

WATT'S UP

AT LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

LPEA

La Plata Electric Association, Inc.
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

JANUARY 2017

Shaping the future by building trustworthy community partnerships as an innovative, forward-thinking industry leader, delivering excellence in our member-owned cooperative.

Do you have one of these?

Of course, if you're a residential member of LPEA, you probably don't have one of these, but this is what a commercial stand-by generator looks like. This is LPEA's back-up located on the Bodo Park campus. Yes, your electric cooperative is prepared to stay in power in the event of a major outage in the region.

"As we go into our traditionally coldest, stormiest and iciest month of the year - January - we want to remind everyone about generator safety," says Dan Harms, manager of rates, technology and energy policy. "A homeowner may have their lights go out and think 'Oh yeah, I have a generator in the shed I can use.' But remember, a generator should always be installed properly before use."

During power outages, some LPEA members do rely on stand-by generators to continue supply of electricity. For the safety of the electrical equipment as well as the line crews, generators MUST be installed with a "double throw disconnect switch." This isolates the generating system from the LPEA system. Merely opening your circuit breakers is not adequate.

"If a generator is connected improperly, it could back-feed our lines," says Harms who encourages that a qualified, licensed electrician always be used when sizing and installing any electrical equipment. "Even though your generator may only be 120V, if it back-feeds through our transformer, the voltage is raised to 7,200V. This is an extremely dangerous situation to personnel who may be working on the power lines under the assumption that the lines are not energized."

In addition to putting lives at risk, when any damage is repaired and our Operations Department restores the power throughout the LPEA system, power will immediately begin flowing back to your meter. If your generator is not disconnected from the LPEA system with the double throw switch, the two electricity

Help us maintain safety on our system: If you have a generator, please let us know. At www.lpea.coop, click on the Generator Notification link. Thank you for helping us serve you.



sources will interconnect - collide, if you will - causing serious damage and possible destruction of the stand-by generator as well as any equipment it was supplying. Fire is also a possibility.

Members with back-up generators are requested to review information at www.lpea.coop/outage/generator, or call 970.247.5786. LPEA representatives can also assist members in advance of purchasing a stand-by generator.

"We definitely hope that winter storms won't impact distribution of electricity from LPEA," says Justin Talbot, manager of operations. "Our team is ready, maintenance has been done, but if we do experience what might be a long-term outage, please heed the generator safety."

"And ultimately, you can help us protect our linemen by letting us know if you have a generator," says CEO Mike Dreyspring. "The top priority for LPEA always will be safety."

Scholarships available to LPEA students

All high school seniors, including home school students, in LPEA's service territory who receive their electricity from LPEA are eligible to apply for the variety of college scholarship and awards available through the cooperative.

Deadline for application is Mar. 1, 2017.

LPEA directly offers the LPEA Scholarship (four-year) and LPEA/John Voelker Memorial Scholarship (two-year), per LPEA Board of Directors policies No. 411 and 416, plus provides for additional affiliated rural electric scholarships/awards offered by Tri-State Generation and Transmission and Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

Specifically, LPEA will award two, four-year scholarships (140 credit hours) for students attending any college or university beginning with the 2016-2017 academic year. LPEA will cover tuition, books and fees, up to \$28,000 over four years, given that the students maintain minimum qualifications.

The LPEA/John Voelker Memorial Scholarship recognizes two students attending accredited vocational schools, technical schools or junior college. This two-year scholarship covers fees, books, tools and supplies up to \$10,000 over two years, per student.

Funds for the LPEA and LPEA/John Voelker Memorial Scholarships come from LPEA's unclaimed Capital Credits. Each year, LPEA endeavors to find "missing" members who are due a share of retired Capital Credits. Those funds unable to be returned to members are then put back into the community – in this case, into college scholarships.

LPEA supports training and educating local young people for positions they may ultimately secure at a rural electric cooperative, though this is not a requirement of the scholarships. Rural electric cooperatives are known nationally to provide stable employment, livable wages and solid benefit packages. LPEA is no exception and, with 110 employees, it exists as one of the more significant employers in the region.

For further information and to download applications, visit www.lpea.coop or contact Jeannie Bennett at 970.382.3505, or jbennett@lpea.coop.



LPEA employees Jeannette Simpson and Amanda Miles serve green chili to those supporting the Salvation Army during the "Stuff the Kettle" lunch.



Members of the Creepers Jeepers Gang in Durango and Pagosa Springs annually support the Project Merry Christmas drive with dozens of new toys.

LPEA celebrates the season!

As has become tradition, LPEA employees celebrated the holiday season giving back to our local communities, supporting many non-profit entities including the local food banks, Project Merry Christmas and the Salvation Army.

LPEA employees in Archuleta County hosted the Fill the Bucket Food Drive on Nov. 19, and were successful in gathering 2,273 lbs. of food and nearly \$3,000 in cash.

On Saturday, Dec. 10, Four Corners Broadcasting set up a radio remote in LPEA's parking lot to encourage support of Project Merry Christmas. FCB's Kim Emanuel and Chad Peyer spent four hours encouraging donations of clothing, blankets, toys, food and cash.

LPEA is an annual sponsor of Project Merry Christmas, and, in addition to the radio PMC radio remote, the co-op'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, Bell and Toy Trees and purchase the needed gifts. Durango High School students and the La Plata County Fair Royalty enjoyed doing the shopping and this year had \$1,710 donated dollars to shop with.

"We were able to fill the needs of 25 Angel requests at the Durango Mall, fill five toy needs from the Toy Tree at Walmart, and help a young family from Needham Elementary currently experiencing difficult times," says Jeannie Bennett who coordinated the shopping activities.

