

Matthews Looks Back at First Year as CEO



CVEA 2024 Safety Day

When asked to look back on her first year as CEO of Copper Valley Electric Association (CVEA), Jaime Matthews said she is filled with pride for the Cooperative; “it is truly remarkable how 42 employees manage to achieve so much. Maintaining an isolated grid with five power plants across a service area the size of West Virginia is no small task, yet our team consistently makes it look effortless.”

Having grown up in Cordova, raised her family in the Copper Basin, and worked at CVEA for the past 19 years, Matthews has a personal connection to both the Valdez and Copper Basin communities. It is this personal connection, along with the dedication of our employees and the support of our members, that drives her every day to make the Cooperative better.

This past year has been a tremendous learning experience for Matthews. While her background at CVEA is in finance and administration, she has focused much of her recent efforts on

deepening her understanding of the Co-op's operations and generation functions. Enhancing reliability is a strategic goal for the Cooperative, and the Operations and Generation departments are committed to this goal daily. Maintenance has been a major priority, particularly this summer. Crews have installed additional fuse cutouts, replaced numerous insulators, and completed extensive right-of-way clearing.

Legislative advocacy, both at the state and federal levels, has also been a key aspect of Matthews' new role. The development of a legislative brochure has helped sharpen CVEA priorities, and involvement in community stakeholder meetings has strengthened a collaborative regional energy message. Navigating regulatory challenges has become a daily task for the CEO. CVEA now spends over a million dollars annually on regulatory compliance—an amount equivalent to nearly two residential electric bills per member.

Transparency is one of Matthews' top priorities. She has made a point of creating opportunities for community members to share their concerns and ideas; Coffee with the CEO events are one example of this. Open communication with members is also crucial, and in response to their feedback, CVEA launched a digital newsletter in January. This provides members with timely, relevant, and easily accessible information about the Cooperative each month.

When asked about her most memorable moments, CEO Matthews had this to say, “this has been an incredible year, and some of my favorite moments have involved spending time with our staff and connecting with members. Safety Day in August was particularly memorable, as it brought the entire company together outside of our daily responsibilities while reinforcing our commitment to safety. Engaging with members at events like the annual meeting and member tour has also been a highlight, and I have been touched by the outpouring of gratitude for our dedicated team, especially during challenging times like outages. Our community's support means the world to us.”

Looking ahead to her second year leading CVEA, Matthews said, “I am excited to continue working on behalf of our members. Among my goals for 2025 are evaluating text messaging for outage communications, assessing the benefits and challenges of the Roadbelt Intertie, and completing the CVEA/Alyeska Intertie Project. I look forward to what we can achieve together in the coming year.”