



June 20, 2014

## NEWS

### **LPEA alerts community of aerial inspection of transmission lines** *Helicopter flights in Durango/Bayfield area scheduled to take place June 30*

DURANGO, Colo. – Tri-State Generation and Transmission, La Plata Electric Association’s primary power supplier, will be conducting a helicopter flyover/aerial inspection of LPEA’s transmission assets in the Animas Valley and the City of Durango, east to Bayfield, on June 30, 2014, weather permitting. The effort is primarily for data collection purposes, and Tri-State will be looking at terrain and vegetation in the transmission line corridor.

The aerial inspection and data acquisition is part of the compliance for reliability of the bulk power system, and is being performed in advance of LPEA’s sale of the transmission line to Tri-State. Approximately 83 miles of transmission line from the La Plata County border (near Cascade) to Bodo Industrial Park will be inspected, as well as the Florida Mesa area and lines east to Bayfield.

“This will be very beneficial to LPEA as well as Tri-State,” said Steve Gregg, LPEA manager of operations. “In one or two days, depending on weather, the helicopter will be able to obtain information that will aid in the identification of problem vegetation and other issues that a ground-based inspection would traditionally take our crews weeks to cover. The resulting information will allow our crews to identify and resolve issues before they result in a more serious problem.”

Tri-State has contracted with Merrick Engineering, Inc., which will be flying the transmission line corridor at an altitude of around 600 feet. Local residents may view the black helicopter with Merrick’s logo prominent on the side, and identification tail numbers N5FX. The flights will be minimally invasive due to the heights and speeds that the lines are flown.

“Essentially we want to alert the community of the aerial inspection,” said Gregg. “We have such little air traffic around here, especially in the Animas Valley, that we know people do notice when something is out of the ordinary.”

Optimally, LPEA will provide more exact times (and dates, if the flight is delayed due to weather) in advance of the aerial inspection, posted to the web site, [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop), and distributed through Twitter and LPEA's email alert list. To sign up to follow LPEA on Twitter or receive email alerts, visit [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop).

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.

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