

# WATT'S UP

AT LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY 2014

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### Board of Directors:

Davin Montoya, President - District 2  
Heather Erb, Vice President - District 4  
Ken Fox, Secretary - District 1  
Joe Wheeling, Treasurer - District 4  
Britt Bassett - District 3  
Jeff Berman - District 3  
Tom Compton - District 2  
Bob Formwalt - District 1  
Mark Garcia - District 1  
Jerry McCaw - District 2  
Michael Rendon - District 3  
Jack D. Turner - District 4

### Chief Executive Officer:

Greg W. Munro

### Next Board Meeting:

9 a.m. | Wednesday, February 19, 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.



## Maintaining a safe culture

BY STEVE GREGG | MANAGER OF OPERATIONS | [SGREGG@LPEA.COOP](mailto:SGREGG@LPEA.COOP)

We surprised our employees last fall.

To be fair, early on last year I did warn them we would be having a group of safety inspectors coming in sometime, but I didn't say when. It's part of our on-going effort to keep safety as top-of-mind with all LPEA employees. Be safe all the time.

The Observation Team was from the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) sponsored by the Colorado Rural Electric Association (CREA). RESAP is dedicated to improving employee and public safety, commitment to Regulatory Compliance, and Loss Control. We've supported the various aspects of the RESAP program for years, but this fall the Observation Team visited LPEA's Durango and Pagosa Springs offices, and even our substations, to take a close look at our operations and facilities, and identify areas with safety concerns, as well as point out those where LPEA maintains safety excellence.

I'm happy to say, that even though only several of us in management knew when the RESAP folks were coming in, the resulting report revealed few problematic areas.

The Observation Team looked at 14 general areas ranging from our safety equipment, vehicles, and pole yard and outside storage, to administrative offices, personal tools, and safety procedures. The team also went out in the field and interviewed crew members individually – including our apprentice linemen – and lauded our men for their knowledge and professionalism.

The safety areas that called for improvement are simple to take care of. For example, we need to check dates on items in our first aid kits, improve cord configurations in offices, update our educational materials, do some hard hat and safety glasses replacements, check expiration dates on the eye wash, make sure all the EXIT lights are in working order, and standardize our fire extinguisher tags.

In January we began addressing the aforementioned items and others in the three categories where RESAP had concerns, walking through each piece with our crews, plus we will review/update our Safety Manual, Standard Operating Procedures and Emergency Response Plan. We also intend to continue to maintain the high performance standard in the remaining 11 categories reviewed. Sometime this year, the Observation Team will return for a follow-up inspection.

As part of our standard procedure, every month LPEA dedicates a day to safety training, review of procedures and refresher training on the use of equipment. We will expand this in 2014. It's one of our most valuable tools to keep everyone sharp and alert to changing conditions in the electrical system enabling LPEA to respond safely and efficiently to our members' needs and "keep those lights on."

Needless to say, safety is important in any industry, but given the natural dangers inherent in the electric industry, we do go above and beyond to build that "safe" culture and make sure we provide a safe environment for the public and our employees. ⚙️



## LIVE WIRES

**Scholarship Deadline:**

High school seniors within LPEA's service territory (including home-school students) are reminded that the application deadline is Monday, Mar. 3, 2014 for all college scholarships available through LPEA. 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 or [jbennett@lpea.coop](mailto:jbennett@lpea.coop).

**Board Election Packets:**

On Mar. 17, LPEA members interested in running for the LPEA Board of Directors can pick up the Director Election Packets at LPEA's Durango or Pagosa Springs office, or download information at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop).

**LED rebate program updated:**

LPEA's rebate program for LED light bulbs has been amended for 2014 – no longer do bulbs have to be marked Energy Star to receive up to a \$10 per bulb rebate. All other aspects of the rebate program still apply, including submission of the original receipt of purchase. Learn more about the program and download the application at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop).

**LPEA offices to be closed:**

LPEA offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs will be closed Monday, Feb. 17, 2014 to honor President's Day. ☀

February 20

**Renewable generation meeting set**

With continued interest in local, renewable energy production, LPEA will host a new, informational Renewable Energy Generation meeting, Thursday, Feb. 20, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The up-coming session, to be held in the multi-purpose room at LPEA's Bodo Park headquarters [45 Stewart Street], Durango, is free and open to all members, including professional solar installers.

"The LPEA board of directors has revised its policy covering Renewable Energy Credits, or RECs, to support and encourage more local renewable installations," says Mark Schwantes, manager of corporate services [See article below]. "Also, Solarize La Plata is working to facilitate solar installations for community members, and we will feature that program at our meeting as well."

