

NOVEMBER 2012

WATT'S UP

AT LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

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Davin Montoya - District 2
Lindon "Lin" Stewart - District 1

Chief Executive Officer:

Greg W. Munro

Next Board Meeting:

9 a.m. | Monday, November 19, 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.



Safety is everything

BY STEVE GREGG, MANAGER OF OPERATIONS

As Manager of Operations, I've had the privilege to watch our employees grow and develop skills and habits over more years than I'd like to admit. I thought it might be of interest to our members to reflect on the culture we (as an electric utility) have developed and aspire to maintain. It's important to keep the lights on, but safety IS everything.

Perhaps Regulatory Compliance and Operations Superintendent John Stephenson says it best, "Safety goes beyond the workplace into everything we do. It's a common sense approach to living. Through training, education and in-the-field experiences, augmented by limited rules and regulations and clear direction, our employees develop safety habits that will serve them well into their senior years. Staying present to the moment (focused on the task at hand) has to be primary in all we do, whether simply walking across a parking lot or completing a complicated, multistep electrical procedure."

Indeed, habits come from both training and living life, but, at the core, when our line crews are at work, they want to finish the assignments of the day, then grab their lunch boxes and head home knowing that their co-workers and our member/owners, along with the entire electrical system, are safe. It's all about following procedures. Mavericks need not apply.

I've heard Line Superintendent Roland Pack frequently say, "Following the safety rules and using the safety equipment will help ensure that you and your co-workers will go home to your family at the end of the work day."

And this doesn't just apply to maintaining the electrical system. At LPEA we hold regular training sessions in other areas such as first aid, pole top rescue, bucket truck rescue, traffic flagging, defensive driving and equipment operation, as well as discussion of potential hazards or conditions that may cause injury or an accident.

In discussing this topic with Lines and Services Manager Ben Cordova, he reminded me that safety is the responsibility of everyone. Yes, we need to ensure that our employees have the training, tools and equipment to perform their jobs in a safe, efficient manner, but safety training is an on-going responsibility



John Stephenson



Roland Pack

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

CO-OP MEMBERS

Ask...

Q: Why doesn't LPEA make its members install "dark sky" compliant lights? My neighbor pollutes the sky every night. I want to see the stars.

A: While we can't tell our members what lights to install, we can help educate about light pollution, so thank you for asking. LPEA does support dark sky efforts and, for example, in the City of Durango LPEA has replaced all of the city street lights with what are called "full cut-off" lenses. They are directional and focus the light down to the street, and don't release excess to the sky. In other parts of our service territory, as street lights fail, they are being replaced with the dark sky compliant lights. LPEA has been purchasing full cut-off lights for more than 10 years, and is the only fixture we install today.

We're not scientists, but according to the International Dark-Sky Association (www.darksky.org), light pollution is any adverse effect of artificial light, including sky glow. As the organization notes, "light pollution wastes energy, affects astronomers and scientists, disrupts global wildlife and ecological balance, and has been linked to negative consequences in human health."

The website's lighting page does offer many suggestions for dark sky compliant lighting fixtures and residential lighting design, so maybe mention it to your neighbor? ☀

Visit Washington DC!

LPEA is seeking high school juniors to be a part of the National Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington D.C., set for June 13-20, 2013. Application deadline is Monday, Dec. 17, 2012. All high school juniors whose households receive electricity from LPEA are eligible to apply.

"The Youth Tour to Washington D.C. is unique to rural electric cooperatives across the country," says Greg Munro, LPEA CEO. "Annually, LPEA and our sister co-ops select students for this all-expense paid experience to our nation's capitol. It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

The Washington D.C. youth tour features an intimate look at the federal government and the nation's capitol, including museum and monument tours, plus interaction with Colorado's elected representatives. Social activities are also part of the adventure.

LPEA hopes to sponsor one student from each municipality within its service territory – Durango, Bayfield, Pagosa Springs and Ignacio. Home school students are also eligible.

To be considered, students must complete the D.C. Youth Tour application and submit it to LPEA, along with an essay of 500 words or less covering any aspect of the electric energy industry.

Download applications at www.lpea.coop, and direct any questions to Jeannie Bennett, 970.382.3505 or jbennett@lpea.coop. ☀

Safety first... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

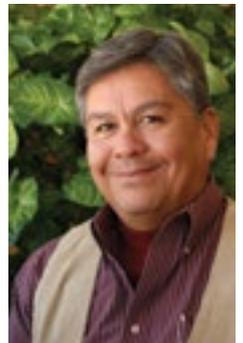
of each LPEA employee, and, I'm proud to say, we have been proactive in keeping everything that may affect how they do their jobs top-of-mind and a priority.

