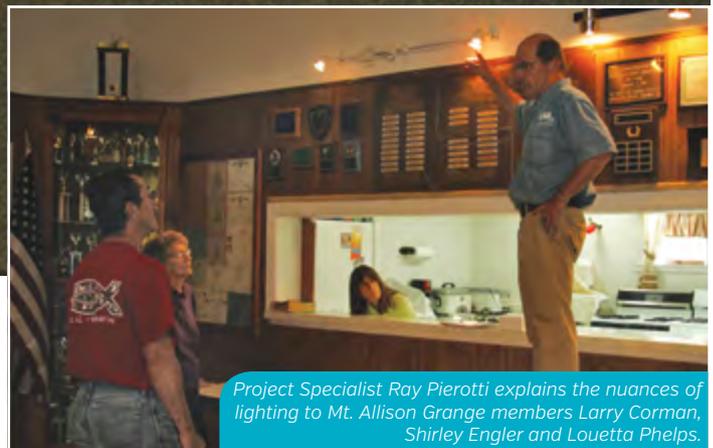


## Lighting “The Grange”



Project Specialist Ray Pierotti explains the nuances of lighting to Mt. Allison Grange members Larry Corman, Shirley Engler and Louetta Phelps.

Photos: Indiana Reed

Each year at the Annual Meeting, LPEA offers gift drawing opportunities for those in attendance. Given the active interest in energy efficient LED light bulbs, the co-op decided to offer a full household lighting change-out as a Grand Prize.

“We assumed it would be a residential customer,” says Project Specialist Ray Pierotti, who handles LPEA’s lighting programs. “But instead, the Mt. Allison Grange came up the winner. We paused for a minute, but then realized that the project is very cool.”

The Grange is located just off of Hwy 151 in the town of Allison in the very southeast corner of La Plata County. Though serving a small ranching community, the Grange touches many lives beyond its 50-member roster, including monthly seniors’ dinners; weekly Cowboy Church; holiday suppers; pivotal life events such as wedding receptions, graduation celebrations and funeral dinners; Junior Grange and more – all of which endured very dim lighting during events.

Also, because it is an older building, the circuits would overload, which Grange member Larry Corman notes had regularly happened while preparing meals.

“There’s nothing more frustrating than cooking pancakes and the griddle outlet is tripped and the pancakes stop cooking,” says Corman.

“The older fixtures with incandescent lights kept overloading the circuits,” confirms Pierotti. “Low wattage LEDs would solve the problem.”

But the Grange didn’t have the funding, so the LPEA

Grand Prize, valued at \$800, was a most welcome surprise.

“Mt. Allison Grange gives a BIG thank you to LPEA for providing us with this LED makeover for our Grange Hall. New lighting was much needed and we truly appreciate it,” says Corman.

With LPEA’s lighting retrofit, the Grange has realized a kilowatt savings of 1.9 kW, but the most dramatic change is the lighting output.

“It’s amazing,” says Pierotti. “The quality and quantity of the light improved, giving them three times more light in the main hall.”

The LED upgrade also included replacing the old bulbs in the entry way and storage area, as well as all exterior lights.

“The parking lot lighting might be the most important since we only have one light for the entire west side of the Hall,” says Corman. “This should help people see their way back to their cars after meetings and the dinners.”

“While this isn’t what we expected when we created the Annual Meeting Grand Prize, we’re delighted with the outcome,” says Pierotti. “Instead of just one family, we’re benefitting all our members who utilize the Mt. Allison Grange today and for decades to come.”

## A trip of a lifetime...

Area high school students Chloe Ciotti and Rebecca [Becca] Schaldach of Durango, Chandler Jackson of Bayfield, and Regan Richardson of Pagosa Springs represented LPEA as part of the National Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington D.C., held June 12-18, 2015.

"The D.C. youth tour was an amazing experience," says Richardson, an in-coming senior at Pagosa Springs High School. "We got a once in a lifetime opportunity to meet so many unique and interesting people that we now call friends. We learned about electricity and the cooperatives that provide it.

Spending a week in the middle of American history was an amazing and enriching experience that I will never forget."

In addition to learning more about the cooperative business model, while in Washington D.C., the students had the opportunity to visit with Senators Bennet and Gardner and Representatives Tipton and Buck, as well as visit many museums and memorials.

According to Youth Tour coordinator Liz Fiddes, a highlight was the presentation by Mike Schlappi, a four-time Olympic wheelchair basketball champion, who inspired the students to be more, to do more, to stand out even if they can't stand up. The students also met a former Sangre de Cristo Electric Youth Tour student, Brian Hall, who now works for the State Department and spoke about opportunities working with the federal government.

As Chandler Jackson, a soon-to-be senior at Bayfield High School, explains, "The recent trip to Washington D.C. was an excellent opportunity to expand my knowledge of both American history and the inner workings of the electric industry. My personal highlight was being given the opportunity to see the Library of Congress. The Library of Congress is truly remarkable for what it represents; the desire to gather all knowledge and preserve it for future generations while still applying it to the problems of today. The trip was a great opportunity that has broadened my horizons and altered my perspectives of this great nation."