As lunch will be served, reservations are required for the Renewable Energy Generation meeting. To RSVP or for further information on the event, contact Sue Maxwell at 970.382.7170 or [smaxwell@lpea.coop](mailto:smaxwell@lpea.coop). To learn about future events, sign up to request email alerts at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop). ☀

*\$350 per kW installed***Renewable Energy Credits increased**

LPEA members who install renewable energy systems (up to 10 kilowatts) can receive, for systems installed in 2014, Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) of \$350 per kW from LPEA.

Renewable generation systems covered by LPEA Board of Directors Policy 359, which defines Renewable Generation and Environmental Attributes, include solar photovoltaic, wind and hydropower generating facilities. To qualify, systems must also be net metered, inspected and approved by LPEA.

The LPEA Board of Directors voted to incentivize local installation of net metered, renewable generation by increasing the \$300 per kW REC payment from LPEA. LPEA recoups these dollars from Tri-State Generation and Transmission, which purchases the environmental attributes from these systems from LPEA.

The extra \$50 per kW will be granted from LPEA's Local Renewable Generation Fund, to which members have the option to contribute in support local renewable generation. In previous years this fund has helped finance solar panels on the middle schools in La Plata and Archuleta counties.

"The amount that Tri-State has been able to pay our members for the RECs has been steadily dropping over the years, due to the market for RECs declining," says Greg Munro, CEO, who praised Tri-State for offering to purchase the renewable attributes when most other markets in the country have disappeared. "The LPEA Board has a commitment to more local, distributed generation, so increasing the amount per kW for the RECs is hoped to encourage more LPEA members to look into installing renewable systems."

Residential or commercial, grid-tied installations located within the LPEA service territory are all eligible for the REC payments. The LPEA contract for purchasing the renewable attributes spans 10 years, but at this juncture, members receive a full, one-time REC payment up front.

At this writing, LPEA has already received paperwork for more than 20 new net metered, solar installations within its service territory. Last year, 95 systems were installed, bringing the total to 475 completed net metered solar systems in La Plata and Archuleta counties.

The complete Board of Directors Policy 359 is available for review at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop). ☀

## Brad Fuqua new IT Specialist

Brad Fuqua has been named Engineering IT Specialist at LPEA, joining the technology team and filling the position formerly held by Mindy Potter, who relocated to Texas.

Fuqua comes to LPEA after 11 years at Milsoft Utility Solutions, the maker of engineering, operations and customer service software. Based in Abilene, Tex., Fuqua first handled all aspects of marketing for Milsoft, but moved into technical support working with utilities across the country on the company's Outage Management System (OMS).

"I first worked with LPEA in 2009 when we installed the outage management system," says Fuqua. "Over the past five years, I've enjoyed a positive working relationship with Mindy Potter and other LPEA employees, and I am thrilled to now join the LPEA team."

In his new position with LPEA, Fuqua assists the Engineering Department with the variety of technology tools utilized to plan, design and maintain the reliability of the electrical distribution system, including on-going enhancements to the OMS system, which facilitates the restoration of power in the event of an outage.

Born and raised in Paducah, Ky., Fuqua originally moved to Abilene to attend Abilene Christian University. After completing his BA, his focus changed and he earned a Master's in digital media, which unlocked his interest in all aspects of technology.

"It's great here," he says of LPEA. "I'm thankful for the opportunity to serve our members while facing the exciting challenge of learning new technologies." ☀



## DELAY FOR SOME MARATHON WATER HEATERS

Due to delays in manufacturing, LPEA is experiencing a shortage of some models of the popular Marathon Water Heaters sold through the cooperative. Demand has outpaced production. Because water heating is 15 to 25 percent of a residential electric bill, purchasing a Marathon to save electricity and dollars has been popular with LPEA members.

Marathon Water Heaters are lauded for their energy efficiency. Free of ozone depleting gasses, Marathons have four inches of insulation surrounding the tank to preserve loss of heat. On the exterior, Marathons have unique, award winning construction in the world of water heaters, including a seamless plastic tank that results in a product that is stronger, of higher quality and longer lasting.

Members who install a new Marathon water heater or replace an existing electric water heater with a Marathon are eligible to receive a \$100 rebate from LPEA.

Marathons are manufactured in 30, 40, 50, 75, 85 and 105 gallon capacities. For further information on Marathon Water Heaters and immediate and future availability of specific sizes, contact Suzy Bynum [970.382.3506] in Durango and Debbie Bass [970.382.7722] in Pagosa Springs. ☀

## Peacock, Cochrane promoted

Veteran LPEA Journeyman Linemen Ryan Peacock and Bret Cochrane have been promoted with the cooperative's Operations Team. Peacock moves into the Line Crew Foreman position, leaving an opportunity for a new Serviceman, to which Cochrane has been named.

