

# WATT'S UP

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

AT LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION | Celebrating 75 years in 2014

MARCH 2013

## “Field of [electric] Dreams”

BY RON MEIER | MANAGER OF ENGINEERING | RMEIER@LPEA.COOP

“Build it and they will come.” This phrase is about creating something today with a vision for the future. Your cooperative was started years ago to bring the dream of electricity to literal fields in this region when no other entity would.

Today, however, we at LPEA don't build just based on a vision. We're much more pragmatic about keeping the electric dream alive. First we consider, is there enough electricity available? Secondly, can we deliver that power from the generators to our members in a safe and reliable manner?

When it comes to acquiring the electricity, we turn to Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association (TSGT). TSGT builds the generators and the large transmission lines that bring electricity to our area. To ensure TSGT is able to meet our needs, annually we submit our projections for power. We take into account our larger industrial members' projected use, in addition to forecasting what you will use.

Once we know that TSGT can plan for our requirements, we move to the next step: making sure our power lines are safe, reliable and have enough capacity to meet your needs. This entails a three-step process: Long Range Planning, Work Planning, and an Annual Capital Construction Budget.

We develop the Long Range Plan by forecasting where our members may want to have electricity service over the next 10 years. We look to our local government planners, have discussions with our larger industrial members, and review the past performance of the electrical system. We start to ask questions like “What if a development [size X] showed up here or there?” We then design the electrical system and projects to serve this development.

The Long Range Plan projects are all triggered by growth, and only when that growth actually starts to happen will we take a project to the next step, the Work Plan process and development of a Work Plan document. We are currently preparing a new 4-year Work Plan, which includes an Environmental Report. In addition to projects coming from the Long Range Plan, the Work Plan contains unforeseen projects, plus general maintenance like replacing aging equipment. Once a Work Plan is finalized, we submit it to the Rural Utility Services (RUS) as part as our loan applications to secure funding.

From the Work Plan, we place projects in the annual Capital Construction Budget. This is where plans are drawn up and we actually start building. Indeed, this is where the heavy lifting occurs to continue the vision that created our cooperative, the “field of electric dreams” that was launched nearly 75 years ago. While we plan theoretically on a “build it, they will come” basis, the reality is, we don't spend co-op members' money until we really know “they” are coming. It's the fiscally responsible and right thing to do. ⚙️



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### Next Board Meeting:

9 a.m. | Wednesday, March 20, 2013  
LPEA Headquarters, Durango

### Mission Statement:

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

### 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

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## Energy efficiency not just “For the Birds”

With a personal mission to connect people with nature, Kristi and Tom Streiffert want their nature shop, For the Birds, to also be as respectful of nature as possible.

“Almost everybody has had a delightful, refreshing experience with nature,” says Kristi Streiffert. “And when they come into the shop, it often reminds them of that.”

Nestled adjacent to Rotary Park in a building that once served as a shop and storage area for the railroad, For the Birds had the benefit of environmentally-conscious owners Janet and Matt Kenna prior to the Streifferts purchasing the business in Nov. 2011. The Kennas installed solar panels on the roof and new, energy efficient fluorescent lighting in the main shop area, plus had replaced incandescent bulbs with the energy-efficient bulb of choice at the time, CFLs. But the Streifferts wanted to take the next step.

For the Birds was accepted into the Resource Smart Business Program, in which LPEA participates. During the energy assessment, fixes for two very obvious energy-guzzlers emerged: replacing the old, flickering fluorescent lights in the back room/office and doing away with the electric space heater that kept the pipes in the bathroom from freezing.

With the bathroom, it was a matter of re-piping along the inside walls. In harmony with the “industrial look” of the building, it solved the problem for less than \$300.

LPEA Project Specialist Ray Pierotti worked with the Streifferts on the lighting – both the old fluorescents and replacing the CFL bulbs with LEDs.

“In the realm of sustainability, lighting is part of it,” says Kristi. “I asked Ray who I could get to do those [fluorescents] because the flickering was driving me crazy. He said call Durango Electric and they came out the next day.”

