

WATT'S UP

Save Your Energy
LPEA
La Plata Electric Association, Inc.
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

AT LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION | Celebrating 75 years in 2014

APRIL 2013

All in the [extended] family...

BY GREG MUNRO | CEO | GMUNRO@LPEA.COOP

LPEA is a rural electric cooperative, and I know, unfortunately, a lot of folks still don't realize what that means. Perhaps with the recent publicity surrounding LPEA, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association and the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC), more of our member-customers will come to a better understanding. LPEA is YOUR rural electric cooperative, and we look out for our members to the best of our ability.

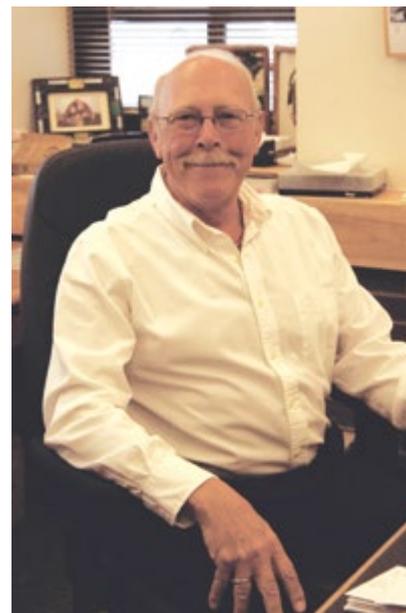
As an electricity distribution company, LPEA receives our wholesale power from Tri-State to distribute to you. That purchased power is more than 70 percent of LPEA's total cost to service our members' electric energy needs, so when Tri-State alters its rate structure, we feel it. Unhappily, we have found that Tri-State's new rate design implemented this year creates an unfair economic burden on many of our member-customers, most notably, energy-conscious residential and commercial customers who have participated in our Time-of-Use program, as well as high-load factor customers, by assessing charges based exclusively on calculated average demands rather than taking into account on-peak, off-peak periods.

Now, please understand that Tri-State is also a cooperative, and its members are 44 rural electric cooperatives, including LPEA, in Colorado, Wyoming, Nebraska and New Mexico. This model has served all of the rural electric cooperatives quite well for years and for that reason, it's been difficult to go forward with a complaint against Tri-State with the PUC, because in essence, it's all in the family. We believe, however, Tri-State's new rate structure is just too painful for our members. Thus, after a year and a half of discussions, meetings and resolutions, our only recourse was to ask the PUC to establish a cost allocation and rate structure that does not discriminate against our member-customers while allowing Tri-State to meet its current revenue requirements. Simply put, Tri-State's former rate structure, with a reasonable rate increase, would accomplish those goals.

Please note that this complaint to the PUC doesn't mean we have abandoned our support of Tri-State. I'd like to remind everyone that Tri-State is extremely effective at providing safe, reliable power – considered among the best in the nation. We're all so used to having electricity whenever we want it, we forget that many parts of the country experience frequent blackouts and brownouts. We don't, and that's due in great part to Tri-State. Plus we work closely on engineering and operations, including construction and maintenance of the lines that carry that electric power to your home to add to that reliability.

Tri-State is steadily investing in renewable energy, is very much involved nationally in new technologies, and even has a seat at the table of EPRI (Electric Power Research Institute). In December, 2012, Tri-State's newest renewable energy source – the 67 megawatt Colorado Highlands Wind Project – began commercial operation in northeastern Colorado. This is the third utility scale renewable resource added to Tri-State's generation mix since

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Next Board Meeting:
9 a.m. | Wednesday, April 17, 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

INSIDE ►►

All about lighting...

Thank you Harry!

Elections up-coming

Co-op Members Ask

USDA funding workshop

Call Before You Dig

LPEA: leading in lighting

Project Specialist Ray Pierotti, LPEA's "lighting guy," advises to never go to Cleveland, Ohio in the winter, given the cold, dreary weather one is likely to experience. He did, however, recently brave the elements to take a "next step" in learning about lighting at the GE Lighting Institute outside of Cleveland in Nela Park for the benefit of LPEA's members.

