the wonderful things that CVE member, Julie Foster does in her daily life.

When we arrived to interview Julie for this member spotlight, she immediately walked us to the beautiful pond in

the front of her rural home where she and her family have lived for the last 13 years. Although some family are no longer in New Mexico, Foster shares this beautiful home with her husband of 34 years who she fondly calls Stevie and her son JT. The pond is surrounded by hybrid willow trees, Cyprus, pine and mulberry trees to name a few. In the pond you will find coy fish and red ear sliders swimming around the bubbling aerator. A very tranquil location for sure.

When asked what Foster has been doing since the pandemic and shut down of multiple programs she helps with, she had much to say. Foster takes her friends and neighbors to doctors appointments when needed, does arts and crafts, makes face masks, designs jewelry, enjoys canning and is currently working on a fundraiser for the local United Veteran's. Foster has a very large garden that offers her an abundant harvest, perfect for making her unique jams and jellies. Some of those include a variety of peppers, but also anything from kiwi to blueberry, plums, cherries and passion fruit. Different combinations such as habanero marmalade were sampled as well as her famous "Lava Sauce." Given its name by her son, the Lava Sauce is a delicious combination of jalapeño peppers, apple cider and apple cider vinegar. Foster does not use any water in her recipes. Prickly pear jellies are also available, some hot, some not. When able to, she sells these creations at local markets and shows.

During our tour of the garden, we were followed by Foster's endearing cat named Si. Si patrols the property and has made friends with the horse, the chickens, and the turkeys. Foster plants her garden from seed and had an enormous zucchini plant, green beans, pumpkin plant as well as a variety of tomatoes.

Born in Illinois, she lived in Wisconsin and Missouri but grew up mostly in Iowa. Foster learned to take advantage of the water, the fields and the forest with all they had to offer. She later decided to join

the Army where she was a medic, an x-ray tech and a lab tech going from place to place, but she met her husband in New Jersey and they later moved to Kentucky. In her civilian life, she was a mechanic where she worked at café's and truck stops while hot rodding around in her 1971 Cutlass Supreme Oldsmobile convertible. Work opportunities allowed Foster to move to New Mexico and now living in NM longer than she has lived anywhere else, Foster is really involved with local and statewide opportunities. She is highly active with the local Senior Center and offers jewelry classes and art classes, but one of her biggest passions is all about flowers. Foster hosts a Mother's Day Rose Garden party each year at the Sr. Center (other than 2020), she is the President of the Artesia Garden Club, Assistant Director for the District Five New Mexico Garden Club, NM Master Gardener, state historian and flower show judge throughout the state. Not to mention, she has been the state litter control and recycle representative for ten years. This role gave her the opportunity to do some recycled art projects and share those with others.

In summary, Foster likes to cook, read, fish, sew, make and remake things. She will help most anyone who is willing to help themselves, but mostly Foster stated, "I like to make people smile." We had a lot of smiles during this interview. **Thank you to Julie Foster for sharing her story and her home with CVE.**



Central Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

OFFICE HOURS:
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Monday - Friday