

WATT'S UP

AT LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

JULY 2014

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Greg W. Munro

Mission Statement:

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

Statement of Non-discrimination

LPEA is an equal opportunity provider and employer M/F/Disability/Veteran. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call [866] 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax [202] 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.



For YOU: Keeping credit safe

BY DENNIS SVANES | CFO | DSVANES@LPEA.COOP

Discussing billing, credit cards and security is probably about as dull of an article as can be perceived, so I apologize. The truth is, however, you, our members need to know this, so please take a moment and suffer through a bit of dry editorial.

In today's world, most people use credit/debit cards extensively because they're more convenient than carrying cash or writing checks. One issue, however, is that thieves want to gain access to your card number. To keep financial information secure, the credit card industry has created an entity called the PCI Security Standards Council (PCI), including compliance rules by which everyone who accepts credit/debit card payments must abide.

LPEA has been implementing these PCI Compliance procedures as we are able. Some of the requirements have necessitated a change in our software, but most have

been processes – how we “physically” handle your card information. As part of this, our Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) have not taken a payment over the phone since 2010. We have an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system in place to take those payments. It may seem silly, but when you call in and want to make a payment with a credit/debit card, our CSRs will connect you with the IVR system. We're avoiding any impropriety with your card.

Additionally, we can no longer take any credit card information via mail, FAX or over the phone (except via the IVR) for any purpose – even to just update the expiration date on a card. Simply put, when it comes to credit/debit cards – if there's a possibility that we can see it, hear it, or have it hit our internal network, we could be cited.

To handle your account securely on-line with credit/debit cards, please go to our website (www.lpea.coop) and click on “SmartHub” to setup payments, auto-payments, and view usage and previous bills. SmartHub is also a free App for both Apple and Android mobile devices.

We still accept credit/debit card payments in person. The “swipers” we use are in the process of being upgraded to an even more secure system, and your credit card never leaves your sight. This may all seem to be over-kill, but it's for your protection. Here at LPEA, we take the security of our member's information very seriously.

To summarize, the simplest way to pay your bill is to sign up for auto-pay online. The payments are never early and never late. This summer we will also install a 24-hour kiosk at our Durango drive-through, offering you even more options for paying your bill.

We do, of course, still accept checks by mail, and our CSRs still staff the front desk and do love to visit with our members, so please don't hesitate to come in and say “hello.” ☀



LIVE WIRES

Next Board of Directors Meeting

The next meeting of the LPEA Board of Directors is set for Wednesday, July 16, 2014, 9 a.m. at LPEA headquarters in Durango. The agenda will be posted 10 days in advance of the meeting at www.lpea.coop.

Impacted by TOU rate change? Tell the PUC

LPEA Members interested in informing the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) of the impact Tri-State's new rate structure [for Time-of-Use] has had on their family or business can write a letter to the PUC at 1560 Broadway, Suite 250, Denver, CO 80202. If writing, be sure to reference the PUC Case Number: 13F-0145E. Information on the complaint is at www.lpea.coop.

Interested in investing in a Solar Garden?

LPEA is supporting development of six Solar Garden projects in La Plata County. To participate, contact the developers directly. A list is posted at www.lpea.coop.

LPEA offices closed for 4th of July

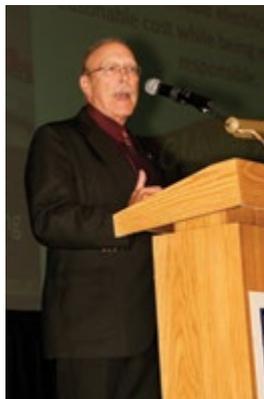
LPEA's offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs will be closed on Friday, July 4, 2014, in honor of Independence Day. 🌞

LPEA members celebrate 75 years

In celebration of the 75th Anniversary of La Plata Electric Association, some 350 community members, ranging from toddlers to octogenarians convened at the Community Concert Hall at Fort Lewis College on Thursday, May 23, 2014 for the Annual Meeting. The count for registered voters in attendance was 272, which exceeded the number needed for a quorum.

Members in attendance enjoyed a sumptuous array of appetizers from Kennebec Café while enjoying the music of singer/songwriter Tim Sullivan and Narrow Gauge outside in the portico area. The weather complied for an enjoyable pre-meeting event.

For the meeting, LPEA Board President Davin Montoya served as the master of ceremonies for the event, which included his report on the state of the cooperative, as well as reports from Treasurer Joe Wheeling on LPEA's financial standing, attorney Barry Spear covering the status of LPEA's PUC complaint against Tri-State Generation and Transmission for its discriminatory rate structure, Kent Singer, executive director of the Colorado Rural Electric Association, and Mike McInnis, new general manager and executive vice president of Tri-State.