Pierotti was invited to visit the institute by Tri-State Generation and Transmission's Keith Emerson, and was the only representative from Tri-State's 44 cooperative members to be included. LPEA and Tri-State work together to offer the variety of rebates for energy efficiency, one of the most successful being lighting retrofits.

"The 90-acre campus is a complete lighting environment with the largest base of lighting information in the industry, from existing to new technology," says Pierotti. "We learned a lot about the basics of lighting including quality of lighting along with quantity and 'cost of light.' My knowledge of lighting types – indoor, outdoor, retail and display – was enhanced. I really appreciated the opportunity to improve my skills to better help our members."

The timing of the trip couldn't have been more appropriate as a week following the GE training Pierotti led the workshop, "The Basics of Bulbs – Understanding New Lighting Technology" at LPEA.

"The two-and-a-half hour training had hands-on examples of types and quality of lighting, especially LED technology," says Pierotti. "We also included 'buying tips and buyer beware' throughout the presentation to give our members the knowledge to find the right bulb for the application or replacement."

The workshop also covered the federal lighting regulations that sparked the need for LPEA to focus on changing out lighting, including discontinued lamps and the replacement options.

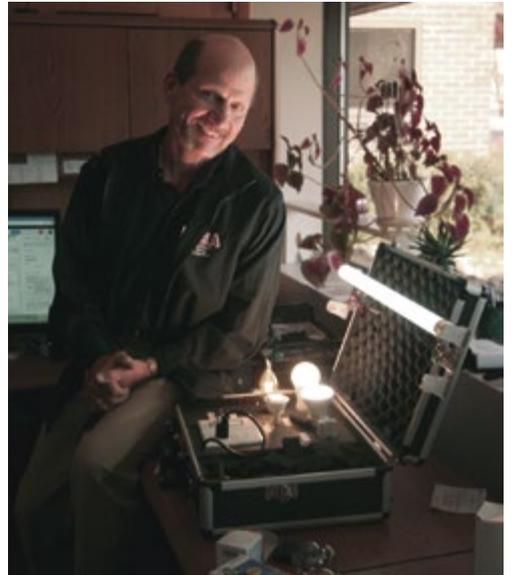
As Pierotti explains, "The 100 watt bulb discontinued in 2012 is replaced with a halogen 72 watt bulb, which is 25 percent more efficient while maintaining the same lumen output. Of course, investing in a LED bulb is an even more efficient option."

Pierotti's knowledge of the new lighting technology also garnered him an invitation to present at the March New Mexico Member Services Meeting, essentially to inform his counterparts at the New Mexico rural electric cooperatives how to initiate and administer a lighting retrofit program for their members, from pre-inspection to rebate payment.

"We're just doing what is right for our members, helping them to save energy and dollars," says Pierotti, noting that LPEA has helped members reduce energy consumption by more than 1.6 megawatts – as of press time. The count increases weekly.

"It's pretty amazing to get outside of our service territory and get a perspective on exactly how successful our program is," adds Pierotti.

Given the interest in lighting retrofits, LPEA will be sponsoring additional workshops in coming months. To receive convenient "email alerts" sign up at www.lpea.coop. Contact Pierotti at 970.382.7770 or rpierotti@lpea.coop. ⚡



Project Specialist Ray Pierotti continues to advance his lighting technology knowledge and help members "save their energy."

[Extended] family...

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2010. It also purchases the output of the 51 megawatt Kit Carson Windpower Project near Burlington, Colo. and the 30 megawatt Cimarron Solar Facility in northeastern New Mexico.

