

# WATT'S UP

AT LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

JANUARY 2014

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### Board of Directors:

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### Chief Executive Officer:

Greg W. Munro

### Next Board Meeting:

9 a.m. | Wednesday, January 15, 2014  
LPEA Headquarters, Durango

### Mission Statement:

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



## Investing in the future

BY JEANNIE BENNETT | PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR | [JBENNETT@LPEA.COOP](mailto:JBENNETT@LPEA.COOP)

LPEA's "Commitment to Community" is evident in the investment we've made since 1987 in annually designating funds from the Unclaimed Capital Credit account for our scholarship program. This allows four area high school seniors an opportunity to continue their education anywhere in the United States.

A key component of LPEA's scholarship program is that the recipients for either scholarship – the LPEA or the John Voelker Memorial scholarships – are encouraged to pursue a degree that relates to the utility industry – and an electric cooperative needs people from practically every discipline.

For many, if not all of our scholarship recipients, we believe that there is truth in these words by Plato, "When you feel grateful, you become great, and eventually attract great things."

For 2003 Bayfield High School graduate, LPEA Scholarship recipient Kim Piccoli, she realized her life-long dream of living and working in Australia, following graduation from Fort Lewis College.

Shanti Johnson, a Pagosa Springs High School graduate and 2007 LPEA Scholarship recipient, earned a B.A. in political science from Fort Lewis. She has been able to marry her love for theater and passion for world politics by landing a prestigious internship with West Improv Theatre and the Actors' Gang Theatre, in Los Angeles.

LPEA Scholarship recipient Ben Southworth, 2009 Durango High School graduate, finished his undergraduate work at Dartmouth College this past spring, and is currently enrolled in the accelerated PhD program at CU Boulder.

Though some of our graduates have expanded their horizons and left the area, we are proud to report that four of our LPEA Scholarship recipients have actually been embraced within the LPEA family and call this area home.

Raised in Durango, 1990 LPEA Scholarship recipient Dan Harms was the first of our scholarship recipients to be hired after graduating from Colorado State University. A Professional Engineer [PE], Dan was hired as a staff engineer, and has worked for LPEA since 1994.

Following suit were 1993 and 2000 Pagosa Springs High School graduates Mindy [Farrow] Potter and Jake Wills. Mindy earned her degree in computer science from Fort Lewis, and worked at LPEA until last month. Wills, who was hired right after graduating from CSU with a degree in engineering, currently works as a staff engineer.

One of our most recent employees is 2006 LPEA scholarship recipient Rachel [Lasiewicz] Gilman, a graduate of Durango High School and FLC, hired in 2012 as our controller. Rachel is the youngest controller LPEA has ever employed.

In 2014, LPEA will award four new scholarships, worth \$76,000, to students graduating from the high schools within our service territory. Additional information is on page 3 of this newsletter.

For further information, please don't hesitate to contact me at 970.382.3505. ☀



## LIVE WIRES

**High school juniors remember:**

All high school juniors within LPEA's service territory (including home-school students) are reminded that the application deadline is Monday, Jan. 6, 2014 for both the National Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington D.C. – the trip of a lifetime [set for June 12 – 19, 2014], and the Colorado Electric Education Institute Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp – an all-expense paid educational/leadership camp [set for July 13 – 18, 2014] at Glen Eden Resort near Steamboat Springs. Visit [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop) for more information and to download the applications. Direct additional questions to Jeannie Bennett at 970.382.3505.

**Solar panels don't work in an outage**

LPEA wants to remind members who have solar panels interconnected with LPEA's system that the PV system will not function in the event of an outage. Also, electricity is not produced if the panels are covered with snow. New "snow brooms" for solar panels are available and could be a good investment.

**LPEA offices closed**

LPEA offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs will be closed Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2014 to celebrate New Year's Day, and on Monday, Jan. 20, 2014 in observance of Martin Luther King Day. ⚡

## Shining a (LED) light on vehicles

Likely, when most people visit a car dealership, they're not thinking about the lighting. In truth, however, lighting – indoors and out – is one of the most important – and costly – aspects of the business.

Beyond providing favorable lighting for employees (and optimum display of the vehicles), security lighting is vital in the outdoor lots. So when the dealership is Durango Motor Co. on Carbon Junction in Durango, that means a lot of security lighting (and electricity) is required. When the dealership learned of the opportunity to save energy and dollars by changing out their lighting to energy efficient LEDs AND receive rebates from LPEA for doing so, Durango Motor Co. jumped on it.

