



La Plata Electric Association, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

April 16, 2015

NEWS

Director elections scheduled in all four LPEA board districts

Election packets to be mailed by April 24; results announced May 16, 2015

DURANGO, Colo. – Ballots for the election of four members to the La Plata Electric Association (LPEA) Board of Directors are set to be mailed by Friday, April 24, 2015. 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 16, 2015.

“We have a tremendous slate of candidates this year and expect a robust election process,” said Mike Dreyspring, LPEA CEO. “This election is very important. We encourage LPEA members to get to know the candidates in their district, and please vote.”

In accordance with LPEA’s bylaws, annually one seat in each of LPEA’s four districts comes up for election.

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

The nearly 8,000 LPEA members in Archuleta County – District 1 – will elect a representative to the board from a field of two: incumbent Bob Formwalt and new candidate Nicholas “Koli” Kazarinoff.

In District 2, which includes approximately 8,300 members in south and west La Plata County, incumbent Jerry McCaw elected to not run for re-election, thus two new candidates, Gregg Dubit and Kohler McInnis will vie for the seat.

In District 3, which is essentially the City of Durango, new candidate Jim Wotkyns is challenging incumbent Britt Bassett. District 3 includes approximately 7,600 eligible voters.

Incumbent Heather Erb will defend her seat against new candidate Karen Barger in District 4. Approximately 7,900 eligible voters are in District 4, which covers north and east La Plata County.

Ballots must be returned by 4 p.m., Friday, May 15 to the La Plata County Clerk’s Office, either by mail or in person. If not voting by mail, members can vote in person at the LPEA

Annual Meeting at Pagosa Springs High School on Saturday, May 16. Registration for the Annual Meeting begins at 9 a.m. with the business meeting to commence at 10:30 a.m. Anyone voting at the Annual Meeting must do so prior to 10:30 a.m.

LPEA, a Touchstone Energy Cooperative established in 1939, provides to its more than 30,000 members, with in excess of 42,000 meters, safe, reliable electricity at the lowest reasonable cost, while being environmentally responsible.

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La Plata Electric Association Board Candidates Profiles Election 2015

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

Nicholas “Koli” Kazarinoff is a new candidate for District 1.

A 10-year resident of Pagosa Springs, Kazarinoff attended the University of Colorado and Meru University, where he received a Doctorate Degree in Neurophysiology of Consciousness. He operated a 217-acre ranch and Lakota Guide and Outfitter Service in Somerset, Colo., and also owned and operated a 160-acre organic soybean and sweet corn farm. His work experience includes hotelier, logistic manager for TAR Corp., and remote technician for Dish Satellite. As Professor of the Science of Creative Intelligence, Kazarinoff was invited to lecture at colleges and universities throughout northern India and the Philippines. He has constructed eco-friendly custom homes, including solar, rammed earth, log and straw bale, and developed green subdivisions.

Candidate's Statement:

“I am running for the LPEA Board because I would like to work with directors and staff to see that LPEA does an outstanding job of communication, including keeping all of the membership more accurately informed and better represented. I will work to see that LPEA’s goals, objectives, policies, plans and programs reflect the changing needs and long term direction of all the members. This involves inviting all members to participate in planning and carrying out programs and policies that affect them. I believe that as a co-op, we should be providing the membership with safe, reliable electricity at the lowest reasonable cost, utilizing renewable resources and technologies, while being environmentally responsible. In meeting our goals we should positively influence local economic development opportunities. We should think of how our policies, operations, and programs will affect not only the current membership but also our children, and their children for generations to come.”

J. Robert Formwalt is the incumbent candidate for District 1.

Mr. Formwalt was raised in Southwest Colorado and completed his college education in Business Administration at Fort Lewis College. He spent the next 10 years in the banking industry at Belgrade State Bank of Belgrade, Mont., and Burns National Bank, Durango, with a focus on real estate and agricultural loans.

Mr. Formwalt served 12 years as an Archuleta County Commissioner, and has participated actively in the local community, as well as statewide, serving on numerous boards and commissions including the Upper San Juan Planning Commission, San Juan Soil

Conservation District Board of Supervisors and the Archuleta County Airport Board. Employed with his wife on their ranch east of Pagosa, he also currently works part time as a Water Commissioner for the Colorado Division of Water Resources.