Born in Ignacio, Peacock attended Durango High School then worked in construction for four years, during which time he began his Lineman apprenticeship. He joined LPEA in 1998 and completed his Journeyman Lineman certification in 2000.

For six years Peacock worked the line crews until taking on the Serviceman job, which he has held for eight years. In his new position as Foreman, he returns to working with the line crews.

"I'm one of the four men who make up a hot crew," says Peacock. "I make sure they know what they're doing, and make sure they're doing it safely."

Cochrane is moving from the line crews to Serviceman where he will focus 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 power restoration.

A native of southwest Kansas, Cochrane joined LPEA in 2000 from Pioneer Electric Cooperative, where he apprenticed and earned his Journeyman Lineman.

"After 10 years I had the opportunity to come to LPEA, and I've worked on the line crew until now becoming a Serviceman," says Cochrane, who appreciates the cooperative model. "I've worked for power companies for the past 24 years. I like the way they do business." ☀



Peacock



Cochrane

## DETERMINE IF TIME-OF-USE IS STILL FOR YOU

It's been one year – is Time-of-Use still for you?

In January 2013, LPEA instituted a new Time-of-Use program, with new times and rates for “off peak” energy usage. This was prompted because of changes to products and services offered by Tri-State Generation & Transmission, which provides electricity to LPEA.

“LPEA knew at the time that the new program would not be optimal for many of our Time-of-Use members who had been switching their heavy energy usage to off-peak times, as the only off-peak hours are now at night,” says Suzy Bynum, energy management advisor. “So we instituted our Guarantee that for one year you wouldn't pay the higher rate.”

During this past year, the bills of members on the regular TOU program were calculated at both the TOU rate and the regular residential rate, and the lesser rate was billed. It is now time for members to see which rate is actually better for them. Members can review their energy usage on LPEA's “Smart Hub” accessed on the LPEA homepage at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop).

“If Time-of-Use is working, then great,” says Bynum. “But if the regular residential rate is lower, we want to know and will change out your meter.”

For further information, contact Bynum at 970.382.3506. ⚙️

## Galleries in a fresh new “light”

As Durango continues to develop as an important “art” town, the gallery owners are also taking steps to make sure their artists' works are seen in the best “light.” And they're saving considerable energy and dollars at the same time. They're changing out their lights to LEDs.

“Almost all the art galleries in Downtown Durango have changed out their lights to LEDs,” says Ray Pierotti, LPEA's lighting specialist. “Lighting is crucial in art gallery. Not only do galleries need good lighting to illuminate the art, they usually need a greater number of lights, which can mean electricity is a large part of the overhead.”

With the advances in LED technology, galleries have a myriad of options to cast just the right “glow” on the exhibited pieces. Plus, combining the energy savings with the lower wattage of LEDs and the LPEA rebate of up to \$10 per new LED bulb purchased, the up-front expenditure has been eased.

“Another benefit of changing out the lights in a retail operation like a gallery is that LEDs last a long time,” says Pierotti. “Even with the extended hours the downtown galleries are open, they still can expect to see eight-plus years before its time to change them out.”

With every lighting change-out, LPEA estimates the energy and dollar savings, and the return on investment [ROI]. According to Pierotti, the galleries are realizing very positive stats. For example, all the lights at Diane West Jewelry and Art were replaced with LEDs, reducing wattage a total of 5,183 watts, saving \$2,201 on the electric bill each year. The gallery will realize an ROI in six or seven months.

Toh-Atin is reducing wattage by 4,173 watts, will reduce the electric bill by more than \$2,200 and an ROI of one year is expected. Sorrel Sky, Azul, Earthen Vessel and the Durango Arts Center are all enjoying similar benefits.

“Every first Thursday evening of every month the galleries have the First Thursdays Art Walk,” says Pierotti. “When you visit these galleries on the evening Art Walk, really look at the lighting. You'll be amazed.”

Contact Pierotti for further information on commercial lighting change-outs, 970.382.7770 or [rpierotti@lpea.coop](mailto:rpierotti@lpea.coop). ⚙️



*Diane West enjoys the LEDs that have put her Diane West Jewelry and Art in a fresh new light.*

## CO-OP MEMBERS

# Ask...



**Q:** I'm trying to replace all my bulbs with energy efficient bulbs. Does a CFL work for an oven light?

**A:** NO! Never install a light bulb in the oven that isn't made for high heat, especially a CFL. Instead of heating a filament until white-hot to produce light like an incandescent bulb, a CFL contains a gas that produces ultraviolet light when excited by electricity. CFL bulbs use less energy, but this technology doesn't stand a chance against a 400 degree oven. A co-op member of Empire Electric in Cortez did put a CFL in the oven, and it was quite the melted mess to scrape out. The hardy, 40-watt oven lights are here to stay, at least for now. ⚙️