



April 11, 2014

NEWS

Director elections scheduled in three LPEA board districts

Election packets to be mailed Thursday, May 1; results announced May 22, 2014

DURANGO, Colo. – Ballots for the election of three directors on the La Plata Electric Association (LPEA) Board are set to be mailed Thursday, May 1, 2014. LPEA directors represent their geographic districts and help determine current and future policy at the electric cooperative. Election results will be announced during the LPEA Annual Meeting, May 22, 2014.

“We encourage our members to be involved,” said Greg Munro, LPEA CEO. “We are facing challenges in the industry, and we will need to be thoughtful and conscientious as we explore our options going forward. This election is very important. We encourage LPEA members to get to know the candidates in their district and vote.”

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 (south and west La Plata County), incumbent director Davin Montoya was the only nominee, thus the election in that district will be cancelled and Montoya retains his seat.

[Please note: Candidate profiles are included at the end of this release.]

The approximately 8,000 LPEA members in Archuleta County – District 1 – will elect a representative to the board from a field of two: incumbent Ken Fox and new candidate Bob Lynch.

In District 3, which is essentially the City of Durango, two candidates will vie for the seat: incumbent Jeff Berman and new candidate Bill Waters. District 3 includes approximately 7,900 eligible voters.

New candidate Alison Dance is challenging incumbent Joe Wheeling in District 4. Nearly 8,000 eligible voters are in District 4, which covers north and east La Plata County, including part of Bayfield.

Ballots must be returned by 4 p.m., Wednesday, May 21 to FredrickZink & Associates, the independent, Durango-based CPA firm retained by LPEA to tally the ballots utilizing La

Plata County's official ballot counting equipment. If not voting by mail, members can vote in person at the LPEA Annual Meeting at the Community Concert Hall at Fort Lewis College, May 22. Registration for the Annual Meeting begins at 5 p.m. with the business meeting to commence at 6:30 p.m. Anyone voting at the Annual Meeting must do so prior to 6:30 p.m.

LPEA, celebrating 75 years in 2014, provides to its more than 30,000 members, with nearly 41,000 meters, safe, reliable electricity at the lowest reasonable cost, while being environmentally responsible. For additional information, contact LPEA at 970.247.5786 or visit www.lpea.coop.

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One candidate will be elected to represent District 1, Archuleta County

Ken Fox is the incumbent candidate for District 1. Fox, since retiring from the U.S. Air Force and moving to Pagosa Springs, has participated in a number of agencies from the Archuleta County Airport Authority and Archuleta Board of County Commissioners to the Area Agency on Aging and the Archuleta County District 50 JT School Board. He was co-owner and partner of K and K Aviation, Inc., and served as Archuleta County Airport manager.

Candidate Statement:

"I seek a second term on the LPEA Board of Directors for some very compelling reasons. Your cooperative is in a time of transition, a polite way of saying we could easily head down the wrong road. Ideological issues have surfaced during the past year, and partisan politics has replaced common sense. "What's in the best interests of the Customers?" is no longer the top priority for some who have placed their agendas above the good of the cooperative.

Among our challenges, not the least of which is the on-going PUC complaint concerning Tri-State's unfair rate structure, is working through the "red tape" to get the Pagosa Biomass plant up and running and on the grid. This project is near and dear to my heart as it will not only help make Archuleta County more energy independent, it will help spur our economy and protect our forest and water. Plus, I'm excited about the possibilities to tap Pagosa's geothermal energy. This is indeed a time for stability and strong leadership.

For more than 26 years I have been actively involved in the Archuleta Community. My command and staff experience with the U.S. Air Force, as well as my experience working in a team environment, has served me well on the LPEA board. I hope to continue the efforts we've begun while keeping the cooperative fiscally strong as we move toward an affordable AND sustainable energy future.

I have the experience, drive and passion to help LPEA succeed in these challenging times. I would sincerely appreciate your vote in this year's election."

