

WATT'S UP

AT LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION
SEPTEMBER 2016

LPEA

La Plata Electric Association, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy Company



To help local homeowners and businesses invest in energy efficiency projects, LPEA, in partnership with First Southwest Bank, has launched an On-bill Financing Program. LPEA members/customers can apply for a low-interest loan to cover costs of a variety of energy efficiency measures, then repay that loan monthly over time on their electric bills.

“By implementing efficiency measures, our members typically can lower their energy costs,” says CEO Mike Dreyssing. “We wanted to make it easy for our members to finance projects, such as whole house insulation or new windows. They can start realizing the savings immediately and enjoy a more comfortable home or office, but that up-front cost can be spread out over time.”

The On-bill Financing Program covers labor and materials for projects such as caulking/weather-stripping, insulation, LED lighting, storm or thermal windows and doors, insulating window coverings, water heaters, heat pump systems or other heating or cooling systems that reduce energy consumption – and more. (New home construction and distributed generation projects [i.e. solar panels] are not eligible for this program.)

“Customers can apply for loans up to \$7,500,” says CFO Dennis Svanes, noting that the application is one-page. “We do the initial review at LPEA, place our credit score, and then pass the loan application on to First Southwest for the approval and funding.”

LPEA customers-in-good-standing, with an established LPEA credit rating, could receive a 3.95% interest rate, and can take up to 5 years to repay the loan, though a shorter term can be selected.

LPEA has been seeking options for on-bill financing for

its members for some years, but it is against state statute for rural electric cooperatives to function as a bank and offer attractive terms to encourage such investments. Typically, banks could also not afford to develop such a program, but with First Southwest Bank’s designation as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), the involvement made financial sense.

“There are only 120 CDFI banks in the country,” says Kent Curtis, First Southwest Bank CEO, noting the federal CDFI is designed to encourage banks to help revitalize more economically challenged areas across the country. “I feel communities need to have a ‘community bank’ to serve people who are not ‘cookie-cutter.’ That’s what community banks do – we take care of people outside the box, and this program with LPEA is one way we can meet our mission.”

While residential customers can realize long term benefits, LPEA’s “lighting guy” Ray Pierotti knows this can help his commercial customers invest in lighting retrofits as well.

“To completely retrofit a business with LEDs, it adds up,” says Pierotti. “This is the perfect way for small businesses to buy all their LEDs at one time, hire a contractor – get it all done. They put their merchandise in a ‘new light’ or give their office workers a better working environment. I’m very excited about this program and will be in touch with businesses that want to change out their lights, but had been hesitating because of cost.”

To learn more and download the application, visit www.lpea.coop. Information is also available at LPEA’s offices in Pagosa Springs and Durango, or call 970.247.5786.

Ryne Waggoner new Staff Engineer



Ryne Waggoner has been named Staff Engineer, tasked to assist with LPEA's efforts to plan and provide for increased distributed generation and maintain quality control on the cooperative's system.

A Durango native and Durango High School graduate, Waggoner has now returned to his hometown following intensive experience with Lockheed Martin's space systems division in Denver. He earned a Bachelor's in Mechanical Engineering from Colorado State University at Fort Collins, as well as a Master's from University of Denver in "Mechatronics" [a new merging of mechanical and electrical engineering], and served with Lockheed Martin for five years.

"I'm very glad to be back home. Lockheed is prestigious and provided me with tremendous experience," says Waggoner who worked on the Mars Lander, geostationary weather satellites, and more. "I look forward to helping LPEA meet the engineering challenges of the future."

During his tenure with Lockheed, Waggoner was one of seven employees selected for the corporation's leadership development program, a four-year program that provided him interface and training with Lockheed's upper management and prepared him for future leadership positions.

"We're very fortunate to have Ryne, who grew up in Durango, now serving LPEA's members and sharing his engineering experience," says Ron Meier, manager of engineering and member relations. "LPEA is always pleased when we can give our talented young people an opportunity to pursue their careers locally."

