



November 24, 2014

## NEWS

### **LPEA Board adopts “opt out” policy for “Smart Meters”**

*Comment period for accompanying new rate tariffs now underway*

DURANGO, Colo. – The La Plata Electric Association (LPEA) Board of Directors has approved Board Policy 215, AMI Opt-out Program, which delineates the specifics of those eligible to “opt out” of the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) installation.

The Board also gave preliminary approval for a \$20 manual meter reading fee and additional revised fees not related to the Opt-out Program. A 30-day comment period is now underway for the new rate tariffs.

LPEA, in concert with most utilities across the country, is in the process of replacing its analog meters with the AMI system (sometimes referenced as “Smart Meters”). Approximately three-quarters of LPEA’s 41,000 meters are now AMI. According to LPEA officials, the new meters are already proving beneficial, streamlining efficiencies and saving money, as well as enabling members with the AMI meters to securely monitor their energy usage via LPEA’s SmartHub at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop).

“While we have endeavored to educate our members about the myths and facts of this new metering system, we understand that there are those who still do not want the technology at their home,” said Ron Meier, LPEA manager of engineering. “We have to recoup some of the costs of manually reading these handful of old analog meters scattered across our service territory, and the Board settled on the \$20 fee – to be assessed whenever a meter is manually read.”

The actual cost for meter readers to visit the homes of those who opt out of the AMI system is actually \$50-plus per meter, according to Meier.

Members who elect to opt out of AMI must complete the Opt-out Request Form signifying their agreement to the Terms and Conditions outlined on the form. These members will be allowed to self-read their analog meters, but will be subject to a quarterly “true-up,” manual meter read by an LPEA representative, and be charged the \$20 per visit.

Members who decide to opt out after an AMI meter has been installed during the current deployment phase of the system (through 2015) will not be assessed the change-out fee of \$40.

“Members ineligible for the AMI Opt-out Program include those who have services or optional rates that require the AMI system, such as pre-pay or net metered accounts,” said Meier. “However, existing net metered accounts, those with existing solar or wind systems, will be ‘grandfathered in’ and allowed to opt out of AMI if they wish through Dec. 31, 2014, but we do advise that they go with the AMI for engineering reasons – the AMI helps us manage the flow of electricity from their generation systems.”

Others ineligible for opt out include those who have tampered with their meters; those found to not accurately or in a timely fashion participate in the self-read meter program; those who have received a notice of Disconnect for Nonpayment; and those whose meters are inaccessible. A complete version of Board Policy 215 including all specifications of the AMI Opt-out Program is available at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop).

The full list of proposed tariffs, as well as additional information on LPEA’s AMI system, is also available on the LPEA web site, or contact LPEA at 970.247.5786. Comments on the new tariffs must be made in writing to LPEA, PO Box 2750, Durango, Colo., 81302 by Dec. 17, 2014.

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.

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