As Line Superintendent Mike Alley adds, "What we train to do at LPEA can affect us not only at work but at home, and anywhere we may go. Paying attention to safety could be a matter of life or death. So safety is what we have to believe in and strive for 24 hours a day so that we all can go home safe. Safety is our security for life."

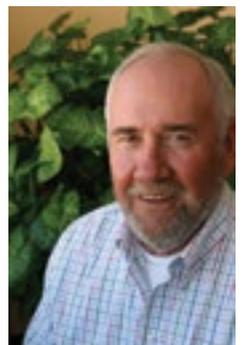
Part of LPEA's training is learning from others, and we review and discuss all accidents and reported incidents that occur in the field. As managers, we listen to our team's concerns and suggestions on how to accomplish the common goal to keep the system operational and everyone safe – and take them seriously. Open communications is key to our program's effectiveness.

In closing, "safety" means something different to everyone. We've found that our training must be broad, thorough, consistent and held often to keep everyone on their toes. It's a reoccurring theme here at LPEA: train, practice, be safe and go home at the end of the day.

Learn more about electrical safety, conservation and efficiency at www.lpea.coop. ☀



Ben Cordova



Mike Alley



City of Durango Fall Electronics Recycling Event:

November 9th and 10th | 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

La Plata County Fairgrounds, 2500 Main Avenue, Durango

A new face in Dispatch

Rachel V. Killinen has been selected as LPEA's Apprentice Dispatcher.

The Apprentice Dispatch program is a two-year intensive that includes text and on-the-job training. Killinen will train to be part of the Dispatch team, which oversees LPEA's system operations. Dispatchers monitor power flows and voltage, field calls when problems occur within LPEA's service area, trouble-shoot outages and dispatch crews to restore power.

Born and raised in Durango, Killinen holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Management from the University of Phoenix. She spent the bulk of her professional career in the insurance industry, and is a licensed agent in the State of Colorado. Most recently Killinen served as office manager for Alternative Elevations, an elevator inspection company, and was a self-employed process server in the town of Kremmling, Colo.

Following graduation from Durango High School, Killinen also earned a Certified Nursing Assistant degree from Pueblo Community College and worked at Mercy Medical Center before pursuing business management. Killinen now resides in Bayfield with her husband Dustin and their three children.

"Rachel's administrative experience and computer expertise will assist her in the Dispatch position," says John Stephenson, operations superintendent, noting that in today's electric utility industry, computer skills are vital. "She will have to study, but will also learn by doing, basically growing into her future position at La Plata Electric."

"I'm a customer-oriented individual who strives to provide an exceptional customer service experience," says Killinen. "I'm looking forward to this experience where I can develop and excel while giving my best to LPEA."

To learn more about employment opportunities at LPEA, visit www.lpea.coop. ☀



Durango Connected

The folks holding hands on the Animas River Trail during Durango Connect on Sept. 27, 2012, (which celebrated the completion of the trail) probably weren't aware of LPEA's support and involvement in the event, but we were there.

In addition to the numerous LPEA employees who took time to be a part of the "human chain," LPEA's linemen Tom Gottlob, Bret Cochrane and Randy Dunton who brought out a bucket truck that ultimately took videographer Dan Osby and photographers Shaun Stanley and Scott Smith high above the trail to digitally capture the human chain and aid in the worldwide publicity. ☀



LIVE WIRES

☛ Durango Franchise Agreement

At its regular September meeting, the LPEA Board of Directors gave preliminary approval to the Franchise Agreement with the City of Durango. City voters will be asked to accept or deny on Nov. 6. Regardless of the Franchise Agreement vote results, LPEA will continue to provide electricity to all its members within the City of Durango. A fact sheet including frequently asked questions is available at www.lpea.coop, as well as on the City's web site, www.durangogov.org.

☛ Lending for Energy Efficiency

First National Bank of Durango and the Four Corners Office for Resource Efficiency have partnered to provide local financing for energy improvements. HomeRx loans through First National enjoy an attractive interest rate and the bank's loan origination fee is waived (up to \$125). To get started, contact 4CORE, www.fourcore.org.

☛ Offices closed

In observance of Thanksgiving, LPEA offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs will be closed Thursday and Friday, Nov. 22 and 23. Happy Turkey Day to all! ☀

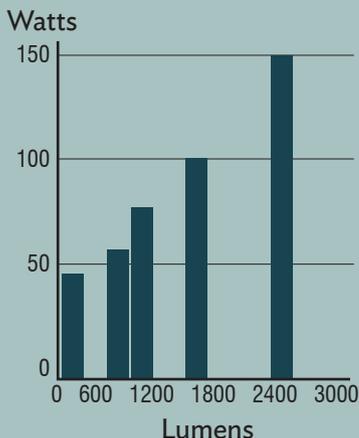
LUMENS VERSUS WATTS

How many lumens in a watt?