Bob Lynch is a new candidate for District 1. Presently both a business management consultant and cattle rancher, Lynch is co-founder of QualTeam, Inc. of Atlanta, Denver and Pagosa Springs, as well as founder of the O'Neal Park Cattle Company in Pagosa. His involvements in Archuleta County include board or committee positions with the Citizens Bank of Pagosa Springs, the Foundation for Archuleta County Education, Pagosa Springs Elementary School Accountability Committee and Upper San Juan Planning Commission.

Candidate Statement:

“I am running for the LPEA Board of Directors representing District 1 because my business experience has prepared me to help LPEA navigate the challenges and opportunities we face. In my 25 years of business management consulting I have worked with senior business leaders across many industries. I understand how large organizations work and know the role of a board member in helping establish a vision for the future, and establishing a long term strategy for achieving that vision.

My 15 years of cattle ranching has added to my preparation for the board. In ranching, being a steward of the land and water resources and working within the natural cycles is critical to success. Ranching requires a longer view, wise investment and being fiscally conservative.

LPEA must maximize all of our options for power generation, so that we have a mix of power sources available, now and into the future. We must plan for a time when traditionally generated power may not be as cheap and available as it is today. Multiple options, including biomass, solar, hydro and geothermal will increase our independence and may help keep costs in line. Our energy security is enhanced when we have multiple sources of generation, particularly local sources.

As an LPEA board member I can contribute by being problem solving oriented and willing to explore facts and options before determining the best solution. I bring independent thinking, fact-based methods and creative problem solving to our challenges and will work collaboratively with all board members.”

One candidate will be elected to represent District 3, the City of Durango

Jeff Berman is the incumbent candidate for District 3. Currently exploring entrepreneurial ventures, Berman has served as sales manager of Living Solar, a local solar installation company. He was CEO of San Juan Bioenergy and executive director of the non-profit Colorado Wild. He is also a founding member of the Southwest Colorado Renewable Energy Society.

Candidate Statement:

“Serving as an LPEA Director since 2005, I have been a diligent advocate for greater clean energy and energy efficiency programs, which has helped reduce electricity usage for the last three years running. I played a leading role in development of our groundbreaking market-based Community Solar Garden policy - with a half dozen solar gardens now approved to help drive prices down for the maximum benefit to our members. And in the last year as LPEA's representative to the statewide lobbying group, the Colorado Rural Electric Association, I have been working with colleagues statewide to better ensure rural electric cooperative leadership embraces rather than challenges the need to move toward cleaner energy sources.

I graduated from the University of Florida in 1992 with a degree in Electrical Engineering. I worked for a local solar installation company until last year, and am currently developing several new business opportunities. If re-elected, I will continue to advocate for greater energy efficiency and clean energy policies that help LPEA's members keep their bills low, encourage conservation, and increase the percentage of our energy coming from local renewables like solar power. I will also continue to promote transparency, rate equity, sound financial decision-making, and careful consideration for both current and long term future reliability and safety of the extraordinary benefits that our electric grid provides.”

Bill Waters is a new candidate for District 3. He is presently Territory Manager for Wagner Equipment, a dealership of the multi-national Caterpillar, Inc. A 57-year native of La Plata County, he has worked for Wagner/Caterpillar for 37 years in various capacities including sales and senior management.

Candidate Statement:

“My wife and I are 5th generation natives of La Plata County with deep roots. We’ve always been active in this community because we care about it. We have four grown sons and our sincere hope is that they will be able to raise their families in this beautiful area.

The direction La Plata Electric has taken in the last couple of years has troubled me. My business experience has taught me that volatile energy practices have a big impact on the local economy and our personal lives, especially when trying to raise a family. Electricity must be affordable. The less affluent folks in our community should be able to live comfortably and not have to make a choice between groceries and electricity. It’s unclear to me how some current LPEA directors can maintain electric rates are too low. LPEA’s members are diverse, and I believe they all deserve fair treatment.

