

COLORADO CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY

Architectural Inventory Form

Official Eligibility Determination (OAHHP use only)

OAHHP1403 Rev. 9/98

- Date _____ Initials _____
- Determined Eligible – National Register
- Determined Not Eligible – National Register
- Determined Eligible – State Register
- Determine Not Eligible – State Register
- Need Data
- Contributes to eligible National Register District
- Noncontributing to eligible National Register District

I. IDENTIFICATION

- 1. Resource number: **5RT.2391** Parcel number(s): **145031007**
- 2. Temporary resource number: **N/A**
- 3. County: **Routt**
- 4. City: **Steamboat Springs**
- 5. Historic Building Name: **Yampa Valley Electric Association Building**
- 6. Current Building Name: **Yampa Valley Electric Association Building**
- 7. Building Address: **32 10th Street**
- 8. Owner Name: **Yampa Valley Electric Association, Inc.**
- Owner Organization:
- Owner Address: **P.O. Box 121832**
Steamboat Springs, CO 80477



44. National Register eligibility field assessment:	Eligible
Local landmark eligibility field assessment:	Eligible

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II. GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

9. P.M.: **6th** Township: **6N** Range: **84W**
NE ¼ of NW ¼ of NE ¼ of NW ¼ of Section 17
10. UTM reference (Datum: NAD27)
 Zone: **13** **344339 mE** **4483196 mN**
11. USGS quad name: **Steamboat Springs, Colorado**
 Year: **1969** Map scale: **7.5**
12. Lot(s): **Lots 7-12 Block 31**
 Addition: **Original Addition of Steamboat Springs** Year of addition: **1884**
13. Boundary description and justification:
This legally defined parcel encompasses, but does not exceed, the land historically associated with this property.
 Metes and bounds?: Describe:

III. ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

14. Building plan (footprint, shape): **Irregular Plan**
15. Dimensions in feet: **Unknown**
16. Number of stories: **2**
17. Primary external wall material(s): **Stone**
18. Roof configuration: **Other Roof**
19. Primary external roof material: **Asphalt Roof/Composition Roof**
20. Special features: **Not Applicable**
21. General architectural description:
The Yampa Valley Electric Association facility in Steamboat Springs comprises an office building, a large maintenance/ truck garage structure, and an elevated parking garage. The original building was completed in 1956, and there is a 1964 addition. Designed by Eugene Sternberg, the building's architectural drawings are located at the Denver Public Library, Western History Collection under the citation: "Eugene Sternberg Architectural Records, WH1003."
- The facility occupies most of the southwest half of Block 31 of the Original Townsite of Steamboat Springs - bordered by 9th Street on the southeast, 10th Street on the northwest, Yampa Street on the southwest, and the alley between Yampa Street and Lincoln Avenue on the northeast. The office portion of the complex faces toward 10th Street on the northwest elevation (façade). A glass-in-steel-frame door, with flanking sidelights set over brushed metal panels, forms the main entry, leading into the building from a pebbled concrete sidewalk near the northeast end of the façade. A band of three tall, vertically-oriented, transom windows extend above the door and sidelights to the roof eave. This door enters into a small foyer where a short set of concrete stairs ascends to the lobby. A plaque, with the following text, is fastened to the foyer wall, just inside the main entry door:**

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**YAMPA VALLEY ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC.
STEAMBOAT SPRINGS HEADQUARTERS BUILDING
1956**

OFFICERS

**A.R. LYONS - PRESIDENT
I.G. ARNOLD - VICE-PRESIDENT
GEORGE D. COOK - TREASURER
MRS. MARY BRUNNER - SECRETARY**

DIRECTORS

**LOY ARDREY
OTTO V. GUMPRECHT
ORA K. HARRIS
O.M. JONES
JOHN J. SHERMAN
GEORGE SIMONTON**

MARVIN L. BROWN, ATTORNEY

MANAGER

L.G. STUKEY

ARCHITECT	EUGENE D. STERNBERG
CONTRACTOR	W.L. PIERCE

The façade wall to the northeast side of the entry is clad with a stone veneer. The façade wall to the southwest side of the entry is stepped back, and features a stacked red brick veneer wall surface, located between bands of awning and fixed-pane windows with silver metal frames. The lower band of windows provides light and ventilation for the ground floor, while the upper band provides light and ventilation for the main upper level. Silver metal letters forming the words "YAMPA VALLEY ELECTRIC ASSN. INC." are fastened to the brick veneer. The wall surface beneath the ground floor windows is clad with white corrugated metal.