CEO Greg Munro addressed the assembly for the final year. Photo: Karen Skelly

CEO Greg Munro also offered his report, and a touching, nearly tearful thank you, as he will be retiring as of Aug. 1, 2014, so this Annual Meeting was his last.

In special celebration of its 75th Anniversary, LPEA welcomed Ted Case as keynote speaker, who offered an overview of his book *Power Plays*, which explores the defining moments in the relationship between electric co-ops and the U.S. presidents throughout the decades.

Board of Director election results were also announced, with incumbents Jeff Berman [District 3] and Joe Wheeling [District 4] retaining their seats. Bob Lynch [District 1] is a newly-elected board member.

In accordance with LPEA's bylaws, annually one seat in each of LPEA's four districts comes up for election. This year in District 2, incumbent director Davin Montoya was the only nominee, thus he retains his seat.

Out of the 23,092 ballots mailed, 5,801 LPEA members cast votes for an approximately 25 percent return.

In a very close decision in District 1, Archuleta County, 1,767 of the approximately 7,800 LPEA members returned ballots with incumbent Ken Fox receiving 874 votes and challenger Lynch receiving 893.

In District 3, the City of Durango, incumbent Berman received 1,070 votes with challenger Bill Waters receiving 988 votes. District 3 includes approximately 7,500 voters.

Incumbent Wheeling received 1,170 votes to challenger Alison Dance's 806 in District 4, which covers north and east La Plata County and includes approximately 7,750 eligible voters. 🌞



Billing Manager Cindy Straight (L) prepares Mark and Lisa Schwantes to register members for the Annual Meeting.



Keynote Speaker Ted Case, author of *Power Plays*, offered an entertaining and informative presentation on the history of rural electric cooperatives. Photo: Karen Skelly



Singer/songwriter Tim Sullivan (R) and his band entertain the crowd at the pre-meeting reception.

Ospreys come home

It took more than two years, but a family of osprey has now recognized the “bird condo,” specially built by LPEA crews and Colorado Parks and Wildlife at Echo Lake south of Pagosa Springs.

Norm Vance, editor of the *Pagosa Journal*, has been keeping watch, and recently sent over the “proof of occupancy” (pictured here).

“This is all happening the way it was intended,” says Steve Gregg, manager of operations. “We’d had an osprey family build a nest on one of our poles along Hwy 84, and we had to remove that nest. Working with Parks and Wildlife we did our best to create a home that was more attractive than the utility pole.”

In late summer 2011 LPEA erected the new (non-functional) utility pole to relocate the osprey family. Parks and Wildlife built the platform to sit atop the pole, designing it to “encourage” the raptors’ relocation.

Raptors, or those birds of prey including eagles, hawks and osprey, hunt from above, but can also consider the cross arms atop utility poles attractive nesting locations.

“Nesting on utility poles is an issue for these large birds, as they run the risk of coming in contact with different phase lines,” says Gregg. “These birds can have a wing span of more than 54 inches and they can touch two different phases of energized current when they literally spread their wings. They become a conductor between electrical phases, and just like lightning can zip through a human body, so will electric current in a bird, and death comes quickly. In addition to this loss of life, all of the LPEA customers on that three-phase line will be out of power.”

LPEA maintains a comprehensive avian protection program. Building the new osprey condo might seem a tad unusual, but the fruits of the labor have paid off. The new family is happily residing and hunting in a safe location. ☀



Ospreys occupying the specially-designed home at Echo Lake south of Pagosa Springs. Photo: Norm Vance.



HELICOPTER INSPECTION PLANNED

Tri-State Generation and Transmission, LPEA’s primary power supplier, will be conducting a helicopter flyover/aerial inspection of LPEA’s transmission assets in the Animas Valley and the City of Durango in coming weeks. The effort is primarily for data collection purposes, and Tri-State will be looking at terrain and vegetation in the transmission line corridor.

The aerial inspection and data acquisition is part of the compliance for reliability of the bulk power system, and is being performed in advance of LPEA’s sale of the transmission line to Tri-State. Approximately 70 miles of transmission line from the La Plata County border (near Cascade) to Bodo Industrial Park will be inspected. Aerial inspections will also be conducted in the Florida Mesa area and lines east of Bayfield.

