

DECEMBER 2012

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970.247.5786 | [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop)

### Board of Directors:

Jerry McCaw, President - District 2  
Tom Compton, Vice President - District 2  
Ken Fox, Secretary - District 1  
Joe Wheeling, Treasurer - District 4  
Britt Bassett - District 3  
Jeff Berman - District 3  
Herb Brodsky - District 4  
Heather Erb - District 4  
Bob Formwalt - District 1  
Harry Goff - District 3  
Davin Montoya - District 2  
Lindon "Lin" Stewart - District 1

### Chief Executive Officer:

Greg W. Munro

### Next Board Meeting:

9 a.m. | Wednesday, December 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.

Save Your Energy  
**LPEA**  
La Plata Electric Association, Inc.  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# WATT'S UP

AT LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

## Price of power

BY GREG MUNRO, CEO

As I reported to you in October, the cost of electricity will be going up next year. We now have a better focus on exactly how much all of our rate classes will be affected.

Hopefully you have reviewed the proposed rates, which are scheduled to take effect Jan. 1, 2013. These have been published in our area newspapers and posted on our website, [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop). As you see, the rate increases are substantial and have the greatest impact on our established Time-of-Use (TOU) programs. We are personally notifying each of our TOU customers by mail to review the proper rate classification. It may be that TOU is no longer the best option for many of our customers who have helped in balancing our electricity load for so many years, and we're disappointed about that. Our ETS customers are also affected, so if you have an ETS unit and haven't received our rate change letter, please do contact LPEA.

The central reason for our rate increase and alteration of our rate structure is because our power supplier, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, has dramatically changed its rate structure. Plus Tri-State is facing increased costs for generating electricity.

Tri-State's new rate structure has been in the making for almost two years, during which time the distribution cooperatives, like LPEA, attempted to be involved to not only try to understand the proposed changes, but also to try to ensure that it is a "correct" type of rate structure. It has been a long and difficult task to this point, and as I write this, I am still uncertain if the rate structure is really "correct."

Your Board of Directors has also been very involved, and is still involved, in posing pointed questions to Tri-State about the new rate structure. Your Board has made it a 2013 goal to do the best it can to mitigate the effects of the Tri-State changes and its general rate increase. How we do that can take a variety of forms, and we will keep you informed as we move forward.

Due to the substantial changes in our rates, your Board of Directors has opted to hold a series of public information meetings before making a final decision on the rates at the December 19 board meeting. At these public meetings, LPEA staff will provide an overview presentation, and then your board members will answer questions and take your input.

The meetings will be held at 6:30 p.m. as follows:

- Dec 11th in Pagosa Springs at the Community Center
- Dec 12th in Bayfield at the Senior Center
- Dec 13th in Durango at LPEA Headquarters

Thank you for your time and effort to stay informed about your electric cooperative. Best to you all during this Holiday season. ⚙



## Solar to the schools...

The word is on  
the wire...  
Electricity  
rates are  
going up  
January 1,  
2013

*Let us explain why  
and learn more.*

Upcoming LPEA Rate  
Information Meetings with  
your Board of Directors:

**Tuesday**  
December 11, 2012  
6:30 p.m.  
Pagosa Springs  
Community Center  
451 Hot Springs Blvd.  
Pagosa Springs

**Wednesday**  
December 12, 2012  
6:30 p.m.  
Pine River Senior Center  
111 W. South St. | Bayfield

**Thursday**  
December 13, 2012  
6:30 p.m.  
LPEA Multipurpose Room  
45 Stewart St. | Durango

For further information:  
970.247.5786 or  
[www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop)

Small photovoltaic solar systems, 4 kW each, went up last month at Pagosa Springs Middle School and Miller Middle School in Durango thanks to members of La Plata Electric Association who contribute to the cooperative's Local Green Power Fund. Shaw Solar, based in Durango, won the bid for both installations following LPEA's request for proposals.

The LPEA Board of Directors' Policy 361 currently directs LPEA staff to organize and fund installation of systems on middle schools within the cooperative's service territory, as dollars are available. Bayfield Middle School received panels in June 2008 with Escalante Middle School (Durango) adding a system to power its greenhouse in August 2009. Ignacio Middle School is slated to receive a 4 kW system as part of a future school district remodel.

