

# WATT'S UP

AT LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION  
JANUARY 2016

# LPEA

La Plata Electric Association, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy Group Company

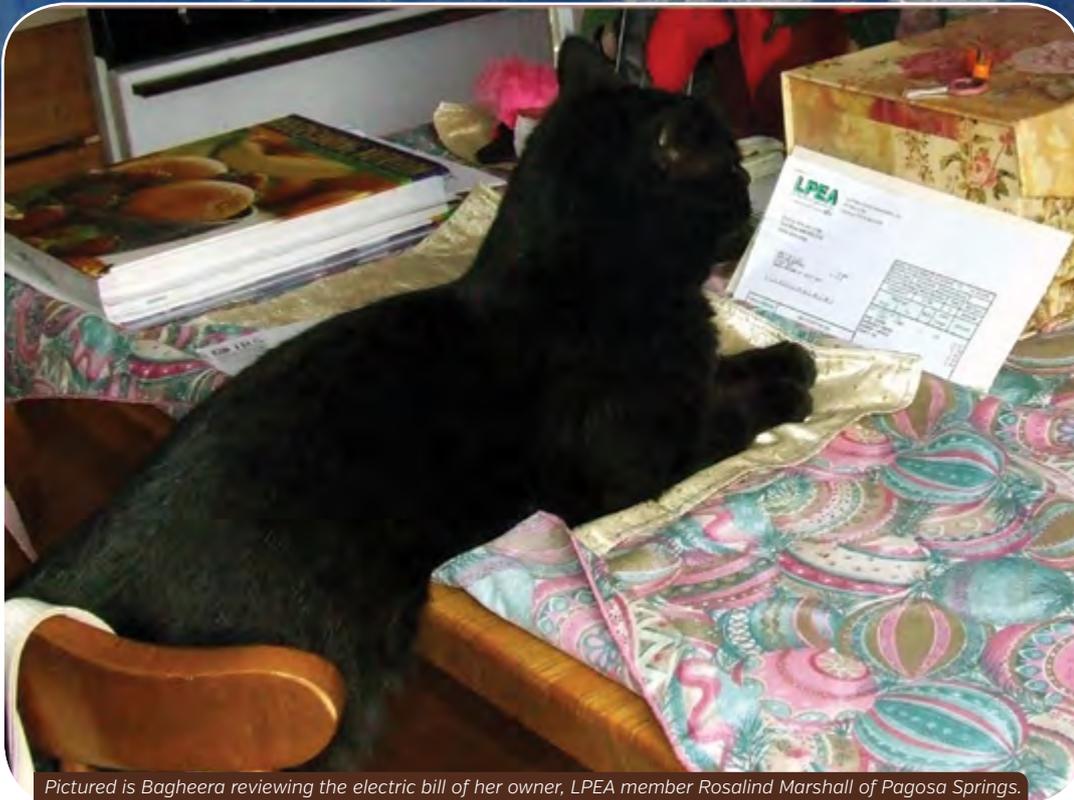


Photo: Karla Prudent

Pictured is Bagheera reviewing the electric bill of her owner, LPEA member Rosalind Marshall of Pagosa Springs.

## How can I lower my electric bill?

Unlike Bagheera, pictured here, most cats probably don't care about your electric bill, but LPEA does.

"As a rural electric cooperative, we want to assist our members however we can," says CEO Mike Dreyspring. "Costs may be going up, but we're looking at ways to help that bottom line on your bill be as low as possible."

The very simplest savings is to turn off lights or unplug appliances, which can add up to kilowatt and dollar savings over time. "Smart strip" surge protectors have also continued to evolve, offering options such as automatically turning off a device after a designated period of time.

"When purchasing new appliances, look for the Energy Star label for the most energy efficient," says Project Specialist Sue Maxwell. "LPEA offers a variety of rebates to assist with purchase of new, more efficient appliances and LED light bulbs."

Plus, LPEA offers an additional rebate when investing in a professional energy audit and implementing suggestions from that auditor.

"But you can begin with a complementary energy assessment from LPEA," says Energy Management Advisor Nancy Andrews. "We'll visit your location and offer energy and money-saving tips as part of our commitment to our members."

Additionally, it may be prudent for members to revisit

LPEA's Time-of-Use (TOU) program. TOU incentivizes members to move their heavy electricity use to off-peak periods when power costs less.

"With implementation of new technology, our Energy Management group can do a much faster and more comprehensive analysis of each member's account and help determine whether switching to Time-of-Use makes sense," says Dan Harms, manager of rates, technology and energy policy. "Sometimes it takes a little discipline to time activities during off-peak periods, but doing things such as putting timers on water heaters can make a difference without too much effort."

Members can also monitor their own day-to-day usage patterns on LPEA's SmartHub (<https://lpea.smarthub.coop/Login.html#login>). If noticing a suddenly high bill, reviewing the account in SmartHub can jog a memory – "Oh yes, that's when the grandkids came for a few days," or "That's when we fired up the hot tub."

"Knowledge is power" is not a pun.