New Linemen on the team

Journeyman Linemen Brandon DeBates and Joshua Puterbaugh have joined the La Plata Electric Association [LPEA] Operations Department. In the electric utility industry, linemen are responsible for constructing and maintaining electric power transmission and distribution lines and facilities.



Brandon DeBates



Joshua Puterbaugh

Originally from Sisters, Ore., and now a Bayfield resident, DeBates moved with his family to Durango in 2003 following his high school graduation and entered the trade as a Groundman with the utility construction company WESODI. Prior to joining LPEA, he served as a contractor throughout the state and entered the Journeyman Lineman Apprentice Program with Front Range contractor Mountain States Electric, "journeying out" in 2015.

Puterbaugh hails from Pennsylvania where he served with the Pennsylvania Power and Light Company for 18 years. From a temporary job at the plant, he worked his way up, entering the Journeyman Lineman Apprentice Program in 2005, "journeying out" in 2009. With family in Colorado, he "came west" in 2016 to join LPEA.

DeBates and Puterbaugh are based out of LPEA's Durango headquarters.

"It's important that we have skilled and experienced linemen in place," says Justin Talbot, 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 two new linemen."

Time to check your ETS heater

The seasons are changing and cold weather is right around the corner. LPEA's energy management advisors encourage members with electric thermal storage [ETS] heating systems to take time now to make sure it is in good working order.

Here are a few tips:

- While the breaker is off, vacuum in and around the heater making, using a certified or licensed technician when needed.
- Make sure nothing is set on top of the heater or too close to the right hand side, which can affect heater performance.
- Turn the heater on making sure display is reading correct time of day and room temperature and is not displaying an error message or PLC fail message. This is applicable to 1000, 2000, and 2100 series room units.
- For the EXT model heaters, make sure on-peak and off-peak indicator lights are on at the correct times and functioning correctly. For the S model heaters, turn on charge level and wall thermostat, making sure they charge.
- Allow for one day to charge ETS units.
- Those members who have whole house ETS units, make sure the digital display is reading correct time of day. Utilize the HELP menu to review settings. Change out the filter in a forced air furnace system.

For additional information, contact Suzy Bynum in Durango, 970.382.3506, or in Pagosa Springs, Debbie Bass, 970.382.7722.

You are invited!

There is a co-op difference! LPEA IS part of everything you do.

Yes, in today's world, we probably can't live without electricity, but more than that, LPEA is YOUR rural electric cooperative. You are our member, and we are a part of the community we serve.

Please join us for a Member Appreciation Lunch – at our offices either in Durango (Friday, Sept. 16) or in Pagosa Springs (Friday, Sept. 23), between 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Call 970.247.5786 for additional information.

We're part of the community we serve, and we want to say "thank you."

Mike Dreyspring, CEO

Thank you Bella and Shaylah

LPEA had the pleasure of two of its scholarship students – Isabella Bussian and Shaylah Wood – serve as summer interns. Though they're now off to school, Bella and Shaylah worked in the Engineering and Member Relations Department and assisted in a variety of tasks to serve our members.

Bussian [2014 LPEA Scholarship recipient] is attending Colorado College, Colorado Springs, majoring in geology. Wood [2015 LPEA Scholarship recipient] is attending CU Boulder, studying architectural engineering.

To learn more about LPEA's scholarship opportunities, visit www.lpea.coop.



Bella Bussian and Shaylah Wood

Safety Demonstrations at the Fair

LPEA offers its safety tabletop demonstration [pictured here] as well as full-sized arc demonstrations (featuring LPEA linemen) to schools and organizations upon request. Contact LPEA, 970.247.5786 to schedule a safety demo.



Energy Management Advisor Amanda Miles enthalls young (and seasoned) visitors at the La Plata County Fair with the "power" of electricity.

LIVE WIRES

Board meeting Sept. 21, 9 a.m.

The next LPEA Board meeting is Wednesday, Sept. 21, 9 a.m., at LPEA headquarters in Durango. The agenda will be posted 10 days in advance of the meeting at www.lpea.coop. All members are reminded that public comment is heard at the beginning of the Board meeting.

