

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

JULY 2013

Foolhardy notion

BY GREG MUNRO | CEO | GMUNRO@LPEA.COOP

Each July we celebrate our nation's independence. In the midst of the fireworks and parades, lots of good food and sunny days on the lake, I still can't help but think about the independent streak that inspired groups of farmers around America's countryside to band together and improve their quality of life through electricity.

President Franklin Roosevelt did pledge federal aid in the form of low-interest loans and engineering expertise, but, beyond that, rural Americans didn't have much help in bringing electricity to their homes. Regardless, they pulled themselves up by their proverbial bootstraps and figured out how to do it all by themselves. As an old adage in our industry goes, "Electric co-ops were constructed with lines, poles and the foolhardy notion that we all prosper by helping each other."

I've always had great respect for and been in awe of the generation that not only lived through the Great Depression, but was also thrown into a World War. Those folks had to grow up quickly to meet the challenges of their era. Yet, they still found the time and energy, and independence, to make rural electric cooperatives a reality in their communities.

The strong, independent streak of these rural electric cooperative founders not only tends to inspire cooperatives today, it remains a guiding principle. The Fourth Cooperative Principle, "Autonomy and Independence," means that no matter what contracts LPEA might enter into, we will always remain an independent entity. And while we work with our sister cooperatives as well as oversee the generation and transmission company our regional cooperatives banded together to create (Tri-State Generation and Transmission) LPEA is a leader all on its own.

In example, LPEA has been aggressively involved in energy efficiency and conservation, as we remind folks, saving energy has the biggest bang for the buck AND for the environment. Through our 2012 efforts with energy efficiency kits, weatherization, energy assessments, commercial lighting retrofits and more, we have reduced

consumption of nearly 2 million kilowatt hours. That's 2 million less kWh that must be produced, and 2 million less kWh that our members need to purchase.

Each year, LPEA's annual meeting becomes an independence celebration. You elect your board of directors and we discuss co-op business. We share a meal and have some fun. Next year we will celebrate our 75th Anniversary at the Community Concert Hall at Fort Lewis College. Mark your calendar for Thursday, May 22, 2014, early evening.

Electric cooperatives form a vast network across the country, with lines strung in 47 states, serving 42 million people. This Fourth of July, as we recognize the hard-fought battle that created the United States, I'll also give a respectful nod to LPEA's founders, who beat incredible odds to improve lives in Southwest Colorado. ⚡



Mailing Address: PO Box 2750 Durango, CO 81302-2750
Street Address: 45 Stewart St. Durango, CO 81303 | 603 S. 8th St. Pagosa Springs, CO 81147
970.247.5786 | www.lpea.coop

Next Board Meeting:
9 a.m. | Wednesday, July 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:
Davin Montoya, President - District 2
Heather Erb, Vice President - District 4
Ken Fox, Secretary - District 1
Joe Wheeling, Treasurer - District 4
Britt Bassett - District 3
Jeff Berman - District 3
Tom Compton - District 2

Bob Formwalt - District 1
Mark Garcia - District 1
Jerry McCaw - District 2
Michael Rendon - District 3
Jack D. Turner - District 4

Chief Executive Officer:
Greg W. Munro

INSIDE ►

Harms earns accreditation
Board officers elected
Budget your billing
LPEA welcomes Grubb
New lighting codes
Meet the Trucks

Looking to the future

Systems Engineer Dan Harms has completed The Robert I. Kabat Management Internship Program (MIP), offered by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. MIP is considered one of the most exclusive educational programs in the nation for electric cooperative management.

Held in conjunction with the University of Wisconsin, MIP is an intensive, six-week program that focuses on different management issues and provides comprehensive analysis of the functions and processes of management, as well as practical application through individual and small group projects. Participants are guided through all facets of the electric utility industry, including the many changes occurring throughout the nation.

Only rural electric cooperative CEOs and top level management participate in the program, which allows greater emphasis of study on management challenges and the aspects of consumer-ownership that cooperatives enjoy.

"Although all the classes were extremely valuable, the opportunity to network with the rest of the participants was even more beneficial," says Harms. "We all exist to 'deliver reliable, affordable power,' but each cooperative has its own unique way of doing it. I now have a list of solid resources that I can call on."