"It might seem counter-intuitive that we would work with our members to sell less of our product: electricity," says Dreyspring. "But this is part of what membership in a rural electric cooperative means. We're your friends and neighbors, and we do care."

To learn more about ways to lower your electric bill, contact LPEA at 970.257.5786.

# Archuleta, Ferris to retire

January 2016 will see the retirement of two long-standing and highly respected LPEA employees: Energy Management Advisor Richard Archuleta and Land Rights Administrator Randy Ferris.

Archuleta has enjoyed 43 years with LPEA. A Durango native, he first worked for Pacific Telephone & Telegraph in San Jose, Calif., but returned to Colorado to enter the electric utility industry. After serving as a plant operator for Western Colorado Power, he joined LPEA, earning his Journeyman Lineman and working the line crews. He went on to serve as Serviceman, Foreman and Substation Maintenance before becoming Energy Management Advisor in 2007, where he facilitates solar installations for members.



Archuleta

During his tenure, Archuleta has been instrumental in developing an in-house lineman apprenticeship program and 401K benefit for employees, as well as organizing "Santa's Helping Hands," an internal fundraiser that now supports Project Merry Christmas, and the "Stuff the Kettle" Green Chili Lunch for the Salvation Army. He's also a personality known by thousands of children throughout LPEA's service territory as he's led the youth Safety Demonstrations for many years.

"It's been a great time. I've enjoyed working with everybody," says Archuleta who will take some time to relax, fly fish and golf before embarking on the travel that he and wife Patty have put off over the years.

Randy Ferris has been in-house at LPEA for nearly 23 years, sharing his experience in right-of-way, land negotiations for the cooperative. He first worked with LPEA as an employee of Trigon, and negotiated easements for a transmission power line to serve two large BP compressor plants in La Plata County. When Trigon sought to send him to North Dakota, LPEA retained him as a consultant, to eventually hire him full time.



Ferris

Ferris' expertise has been invaluable working with state and federal agencies, as well as the Southern Ute Tribe, negotiating land deals and overseeing environmental and cultural studies for sites on which LPEA seeks to build facilities. He began his career as an oil & gas Landman in Denver.

"LPEA's been a great place to work," says Ferris, who looks forward to traveling with wife Shari. "I feel very fortunate to have been employed here. It is one of the best employers in our area."

# Jake Wills now Systems Engineer

Jake Wills has been promoted to Systems Engineer, responsible for monitoring LPEA's system, including planning plant improvements and conducting engineering reviews for new construction and solar installations. He also oversees system overcurrent protection and helps in the design of new substations.



"I look forward to the new challenges presented as Systems Engineer," says Wills, who previously served as Staff Engineer. "The electric industry continues to evolve presenting new and varying issues as more renewable and distributed generation comes on to our system."

Originally from Pagosa Springs and now a resident of Bayfield, Wills launched his career at LPEA in 2000 as a summer intern while earning his BS in Electrical Engineering. A recipient of LPEA's four-year scholarship, he graduated from Colorado State University, Fort Collins in 2004 and earned his Professional Engineering designation in 2008.

Wills, who has followed his father, Pagosa Springs Line Superintendent Jerry Wills into the local rural electric cooperative employment arena, learned a variety of aspects of the business during his internship, serving in the meter shop and warehouse. He also spent time in the field, garnering valuable experience as a ground man, working with the line crews.



## Commitment to Community

# LPEA assists Project Merry Christmas

On-air radio personalities from Four Corners Broadcasting Simone and Chad hosted the final Project Merry Christmas (PMC) live radio remote at LPEA on Dec. 12, braving the cold for four hours to gather toys, food, cash and more for the non-profit organization that seeks to help enhance the holidays for those in need in La Plata County.

LPEA is an annual sponsor of Project Merry Christmas, and, in addition to the sponsored radio PMC radio remote, the coop's generous employees donate funds through the aptly titled "Santa's Helping Hands." The dollars combined allow LPEA to adopt families from PMC's Angel Tree and purchase the needed gifts. The La Plata County Fair and Fiesta Days Royalty get to do the shopping. In 2015, \$1,600 was raised, which supported 24 deserving families.

*(Left) Simone Crouchelli of Four Corners Broadcasting interviews LPEA CEO Mike Dreyspring during the PMC radio remote.*

# Unclaimed Capital Credits support new FLC building

In an effort to make good use of idle funds left abandoned by former LPEA member-customers as Unclaimed Capital Credits (UCC), the cooperative's Board of Directors has awarded an Educational/Special Project Grant totaling \$200,000 over three years to Fort Lewis College. The UCC funds are designated to support the new Geoscience, Physics & Engineering (GPE) Hall currently under construction.



"Unclaimed Capital Credits belong to the community, so the Board sought to provide the broadest benefit to the people we serve, and the college was a good fit," says Mike Dreyspring, CEO. "Plus, from the cooperative's standpoint, we are in need of well-trained engineers. Our current engineers who began college at Fort Lewis, had to complete their degrees at other institutions. Now we will literally be able to grow our own professionals and participate with the college on needs for the future."

With significant growth in the college's geosciences, physics and engineering programs, as well as a need for updated laboratories, the new building is a top construction priority for FLC. The \$35 million project is due to be completed in 2016.