The long southwest elevation faces toward Yampa Street. Here, a total of seven large brown metal roll-away garage service bay doors open onto an asphalt driveway which extends to Yampa Street. The service bays at the northwest end of this elevation are located beneath the main upper level office space, while the service bays at the southeast end of this elevation are located beneath the elevated parking structure.

A concrete ramp leads to the elevated parking structure from 9th Street to the southeast. Forming the southern quadrant of the facility's upper level, the parking structure features a concrete floor, and a steel roof supported by steel I-beam vertical supports, steel I-beam girders, and steel trusses. Bands of single-light fixed-pane windows, with flanking casement windows, with white metal frames and red brick rowlock sills, overlook the parking structure from the southeast elevation of the office area. A brown metal service door enters the office area from the parking structure.

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The long northeast elevation fronts onto the alley between Lincoln Avenue and Yampa Street. The wall surface on this elevation is made primarily of a red brick veneer, laid in running bond. Fixed-pane and awning clerestory windows, with silver metal frames, penetrate the upper northwest (front) end of the northeast elevation. The southeast (rear) end of this elevation is penetrated by single-light fixed-pane and casement windows, with white metal frames and red brick rowlock sills. Two brown metal service doors, a white metal roll-away garage door, and a painted white vertical wood plank, horizontal sliding, garage door are also located along the northeast elevation. The two garage doors both open onto short concrete loading docks adjacent to the alley.

22. Architectural style: **Modern Movements/International Style**
 Building type:
23. Landscape or special setting features: **The Yampa Valley Electric Association facility occupies most of the southwest half of Block 31 in the Original Townsite of Steamboat Springs. The property is bordered by 10th Street on the northwest, Yampa Street on the southwest, 9th Street on the southeast, and the alley between Yampa Street and Lincoln Avenue on the northeast.**
24. Associated buildings, features or objects: **Not Applicable**

IV. ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

25. Date of construction: Estimate: Actual: **1956**
 Source of information: **Eugene Sternberg Architectural Records, WH1003, Western History Collection, The Denver Public Library.**
26. Architect: **Eugene D. Sternberg**
 Source of information: **Eugene Sternberg Architectural Records, WH1003, Western History Collection, The Denver Public Library.**
27. Builder: **W.L. Pierce**
 Source of information: **Building plaque.**
28. Original owner: **Yampa Valley Electric Association, Inc.**
 Source of information: **Eugene Sternberg Architectural Records, WH1003, Western History Collection, The Denver Public Library.**
29. Construction history:
The Yampa Valley Electric Association Building was designed by Denver architect Eugene D. Sternberg in 1954-1955, and constructed by Steamboat Springs contractor W.L. Pierce in 1956. Sternberg designed an addition to the original facility in 1964. This was the largest of a group of Steamboat Springs buildings designed by Sternberg in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Other local buildings or additions designed by Sternberg include: the Steamboat Apartments at 11th and Pine (1958), a classroom addition to the Steamboat Springs Elementary School (1960), and the Chamber of Commerce building at 1201 Lincoln Avenue (circa 1960). Regionally, Sternberg also designed the Craig Memorial Hospital (1959), and addition to the Moffat County High School (1957), and the Yampa Valley Electric Association Office and Warehouse Garage in Craig (1954).
30. Original location: Moved: Date of move(s): **N/A**

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V. HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

31. Original use(s): **Industry/Processing/Extraction/Energy Facility**
32. Intermediate use(s): **Industry/Processing/Extraction/Energy Facility**
33. Current use(s): **Industry/Processing/Extraction/Energy Facility**
34. Site type(s): **Yampa Valley Electric Association offices and facilities building.**

35. Historical background:

The Yampa Valley Electric Association Inc. (YVEA) is a user-owned cooperative, serving Northwest Colorado and a portion of Carbon County Wyoming, including the communities of Steamboat Springs, Craig, Hayden, Yampa, and Baggs, Wyoming. Established in 1940, it brought dependable energy to the farms and ranches in the region.

