

APRIL 2012

WATT'S UP

AT LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

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Mailing Address:

PO Box 2750
Durango, Colorado 81302-2750

Street Address:

45 Stewart Street | Durango, Colorado 81303
603 S. 8th Street | Pagosa Springs, Colorado 81147

970.247.5786 | www.lpea.coop

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Chief Executive Officer:

Greg W. Munro

Next Board Meeting:

9 a.m. | Wednesday, April 18, 2012
LPEA Headquarters, Durango

Mission Statement:

La Plata Electric Association provides its members safe, reliable electricity at the lowest reasonable cost while being environmentally responsible.

Save Your Energy
LPEA

La Plata Electric Association, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

An "electric" economy

BY GREG MUNRO, CEO

Over the years I've found that some people don't readily equate La Plata Electric Association with economic development, which always surprises me. Back in the 1930s, economic development was one reason the country's 900-plus rural electric cooperatives were created. It's part of our heritage, because there could be no economic prosperity without electricity.

It's been nearly 73 years since LPEA brought electric power to the rural parts of La Plata and Archuleta counties. Early on it helped our agricultural sector, but today we help spur all of our regional economic sectors in a variety of ways.

Long before independent economic development offices existed in La Plata and Archuleta counties, LPEA was one of the founding members of the Durango Industrial Development Foundation (DIDF), the entity formed to create Bodo Industrial Park. Bodo was developed specifically as a location for growing industry, since Downtown Durango was evolving into charming historic Downtown we now enjoy. Supporting the project, LPEA was one of the first entities to purchase land in Bodo and constructed what is still our headquarters at 45 Stewart St., which we occupied in 1980.

About 25 years ago, LPEA actually housed an economic development specialist, a position that evolved into what is today the La Plata Economic Development Alliance, which LPEA still actively supports. Over in Pagosa Springs, we've also been active with the Archuleta Economic Development Association, now the Pagosa Springs Development Council. We support all chambers of commerce in our service territory, and remain active with DIDF, as it moves forward with a new industrial park near the La Plata County Airport.

Within our own industry, we continue to study, support, and when economically viable, invest in new technologies for our members. For example, renewable energy has its place in economic development by helping local communities be more sustainable and adding to the job base. And, interestingly, we've come full circle as we're currently assisting interested farmers and ranchers with energy efficiency and renewable technologies thanks to a grant from the USDA.

Because tourism remains a vital sector, LPEA has stepped up to assist with the new Durango Welcome Center. A collaboration of numerous entities in the community, the center will be the first of its kind in the heart of Downtown Durango, helping enhance the experience of our region's guests as well as encourage Fort Lewis College recruitment.

I've just touched on LPEA's legacy of economic development, but perhaps you now have a better idea that for our communities LPEA is truly "part of everything you do." ⚙



67 MEGAWATTS OF WIND POWER COMING SOON

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, from which LPEA purchases the majority of its electricity, has signed a 20-year power purchase agreement to buy power generated from the state's latest addition to renewable energy: the 67-megawatt Colorado Highlands Wind project.

The facility is being built on a 5,200 acre site in northeast Logan County, Colo., within the service territory of one of LPEA's sister co-ops, Highline Electric Association, and is scheduled to be operational by the end of the year.

The project will use GE wind turbine generators and be developed by Colorado Highlands Wind, LLC, which is jointly owned by Alliance Power, Inc. of Littleton, Colo., and GE Energy Financial Services of Stamford, Conn.

Colorado Highlands Wind will be the third utility-scale renewable energy facility from which Tri-State receives all electrical output and renewable energy credits. In 2010, Tri-State began purchasing electricity generated at the 51-megawatt Kit Carson Windpower Project in eastern Colorado as well as the 30-megawatt Cimarron Solar Facility in northeastern New Mexico.

For further information, visit the Tri-State web site, www.tristategt.org. ⚙️

The final frontier...

"Aynah" doesn't exist, but from the presentation given last month by the Durango High School Aerospace Design Team (DADT), one might actually believe a settlement in orbit around Mercury is ready to be built.

"It's futuristic in nature," said Dan Garner, DADT instructor, during the "mock" presentation made by the students at LPEA's Durango headquarters. "But the process of research, development, collaboration and innovation is all very real."