“Then we talked about what kind of lighting they wanted in the retail part of the store,” says Pierotti, referencing the large open area that features everything from bird houses and yard art to wind chimes and trail gear. “They selected the LEDs closest to daylight, which not every shop would want to do, but most of the merchandise is designed to be outside, so by selecting the daylight LEDs, they are able to bring the outside, in – and it looks great.”

With the lighting change-out, For the Birds has reduced electricity consumption by 1.37kW, for a savings of about \$300 a year. The change-out qualified for LPEA’s lighting rebates, so though they invested \$1,035 for materials and labor, the actual cost of the effort after the rebate was \$691. The resulting energy savings will mean that the Streifferts will see a return on investment in less than 2.5 years.

Learn more about For the Birds at [www.forthebirdsdurango.com](http://www.forthebirdsdurango.com). ⚙️



*By installing new “daylight” LED lights, For the Birds owners Tom and Kristi Streiffert help bring outdoor “lighting” into the nature shop.*

## DIRECTOR ELECTION PACKETS NOW AVAILABLE

Election packets for those interested in running for a seat on the LPEA Board of Directors are available as of Monday, Mar. 4, 2013, at LPEA offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs and on-line at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop). To be placed on the ballot, candidates must return completed petitions to the Durango office by 1 p.m. on Friday, Mar. 27.

Four seats on the LPEA board of directors are up for election. Incumbent directors are Lindon Stewart [District 1 – Archuleta County], Tom Compton [District 2 – south and west La Plata County], and Herb Brodsky [District 4 – north and east La Plata County]. Incumbent Director Harry Goff [District 3 – City of Durango] has announced that he will not seek re-election.

Those interested in running are advised to learn about the cooperative and understand obligations and fiduciary duties of the directors. Director candidates must be cooperative member-owners and be permanent residents of the district for which they are seeking office. ⚙️

## A new foreman

Veteran Journeyman Lineman and Serviceman Curt Marlatt has been promoted to Working Foreman at LPEA, based out of the Durango office.

In the electric utility industry, a working foreman performs supervisory responsibilities for managing all aspects of the construction, installation, maintenance, and repair of electrical power lines, electrical systems, fixtures, apparatus, and appliances, as well as inspecting new projects for quality control.

Another of the LPEA Operations team that has climbed the proverbial career ladder at the cooperative, Marlatt joined LPEA in 1994 as a Groundman, and proceeded to apprentice and earn his Journeyman Lineman in 1998. Since that time he worked on the line crews until moving to the Serviceman position in July 2011.

“LPEA opens its positions to existing employees, and as a result, we have many, many long-standing employees,” says Steve Gregg, manager of operations, who has been with LPEA for 40 years. “Once we have good employees like Curt, in whom we’ve invested a great deal in training, we want to keep them.”

Marlatt, who was raised Bayfield, now resides with his wife Sandie in the Bondad area. They have one daughter, Dustrie. ⚙️



## Celebrating service

Each year LPEA takes an opportunity to reward milestones in employment at the cooperative.

“More often than not, when someone comes to work for LPEA, they stay,” says Human Resources Director Linda Looman. “LPEA is one of the best places to work in La Plata and Archuleta counties.”

In 2013 Steve Gregg and Richard Archuleta celebrated 40 years with the cooperative, but John Branam, Jim Coloff and Bruce Crangle aren’t far behind with 35 years of service each.

Mark Schwantes joined LPEA 25 years ago, with 20 years being logged by Debbie Bass, Dennis Baxter, Craig Burnham, Ron Meier, CEO Greg Munro and Michael Wertenberger.

Jeannette Simpson celebrates 10 years with LPEA, and Jeremy Gurule, Joel Mann, Sue Maxwell, Jurgen Montgomery, Aaron Renner, Archie Ribera and Karen Sims have been with the co-op for five years.

To learn more about employment opportunities at LPEA, or to sign up for job email alerts, visit [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop). ⚙️



Manager of Engineering Ron Meier congratulates Staking Engineer Jim Coloff for 35 years of service to LPEA.