"I'd like to offer a huge, electrifying thank you to LPEA for their support of the new Geosciences, Physics & Engineering Hall at Fort Lewis College," says FLC President Dene Thomas. "This new facility will be an incredible asset to our students and to our community. Companies and organizations in our area looking for exceptionally well trained employees need look no further than their college up on the hill."

Learn more about the GPE at: <https://www.fortlewis.edu/president/NewGPEHallPlan/GPEHallInformation.aspx>.

Capital Credits are LPEA's margins or revenues remaining after all expenses have been paid. When the cooperative is able, Capital Credits are returned to members, but the dollars become "unclaimed" when LPEA cannot find members deserving of the refund, thus they are put back into community projects.

## 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 Scholarship Open House, Thursday, Jan. 21, 2016, 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 Tuesday, Mar. 1, 2016. Attendance at the Open House is not a requirement of application.

LPEA directly offers two LPEA Scholarships (four-year) to any college or university, and two LPEA/John Voelker Memorial Scholarships (two-year) for vocational students. 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).

## LIVE WIRES

### Board meeting Jan. 20, 9 a.m.

The next meeting of the LPEA Board of Directors is set for Wednesday, Jan. 20, 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.

### Application deadlines

High school juniors are reminded to apply for two very special programs:

- The National Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington D.C., set for June 9-16, 2016.
- The Colorado Electric Education Institute Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp – an all-expense paid educational/leadership camp set for July 17-22, 2016 at Glen Eden Resort outside of Steamboat Springs, Colo.

Application deadline for both programs is Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2016.

### Update banking information

Are you on LPEA auto-pay through your bank? Please make sure your bank has your complete and correct account number, and if you've moved, make sure your bank and LPEA are working with the same information. Keep everyone informed! Call us at 970.247.5786 or contact through SmartHub at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop).



## CEO Update

# The 2016 rates essentially reverse unfair 2013 rates

BY MIKE DREYSPRING | CEO | MDREYSPRING@LPEA.COOP

La Plata Electric Association's power supplier, Tri-State Generation and Transmission has implemented its new rate structure for 2016. The long-awaited result of LPEA's Colorado PUC complaint against Tri-State has arrived.

While LPEA, as a member distribution cooperative, saw a slight rate decrease from Tri-State, the change in Tri-State rates will impact LPEA's different rate classes in different ways. A little history is necessary to understand this impact: In 2013, when Tri-State implemented what LPEA felt was an unfair all-energy rate, it led to rate changes for LPEA members that caused some shift in power cost and rates. The new rates effective in 2016 reverse that.

Overall for all LPEA members, LPEA's revenue requirements for 2016 have slightly declined.

Commercial accounts have seen a decrease in 2016, [where they saw a significant increase in 2013]. Conversely, residential members will see an increase in 2016, where the 2013 rate change caused residential rates to be lower.

Confused? There's more.

Because Tri-State's rates are back on an energy and demand rate structure, LPEA has restructured its time-of-use rate. The on-peak charges will be higher, and the off-peak charges lower. What that means is that LPEA members who can control their usage and move as much as possible to the off-peak times, could realize decreases in their electric costs.

In 2013, the Tri-State rate change impacted commercial accounts negatively and residential rate-payers positively. Tri-State's new rates that are effective January 1 are more aligned with the actual cost of service. In essence, the 2013 rate impact generally gets reversed.

The reason why residential bills are going up and commercial bills are going down is due to a change in the way our wholesale provider bills us. There are two parts to LPEA's wholesale bill. One measures the amount of energy

all our members consume and the other measures the amount of facilities [the size of the wires and generators] required to serve our members. In 2016, our wholesale supplier will be placing much more emphasis on the facilities portion of our bill. The result is that it will cost LPEA less to serve members during non-peak times and more to serve members during peak times. LPEA peak times are generally between 5:00 and 10:00 p.m., which coincides more with residential usage than it does with commercial usage. LPEA strives to have rates that are fair and based on the cost to serve each class of members, which is why we are seeing this adjustment.

Residential members may want to consider transitioning to our Time-of-Use rate that would save money if some on-peak usage can be shifted to off-peak hours. It would not take much shifting to offset the 5 percent increase.

Call us if we can help you review your account and help find ways to manage your electric costs. And let me know your thoughts and questions. I can be reached at 970.382.3509, or email at [mdreyspring@lpea.coop](mailto:mdreyspring@lpea.coop).

**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](http://www.lpea.coop)

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

**Board of Directors:**  
Michael Rendon, President [District 3]  
Tom Compton, Vice President [District 2]  
Karen Barger, Treasurer [District 4]  
Jeff Berman, Secretary [District 3]  
Britt Bassett [District 3]  
Bob Formwalt [District 1]  
Mark Garcia [District 1]  
Bob Lynch [District 1]  
Kohler McInnis [District 2]  
Davin Montoya [District 2]  
Jack Turner [District 4]  
Joe Wheeling [District 4]

**Chief Executive Officer:**  
Michael A. Dreyspring

**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).