“This will be very beneficial to LPEA as well as Tri-State,” says Steve Gregg, LPEA manager of operations. “In one or two days, depending on weather, the helicopter will be able to obtain information that will aid in the identification of problem vegetation and other issues – that a ground based inspection would traditionally take our crews weeks to cover. The resulting information will allow our crews to identify and resolve issues before they result in a more serious problem.”

Updated information on the timing of the aerial inspection will be posted at www.lpea.coop. ☀

Safety at Safety Town

Each year LPEA provides age-appropriate electrical education to students throughout Archuleta and La Plata counties. Closing out the 2013-2014 academic year was Safety Town, during which Energy Management Advisor Richard Archuleta visually demonstrated to some 125 area youngsters that even though electricity seems magic, it is extremely “powerful.”

“The kids really relate to Richard,” says Indiana Reed, marketing communications specialist. “As a Journeyman Lineman, Richard is a strong advocate of LPEA’s safety culture. It’s fun to watch him with the kids as he entralls them with his explanation of electricity.” ☀



Richard Archuleta explains the “power” of electricity to young La Plata County residents during Safety Town.

LLOYD RECEIVES PROMOTION



Robert Lloyd has been named Inventory Control Specialist, promoted from his position as Warehouse Storekeeper following the recent retirement of James Forsythe.

A long-time La Plata County resident, Lloyd now oversees inventory and assists linemen with materials needed for repair and maintenance of the electric system.

Lloyd came to LPEA in 2012 from the line construction company WESODI, where he worked for six years. Serving first as a Groundman at WESODI, eventually promoted to equipment operator, Lloyd gained familiarity with LPEA's system, literally from the ground up. He also filled in temporarily in LPEA's warehouse in 2007-2008.

Originally from Texas, Lloyd moved to La Plata County in 1983 to assist his grandparents on their ranch near Saul's Creek. He then worked a variety of jobs, eventually hired on at South City Market, where he was employed for 18 years before joining WESODI, and ultimately LPEA. ⚡

LPEA welcomes three new linemen

Helping ensure that LPEA will do its very best to keep the lights on, veteran Journeyman Linemen Ryan Carman, Bryon Kelly and Faron Sullivan have joined the Operations team, responsible for constructing and maintaining electric power transmission and distribution lines and facilities.

Ryan Carman was born and raised in Albuquerque, N.M. and began his apprenticeship right out of high school. He completed his Journeyman in 2009 and has been doing contract work throughout the country, but predominantly in the Southwest, since that time. He has traveled over the years to Durango for rodeos, and enjoys hunting in the area.

"I'm finally ready to put down some roots," says Carman. "I've been looking at this place for a while, so when an opening came about, I put in for the job."

Originally from the Big Bear/Lake Arrowhead area of Southern California, Byron Kelly did his apprenticeship with Southern California Edison (SCE), "journeying out" in 2007. In addition to SCE, he served with Hotline Construction and comes to Durango from Victorville, Calif.

"All my family lives out here in Pagosa Springs," says Kelly. "I've been coming here for the last 20-25 years. It's a beautiful place and I'm happy to be here."

Inspired to get into linework by his father-in-law, who was a career lineman, Faron Sullivan grew up in the country in a small town southeast of Tulsa, Okla. He earned his Journeyman in 2001 and garnered much of his training through East Central Electric and PSO (Public Service Company of Oklahoma), as well as several contractors in the state. Most recently he served with Grand River Dam Authority, which provides power to about one-third of Oklahoma.

"I got to work all over the state doing a variety of things," says Sullivan. "But I just love the mountains, and my wife has family all over Colorado. We've come out here for years, hunting and fishing."

All three linemen are based out of LPEA's Durango headquarters.

"It's important that we have skilled and experienced linemen in place," says Steve Gregg, manager of operations. "Our linemen are the ones who are out there literally on the front lines getting the power back on in all types of conditions. LPEA was fortunate to be able to pick from the best to get our three new linemen." ⚡



New LPEA Journeyman Linemen
(LtoR) Ryan Carman, Byron Kelly and Faron Sullivan

Ruby on a roll at LPEA

When the stars align, LPEA is happy to welcome its LPEA scholarship students as interns at the cooperative. This year 2013 LPEA Scholarship recipient Ruby Roll is currently assisting the LPEA Corporate Services Department several days a week.

"Ruby has been a tremendous help to me," says Ray Pierotti, project specialist who, among other responsibilities, handles lighting rebates. "With the increase in LED rebates, we have a great amount to process, and I'm so thankful Ruby is with us."

A 2013 graduate of Durango High School, Roll is currently pursuing a degree in Physics from Lewis & Clark in Portland, Ore. ⚡