Applications for the 2016 Washington D.C. Youth Tour, open to all high school juniors receiving electricity from LPEA, will be available in November at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop). Direct questions to Jeannie Bennett, 970.382.3505.



*On the steps of the U.S. Capitol, Chandler Jackson, Regan Richardson, Chloe Ciotti and Becca Schaldach enjoy the trip of a lifetime.*

## 100 Pole Project

To help ensure reliability of service, as well as the safety of cooperative members, LPEA has initiated a utility pole replacement project to be completed in November 2015.

Individual poles targeted for replacement are scattered across LPEA's service territory.

"LPEA regularly conducts inspections of our electrical system, including testing the integrity of the utility poles," says Justin Talbot, manager of operations. "We have identified 100 poles that we feel need to be replaced to keep our system operating topnotch. Poles may be located on our members' property, so we want to alert everyone to be prepared that we may be working in your neighborhood."

To facilitate the comprehensive pole replacement project in an efficient manner, LPEA has contracted with Ward Electric. The contractor has been instructed to contact property owners prior to entering members' property. LPEA has also distributed informational letters via mail to those expected to be impacted.

Each pole will require a good part of one day to replace and the process does not necessarily require that the power be shut off.

Questions or concerns can be directed to Justin Talbot, [jtalbot@lpea.coop](mailto:jtalbot@lpea.coop) or 970.382.7183.

## Bolstering Bayfield

Construction is currently underway for a new substation in Bayfield, relocating it to land adjacent to Tri-State Generation & Transmission's substation just off of Hwy 160, to the west of the town proper.

"This is an up-grade that will tremendously benefit our members in Bayfield," says Operations Manager Justin Talbot. "The rebuild should help keep the lights on for our members and enable our Operations Department to feed electricity to our members in Bayfield and subdivisions east of Durango from alternate ways in the event of an outage."

The new Bayfield Substation will be located to the east of Tri-State's equipment (the dirt/gravel area to the right in the adjacent photo).

"The project is slated to be completed prior to the first snowfall," adds Talbot. "We look forward to better power quality and reliability once the new substation is complete."



# Succession planning underway

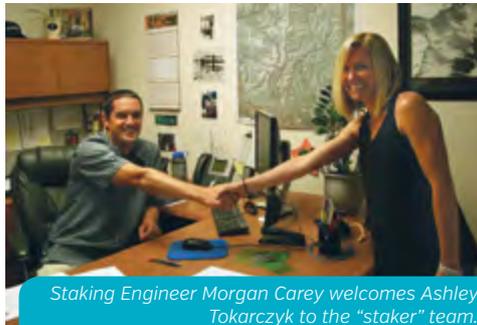
LPEA is noted for its employment longevity, with some employees serving the co-op for 30-40 years. In preparation for future retirements, the co-op is undergoing some significant succession planning, and looks forward to the opportunity to promote from within.

One such domino effect has occurred in the Engineering Department. Land Rights Manager Randy Ferris has announced his retirement as of January 2016. Ferris holds a wealth of knowledge from his years handling research, negotiations and contracts with primary landowners, as well as adhering to environmental and cultural concerns. He is now training his replacement, Morgan Carey, a credentialed Staking Engineer. With a new vacancy pending in the staking department, Ashley Tokarczyk, formerly an accounting clerk, has entered the Staking Engineer Apprentice Program.

Carey, originally from Fort Collins, entered LPEA's Staking Engineer Apprenticeship Program in 2006, and earned his credentials in 2010. He has a degree from CSU in natural resource management, and a Masters in natural resource law from University of Denver. He is the son of Ron Carey, retired general manager, Poudre Valley Rural Electric Association, Fort Collins.

Raised in Durango and a Fort Lewis College graduate, Tokarczyk joined LPEA's Finance & Accounting department in June 2013 as a Billing Clerk. She moved to Accounting Clerk in September 2014.

Staking Engineers work with the cooperative's members on design and layout of the power lines for their properties or projects. Tokarczyk will serve as an apprentice for four years.



Staking Engineer Morgan Carey welcomes Ashley Tokarczyk to the "staker" team.

# Supporting future health care



Endeavoring to inspire future quality health care in our region, the LPEA Round Up Foundation supported the recent Health Careers Camp organized by the Southwestern Colorado Area Health Education Center (AHEC).

Held at Fort Lewis College, the three-day camp immersed 26 middle/high school students in wide range of disciplines - including hands-on work [such as suturing a banana] to shadowing a professional [where students actually inserted an IV], to witnessing a mock trauma situation, and more.

"The kids were really inspired," says Kathleen McInnis, executive director, noting she's already hearing how the participants are shaping their academic focus, knowing they want to pursue a career in health care. "Ultimately this effort impacts our communities ... If they go on to pursue a career in health care and then come back and provide quality health care for us - and if they can get a job that makes a livable wage - it's good for the economy and beneficial for everyone."