The town of Steamboat Springs had enjoyed electricity since early 1901. On March 23 of that year, G. H. Smedley, who had previously operated a plant at Gillett in the Cripple Creek District, began generating electricity from his new plant in Steamboat Springs. In addition to supplying light to the town's businesses and residences, the plant was capable of generating current at both 220 and 440 volts, for small and large motors. While most of the developed portions of Steamboat enjoyed the benefits of electric power, such was not the case for the region's rural residents. Circa 1929, Douglas Graham, started the Colorado Utilities Corporation, which received its energy from a small coal-powered plant Graham built at McGregor, just west of Milner. Graham, originally from Chicago, had previously developed several small utilities serving Colorado communities. Grahams' power lines were constructed from McGregor to Craig, and then to Steamboat Springs. According to a 1985 interview with YVEA engineer Ev Bristol, the original plant was manually operated. A fireman would load a wheelbarrow with coal, which would then be shoveled into the boilers to generate the steam that powered the turbines. Later, there was a "jerry-rigged" cable car system, with hoppers feeding into the firebox, eliminating some of the need to shovel coal. When the YVEA was formed in 1940, it purchased power for its more than 300 customers from this small generating plant. This little plant operated until 1965, when it was supplanted by a larger modern plant constructed near Hayden.

The National Rural Electrification program, one of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs, began in 1935. In 1940, a special deal being offered by the Rural Electric Administration (REA) caught the attention of County Agent Edson Barr. Barr was authorized by the REA to appoint a board of directors, and the first meeting of the Yampa Valley Electric Association was held in the Routt County Courthouse on July 13, 1940. Rural residents were very excited to finally full-time electric power wired directly into their homes. As the YVEA website proclaims, "No longer would [rural residents] have to burn kerosene lamps, charge batteries with makeshift generators or struggle to keep perishable goods under refrigeration." Under the direction of the Yampa Valley Electric Association's first general manager, Cliff Hanson, the first line was electrified on Dec. 6, 1941.

The Yampa Valley Electric Association began its operations in an old hotel, and later in the Courthouse Annex, which stood right across the street from the courthouse. In 1942, the association had two employees - its manager, Claus Rose, and office manager, Eunice Dorr. In addition to selling people electric service, the YVEA also sold them electrical appliances, such as refrigerators, toasters and small kitchen appliances, radios, and chicken brooders. By 1946, the association's workforce had doubled, to four. In addition to Claus Rose and Eunice Dorr, the association had added an experience lineman named Smitty, and Ev Bristol, its engineer. The next year, the cooperative was serving 326 customers. In 1952, the Yampa Valley Electric Association purchased Graham's Colorado Utilities Corporation, and began to serve the towns of Craig, Hayden and Steamboat Springs,

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instantly increasing its membership by 3,553 new members. The expanded utility desperately required a new building to house its growing work force. Under the tenure of general manager L.G. Stukey, a contract for construction of a two story building was let to Denver architect Eugene Sternberg and contractor W. L. Pierce.