"We believe this is the largest lighting change-out we have had in our service territory," says Ray Pierotti, project specialist who worked with Tom Ondrako, controller, Durango Motor Co. and Rob Shockley of Durango Electrical Services on the project. "They changed out everything and reduced their electricity usage by nearly 55kW, and included some advanced lighting controls that are even more beneficial."



New high bay LEDs at Durango Motor Co. presents vehicles in a whole new "light."



LPEA Project Specialist Ray Pierotti (right) presents rebate checks totaling more than \$29,000 to Mike Aus of Durango Motor Co.

For example, the new high bay LEDs in the main showroom employ daylight harvesting to save energy. Light levels change depending on concentration of natural light from the expansive showroom windows.

"Many of the old lamps were often burned out causing increased labor and expenses," says Ondrako, noting because the ceiling is so high, changing bulbs was a significant task. "The summer air conditioning costs will be reduced because LEDs produce very little heat. Plus, the vehicles just look better with full light exposure."

The street/pole lights in the parking areas/outdoor lots were changed from 1000 watt metal halides to 300 watt LEDs. The LEDs produce more lumens [light] than the previous lamps, and will likely last more than 10 years.

"The outdoor lighting also has occupancy sensors with dimming capability," adds Pierotti. "When someone enters the area, the lights go to full power. But when there's no activity, dimming the lamps conserves electricity and saves money."

LPEA recently presented Mike Aus, Durango Motor Co. dealer/operator, with five rebate checks totaling \$29,504.00, which helped pay for the project. According to Pierotti, the company will begin to realize a full payback, thanks to the energy reduction, in 2.5-3 years.

Businesses interested in learning more about the advantages of changing out lighting to LEDs can contact Pierotti at [rpierotti@lpea.coop](mailto:rpierotti@lpea.coop) or 970.382.7770. ⚡

## College scholarships available

To assist high school seniors and their parents with the application process for college scholarships available through LPEA, the cooperative will host a special Open House, Thursday, Jan. 23, 2014, 5:30-7 p.m. at LPEA's Bodo Park headquarters [45 Stewart St., Durango].

LPEA staff members will be on-hand to answer any questions. Copies of all applications will be available, and no r.s.v.p. is required.

All high school seniors in La Plata and Archuleta counties, including home school students, who receive their electricity from LPEA, are eligible to apply for the variety of funding opportunities. Deadline for application is Monday, Mar. 3, 2014. Attendance at the Open House is not a requirement of application.

LPEA directly offers the LPEA Scholarship [four-year] and LPEA/John Voelker Memorial Scholarship [two-year], per LPEA Board of Directors policies 411/416, respectively. Specifically, LPEA will award two, four-year scholarships [140 credit hours] for students attending any college or university beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year. LPEA will cover tuition, books and fees, up to \$20,000 over four years, given that the students maintain minimum qualifications.

The LPEA/John Voelker Memorial Scholarship recognizes two students attending accredited vocational schools, technical schools or junior college. This two-year scholarship covers fees, books, tools and supplies up to \$6,000 over two years per student.

Funds for the LPEA and LPEA/John Voelker Memorial Scholarships come from LPEA's unclaimed Capital Credits. Each year, LPEA endeavors to find "missing" members who are due a share of retired Capital Credits. Those funds unable to be returned to members are then put back into the community – in this case, into college scholarships.

Additional affiliated rural electric scholarships/awards offered by Tri-State Generation and Transmission and Basin Electric Power Cooperative are also available.

For further information and to download applications, visit [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop) or contact Jeannie Bennett at 970.382.3505, or [jbennett@lpea.coop](mailto:jbennett@lpea.coop). ☀

## CURT MARLATT IS NEW LINE SUPERINTENDENT



Curt Marlatt has been promoted to Line Superintendent at LPEA. In his new position, Marlatt is responsible for all contract tree trimming groups and maintenance of LPEA's underground and overhead lines in La Plata and Archuleta counties.

Another of the LPEA Operations team who has climbed the proverbial career ladder at the cooperative, Marlatt joined LPEA in 1994 as a Groundman, and apprenticed and earned his Journeyman Lineman in 1998. Since that time he worked the line crews until moving to the Serviceman position in July 2011. He had been promoted to the supervisory position of Working Foreman early in 2013.

