

WATT'S UP



AT LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION | Celebrating 75 years in 2014

FEBRUARY 2013

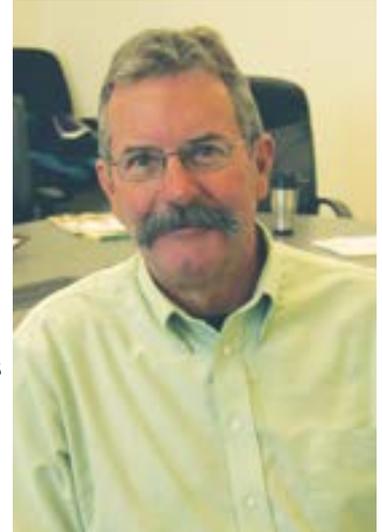
Certified "Safe"

BY STEVE GREGG | MANAGER OF OPERATIONS | SGREGG@LPEA.COOP

LPEA has always been involved in safety accreditation for the cooperative, members and employees through RESAP, the Rural Electric Safety Accreditation Program, which is dedicated to improving employee and public safety, commitment to Regulatory Compliance, and Loss Control.

RESAP has now changed its name to the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program, a new approach for an enhanced national safety program. The premise for this enhanced program is based on two fundamental guiding principles that are essential to achieving safety excellence:

1. Safety must be embraced as a core value where the actions and decisions of La Plata Electric reflect a fundamental and unwavering commitment to safety at all levels of our cooperative.
2. Leaders and employees take ownership of systems and processes that create a safe working environment. Safety systems are a shared responsibility and focus on enhancing safe behaviors and reducing unsafe acts and risks to injury.



The continuous improvement process is a way to achieve safety excellence through engaged leadership, continuous improvement, employee involvement and a strong safety culture.

LPEA views "safety" as a means to ensure that our employees know and understand the hazards of their job, and that they are well-versed with the tools that keep them safe. The tools fall into two groups: the live line tools used to work on energized equipment, and perhaps most important as it's the last line of defense, is the Personal Protective Equipment, or PPE. The PPE consists of a hard hat, safety glasses, fire retardant shirt and pants, rubber gloves and foot protection.

Line personnel train on the procedures and operation of live line tools to become proficient in their use and testing to insure that electricity will not flow through the tool during the operation of electrical equipment. When step-by-step working procedures are followed and the equipment functions properly, the need for the PPE could be considered a redundant precaution to protect the employee from electrical shock and/or burns, but we don't treat it that way because the PPE is the one thing a lineman can control, and the one thing that could be the difference between life and death.

Part of our training also requires that the employee demonstrate their ability to climb a pole and perform pole top rescue of a fellow employee. Training includes discussion of "close calls," or a review of a work procedure where the crews can problem-solve and determine if a different process or procedure was available. By sharing such information, others can grow their awareness, gain knowledge and enhance their personal skills.

Each month LPEA dedicates a day to safety training, review of procedures and refresher training on the use of equipment. This training keeps everyone sharp and alert to changing conditions in the electrical system enabling LPEA to respond safely and efficiently to our members' needs and "keep those lights on." ⚙️

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Next Board Meeting:
9 a.m. | Wednesday, February 13, 2013
LPEA Headquarters, Durango

Mission Statement:
La Plata Electric Association provides its members safe, reliable electricity at the lowest reasonable cost while being environmentally responsible.

Board of Directors:
Jerry McCaw, President - District 2
Tom Compton, Vice President - District 2
Ken Fox, Secretary - District 1
Joe Wheeling, Treasurer - District 4
Britt Bassett - District 3
Jeff Berman - District 3

Herb Brodsky - District 4
Heather Erb - District 4
Bob Formwalt - District 1
Harry Goff - District 3
Davin Montoya - District 2
Lindon "Lin" Stewart - District 1
Chief Executive Officer:
Greg W. Munro

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Co-op members ask...

“Need to Know” basics of LED lighting

LPEA and Tri-State offer commercial and residential lighting rebates to encourage members to upgrade to energy-efficient LED (light-emitting diode) lamps. But, as with any new technology, there is a learning curve.

According to Project Specialist Ray Pierotti, who oversees LPEA's lighting programs, members have many questions when making this lighting decision. Though the price for LEDs is dropping, it is still much higher than other lighting sources, so it pays for members to do their homework before buying.

“The LED Lighting Facts [®]Label on the packaging can be very helpful when finding the accurate replacement,” says Pierotti, referencing a label as is pictured below. “It will help you select the right lamp for the purpose or location.”