"We're very pleased that Dan has completed the Management Internship Program," says Greg Munro, LPEA CEO. "The skills and information that he has amassed will benefit him personally and professionally, and strengthen our LPEA team, ultimately helping us provide better service to our members."

As a company, LPEA supports continuing education for all staff members within their various disciplines. Nine LPEA staff members have received their MIP certification. ⚙️



Dan Harms (left) receives his MIP certification from Gary Pfann, NRECA director, executive & staff education.

LPEA Board elects officers

Davin Montoya [District 2] will serve as 2013-2014 president of the LPEA Board of Directors, with Heather Erb [District 4] serving as vice president. Directors Ken Fox [District 1] and Joe Wheeling [District 4] were chosen to continue in their positions as secretary and treasurer, respectively.

Wheeling will also maintain his seat on the Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association board. Jeff Berman [District 3] and Bob Formwalt [District 1] will represent LPEA on the Colorado Rural Electric Association and Western United boards, respectively. Ken Fox will also sit on the LPEA Round Up Foundation board.

As per the LPEA by-laws, officers are elected each year at the first board meeting following the cooperative's annual meeting. Complete biographies of and contact information for all LPEA board members are available on LPEA's web site, www.lpea.coop.

"We have challenges in the energy industry, both nationally and locally, and the LPEA board will have some important decisions to make in the coming months and years," said Montoya, who has served on the LPEA board since 1990. "As always, however, the La Plata Electric board will continue to listen to our members, and seriously consider what is best for our members as we go forward." ⚙️

LIVE WIRES

Independence Day Observance

LPEA offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs will be closed Thursday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day.

Energy Star Appliance Rebates

More than 2,300 rebates for purchase of Energy Star appliances have been processed by LPEA, with in excess of \$90,000 going back to members. Purchase a new Energy Star® refrigerator, freezer, dishwasher or clothes washer and receive \$40 rebates. Visit www.lpea.coop for information.

SW Colorado Women's Small Business Conference

LPEA representatives will be on hand at the 4th Annual Southwest Colorado Women's Small Business Conference designed to assist women entrepreneurs - Friday, July 12, DoubleTree Hotel, Durango. For more information and to register: www.coloradosbdc.org. ⚙️

Consider “Budget Billing” option

To assist members in managing monthly expenses, LPEA reminds members of the availability of the Budget Billing Program.

“Electricity is a commodity used by virtually everyone, but consumers can’t always predict in advance how much they will use in any given month,” says CFO Dennis Svanes. “This can impact efforts of a household or a business to budget, as those kilowatts are billed after you use them, not before.”

With the Budget Billing Program, LPEA reviews a customer’s use of electricity during the previous 12 months as a base, and averages the amount of the bills to determine a set monthly payment, which will be assessed for 11 months. The twelfth month will be used to “settle up,” with the customer paying more or less than the average month to compensate for the electricity actually used during the year.

“The Budget Billing can eliminate dramatic surprises with your electric bill,” adds Svanes, reminding that members must have at least one year of billing history to participate in the program. “Often in the winter electricity use spikes up, especially when we have extraordinarily cold months. By participating in Budget Billing you can spread out the cost over the year. We really encourage our members to look at this option and see if it can work for them.”

LPEA also offers convenient e-billing as well as auto-pay programs. To learn more and get started with Budget Billing or any of the billing services options, visit www.lpea.coop or call 970.247.5786. ⚙️

Grubb named Billing Clerk

LPEA welcomes Ashley Grubb to the Finance and Accounting team, serving as the cooperative’s new Billing Clerk. She fills the position recently vacated by Jean Vittelto, who retired after 32 years with LPEA.

“That’s what I’m looking forward to,” says Grubb, referencing the longevity of employment at LPEA. “I appreciate that this is a place to be for a career. I’m looking forward to the challenges of this new position.”

Grubb comes to LPEA following employment in the medical field

where she garnered experience in customer relations and billing.

Raised in Durango, she attended Colorado State University at Fort Collins for two years before being wooed by Fort Lewis College’s Athletic Department to return to her hometown. As a result, Grubb completed her degree in psychology at Fort Lewis while participating competitively on the school’s mountain biking team.

“I grew up doing BMX and raced until just a few years ago,” says Grubb, who competed nationally and internationally in BMX, and in 2007 won the women’s 17-24 Cruiser Class at the Union Cycliste International BMX Championships in Canada. “Until last year they didn’t have collegiate BMX, so that’s why I competed in mountain biking for the Fort.”