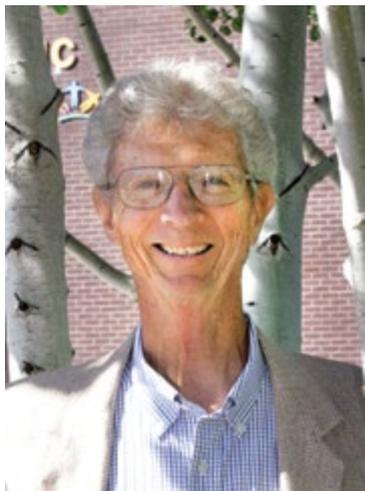
LPEA, working with Tri-State, has been helping incentivize all of us to "save our energy" through energy assessments, rebates and energy efficiency credits, weatherization, commercial lighting retrofits, solar rebates and more.

We understand that Tri-State's costs of doing business will necessarily increase from time to time and therefore rates must also increase. But we ask that the increase be "reasonable," and believe this new rate design is not the best way to recoup costs and treat everyone fairly.

As said, we continue to be a supportive member of Tri-State's cooperative model and intend to remain a member, and we hope we can come to an equitable agreement. The years ahead are going to continue to be challenging for the electric industry. LPEA intends to continue to look out for you – but remember that Tri-State does have our back. ⚡

Thank you Harry

Harry Goff has served on the LPEA Board of Directors since 2001, representing District 3 (City of Durango), however, in advance of the 2013 election, he has opted to step down. LPEA thanks him for his years of service.



Serving as an LPEA director requires a commitment of time, both in attending meetings and conferences to represent the co-op, and in the time it takes to learn all aspects of the electric industry and LPEA as a business. Goff excelled at all.

In addition to his basic duties on the LPEA board, Goff most recently served as chairman of LPEA's operations and planning committee and was on the board of WESODI, LPEA's wholly-owned construction company. During his tenure with LPEA, he was also the co-op's representative on the Tri-State Generation and Transmission board of directors.

A civil engineer by training and education, Goff retired after 40 years in consulting engineering and land surveying, with 22 of those years spent as president of Goff Engineering, a firm still known in the region for its excellence. Prior to founding Goff Engineering, he was part owner of Durango's Ernst Engineering.

Goff has been recognized as Citizen Surveyor of the Year from Professional Surveyors of Colorado; Distinguished Service Award from National Council of Examiners for Engineering/Surveying and the Friend of Durango High School award. ⚙️

Watch your mail

"Your vote makes a difference." It's something of a cliché, but when it comes to electing the directors who oversee the current and future policies of LPEA, every vote really does make a difference. Ballots for LPEA director elections will be mailed Friday, April 19, 2013.

"We want our members to be involved," says Greg Munro, CEO. "We have many challenges, and our board members will need to be thoughtful and conscientious going forward. This election is important. We encourage all LPEA members to get to know the candidates and vote."

In accordance with LPEA's bylaws, one seat in each of LPEA's four districts comes up for election annually. As of press time, the full slate of candidates was unknown, however, incumbents Lindon Stewart (District 1-Archuleta County), Tom Compton (District 2-South and West La Plata County) and Herb Brodsky (District 4-North and East La Plata County) had returned their election petitions. Incumbent Harry Goff (District 3-city of Durango) announced his retirement.

Election materials are mailed to all member-owners (residential and commercial customers). For votes to be counted, ballots must be returned by Friday, May 10 to FredrickZink & Associates in Durango. The independent CPA firm has been retained by LPEA to tally the ballots utilizing La Plata County's official ballot counting equipment. Ballots may also be physically brought to the LPEA Annual Meeting on Saturday, May 11. If voting in person, be sure to register before 10:30 a.m. to make sure your ballot is counted.

Election results will be announced at the LPEA Annual Meeting, planned for the Sky Ute Casino and Resort in Ignacio on Saturday, May 11. Registration begins at 9 a.m., with the business meeting to commence at 10:30 a.m. A complimentary lunch for all in attendance follows. ⚙️

CO-OP MEMBERS

Ask...



Q: We always shifted to "summer" hours for the Time-of-Use program in mid-May. Is that going to happen this year?