Brightness: Lumens measure light output. The higher the number, the more light is emitted. Compare lumens in the bulb to be replaced with the LED to get the equivalent light output.

Estimated Yearly Energy Cost and Life: This is based on three hours use per day and an electricity rate of 11¢ per kilowatt hour.

“LEDs usually don't ‘burn out’ like other types of bulbs,” explains Pierotti. “Over time they do get dimmer and the life is based on how long they operate at 70 percent of the initial light output. Good-quality LEDs are expected to last 25,000 to 50,000 hours or longer. A typical incandescent lamp lasts about 1,000 hours and a comparable CFL, 8,000 to 10,000 hours.”

Light Appearance: This references the color of the light. The “K” stands for “Kelvin,” a unit of measurement in degrees that describes the hue (or color) of a light source.

“Cool colors have a higher Kelvin temperature, 3600 to 5500K, and these lights are often used for reading and task oriented applications requiring a cool, blue-toned white light, such as a workshop or outdoor lighting,” says Pierotti, noting that selecting between daylight and soft white light bulbs is generally a personal preference. “Warm colors have lower color temperatures, 2700 to 3500K, and are considered a yellowish, more ambient light often used in cooler color schemes to add visual warmth with accents and mood lighting.”

Energy Used or Watts: This is the energy required to light the product. The lower the wattage, the less energy used.

Color Rendering Index (CRI): This measures color accuracy on a scale of 0 to 100, with 100 reflecting the perfect outdoor light rendering. Color rendition is the effect of the lamp's light spectrum on the color appearance of objects.

“We encourage members investigating LEDs to visit local businesses who have already changed out their lights, including Maria's Bookshop, Himalayan Restaurant, River City Liquors, Old Town Market, Toh-Atin Gallery, Earthen Vessel, Gloss, Backcountry Experience, and many more,” says Pierotti. “You'll be ‘illuminated.’”

To provide additional information on the new technology, LPEA will host a free lighting workshop, Thursday, Feb. 28, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Lunch will be served, so reservations are required. Visit www.lpea.coop for information on this workshop and LPEA's Commercial and Residential LED rebates. ⚙️

Lighting Facts	
Per Bulb	
Brightness	450 lumens
Estimated Yearly Energy Cost	\$0.72
Based on 3 hrs/day, 11¢/kWh. Cost depends on rates and use	
Life	22.8 years
Based on 3 hrs/day	
Light Appearance	
Energy Used	6 watts

LIVE WIRES

Director Election packets available

Election packets for those interested in running for a seat on the LPEA Board of Directors will be available March 4, 2013, at LPEA offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs. To be placed on the ballot, candidates must return completed petitions to the Durango office by 1 p.m. on March 27.

Four seats on the LPEA board of directors are up for election. Those interested in running are advised to learn about the cooperative and understand obligations and fiduciary duties of the directors. Director candidates must be cooperative member-owners and be permanent residents of the district for which they are seeking office. Learn more at www.lpea.coop.

Want to change the name on your account?

LPEA's records for signing candidate petitions and voting in Board of Director elections are tied to the name of record in LPEA's system – in other words, the name on the electric bill. To update your LPEA records, call 970.247.5786. Authorized changes will be made free of charge. ⚙️

Reprogramming meters

Due to the change in rate structure from LPEA's power supplier, Tri-State Generation and Transmission, which forces a shift in the off-peak, on-peak hours of LPEA's Time-of-Use (TOU) program, all of those TOU meters must be reprogrammed. This is a time-consuming project for LPEA personnel.



LPEA representatives have started the process of visiting homes with TOU meters to make the exchange, but until which time the meter is changed out, customers should heed the off-peak hours from 2012. All off-peak usage will, however, be billed at the new 2013 Off-Peak Night Energy Rate [5¢ per kilowatt hour] until the meter is reprogrammed.

"We hope our members can be patient as we make our way through this transition process," says Mark Schwantes, manager of corporate services. "Once the meters are reprogrammed, you will find a door tag hung on the front door that tells you the new hours and that they are in effect."

Members with additional questions are asked to call LPEA's Corporate Services Department:

Suzy Bynum

970.382.3506 | sbynum@lpea.coop

Debbie Bass

970.382.7722 | dbass@lpea.coop

Mark Schwantes

970.382.3511 | mschwantes@lpea.coop



Talbot steps up

Journeyman Lineman Justin Talbot has been promoted to Line Superintendent at LPEA. Talbot fills the position formerly held by the retiring Roland Pack.