To encourage participation, student tuition is a nominal \$150, with many scholarships available. Actual cost per camper is, however, about \$500. The LPEA Round Up Foundation granted \$1,500.

"Round Up's contribution helped us offset that cost and make it affordable for all families," says McInnis.

To learn more about supporting or participating in the AHEC Health Careers Camp, contact McInnis at [kathleen.mcinnis@swcahec.org](mailto:kathleen.mcinnis@swcahec.org).



Aspiring health care provider Labrea Matteson works with orthopedic surgeon Brinceton Phipps MD to understand the capabilities of the new robotic arm at Animas Surgical Hospital during the AHEC Health Careers Camp.

Photo: Lisa Schwantes

## LIVE WIRES

### Board meeting August 19, 9 a.m.

The next meeting of the LPEA Board of Directors is set for Wednesday, August 19, 2015, 9 a.m. at LPEA headquarters in Durango. The agenda will be posted 10 days in advance of the meeting at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop). All members are reminded that public comment is heard at the beginning of the meeting.

### Delinquent notices to be sent earlier

To better accommodate members, LPEA will send delinquent bill notices two days prior to the next bill due date, as opposed to five days post. The billing date shift will occur with the October billing cycle. Contact LPEA with any billing issue questions at 970.247.5786.

### Golf Tourney tops all records

The LPEA Golf Tournament, held in June, enjoyed record success netting more than \$10,000 for the Darin Rome Memorial Scholarship Fund for aspiring music students. Thanks go out to all who contributed time, talent and treasures.



# Director's Corner Clarifying the future of renewable generation

BY JEFF BERMAN, LPEA CREA DELEGATE, JBERMAN@LPEA.COOP

**L**a Plata Electric Association held its annual meeting this May, and as representative to the statewide trade and lobbying association - the Colorado Rural Electric Association - I offered my report. Attendees were either greatly enthusiastic, or fairly upset, over my suggestion that we need to switch over to clean, renewable energy as our existing resources age. Even given the integration costs of intermittent resources like wind and solar (dark blue in the chart), renewable energy is now becoming cheaper than our existing fossil fuel based resource mix.

I didn't mean this to suggest that any single one of our members need buy solar panels - at not insignificant expense, as some interpreted it. I regret not being more clear. By "we" I mean the cooperatives as a whole: LPEA, our 21 sister distribution cooperatives statewide, our state and national trade associations (CREA and NRECA - the National Rural Electric

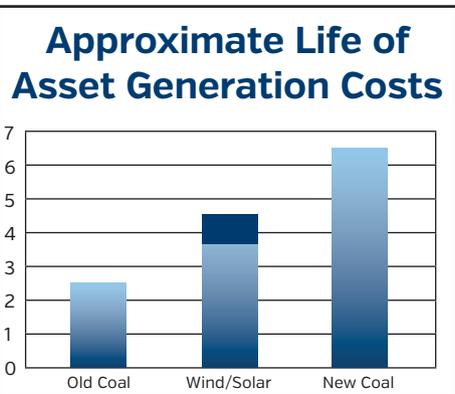
Cooperative Association), and critically our power supplier, Tri-State Generation and Transmission. Coupled with programs and rates that help balance demand with supply, together we can cost-effectively clean up our power supply with both local distributed generation and utility scale renewable energy.

As our power supply fundamentally affects our deliberations regarding legislation and regulation, I also suggested we must more deeply question our industry's lobbying against

change), or standards limiting mercury emissions that foul lakes like Vallecito reservoir.

And as battery storage becomes economical, we must either adapt by integrating ever cheaper renewables with them, or it may very well happen without us. First to quit the coop would be our wealthier members, capable of paying for not only rooftop solar, but now batteries for when the sun doesn't shine. Cutting their ties to the grid for simply no reason other than it became cheaper than the service and value that LPEA provides! That leaves the rest of us. With fewer members to foot the fixed costs, base charges theoretically will climb and climb, leading to real financial harm - especially to our low income members.

We can turn this threat into an opportunity though. As the cost of renewables keeps falling, we carefully incorporate ever more of it into the system as a whole, develop demand response rates, and continue to expand energy efficiency offerings so all our members can lower their bills. We must necessarily change how we provide service: adding new programs, eliminating others, changing roles and job descriptions, but doing it together - as a cooperative - with the expertise, capacity, and stability you've come to expect all along.



clean energy requirements, such as the bitterly contested Senate Bill 252 that in 2013 increased our renewable energy requirement to 20% by 2020. (This spring Tri-State advised it would have no problem meeting that mandate). Today this must include the proposed Clean Power Plan (which seeks to reduce carbon emissions driving climate

**Mailing Address:**  
PO Box 2750 Durango, CO 81302-2750

**Street Address:**  
45 Stewart St. Durango, CO 81303  
603 S. 8th St. Pagosa Springs, CO 81147

**970.247.5786 | www.lpea.coop**

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

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**Chief Executive Officer:**  
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**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](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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