HUNTERS: Sight-in Days scheduled

Plan to sight your rifle scopes free of charge at the Durango Outdoor Gun Range in advance of the three big game seasons. LPEA's Sight-in Days are Oct. 13 and 14, Oct. 20 and 21 and Nov 3 and 4, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Lunch & Lights Workshop

Learn the latest in energy efficient lighting at the next Lunch & Lights Workshop, set for Tuesday, Oct. 25, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. at LPEA's Durango Headquarters. RSVP to Ray Pierotti, 970.382.7770.

Round Up Grants

The following organizations received grants from the Round Up Foundation in July: Manna Soup Kitchen, Trails 2000, La Plata Family Centers Coalition, Cowboy Poetry Gathering, iAM Music, Sunnyside Elementary, Pine River Community Learning Center and Know Your Dough.



It makes a difference Join us in “Rounding Up” your electric bill

BY MICHELE HARRIS | ROUND UP FOUNDATION BOARD PRESIDENT

In each of the past 20 years, LPEA Round Up members have funded grants to dozens of diverse community-based non-profits in La Plata and Archuleta counties. Each month, numerous organizations apply for grants to the Round Up Foundation. The Round Up Board, which is comprised of two volunteers from each of the LPEA districts, two directors from the LPEA Board and LPEA’s CEO, meets on a monthly basis to review grant applications and distribute these funds in our communities.

Who benefits from these Round Up funds? Approximately 70 percent of funds each month have helped improve our community centers and libraries, assisted with computer training and exercise programs for seniors and provided food and school supplies to children in need. Past non-profit recipients have included the Adaptive Sports Association, Alternative Horizons, Bayfield Early Learning Program, Archuleta County Senior Services,

Blue Star Moms, Archuleta County 4-H, the Women’s Resource Center and the Pine River Library, just to name a few. You can review the entire list of grant recipients at www.lpea.coop/programs/roundup. Also, about 30 percent of the overall funding is distributed to individuals and families with critical needs who apply for assistance.

So, now you ask, “How does Round Up work?” When you sign up to “Round Up,” LPEA will round up your electric bill to the next highest dollar each month. For example, if your bill was \$38.49, LPEA would round your bill up to \$39 and 51 cents would be put in the Round Up fund. This averages out to \$6 per year per member.

Foundation receives five to ten grant requests and distributes about \$6,500 locally. The Board works diligently in reviewing the very diverse requests. Rather than contributing to an agency’s operating budget, we endeavor to award grants that help with a specific project or event. The Board also considers where grants will make the biggest difference to the greatest number of people.

The power of multiplying \$6 per year times thousands of members is what makes such an impact. So far, thanks to the generosity of LPEA Round Up members, more than \$1 million has been distributed since 1996. Currently, we have 14,000 members who are “rounding up” their bills. However, the community need is always significantly greater than available funds. You may have heard that many of the large corporations have been cutting back on their community-based funding. We have noticed an increase in the number of grant requests made to the Round Up Foundation. This is where you can help!

Please join us in supporting families and organizations in our community by signing up to Round Up. Your Round Up pennies and dollars make a huge impact! It’s “pocket change for positive change,” and together, we can make a real difference. To sign up, visit www.lpea.coop or call 970.247.5786.

Round Up Foundation Volunteer Board

Mike Alley	Michele Harris
Sheryl Ayers	Werner Heiber
Jenn Bartlett	Carmen Hubbs
Doug Bowen	Kohler McInnis
Teresa Campbell	Briggen Wrinkle

If you prefer to contribute more, simply contact LPEA and specify a fixed amount you wish to contribute each month (such as \$1.00), which will be added to your Round Up amount. Your donation is clearly itemized on your monthly and year-end bill and is tax deductible.

Each month, the Round Up

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.

Board of Directors:
Davin Montoya, President [District 2]
Kohler McInnis, Vice President [District 2]
Joe Wheeling, Secretary [District 4]
Karen Barger, Treasurer [District 4]
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Jack Turner [District 4]

Chief Executive Officer:
Michael A. Dreysspring

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.