I do believe renewable energy should be a goal for LPEA, and I know local generation projects can be developed while maintaining the fiscal integrity of the cooperative. Unlike some, I have no conflicts of interest and will judge every project on its merits and not promote any pre-determined agendas. LPEA should not be involved in partisan politics, which is one of the most troubling changes I have seen at LPEA. LPEA is a business and should be run as a business.

If you will elect me, please know I can and will work with the entire board. I respect diverse opinions and will consider everyone’s. You can be assured ultimate decisions I make will be in the best interests of the entire cooperative.”

One candidate will be elected to represent District 4, North and East La Plata County

Joe Wheeling is the incumbent candidate for District 4. An MBA from the Wharton School of Business, Wheeling is a partner in James Ranch Beef and The Gardens at James Ranch, in the north Animas Valley. His earlier experience includes CEO of Red Roof Inns, executive vice president of Accor North America, and Deloitte Consulting. He is also a member of the Colorado Forum.

Candidate Statement:

“I have truly enjoyed my time serving on the La Plata Electric Association Board of Directors and am seeking re-election. In the six years that I have been on the board, I believe that I have benefited the board and the membership with my knowledge of business, finance and management.

I am the current Treasurer for LPEA as well as the LPEA representative to Tri-State Generation and Transmission, our power supplier, requiring a trip to Denver on a monthly basis. At Tri-State I am a member of the Executive Committee so I am positioned to bring positive change for LPEA, as well as long-term stability.

My life experiences in corporate management (most recently CEO of Red Roof Inns) and an MBA from the Wharton School of Business have given me solid resources to contribute a strong business background to LPEA in decisions concerning finance and management. I have enjoyed learning the financial models of a rural electric cooperative and especially recognizing that LPEA is on firm financial ground, something that all members should take confidence in.

My participation in the activities of this board has continued the passion of my family in western North Dakota who were instrumental in starting the local electrical co-op.

My family and business, James Ranch, are grounded in sustainable resource management, environmentally sound enterprises, and the support of our local community making those tenets the heart and soul of our livelihood.

I feel that I bring a balanced perspective to the LPEA board, a clear and focused business mind and a sound ethic toward sustainability and local environmental sensitivity.”

Alison Dance is a new candidate for District 4. With extensive education and experience in the hotel and restaurant industry, Dance is a restaurateur and owner of both Cyprus Café and Eno in

downtown Durango. She is a founding member of Local First and Sustainability Alliance of Southwest Colorado (SASCO), and a former officer on the La Plata Democratic Executive Committee.

Candidate Statement:

“I am excited by the chance to represent you on the LPEA Board. I have long been an active leader and businesswoman in La Plata County, a founding member of Local First, and a member of SASCO. As a successful downtown business owner since 1996, thanks to this community, I am able to employ between 30-50 people, pumping over a million dollars into our economy yearly through jobs and sustainable, local purchases from farmers, ranchers and local suppliers. That multiplies with every dollar my employees spend in turn on rent, utilities, food, and fun. Buying local is a smart way to grow our county’s economy from the ground up.

As your Director, I’d bring my small business background and commonsense questions to the LPEA Board, as well as my personal commitment to sustainability and our local economy. LPEA’s website proudly cites their “history of inventiveness and determination.” Let’s embrace that inventiveness now. LPEA has the chance to craft a new energy policy to carry us forward into the 21st century – and that future must include renewables while guaranteeing affordable, reliable electricity for members. Rather than buying our electricity from distant, ageing coal-fired plants, let’s keep those energy dollars here in SW Colorado. Solar and wind installations create local jobs, ensure clean air and water, and provide stable energy prices in an uncertain energy future.

As your next Board representative, I will pursue renewables aggressively and realistically, and seek to encourage all our co-op members who choose to participate in greater energy efficiency and local energy solutions.

I want LPEA to invest in our energy future, not in our energy past. With your vote, I will help make that happen.”