"The initial directive was to spread the donated funds around and introduce solar power to the broadest base possible in our service territory," says Mark Schwantes, LPEA manager of corporate services. "Middle schools were selected with the idea that the solar panels could be used to educate students about how electricity can be generated from the sun, while at the same time generating a small amount of power for the schools."

"When we received the invitation to bid on the PV systems for Pagosa and Miller, we knew we had to be part of it," says John Shaw. "Educating tomorrow's renewable energy users - at any age - is part of our core mission here at Shaw Solar. The on-line monitoring of the system's power production will be available both to students or any other interested member of our community."

The LPEA Local Green Power fund will invest \$33,200 for installation of the Pagosa and Miller middle school systems. Monies are generated when LPEA members opt to contribute to the Local Green Power Fund by designating that a minimum of 8 cents be added to their electric bill each month. Members can choose to contribute at any level above the minimum 8 cents per month, and according to Schwantes, many members do.

"Good things come in small packages," said Schwantes noting that the school systems will be net metered and connected to LPEA's system. "We now have 1,740 kW of solar power being generated locally by our members. Think small, but achieve big."

Since launching the local fund in 2008, some \$90,000 has been raised, with about 1,600 LPEA members participating in the voluntary program. To sign up for the Local Green Power Fund or for more information about Green Power, visit [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop). ☀



*A new 4-kW  
photovoltaic solar  
system is installed  
on the roof of  
Pagosa Springs  
Middle School.*

## McCarthy joins LPEA

Dennis McCarthy has joined the LPEA Operations Department as an Equipment Operator, based out of LPEA's Durango headquarters.

LPEA's Operations Department maintains LPEA's electrical distribution system, including regular maintenance and repair of equipment in the event of an outage. Its workers are members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, (Local IBEW 111 26A). McCarthy will assist LPEA's Journeyman Linemen in their work with utility line construction.

Born and raised in New Jersey, McCarthy was drawn west to the mountains, and settled in Durango in 2003, now with ranch property in the Oxford area.

"I've been in the electrical and construction fields for more than 12 years," says McCarthy, who most recently worked for Horizon Environmental and CT Electric. "In my background, I have experience getting things set up for the lineman to come in and do the final connection, so this is a natural fit. I'm happy for the opportunity to be here at LPEA."

Married to Aspen (Emmett McCarthy), of Andy's Photography by Aspen, McCarthy enjoys the region's outdoor activities including hunting, fishing and more, as well as spending time with his six-month-old son.

To learn more about employment opportunities at LPEA, visit [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop). ☀



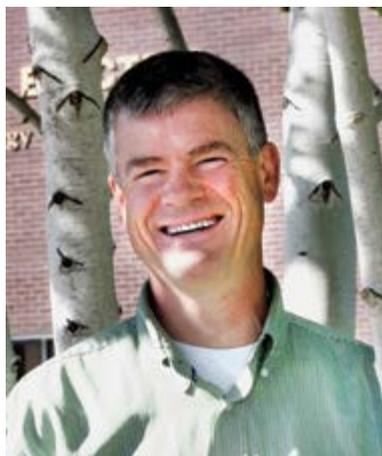
## Credentialed Director

LPEA Board Member and Treasurer Joe Wheeling has completed the required courses and earned his Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Wheeling was recognized for his commitment to education at NRECA's Region 7 and 9 meeting held recently in Salt Lake City.

"Education is the cornerstone of effective self-governance, and LPEA's members are best served by directors who are well-versed in democratic principles and who understand the industry and how this industry can move forward to meet changing demands," says Greg Munro, LPEA CEO. "Today's electric utility environment imposes new demands on electric cooperative directors, particularly increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and a working knowledge of the cooperative principles. We applaud Joe for his commitment."

The NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director, or CCD, program requires attendance and demonstrated understanding of the basic competencies contained in five core courses: Director Duties and Liabilities; Understanding the Electric Business; Board Roles and Relationships; Strategic Planning and Financial Decision Making.

The NRECA Region 7 and 9 meeting is one of a series of 2012 Regional Meetings convened by the NRECA to continue the association's grassroots policymaking process regarding national and state issues, which begins at the local co-op level and culminates at NRECA's Annual Meeting in February 2013. ☀



## LIVE WIRES

### DC Tour deadline

A reminder: 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. For more information and to download the application visit [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop).