Each November, NASA and additional aerospace engineers issue an RFP for a different aerospace project. This year, student teams from all over the world are designing the "Aynah" settlement to support mining on the planet below.

To assist Garner and the DADT, retired nuclear engineer Dave Nulton organized a series of speakers, giving the students access to everything from astrophysics to micro processing, from men and women who had truly "been there, done that."

The "mock" review, to mimic the presentation to NASA, followed, during which DHS students Katie Dudley, Mariah Dorsey, Emma Greenberg, Jesse Rubenstein, Katy Schneider and Jacob Skeath explained why their (invented) company "Northdonning Heedwell" should get the contract, to local professional scientists and engineers, Dr. Robert Ferrell, Dr. Ryan K. Haaland, Dr. Ben Kater, James Lane, Bill Mensch, Dr. Gary Rottman, Ali Sabeti, Dr. Les Sommerville, Annette Wolf-Adamski and Nulton.

"It was amazing to watch," says Indiana Reed, LPEA marketing communications specialist. "The adult 'experts' would challenge the students on various aspects of the proposed space settlement, and the students could come right back with answers that demonstrated they had not only thought through their designs, but they could substantiate them."



DHS student Katie Dudley begins the "practice" presentation the Aerospace Design Team will make to NASA. The gathering was held at LPEA.

The adult panel also suggested additions the DADT could incorporate into the 40-page "Aynah" proposal before submission to NASA by April 4. The proposal includes structural design, operations and infrastructure, human factors, automation design and services (computers/robots), schedule and cost, and business development.

"The DADT is a group of bright, curious and creative young men and women who are going to make a difference in our world," says Nulton. "It has been a joy to work with them."

"We've been able to branch out so much more into the community," adds Garner, "and it's astounding how many amazing people live here, and who want to give back. I love where the program is going because it's not just a student endeavor anymore. It's really a community endeavor."

This is the 19th competition for the DADT, and 17 of those years DHS made the national finals. Four out of the last five years, the DADT has been an International Champion. To learn more about the DADT or to get involved, contact Garner at dgarner@durango.k12.co.us. ⚙️

A big territory

It was time for a change. The map of LPEA's service territory, which hung for decades on LPEA's board room wall, was truly outdated, but creating a replacement was not a small undertaking. Don Short, however, took on the challenge, and developed a large territory map that would be both useful and interesting to view.



Don Short, who stands 6' tall, is nearly dwarfed by the new LPEA territory map now hanging in the LPEA board room.

Short is LPEA's Manager of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) services. The position is a behind-the-scenes one, but it's vital to the cooperative for integrating hardware, software and data to manage, analyze and display all forms of geographically-referenced information.

"GIS allows us to view, understand, question, interpret and visualize data in many ways," says Short, who has been with LPEA since 1997. "GIS reveals

relationships, patterns and trends in the form of maps, reports and charts."

The new territory map, which was printed on a canvas-type material, is about 5' x 10' and features the LPEA board districts, main highways and municipalities, plus the location of all of LPEA's substations and main transmission lines, and more. As infrastructure evolves within LPEA's territory, the map and frame can easily be taken down and the canvas replaced with a new map to reflect updates. ⚙️

Saving lives

It's an award that the International Brotherhood of Electric Workers (IBEW) doesn't want to present very often, as it indicates a life has been in jeopardy. But, conversely, when the IBEW has opportunity to present it, it means a life has been saved.

Last month representatives of the IBEW made a trip to Durango to present the highly-respected "Life Saving Award" to LPEA Journeyman Linemen Jerry Sutherlin, Aaron Renner and Aaron Galloway. In fall of 2010 the three did indeed help save the life of a motorcyclist who was pinned under a large trailer. The crew had been returning from a service call in the North Animas Valley when they happened upon the Hwy 550 accident scene. According to emergency personnel, their actions and quick work in removing the trailer resulted in a "successful outcome" for the motorcycle rider.

The national IBEW learned of the efforts and decided to add the three linemen to an honored group of brave individuals working in the electric utility industry.