Though essentially retired from competitive racing, Grubb continues to train and has promised her father that they will ride the Iron Horse Bicycle Classic in 2014. She will be married in the fall to Tommy Tokarczyk of Durango. ⚙️



PIEROTTI NEW “VOICE” OF LPEA



With the retirement of John Mackley, the need arose for a new “voice” for LPEA’s weekly “Enlightening Energy Updates,” which air on Four Corners Broadcasting’s three stations, 101.3 FM, 100.5 FM and AM930. LPEA’s “lighting guy” Ray Pierotti took on the challenge.

“Mr. Mackley’s shoes are big ones to fill,” says Pierotti, referencing Mackley’s years of radio experience. “I’m rehearsing, and I’ll do my best to keep LPEA’s members informed.”

The radio updates offer energy-saving and electrical safety tips as well as news of general interest from LPEA. Tune in on Thursdays shortly after the 8 a.m. news. ⚙️

Lighting “controls” to be mandated

Attendees at the recent LPEA Basics of Bulbs lighting workshop learned that new, much more stringent building codes from the Federal government pertaining to energy efficient lighting go into effect on Oct. 1, 2013. Of note were requirements for “controlled” lighting.

“There’s going to be a huge change in culture with the new codes,” says Dave Warner, of Centauri Sales, Albuquerque, N.M., which specializes in lighting control products. “Lighting control has never been more relevant.”

“Once you’ve gone to LEDs, controls are the only way you can further increase your energy savings,” says Ray Pierotti, project specialist and LPEA’s “lighting guy.” “Lighting controls and dimmers save energy and money, enhance comfort and convenience, increase productivity and improve safety and security.”

According to the new codes, all new commercial construction and even moderate renovation projects that affect some 10 percent of the connected lighting load, regardless of the size of the building, must comply with a number of provisions – in example, automatic lighting shutoff and control devices to manage lighting in the space.

“The technology is going to ‘vacancy’ sensing as opposed to ‘occupancy’ sensing,” says Warner. “In other words you’ll have to turn the light on, but when you leave the room, the lights automatically shut off. This, in fact, does translate into 27 percent additional energy savings.”

The new codes are also requiring “daylight harvesting” or lighting in daylight zones within rooms with windows or skylights. In basic terms, lighting is



Dave Warner from Centauri Sales explains lighting “controls” at a recent LPEA lighting workshop held at the cooperative’s Durango headquarters.

designed to react to the availability of natural light through windows. A room’s lighting design can designate less illumination close to windows, and full illumination well into the room, and even react to cloud cover outside. This is accomplished by establishing automatic day-lighting zones with sensors installed in the ceiling.

Simple “dimming” can also save energy, lengthen the life of a bulb and comply with new codes that specify that controls must be installed to allow for 30-70 percent reduction of power (in addition to turning off lights). According to Warner, studies indicate that businesses can trim the lighting and 80 percent of people will not notice that the lights have actually been dimmed.

“Things continue to evolve rapidly in the world of lighting, and the changing technology can be difficult to keep up with,” says Pierotti. “That’s something LPEA wants to assist with, which is why we host regular informational workshops. And if you’re doing new commercial construction or remodeling, give us a call and we can help with your lighting choices.”

Regarding the new federal codes – titled ASHRAE 90.1-2010 – design professionals should review specific language to ensure project compliance, www.ashrae.org. ☀

THEY MET THE TRUCKS AT LPEA

Horns blared, sirens screamed, and heavy equipment offered the sounds characteristic to their operation as “Meet the Trucks” was staged in the LPEA parking lot on June 8. Vehicles from the City’s Big Red Trolley to fire engines and everything in between converged for the fundraiser for Skills for Living and Learning, Piedra Learning Community and Silver Spruce Academy.

Traditionally the event has been held at the fairgrounds, but the price tag for rental had become too high. LPEA donated the space free of charge. LPEA’s bucket truck proved to be a highlight for children young and young at heart, as Journeyman Lineman Shaylon Sieg offered lifts high in the sky above the festivities (as pictured). Journeyman Lineman Archie Ribera and Equipment Operator Dennis McCarthy also volunteered at the event. ☀