Born and raised in Bayfield, Talbot joined LPEA as a Groundman in 1994 following studies at CSU. Within a year he'd been accepted into LPEA's Apprentice Lineman program and "journeyed out" with his Journeyman Lineman in 1999. He rose to the supervisory position of Foreman in 2004, managing the line crews in the field.

In his new position, Talbot is responsible for all contract tree trimming groups, maintenance of all underground and overhead lines, as well as substations in La Plata and Archuleta counties.

"It's challenging, and definitely something different than what I've been doing during my career at LPEA," said Talbot who will continue LPEA's tradition of pro-active care for the system, as well as respond to customer needs. "We want to keep the lights on and the customers happy."

Talbot is active in the Bayfield community, having served for four years on the Bayfield Town Board. In his spare time he enjoys building spec homes and spending time with his wife Becki and their three daughters, ages 14, 10 and 5.

"Justin is an example of how a career can be built at LPEA," said Steve Gregg, manager of operations. "Hired initially as a Groundman, he basically started on the bottom rung of the ladder and has learned all aspects of operations in his steady progression." 



LIVE WIRES



College scholarship deadline

Remember that the deadline for application to the various college scholarships and awards available through LPEA is March 1, 2013. Included are two 4-year scholarships to any college or university, and two 2-year scholarships for vocational training. For more information and to download applications, visit www.lpea.coop.



The "Basics of Bulbs"

LPEA's Free Information Series continues on Feb. 28, 2013, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. with the "Basics of Bulbs - Understanding New Lighting Technology." Lunch included; RSVP required. Learn more at www.lpea.coop.



Offices closed

LPEA offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs will be closed February 18, 2013 in observance of President's Day. 

Local students heading to Washington DC

Area high school juniors Jacob Branch-Boyle, Gabriela Garcia, Rose Graveson and Meredith Nass have been selected to represent LPEA as part of the National Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington D.C., June 13-20, 2013.

LPEA annually underwrites the cost of the trip for up to four students within its service territory – one from each school district. No applications were received from Bayfield this year.

“This trip is a tremendous opportunity for our area students,” says Greg Munro, CEO. “We’re facing many challenges in the energy arena, and the industry is changing, so it’s important that our next generation gain an understanding about energy policy development at the federal level. We are pleased to be able to further that education.”

Students completed an application and penned a 500-word essay covering any aspect of the electric industry. Excerpts of the students’ essays are below.

LPEA’s student representatives will join juniors from sister electric co-ops across Colorado. The schedule includes an intimate look at the nation’s capitol and the government from the inside, including discussion of current concerns with national and state Congressional representatives. Tours of Washington D.C.’s monuments and museums, plus social activities, are also included.



Jacob Branch-Boyle



Gabriela Garcia



Rose Graveson



Meredith Nass

In his essay Jacob Branch-Boyle [Durango High School] addressed geothermal power generation as a renewable resource: *“Such power plants don’t create pollution, and are forever reliable because the earth’s thermal energy is everlasting and constant, unlike solar or wind power which have been known to be unpredictable.”*

Gabriela Garcia [Ignacio High School] also addressed renewable energy, though her focus was in support of solar power: *“I hope in the future to have everything run by solar power thus saving our fossil banks for emergencies. In Colorado we receive an abundant amount of sunlight enough to power our homes, cars and school.”*

Rose Graveson [Pagosa Springs High School] wrote of the need for clean, renewable energy development: *“By harnessing the sun’s powerful rays, or capturing the power of the wind, we can provide the exact same electricity that burning coal does. But the difference is that methods like solar, wind or biomass do not create the harmful pollution that fossils fuels do.”*

Meredith Nass [Durango High School] recognized the importance of bringing electricity to countries throughout the world, especially impoverished Third World cultures: *“Electricity may be seen as the best hope the world has for promoting a better future; a future where all people will share the privileges of clean water, education, and an opportunity for children to live until they die of old age.”*

Applications for the 2014 Washington D.C. Youth Tour will be available in November 2013. Home-schooled students are eligible to apply. ⚙️

CO-OP MEMBERS

Ask...



Q: : Is LPEA raising rates to increase its own corporate profits and pad its coffers?

A: Absolutely not. LPEA is a non-profit, rural electric cooperative, and by its legal structure it does not make “profits.” We do try to build “margins” into our budgeting to ensure there is money to maintain the system from year to year, but when those margins aren’t used, we return those dollars to our members [customers] in capital credit distributions. Because LPEA is a member-owned cooperative, we [LPEA] are you [customers], and we go out of our way to keep our budget tight and maintain the most reasonable rates possible, while ensuring the system is maintained so you have reliable power. We are necessarily raising rates this year because our costs for providing service to you have increased. ⚙️