Candidate's Statement:

"I, Bob Formwalt, am seeking a renewed term on the board of directors of La Plata Electric Association. A main emphasis of my tenure is to ensure the continued build-out of the 115-kV transmission line from Bayfield to Pagosa Springs. This continued build-out is vital to the future economic development of District 1.

"In serving LPEA District 1, I want to be part of the continued dialog with the biomass project and make sure that Pagosa Verde has a seat at LPEA's table. It is important that Pagosa Verde be able to market their electricity when the geo-thermal project is completed.

"Most importantly, I want to ensure District 1 does not get pushed to the side by the desires of Districts 3 and 4 to solarize their districts at the cost of the remainder of LPEA's service area."

One candidate will be elected to represent District 2, South and West La Plata County

Gregg Dubit is a new candidate for District 2.

Mr. Dubit earned a Bachelor's Degree in Forest Resource Management from the University of New Hampshire, with an education license in secondary science, from Fort Lewis College. Currently involved in entrepreneurial ventures, he is owner of the Durango Dog Ranch and a professional energy auditor, nationally certified through the Building Performance Institute and InterNachi, as well as a solar consultant. He served with the Four Corners Office for Energy Efficiency (4CORE) as executive director and weatherization program manager.

Candidate's Statement:

"Today's shifting energy landscape offers new opportunities and challenges. I hope to serve the families and businesses in our community as an LPEA Director to ensure a stable future for our cooperative. I am running because I believe I have the professional experience and positive energy to make a difference as your representative for LPEA in District 2.

In my 25 years as a resident of La Plata County, I have helped hundreds of local families and businesses reduce their energy use and cost as a nationally certified energy auditor. Innovative programs and services are available to LPEA for the benefit of both our members and community. New technologies and financing options can reduce energy use, and costs in our homes, farms and businesses. I will encourage locally distributed electrical generation (hydro from irrigation ditches and solar) to reduce our bills and help co-op members move toward greater energy independence.

As a current business owner, and as the former board chair for our regional Conservation Corps, and the former Executive Director of 4CORE, I will bring sound financial oversight experience; managing costs, capitalizing on opportunities and increasing services will ensure LPEA's long term success."

Kohler McInnis is a new candidate for District 2

A Colorado native with more than three decades in business management, Mr. McInnis is widely known as the owner/operator of the successful Kohler's Printing and Copying in Durango, from which he is now retired. Still self-employed, however, he is a managing member for three investment companies, utilizing his business acumen and experience to direct a variety of diverse investment portfolios. Always active in the community, Mr. McInnis currently volunteers (and has since 2007) in leadership of Troop 507, Boy Scouts of America. He also

volunteers twice monthly at Saint Columba Catholic Church and regularly with the Southwest Colorado Area Health Education Center. Having studied at Mesa State College and Western State College, he is a former Commissioner on the 6th Judicial District Nominating Commission (2007-2012) and actively supported the Durango, Bayfield and Silverton chambers of commerce during his years in business.

Candidate's Statement:

“I am running for the LPEA Board of Directors because I believe affordable electricity should be available to all. The electricity provided by LPEA affects each of us and we must work together to keep LPEA at the top of their game. My more than 35 years of experience qualifies me to work with the board, staff, and associated organizations to look at the big-picture and make sound business decisions while keeping LPEA financially strong, reliable, transparent and accountable to its members. In addition, I would encourage the Association to work toward promoting responsible conservation and renewable energy for both LPEA and its members, reducing our impact on the environment.”

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

Britt Bassett is the incumbent candidate for District 3.

Mr. Bassett is a Colorado native raised in La Plata County where he attended Bayfield schools for 12 years. He has a Master's Degree in Nuclear Engineering from the University of Arizona and his career includes working at Los Alamos National Laboratories in New Mexico, and the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) labs in Colorado. He has been a partner in the startup of three small businesses in Colorado, and is currently an active partner in CalCom Solar, a business that analyzes, designs, and installs large photovoltaic (PV) systems for the agricultural industry in California. Mr. Bassett established an office in Durango for the CalCom Solar analysis team, but the company's main sales and construction offices are in California.

Candidate's Statement:

“As your incumbent Director, my top priorities are to continually strengthen the financial position of LPEA through risk reduction and cost containment while increasing the range of services to our members. The energy industry is changing dramatically and offers opportunities for local economic development that were not available in the past. I have the strong technical background, business experience, and leadership qualities needed to identify these opportunities and to help overcome obstacles in reaching them. With a creative and thoughtful approach I will continue to encourage LPEA to be a leader in embracing the opportunity distributed energy provides to our community. For example, I authored the policy and led the effort to launch LPEA's community solar garden program which resulted in four projects being completed that are locally owned.”

