



La Plata Electric Association, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



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NEWS

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Durango School District 9-R wins competitive grant for district's first electric school bus

DURANGO, Colo. – Durango School District 9-R has been awarded up to \$328,803 to purchase and install a fully electric school bus and related charging infrastructure, thanks to a joint grant application by the school district and La Plata Electric Association (LPEA).

The grant, funded through the Regional Air Quality Council's (RAQC) [ALT Fuels Colorado](#) program, aims to improve Colorado's air quality by incentivizing the replacement of pre-2009 vehicles with fully electric and Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) fleet vehicles. LPEA will contribute an additional \$120,000 to cover electric charging infrastructure and bus costs.

Durango School District 9-R was one of only eight grant awardees out of 38 total applicants. The 81-seat bus is expected to be operational by the fall of 2021.

“This new eBus will be a great addition to our fleet for getting around in town,” said Durango School District 9-R Transportation Coordinator Daniel Blythe. “We were excited to work on this proposal with LPEA and to ultimately win the RAQC grant for the bus as it is a great opportunity for the district to integrate electric vehicles into the system and to continue to explore ways to reduce our carbon footprint.”

Beyond environmental benefits, the electric bus will bring tangible health benefits to the students who ride the bus. Roughly 95 percent of America's school buses run on diesel and emit tailpipe pollution linked to asthma attacks, respiratory illness, and cancer. Electric buses do not emit any exhaust, thereby eliminating this health concern.

The bus will also be the first vehicle-to-grid installation in LPEA's service territory. Also known as bi-directional charging, this will allow the bus to pull electricity from the grid to charge during inexpensive off-peak hours. It will also allow LPEA to pull electricity from the vehicle onto the grid during critical times.

“This is a really cutting-edge project, not just for this area but for the whole state,” said LPEA CEO Jessica Matlock. “Vehicle-to-grid installations are the future because they enable our grid to operate with a higher degree of flexibility. This will equate to big cost savings by allowing LPEA to avoid the purchase of expensive on-peak power, while aligning the charging of the bus with times of less expensive renewable generation. This project delivers financial, social, and environmental benefits to our community, and we're grateful to Durango School District 9-R for their interest and collaboration.”

About La Plata Electric Association

LPEA is a member-owned, not-for-profit, electric distribution cooperative serving La Plata and Archuleta, with segments of Hinsdale, Mineral and San Juan counties. LPEA is the fifth largest cooperative of 22 in Colorado, and aims to provide safe, reliable electricity at the lowest reasonable cost to its approximately 34,500 members. For additional information, contact LPEA at (970) 247-5786 or visit lpea.coop

About Durango School District 9-R

The mission of Durango School District 9-R, an innovative educational system committed to excellence, is to ensure each student develops the skills and attributes for lifelong learning. Through leading instructional models, globally minded learning programs and engaging teaching and learning methods, the district aims to instill in each student the ability to compete and contribute in the global community. Furthermore, the district encourages supportive and safe school environments, guaranteeing equitable educational opportunities for each and every student. For more information, visit us online at durangoschools.org.

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