### Project Merry Christmas at LPEA

LPEA will once again partner with Four Corners Broadcasting for the Project Merry Christmas Blanket Drive, Saturday, Dec. 15 at the co-op's Durango headquarters, 45 Stewart St. in Bodo Park. The FCB team will be in the LPEA parking lot, broadcasting live from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Community members dropping by with donations will be eligible for giveaways, and enjoy hot cocoa and cookies with Four Corners Broadcasting radio personalities. Blankets, clothing and toys are welcomed, as well as non-perishable food items and cash contributions.

### Offices closed

Happy Holidays to all! In observance of Christmas and New Year's, LPEA offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs will be closed December 24 and 25, 2012, and January 1, 2013. ☀

## NOT JUST ANOTHER CAMP

High school juniors are invited to participate in the Colorado Electric Education Institute Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp – an all-expense paid educational/leadership camp set for July 14-19, 2013 at Glen Eden Resort outside of Steamboat Springs, Colo. Deadline for application is Monday, Jan. 14, 2013.

“It’s not just another camp,” says Jeannie Bennett, public relations coordinator handling the application process. “This is an experience that will help students build for their future, and help them gain valuable leadership and interpersonal relationship skills that will benefit them in an increasingly competitive world. Plus it looks great on a resume.”

Bennett notes that “fun” is also part of the experience, and scheduled activities include a river trip and dance, a visit to Steamboat Springs and Fish Creek Falls, plus free time at the swimming pool.

LPEA will sponsor up to four high school juniors, one from each school district (Durango, Bayfield, Ignacio, Pagosa Springs). All area high school juniors who receive their electric power from LPEA are eligible, including home-schooled students.

Applications are available for download at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop), from high school counselors, or at the LPEA’s Durango and Pagosa Springs offices. For further camp information or questions, contact Bennett at [jbennett@lpea.coop](mailto:jbennett@lpea.coop) or 970.382.3505. ☀

## Director elections in 2013

Four seats on the LPEA board of directors will be up for election in 2013. Those who may be interested in running are advised to begin their education about the cooperative and understand obligations and fiduciary duties of the directors.

“We encourage those interested to familiarize themselves with the organization through the web site, [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop), and to attend regular board meetings,” says Greg Munro, CEO. “Traditionally the board meets the third Wednesday of each month beginning at 9 a.m.”

Election packets for those interested in running for a seat will be available March 4, 2013, at LPEA’s offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs. To be placed on the ballot, candidates must return completed petitions to either the Durango or Pagosa office by 1 p.m. on March 27.

Pursuant to LPEA bylaws, one-third of the director’s seats are up for election annually, one in each of LPEA’s four districts. Incumbent directors are Lindon Stewart (District 1 – Archuleta County), Tom Compton (District 2 – south and west La Plata County), Harry Goff (District 3 – Durango proper) and Herb Brodsky (District 4 – north and east La Plata County).

Director candidates must be cooperative member-owners and be permanent residents of the district for which they are seeking office. Ballots will be mailed to LPEA’s full membership in April, and the results tallied during the LPEA Annual Meeting, set for Saturday, May 11, 2013 at Sky Ute Casino, Ignacio. ☀

## Festival of Trees

Annually, businesses and organizations, including LPEA, support Community Connections in its holiday fundraiser, the “Festival of Trees,” which raises funds to support people with developmental disabilities. For 2012, partial proceeds from the event will also benefit the Civitan Club of Durango.

Each tree (and its gifts beneath) has a unique theme selected by the sponsoring business, and this year LPEA’s is a fun-filled and colorful offering highlighting “Winter Sports.”

LPEA employees Charlene Sandoval, Kelly Alsum, Jeannie Bennett, Linda Looman, and Suzy Bynum sourced the unique ornaments and decorated the tree, all finished with a Kermit the Frog winter hat as a tree topper.

“It’s such a positive, feel-good fundraiser that really gets everyone in the spirit for the holidays,” says Julie Dreyfuss, Community Connections president/CEO. “The Railroad Museum becomes a winter wonderland and the community’s financial support truly helps meet our mission to provide opportunities for children and adults with developmental disabilities lead healthy and fulfilling lives.”

Festival of Trees at the D&SNG Railroad Museum will be open to the public 1 to 6 p.m. Friday-Sunday, Nov. 30-Dec. 2 and Dec. 7-9. Entry to the event is free. ☀



*Santa’s little helpers decorating LPEA’s tree for Festival of Trees were (back LtoR) Jeannie Bennett, Linda Looman, Kelly Alsum, and (front) Suzy Bynum and Charlene Sandoval.*