For years light bulbs have been selected by the watt, as consumers have come to understand over time the amount of light a typical 60 or 100 watt bulb puts out. But wattage tells only how much energy a bulb uses, not how bright it is. With the newer light bulbs designed to use less energy, wattage is no longer a reliable way to gauge a light bulb's "brightness." The new technology talk is "lumens." The new technology talk is "lumens."

Lumens literally measure brightness. A standard 60-watt incandescent bulb, for example, produces about 800 lumens of light. By comparison, a CFL bulb produces those same 800 lumens using less than 15 watts. Thus, when looking to buy a bulb that will produce the amount of light of a typical 60-watt bulb, now look for 800 lumens. Lumens can be used to compare the brightness of any bulb, be it LED, CFL or incandescent.

To start the mind-shift, a rough guideline is:



StoneAge no dinosaur

From its beginnings 33 years ago in co-founder and engineer Jerry Zink's garage, StoneAge Waterblast Tools has never shied away from innovation and creative solutions.

"I think we've been careful not to abuse the earth," says Zink who with John Wolgamott built the company first around rock drills but shifted their business to industrial cleaning with the demise of uranium mining. "We make tools that clean integral equipment without solvents. We are able to remove the waste from vessels, reactors, pipelines, and often put it back in the process because the water is a pretty benign substance."

The business has continued to grow and in 2007, StoneAge moved into its new, 30,000 square foot headquarters in Animas Air Park. Numerous energy efficiencies were included in construction. At issue, however, was the existing structure, which became StoneAge's shop. Once home to Victorian Millworks, it was built in 1982, and included lighting also of that vintage.

"We wanted to get light to these guys on these machines," says Ron Fidel, StoneAge facilities coordinator and inventory control, referencing the machinists and welders who create the precision parts with very close tolerances.

Enter LPEA's "lighting guy" Ray Pierotti who reviewed StoneAge's needs along with Rob Kirkpatrick of lighting supplier Service Concepts.

"I think the most important service that we provide is the education," says Pierotti. "Oftentimes contractors give just one choice for lighting, when in reality, there are a lot of different options – and the technology keeps changing."

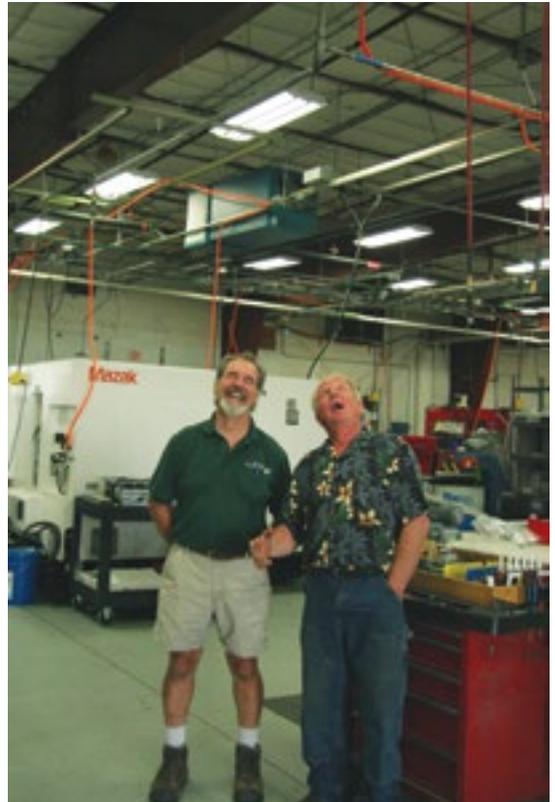
For StoneAge, Pierotti and Kirkpatrick suggested replacing the old metal halides and the long rows of aging T-12 fluorescents with high output T-8 fluorescents. Pierotti was also able to help with new LED lights in StoneAge's exterior entryway, which added extra light at a fraction of the cost. In all, some 240 fixtures were replaced, saving more than 7,300 watts of electricity.

"It was amazing to watch the transformation," says Fidel, explaining the installation was done over a series of weekends when the shop wasn't in use. "We've got more light with less bulbs, and it's much more even throughout the shop. It's almost like daylight in here."

LPEA was able to help StoneAge with a \$1,829.50 rebate, and estimates are that StoneAge will realize a positive return on their investment in approximately two years.

"We're anticipating that StoneAge will save more than \$6,000 a year on the electric bill," says Pierotti. "As with all our lighting retrofits, we've started monitoring StoneAge's account, and after accumulating several months of data we'll be able to tell them what this investment means to their company."

Learn more about StoneAge at www.stoneagetools.com. 



StoneAge's Ron Fidel and Jerry Zink admire the new energy efficient lighting that gives the company's shop the appearance of daylight.