



April 7, 2016

NEWS

Director elections scheduled in three LPEA board districts

Election packets to be mailed by Friday, April 15; results announced May 7

DURANGO, Colo. – Ballots for the election of three directors on the La Plata Electric Association (LPEA) board are set to be mailed by Friday, April 15, 2016. 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 7, 2016.

“We encourage our members to be involved,” said Mike Dreyspring, LPEA CEO. “We are facing challenges in the industry, and we 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 3 (City of Durango), new candidate Doug Lyon is the only nominee, thus the election in that district will be cancelled and Lyon will assume the seat of retiring incumbent Michael Rendon.

[Please note: Candidate statements 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 three: incumbent Mark Garcia and new candidates Mike Alley and Calum McNeil.

In District 2, south and west La Plata County, two new candidates will vie for the seat vacated by retiring incumbent Tom Compton: Dan Huntington and Lori Smith Schell, PhD. District 2 includes approximately 8,400 eligible voters.

District 4 members also have an option to vote for one of three: incumbent Jack D. Turner or new candidates John Beebe or Ron Bishop. More than 8,000 eligible voters are in District 4, which covers north and east La Plata County, including part of Bayfield.

Ballots must be received by 4 p.m., Friday, May 6 at the La Plata County Clerk’s office (Bodo Park). The Clerk’s office is the independent, third-party retained by LPEA to tally the ballots utilizing La Plata County’s official ballot counting equipment. Ballots may also be dropped off at LPEA’s offices in Durango or Pagosa Springs, the La Plata County Administration office

in Downtown Durango, and Bayfield Town Hall, or mailed by May 4 to ensure timely delivery at the County Clerk's office.

If not voting prior to the meeting, members can bring their ballots to the Annual Meeting at Sky Ute Casino and Resort in Ignacio on May 7. Registration for the Annual Meeting begins at 9 a.m., with the business meeting to commence at 10:30 a.m. Any member 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 nearly 42,000 meters, safe, reliable electricity at the lowest reasonable cost, while being environmentally responsible. For additional information, visit www.lpea.coop.

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

Mike Alley

Retired; Community Volunteer – 45-year veteran of the rural electric cooperative industry

“LPEA is central to our community. I was privileged to be employed at the cooperative for 20 years, serving at my retirement as superintendent, overseeing operations in Archuleta County. I would now like to give back to all of you, representing our county on the LPEA Board of Directors.

“I foresee that we will soon have a greater demand for electricity in Archuleta County, with new housing and commercial development, and I want to ensure that we have reliable service here. New technology is coming on line that can enhance the reliability, and I believe I am in a unique position to understand how we can incorporate this technology with our current infrastructure for better service, while keeping rates to members in line.

“I have more than 45 years' experience in the electric utility industry, but in addition, I have taken on many volunteer leadership roles, including serving as councilman and mayor when I lived in Princeton, Missouri. Plus I'm proud of working on our economic development efforts here, and I will continue to be involved.

“I'm also proud of the success we had when my wife Liz and I served as chairs for the United Way campaign in our county. At LPEA we also started some great legacies years back, and the LPEA Golf Tournament and Fill the Bucket Food Drive continue to make a difference every year. I believe in community involvement and with your vote, will continue to support Archuleta County to the best of my ability.”

Mark Garcia (Incumbent)

Consultant

“Thank you for allowing me to serve as your director and represent you over the last three years. I have learned a lot about our co-op and sought to make sound decisions on important business matters that support your best interests and that of the co-op. In fact I have voted NO on all rate increases because the rate increases were not necessary. Many of my votes have been in opposition to other directors who have different views or are content

with the status quo. In the next five years, LPEA is going to experience major changes, which are evolving throughout the electric industry and in our own communities, and we better be ready.

“The Board of Directors has been wrestling with tough issues that are critical and important to the future of our cooperative. These issues include addressing rates and policies imposed by Tri-State, rapid changes in the electric industry that are and will have a dramatic impact on the co-op model and a failed LPEA subsidiary (WESODI) which lost millions of member dollars. A lot of tough work is still needed to ensure LPEA is poised for the future and able to meet member demands.

“I would like to continue my service on the LPEA Board. If elected I will continue to represent you, your interests, and make sound business decisions. I welcome your questions, comments and concerns and would gladly meet with you to discuss the past, present and future LPEA.”

Calum McNeil

Business Owner

Calum McNeil was the 8th grade chess champion in Goffstown, New Hampshire. Upon finishing high school he moved to Europe and worked as a stone mason in Parbitsva Castle in the Czech Republic. He went on to found Calum's Cookies in Hawaii, where he won the favor of the locals. He spent time studying business in Oregon, and electrical installation back in New Hampshire. He volunteered with community access television during the 2008 presidential election, and on several other local boards. He moved to the Rocky Mountains in 2009 for the snow. Now a proud landowner in Pagosa Springs, he works in construction and septic installation, and wears a large mustache.

“I want to help efficiencies in LPEA in order to reduce rates for local families.”

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

Dan Huntington

4th Generation Rancher

“I was born in Durango, Colo. in 1947. I am a 4th generation resident in the Hay Gulch area. Attending elementary school on the campus of Fort Lewis College in Hesperus and then to Durango High School, graduating in 1965. After four years at Colorado State University I came back to the Family Ranch with a BS degree in Animal Science.

“Going into partnership with my father we installed sprinkler irrigation with gravity pressure, which resulted in having to dissipate a lot of energy. I always believed that a hydroelectric unit would work at this location but the technology was not available to stop the back feeding of power when the line was not energized. The technology finally came and I installed one of the first micro hydroelectric generators, a 15 kW unit.