Eugene Sternberg was born in Czechoslovakia on January 15, 1915. He earned a degree in architectural engineering in Prague. While pursuing graduate work in architecture at Cambridge University in England, World War II began. He remained in London during the war, teaching part time at Cambridge. He then joined the firm of Sir Abercrombie, where he was involved in rebuilding many of the homes and buildings destroyed by German bombing. While in England, he met and married his wife, Barbara. In 1945, the couple immigrated to the United States, where Sternberg had accepted an offer to teach at Cornell University. Shortly after, he became the first faculty member at the University of Denver's new School of Architecture. In 1949, Sternberg became associated with developer Edward Hawkins in the creation of the Arapahoe Acres development in Englewood. Sternberg was attracted to the project because of his interest in the creation of "socially conscious modern housing, combining quality architectural design and economical construction." (OAHF, Historical Guide to Colorado Architects, <http://www.coloradohistory-oahf.org>). Arapahoe Acres is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Sternberg is best known for the many civic, educational, and commercial buildings he designed. His list of accomplishments includes Arapahoe Community College in Englewood, Heritage High School, Littleton's Bemis Public Library, Court House and Law Center, and Denver General Hospital. Altogether, Sternberg is responsible for over 400 buildings in Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska.

Designed in the International style, the Yampa Valley Electric Association building is an example of Sternberg's work at its best. In its construction, Sternberg employed a wide variety of materials, including cast concrete, brick, stone, and sandstone, with large panels of glass. In 1956, Governor Steve McNichols dedicated the opening of the new Yampa Valley Electric Association office.

Today, with headquarters located in Steamboat Springs, and a branch office in Craig, the Yampa Valley Electric Association's 7,000 square mile territory serves nearly 25,000 meters, over 2,700 miles of line. Its service area extends east to the continental divide, south to almost I-70, north about 10 miles into Wyoming, and west nearly to the Utah border. The Yampa Valley Electric Association no longer owns its own generation facilities, instead purchasing power from the Western Area Power Administration and Xcel Energy.

36. Sources of information:

Clark, Michelle, and Ross, Mary. "Let There Be Light." *Three Wire Winter*, Spring 1985, p. 28-34.

Colorado's Historic Newspaper Collection. <http://www.coloradohistoricnewspapers.org>. "The Electric Light Plant A Progressive Enterprise of Which Steamboat is Justly Proud." *Steamboat Pilot*, January 8, 1902.

"Eugene Sternberg Architectural Records Biographical Note." Eugene Sternberg Architectural Records, WH1003, Western History Collection, The Denver Public Library.

"Yampa Valley R.E.A. Office Building, Tenth and Yampa, 1954." Eugene Sternberg Architectural Records, WH1003, Western History Collection, The Denver Public Library.

"Yampa Valley Electric Assn., Inc. SS, CO Office & Whse Specs., 1955" Eugene Sternberg Architectural Records, WH1003, Western History Collection, The Denver Public Library.

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**"Yampa Valley Electric Assn., Inc. SS, CO Headquarters Building Additions & Specs., 1964." Eugene Sternberg
Architectural Records, WH1003, Western History Collection, The Denver Public Library.**

VI. SIGNIFICANCE

37. Local landmark designation: Yes No Date of designation:

Designating authority:

38. Applicable National Register criteria:

A. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history;

B. Associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;

C. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguished entity whose components may lack individual distinction;

D. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

Qualifies under Criteria Considerations A through G (see Manual).

Does not meet any of the above National Register criteria.

Steamboat Springs Standards for Designation:

A. Its character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of Routt County, the State of Colorado, or the United States.

Not Applicable B. Its location as a site of a significant historic event.

Not Applicable C. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the culture and development of Routt County.

D. Its exemplification of the cultural, economic, social, or historic heritage of Routt County.

Not Applicable E. Its portrayal of the environment of a group of people in an era of history characterized by a distinctive architectural style.

F. Its embodiment of distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen.

G. Its identification as the work of an architect or master builder whose individual work has influenced the development of Routt County.

H. Its embodiment of elements of architectural design, detail, materials, and/or craftsmanship that represent a significant architectural innovation.

Not Applicable I. Its relationship to other distinctive areas that are eligible for preservation according to a plan based on an historic, cultural, or architectural motif.

J. Its unique location or singular physical characteristic representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, a community, or Routt County.

39. Area(s) of significance: **Architecture**

40. Period of significance: **1956, 1964**

41. Level of significance: National: State: Local:

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Sketch Map



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Location Map