## CO-OP MEMBERS

Ask...



**Q:** I was wondering where LPEA was in being more proactive with supporting local renewable energy projects.

**A:** LPEA is continuing in its effort to develop an Alternative Energy Plan, and the Board of Directors have scheduled up coming sessions to help them understand the viable and legal options available to LPEA. Given the regulatory issues faced by electric cooperatives, and LPEA’s desire to be fair to all its members, launching local renewable energy projects is not as simple as it may seem. The board is looking at community solar gardens, virtual net metering, renewable energy credits and ultimately, how to work with Tri-State Generation and Transmission – LPEA’s primary power supplier. The LPEA board will prudently explore all options and in coming months approve policies for moving forward. ⚙️

## Students selected for Leadership Camp

Four area students have been selected by LPEA to attend the 2013 Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp. LPEA will sponsor Rachael Bennett [Durango High School], Eli Kopp-DeVol [Animas High School, Durango], Patrick Pistor [home-schooled, Bayfield] and Jessica Tanner [Connections Academy, Pagosa Springs] for the educational/ leadership experience at Glen Eden Resort, July 14-19, 2013.



Rachael Bennett

Annually, the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp brings together some 100 high school students selected by electric cooperatives in Colorado, Kansas and Wyoming to learn about the organization and operation of a cooperative, as well as to build leadership skills designed to assist students in meeting future challenges.

Rachael Bennett, nominated to attend the National Youth Leadership Forum and a US Achievement Academy award recipient in Foreign Language, looks forward to studying East Asian international relations with a goal of working in foreign diplomacy or as a translator for international businesses.



Eli Kopp-DeVol

In her winning essay on leadership, Bennett noted, "The characteristics of humbleness and humility would have to be involved, as well as giving credit to others... these traits seem to be the things that make a good, or rather great leader, for they help to create a person who doesn't put themselves first and someone who would seem to be more grounded."

Co-president of Student Council and volunteer with the Stillwater Foundation, Eli Kopp-DeVol plans to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering with a minor in music performance, as well as visit all world continents.



Patrick Pistor

Kopp-DeVol's winning essay summarized, "The best kind of leader... is one that can take a leadership role in a situation that neither they, nor anybody else, understand. It takes a special kind of person to show confidence and strength in a situation about which they may be unsure."

Active in computer programming and web and video game design, Patrick Pistor looks forward to college and post graduate studies in Computer Science.

As Pistor noted in his winning essay, "A good leader can change the way a person thinks, acts, and reacts to situations... Leaders can change people for the good, or for the bad. John C. Maxwell, a Christian author, sums up leadership by simply saying: Leadership is influence."



Jessica Tanner

Jessica Tanner is a budding writer and active 4-H club member who looks forward to becoming a published novelist.

Tanner concluded her winning essay that examined Abraham Lincoln with, "Every leader is different and a good, true leader knows how to do the right thing even when it is the hardest thing to do. I want to be a good leader; someone people can look up to even when times are hard - like Lincoln."

To learn more about the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, contact Jeannie Bennett, [jbennett@lpea.coop](mailto:jbennett@lpea.coop) or 970.382.3505. ⚙️

## CLEAN-ENERGY RESOURCES

A variety of new, clean-energy resources is available through the La Plata County Colorado State University Extension Office.

Residents and organizations can take advantage of the Home Energy Audit Loan program, or HEAL - kits that can be borrowed free for one week. Included are tools such as a thermal leak detector, a Kill-A-Watt power monitor and "flicker checkers."

Middle and high school teachers can borrow a more comprehensive clean-energy kit that includes mini solar panels and wind turbines; a variety of new technology light bulbs; a light meter and much more - all of which are designed to complement the CSU Extensions clean-energy curriculum.

Also available is an on-line, do-it-yourself home energy audit, including tools to help determine if a property is a good candidate for solar or wind power, plus videos, fact sheets and other resources.

For more information, visit [www.ext.colostate.edu/energy](http://www.ext.colostate.edu/energy) or call 970.382.6463. ⚙️