On Dec. 14, the co-op hosted the Stuff the Kettle Green Chili Lunch supporting the Salvation Army. Food donations came from Bart's Deli and Sunnyside Meats, though LPEA staff baked cornbread and dozens of desserts. People gathered from throughout the community, with donations topping \$2,300, including many contributions made in memory of former LPEA Director Jerry McCaw. The donations were nearly double garnered during the 2015 event.

Genge named Accounting Clerk

David Genge has joined the Finance and Accounting team at LPEA as an Accounting Clerk. In his new position, Genge is currently working in accounts payable, with responsibilities to also include receivables for Marathon water heaters and ETS space heaters, and work on LPEA's sales tax returns.

Originally from Orange County, Calif., Genge earned degrees in accounting and management information systems from California State University – Fullerton. His education and unique skill set made him a sought-after employee in the Los Angeles area at key national companies, including Basic Four Inc., MSA Inc. and Ernst & Young.

With a goal to escape the congestion of the L.A. basin, Genge and his family moved in 1995 to Northwest Arkansas, his wife's family home, where he was an independent management consultant for 5 years and then served as Systems Project Manager in the IT Department for J.B. Hunt Transport Services for 15 years. As a further lifestyle choice, the Genge family moved to Durango in early 2015.

Beyond his professional activities in analytical positions, Genge is a passionate advocate of children's, amputee and disabled persons support organizations, having worked with numerous charities over the years.



LPEA on Durango TV!

LPEA CEO Mike Dreyspring continues his television career with the bi-monthly "Watt's Up at LPEA" as part of Durango TV's News programming. Within the City of Durango, the program can be viewed on cable channel 16. Satellite customers can tune in on Dish and Direct, channel 33. The programming is also always available at www.DurangoTV.com, and airs on MeTV out of Albuquerque at 9 p.m. Thursdays and 8:30 a.m. Sundays.



"We are using this as an opportunity to really communicate to our members, and each segment features a different topic," says Dreyspring. "In addition to the public airing, the videos are available on the LPEA YouTube channel."

Upcoming air dates this month are Jan. 12 and 26, 2017.

CO-OP MEMBERS

Ask...



Q: I'm hearing the acronym "DG" referenced a lot these days. Could you explain what that means?

A: "DG" stands for "distributed generation," as opposed to "centralized generation." Very basically, distributed generation is an approach that employs small-scale technologies to produce electricity in close proximity to the end users of power. DG often consists of modular (and often renewable-energy) generators, in contrast to the use of a few large-scale generating stations located far from load centers (for example, LPEA's primary [centralized] power supplier Tri-State generates power we use outside of LPEA's service territory). DG systems essentially provide power to customers with little reliance on the distribution and transmission grid. The current model for electricity generation and distribution in the United States is dominated by centralized power plants, though interest in DG is growing in popularity.

LIVE WIRES

Board meeting Jan. 18, 9 a.m.

The next meeting of the LPEA Board of Directors is set for Wednesday, Jan. 18, 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 meeting.

Application deadlines

High school juniors are reminded to apply for the National Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington D.C., (June 8-15, 2017) and the Colorado Electric Education Institute Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp (July 15-20, 2017). Application deadline for both programs is Monday, Jan. 9, 2017.

LPEA offices closed

In observance of Martin Luther King Day, LPEA offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs will be closed Monday, Jan. 16, 2017.

Round Up Grants

The following organizations received Round Up or Educational grants, distributed by the Round Up Foundation Board of Directors, in November: Immaculate Heart Food Bank, Shop With a Cop, Pagosa Crisis Pregnancy Center/Thrive, Archuleta County Education Center, Durango Montessori School, Tri-County Headstart



From the CEO The strategic future

BY MIKE DREYSPRING | CEO | MDREYSPRING@LPEA.COOP

/work with some of the most awesome people on the planet. LPEA's employees are incredibly dedicated to serving you. They often work in some of the most difficult weather conditions, risking life and limb; they answer calls and questions, and even some complaints, with smiles and genuine concern; they stake line in terrain throughout our service territory that I personally would hesitate to climb; and much, much more. They're a happy and fun group to work with.

One of the things that really inspires me, however, is their commitment to your energy future.

In 2016, LPEA's employees helped craft a Vision Statement for your cooperative - where do we want to be in five years? A draft of the statement came after numerous

discussions and work sessions, and then the neat thing is, it became a collaboration with the employees and LPEA's Board of Directors. Once we submitted the employees' suggested Vision, the Board discussed it and made only a few minor changes. Thus, LPEA's Vision truly is the effort of the wonderful people here at LPEA - the people who serve you.

Our Vision Statement is: **Shaping the future by building trustworthy community partnerships as an innovative, forward-thinking industry leader, delivering excellence in our member-owned cooperative.**

This coming year, our "first" year for our new stated Vision, I am focusing on the verbs - shaping, building, thinking, and delivering. We do believe we can influence our - and your - energy future. We believe we have outstanding resources available to us in our business and local government communities, and look forward to partnering with them to serve you. We believe our competency enables us to anticipate the future with reasonable degree of accuracy.

And, ultimately, we intend to deliver excellence in all we do for you.

The road to the future in the electric business has some challenging spots. How will electric vehicles and battery storage impact our business? To what extent will renewable distributed resources replace retired coal generator fleets? What new technology will empower electricity consumers to manage their energy footprint with greater proficiency? How might deregulation at the bulk power side of the electric business change the production, distribution and costs of electricity? What role will drones play in the distribution of electricity? How might technology help us deal with increasing threats to electric grid security? How will social media tools help us better connect across a broad group of LPEA's member demographics? I could go on.

Your elected Board of Directors, your employees and your cooperative management team will be working on answering these and other questions.

One thing is for certain, your energy future is taking shape.

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

Board of Directors:
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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, 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 intake@usda.gov.