“From serving on the Basin Co-op, Inc. Board, I feel that I have the knowledge to help with budgets and the financial statements. Also the workings of a Cooperative are different from a normal business, but it needs to be run as a business to provide infrastructure and power to its members. Being open to new ideas and innovation is a must to move the Cooperative forward in this ever-changing world and make them available to members. After

driving the Activity Bus for 17 years part-time with School District 9-R, I know I can work with almost anyone and come to a resolution of any situation.”

Lori Smith Schell, Ph.D, ERP

Energy Consultant

“Experience. Objectivity. Reasoned policymaking. Bridge building. These are the main characteristics I offer to the LPEA Board.

“I am an energy economist with 30 years of diverse industry and government experience spanning oil and gas, fossil-fueled and renewable electricity generation, cogeneration, and distributed energy. I have built the professional reputation of my independent consulting firm, Empowered Energy, on providing objective analysis.

“I will bring the same professionalism and objective analysis to the LPEA Board by providing reasoned policy decisions to try to balance the sometimes competing interests of LPEA’s members. I have no hidden agenda or political affiliation; my goal is to encourage real dialogue to find areas of agreement or compromise. My Community Solar Garden participation reflects my belief that our future energy requirements demand a broad, diverse, and sustainable energy supply portfolio. I anticipate that every LPEA Board member will at times be displeased with how I vote, a validation of my balanced approach to evaluating the policy issues facing LPEA.

“Meeting my husband Jeff at Penn State University eclipsed the honor of receiving my Ph.D. in Mineral Economics and Operations Research there. Jeff and I have been active members of the community since moving our family to Durango in 2002, the best “corporate” move we ever made. Serving on the LPEA Board would be another way of giving back to our adopted hometown.

“I will focus on face-to-face meetings throughout District 2 to ask for your vote. Please feel free to contact me at 970.247.8181 or LSchell@EmpoweredEnergy.com.”

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

John Beebe

Retired; Community Volunteer – 40-plus year career in business, finance and accounting

“A cooperative ‘...is run for the benefit of all its owners.’ I am running for the LPEA Board because I believe our Board has been overly influenced by special interests. The result is that rate and policy decisions are being made for the benefit of a few at the expense of many with the appearances of conflicts of interest.

“Today’s electricity landscape is complex, rapidly changing, and unsettled - driven by technology, economics and concern for the environment. Coal is cheap with massive investments in infrastructure, but it’s dirty; gas is cheap, but conversions are extremely expensive; wind and solar are clean, but dependent on nature and cannot be effectively stored today. Renewable energy is mandated by State law and encouraged by tax incentives. Electricity is becoming more expensive at an alarming rate. These are difficult issues requiring courageous leadership. It is essential that Board members be analytical, open-minded and not influenced by predetermined agendas.

“I am an experienced businessman anchored by a BS in business/economics and MBA. The majority of my career was in senior management - international public accounting, banking and a 320 attorney corporate law firm. My success in these professions translates into independent judgment and ethical business practices. My community commitment – 34

year local property owner; HOA Board; Upper Pine Fire - former volunteer firefighter & current Board; USFS Resource Advisory Committee; former VISTA volunteer.

“I am uniquely qualified to help make demanding business decisions serving the best interests of ALL members.”

Ron Bishop

Retired – 40-year veteran of the rural electric cooperative industry

“Hello, first I would like to introduce myself to you and the members of District 4. I was born and raised in Montrose, Colo. and moved to Durango in 1964 to attend my further education at Fort Lewis College studying Geology. In 1967 I was drafted into the U.S. Army as a private, and promoted to Buck Sergeant in 13 months. During my tour in Vietnam I was awarded the silver star (3rd highest award in the army) for gallantry in action, the bronze star (5th highest award) for meritorious service, and the air medal (7th highest award for completion of over 25 aerial missions. I was honorably discharged in 1968.

“My expertise in the electric industry began in 1972. I started my career employed by Colorado Ute Electric then transferred to Tri-State when they were bought out. I worked for Tri-State for 40+ years until I retired in 2011. As a high voltage lineman I have been exposed to the real world of electrical generation and transmission, with a real understanding of how people in the field need to operate in a safe and reliable manner at the highest standard.

“We, the consumer, each owns shares of La Plata Electric and Tri-State and deserve to have representatives that strive to keep our rates as low as possible. We should be using our available assets first and then look at alternative energy sources. Most importantly, we should be casting our votes, if not for me, then one of the other qualified candidates for the Board of Directors,”

Jack D. Turner (Incumbent)

“I began with saying it is about community sustainability. Today, with three years of experience as your director, I emphatically say again, it is about community sustainability. It is about keeping your rates low and keeping our energy dollars circulating in our community. It is about locals being first!

“With today’s technology, it is possible to lower rates and strengthen our energy independence. I whole-heartedly support development of local energy in order to limit reliance on outside corporations that keep our rates high and siphon money from our community. With a track record of voting no on every rate increase, I remain committed to lowering rates. With 300 hours of education on the advancements of energy technology, I have the expertise to guide our community into securing energy independence. I will continue to work to lower your rates, to support local economic development, and to keep dollars circulating in our economy.

“Today, it is possible. This is and continues to be my mission as your District 4 LPEA Board Director.”

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](tel:8666329992) 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](tel:2026907442) or email at program.intake@usda.gov.