"We are very proud of Jerry, Aaron and Aaron," says Greg Munro, CEO. "Our linemen are the best of the best, and this is just one more example." ⚙️



Journeyman Linemen Jerry Sutherlin, Aaron Renner and Aaron Galloway (with plaques) were congratulated by Jim Thorp, IBEW senior assistant business manager (left) and Mike Byrd, IBEW business manager/financial secretary, and Mike Kostecky, IBEW president.

CO-OP MEMBERS

Ask...

Q: All kinds of scary stuff about so-called "Smart Meters" is on the internet. Where can I learn some facts and find out more about what LPEA is doing?

A: LPEA is up-grading the metering system with new Automated Metering Infrastructure or AMI, and it's true that there's a lot of misinformation circulating about this advanced technology. LPEA studied the technology for more than a year, and discovered that all AMI systems are not the same – so if you read about some kind of system deployed in another part of the country, you may be reading about technology different from what LPEA will have.

To that end, we have prepared a "FAQ," or frequently asked questions with answers, and it is now posted on our web site, www.lpea.coop. In addition, we will host several AMI presentations as part of our Free Information Series. The first two are set for Thursday, April 26 – 3 and 5:30 p.m. – at LPEA's headquarters in Bodo Industrial Park, Durango. This presentation can also be given to any interested community group. Please contact Ron Meier, manager of engineering, 970.382.3513 or rmeier@lpea.coop, to make arrangements. ⚙️

Save the Dates!

April 14-15

Green Living Expo, La Plata County Fairgrounds

April 16

Spring Run Off Earth Day
5K Run
Durango Nature Studies

April 19

LPEA Free Information Series
Regional Lighting Workshop
rpierotti@lpea.coop

April 20-21

E-cycling electronic waste recycling
City of Durango Recycling Center
www.durangogov.org

April 26

LPEA Free Information Series
Automated Meter Infrastructure
3 and 5:30 p.m.
www.lpea.coop

April 28-29

Home & Ranch Show
La Plata County Fairgrounds

May 12

LPEA Annual Meeting
Sky Ute Resort & Casino
www.lpea.coop

“Energy” in good hands

LPEA's Operations Department has selected Garrett Hammer as a new Equipment Operator in its Pagosa Springs office, with Journeyman Lineman Tim Baker moving to Serviceman in Pagosa, and Journeyman Lineman Aaron Galloway joining the Dispatch team in Durango.

Operations maintains the cooperative's electrical distribution system, including construction and regular maintenance, plus repair of equipment in the event of an outage. Its workers are members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (Local IBEW 111 26 and 26A).

New Equipment Operator Garrett Hammer is a native of Pagosa Springs, though he attended high school in Arizona. He moved back to Pagosa Springs in 1999 and enjoyed a temporary warehouse position with LPEA, which introduced him to the opportunities within the cooperative. His experience includes overhead distribution pole line construction with LPEA's construction subsidiary WESODI as well as cell tower construction for entities such as AT&T and Verizon. He also has 10 years experience as an electrician in the Pagosa area.

Journeyman Lineman Tim Baker, who last year relocated from Durango to Pagosa, now moves to Serviceman for LPEA's Archuleta County district. In the electric utility industry, a serviceman focuses on direct work with customers, upgrading electrical systems, setting meters, and working with local electricians. LPEA's servicemen are also on-call for outages and are the first in the field, troubleshooting the cause of an outage and determining next steps for restoration of power.

A Durango native, Baker is an experienced horseman, and worked on various ranches in the Four Corners before joining LPEA 22 years ago. Originally a temporary Groundsman, he then took a full time Meter Reader position. By the early '90s, he'd joined the apprenticeship program and earned his Journeyman Lineman.

Journeyman Lineman Aaron Galloway, though born in Casper, Wyo., is nearly a Durango native, having moved to town when he was five. Galloway joined LPEA in 2005 after garnering broad experience in the industry with Sturgeon Electric, Par Electric and WESODI. He earned his Journeyman Lineman while with Par Electric in Denver. He is also a recent recipient of the IBEW Life Saving Award, a national honor presented to individuals who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to save lives.

In his new position, Galloway oversees system operations, monitoring power flows and voltage, fielding calls when problems occur within LPEA's service area, troubleshooting outages and dispatching crews to restore power.

Keep current with employment opportunities at LPEA at www.lpea.coop. ⚙



Aaron Galloway



Garrett Hammer



Tim Baker