Jim Wotkyns is a new candidate for District 3.

A graduate of Colorado State University, Mr. Wotkyns planted roots in Durango in 1981 and is currently highly regarded as a 30-year owner/partner of The Wells Group Real Estate Brokerage. He has worked in the oil & gas business, which served his real estate career well when dealing with property mineral rights. He and his wife, Daryl, raised two children with agriculture and ranching as a focus of family life. Mr. Wotkyns is also a commercial and residential landlord. As a commitment to the community, he is a POST-certified peace officer, serving as a reserve officer for the Durango Police Department. Additionally, he volunteers for La Plata County Search and Rescue where his knowledge of the high country and horses assists with missions. A

leader in the community, he has served effectively on numerous volunteer boards, including president of the Durango Association of Realtors and Durango Chamber of Commerce.

Candidate's Statement:

“Running for the LPEA board was an easy decision for me to make because I care about our cooperative and community, and I have the business experience to move the cooperative in a direction of high functioning and great representation. I will bring my business background, board experience and personal ethics to LPEA.

The board needs to focus on bylaw compliance, build a code of ethics, and maintain both price and reliability when discussing delivery of electricity. I would like to see the board consider reasonable uses of new and emerging power supplies and technologies. I will be responsive to all members of the cooperative and represent the cooperative honestly and with sincere integrity.”

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

Karen Barger is a new candidate for District 4.

Ms. Barger is the owner of Seasons Rotisserie & Grill. A leader in supporting local farmers and ranchers, with a majority of the food served at Seasons sourced from within 60 miles of Durango, she has actively supported dozens of non-profit organizations, including founding the Durango Wine Experience, which has generated more than \$35,000 to non-profits in La Plata County.

Ms. Barger is an experienced board director, having served in leadership roles for numerous organizations, including nine years on the Business Improvement District board, most recently as chair. She was the first woman ever appointed to the BID, and assisted in helping sustain the economic vitality of the district on a very limited budget. With a military son, she is a supporter of Blue Star Mothers, and is actively involved with La Plata County's first responders, having seen firsthand the importance of their role when fire destroyed her Main Ave. business in 2008. Her management skills allowed that business to re-open within one year.

Candidate's Statement:

“I believe I have a unique perspective that will benefit all members of LPEA. I have more than 20 years' experience as a business manager with thorough understanding of budgeting, projections, payroll and benefits, as well as marketing and staff development and training. LPEA is a business and I am concerned with the direction the organization is heading with board policies that require members to subsidize programs at a time when all our dollars are precious. In addition to being a successful business owner, as a wife, mother and grandmother, I weigh every decision I make with an eye for sustainability, health and economic prosperity for all our community members. We can have it all with LPEA.”

Heather Erb is the incumbent candidate for District 4.

Ms. Erb is a Realtor with Coldwell Banker Heritage House and is actively involved in the community. She lives with her family in the Lemon Reservoir area of La Plata County.

Candidate's Statement:

“I have been involved with energy since receiving a scholarship to study renewable efforts in Europe in 2010. As Vice President of the LPEA Board, I have worked collaboratively with our Board to keep electric rates low and address the shift in energy generation from carbon based to renewable energy. As LPEA representative to the Four Corners Office for Resource Efficiency (4CORE), I support its efforts to assist low income co-op members reduce their utility

bills and participate in renewable energy savings through solar energy assistance programs. I chaired the LPEA Community Solar Garden (CSG) taskforce, which was successful in leading the way for four local CSG solar projects that built several hundred thousand watt local solar arrays constructed by local companies in the LPEA service area with non-LPEA funding. In my first term, I attended state and national electric co-op meetings and classes that furthered my knowledge of the 21st century challenges of energy innovations, increasing energy rates and declining sales.

“The shift from carbon to renewable energy sources is happening with or without us. I believe we must and can secure the benefits of this change to empower our community and keep our energy dollars local. The time is now to plan what our utility will look like in the future.

“We must encourage non-LPEA funded local energy development to ensure local control and keep our energy rates lower. I work for our members and their families. Let’s continue to make LPEA a leader among rural cooperatives.”

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.