"LPEA opens its positions to existing employees, and as a result, we have many long-standing employees," says Steve Gregg, manager of operations. "Once we have good employees like Curt, we want to keep them." ☀

## LPEA supports 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.

Each tree [and its gifts beneath] has a unique theme selected by the sponsoring business, and this year LPEA's was a fun-filled offering highlighting "Memories & Traditions."

"We tried to incorporate the memories we make for Christmas and the traditions we pass along to our families," says Charlene Sandoval who headed up the committee that included employees Laura Rome, Jeannie Bennett, Suzy Bynum, Kelly Alsum, Karen Sims and Linda Looman.

Gifts under the tree to make and keep memories included, picture frames, camera, photo albums, scrapbooking supplies and more. The committee also created "homemade" ornaments using Fruit Loops and macaroni – a tradition in schools when making holiday gifts for parents.

"The committee had a great time shopping for the gifts and we hope the winner had some wonderful memories for this year's Christmas," says Sandoval. ☀



ENERGY  
EFFICIENCYTIP OF  
THE  
MONTH

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, almost one-quarter of employed Americans do some or all of their work from a home office. With rising energy costs, it pays to take steps to make your home office more energy efficient.

Start by helping your computer save money by utilizing its energy saving settings. For example, have your computer go to the sleep mode when it's not in use, instead of using a screen saver.

Also, use a power strip or smart strip to prevent electronics from drawing electricity when not in use. Plug all electronics in your office, including your computer, printer and chargers, into a power strip and simply switch off the electric current when you finish working.

A smart strip is similar to a power strip but it automatically cuts off the electric current to electronics depending on the design. Look into timer-equipped strips, which are programmable. Occupancy sensing strips shut down after detecting no use after a period of time. And current sensing strips have the ability to cut or add power to a device when sensing whether a device is powered off or on. ⚙️

## LPEA to miss Ben Cordova

For the last several months, Manager of Lines and Services Ben Cordova has been smiling a lot – Cordova retires on Jan. 2, 2014.

Though he will be missed at LPEA, employees agree that he deserves to be happy, relaxed and proud after working for 42 years in the electric utility industry – and almost 35 of those at LPEA.

Raised in Durango, Cordova joined Western Colorado Power Co. in 1972 as a laborer, first temporary and then full time. He then went on to serve as a plant operator at the Ames Hydro plant near Telluride.

Interested in advancing in the industry, Cordova entered the lineman apprentice program and earned his Journeyman Lineman from Utah Power & Light, and for five years worked the line crews for the utility.

"Then I had an opportunity to come back here to Durango," says Cordova. "I worked as a Journeyman here until 1994, when I was promoted to Assistant Line Superintendent."

Cordova continued to rise within the Operations team, serving next as Line Superintendent before his promotion to Manager of Lines and Services in 2005. In his management position, Cordova has overseen LPEA's line crews and superintendents and helped ensure optimum maintenance of the system, construction and safety of personnel.

"It's been great," says Cordova of his experience at LPEA. "I couldn't have asked for anything better."

Now Cordova plans to "wear out all my toys" [the ATV, boat, camper, etc.], do a little traveling and spend more time with his family, including four grandchildren.

"Benny has been a tremendous asset to LPEA and he will be missed," says Greg Munro, CEO. "At the same time, though, we support him as he pursues new adventures. We wish him all the best." ⚙️



## Moustaches for "Movember"

Network Administrator Drew Timmerman was the "landslide" winner in LPEA's "Movember" competition – a local version of a global non-profit.

During November each year, Movember is responsible for the sprouting of millions of moustaches on men's faces around the world. Through the power of the Mo, funds and awareness are raised to combat prostate and testicular cancer and mental health challenges.

Journeyman Lineman Jerry Sutherlin organized LPEA's competition among LPEA's Mo Bros (with support from the LPEA Mo Sistas). Donations were accepted for the cause, with the Mo winner to receive half the proceeds for his effort. Participants began November clean-shaven, and LPEA employees voted for the best Mo at the end of the month. Timmerman took the crown.

"I had to beg him to enter because he said he couldn't grow a moustache," says Sutherlin. "And with his kindness and generosity, he donated his winnings back to Movember.com. My thanks go out to all who participated. We raised \$350 for a great cause!"

Sutherlin plans to reprise the competition in November 2014. Learn more about Movember at <http://us.movember.com>. ⚙️



Drew Timmerman,  
winning-Mo and  
no-Mo