A: With the new rate structure established by Tri-State Generation and Transmission, LPEA's power supplier, the Time-of-Use hours (for both the regular TOU customers and those who have ETS heaters) are now year-round, so no, you don't need to change your use patterns between May 15 and Sept. 15.

Please do remember that ALL DAY every Sunday throughout the year, off-peak rates apply. Plus more holidays (with ALL DAY off-peak) have been added with the new structure. Enjoy lower cost electricity on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. Please call us [970.247.5786] if you have any questions about Time-of-Use. ⚙️

Funding efficiency/renewables through USDA

LPEA will host an energy efficiency improvements and renewable systems grant education training featuring U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development representatives Pattie Snidow and Charles Thompson, Thursday, April 18, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at LPEA's Bodo Park headquarters (45 Stewart St.), Durango.

The “brown bag lunch” workshop supports the USDA's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), and is free and open to all businesses or agriculture producers interested in seeking additional funding for energy efficiency upgrades and renewable systems.

“The next USDA funding cycle hasn't been announced, but we want our members to be ready and informed of how to apply for a grant,” says Sue Maxwell, project specialist. “LPEA was a successful recipient of a \$100,000 USDA grant for energy audit review and education in 2011. We encourage local small businesses and our regional farmers and ranchers to look into this opportunity, and LPEA wants to help however we can.”

The USDA grants, which can be up to 25 percent of a project's costs, are designed to encourage implementation of commercially available energy efficiencies or renewable energy products on a commercial building, or energy efficiency improvements to manufacturing processes or equipment such as coolers, refrigerators, etc.

Under USDA guidelines, eligible applicants are those considered small businesses by the Small Business Administration or agriculture producers, private sector applicants only. Non-profit organizations and local governments are not eligible.

“But we do want to encourage energy efficiency and renewable energy contractors to attend, as they play a key role in the success of the application for a small business or agriculture producer,” adds Maxwell.

Reservations are required. For further information and to RSVP, contact Maxwell at 970.382.7170 or smaxwell@lpea.coop. ☀

Don't just “dig”

It may seem to be a harmless thing – digging a hole in the yard for that new spruce tree or forsythia. A word to the wise – dial 8-1-1 before you dig.

Utilities can be buried only a few inches underground, making them easy to strike even during shallow digging projects. More than 256,000 underground utility lines are struck each year in the U.S., resulting in injuries, property damage and electrical outages, and 35 percent of all those digging damages result from not calling before digging.

“As spring comes along, everyone is ready to get out into the yard, or they're looking into home improvement projects,” says Steve Gregg, LPEA manager of operations. “All we ask is that before you start excavating for that new deck or outbuilding, or even with new landscaping, let us come out and do a line locate. No job is too small.”

Within two days of dialing 8-1-1, LPEA will send a professional line locator who will mark the paths of any underground cables. Line locate arrangements can also be made online via the Utility Notification Center of Colorado, www.uncc.org/web/guest/services. ☀



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

LIVE WIRES

Home and Ranch Show up-coming

Stop by the La Plata County Fairgrounds April 26-28 and visit with the LPEA staff and volunteers involved in the LPEA Round Up Foundation. Round Up is LPEA's non-profit foundation that provides grants to local non-profit agencies and organizations.

Save the Date!

The annual LPEA Golf Tournament is set for Saturday, June 22 at the Pagosa Springs Golf Course. Proceeds will benefit the Darin Rome Memorial Scholarship Fund for local music students. Rome was an LPEA Journeyman Lineman and musician killed in a tragic accident in 2011. As a special addition to the event, a celebration and silent auction, including live music with Tim Sullivan and special guests will be held at 6:30 p.m. following the tournament at the Pagosa Springs Community Center. Stay tuned for tournament registration information, or if you're interested in volunteering, contact Mike Alley (970.382.7721) or Laura Rome (970.382.3508) to get involved. ☀