

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

OCTOBER 2013

Understand your electric cooperative

BY GREG MUNRO | CEO | GMUNRO@LPEA.COOP

Every October not-for-profit cooperatives of all sorts recognize National Cooperative Month as a way to educate the public about how co-ops work and to appreciate their many members.

I'd like to take this annual recognition to highlight the notions that guide all co-ops: the seven cooperative principles. These notions lead electric cooperatives like LPEA to do business in a better way every single day. Here are real-life examples of how the principles affect your cooperative.

Voluntary and Open Membership, and Democratic Member Control

Co-ops are open to anyone who is able to use their services, which means any person who moves into LPEA's service territory is allowed membership. Annual meetings serve as a way for members to get to know the people who run their co-op, and it's where members are updated on business matters. Every year in May, LPEA convenes for its annual membership meeting, and in 2014, we will be celebrating our 75th Anniversary with an extra special Annual Meeting on Thursday, May 22, at the Community Concert Hall at Fort Lewis College. More details to come!

Democratic member control means members vote for a director who represents them on a board, which governs the cooperative.

Members' Economic Participation

Because electric cooperatives are owned by their members, they do not create profits for distant shareholders. Any excess revenue, called margins, is allocated back to the membership in the form of capital credits, or patronage capital.

Capital credits are retired on a 15 to 20 year cycle and paid back to members each year based on their purchases (in the case of electric cooperatives, electricity) from the cooperative. Margins are used by the co-op as working capital for a period of time, and then paid back to individual members. Since incorporation in 1939, LPEA has

returned \$35 million to its members.

Allocating and retiring margins to members helps distinguish cooperatives and we're proud to support our communities by putting money back into the local economy and into the pockets of those we serve. It makes our business model special.

Autonomy and Independence

Electric cooperatives form a vast network across America.

They're found in 47 states, and cooperative-owned electric lines cover 75 percent of the nation's land mass. But what's unique is that each cooperative is an autonomous, independent business.

We do work with our many sister co-ops, but LPEA members are the sole governors of LPEA. Our member-elected board of directors approves policies and resolutions that inform the way we do business.

Education, Training and Information

Cooperatives have a responsibility to keep their members informed, not just about cooperative business, but also about topics such as energy efficiency, safety and community contribution. For example, we utilize *Colorado Country Life* as one way to keep our members up on



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Next Board Meeting:

9 a.m. | Wednesday, October 16, 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

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Sight-in Days for hunters

In an effort to both assist hunters and protect valuable electrical equipment, LPEA will once again help underwrite "Sight-In Days" at the Durango Gun Club Outdoor Range, Oct. 10-11 and 17-18, and Oct. 31-Nov. 1.

During Sight-In Days, the Durango Gun Club is open to the general public/hunters from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for rifle scope sighting, and hunters are encouraged to take advantage of the controlled environment to prepare their firearms for the season. Given this opportunity, LPEA officials ask that hunters not take aim at electrical equipment to avoid causing a power outage and expensive and dangerous repairs.

During the special Sight-In Days, Durango Gun Club staff, plus volunteer club members, will be on hand to answer questions, provide assistance and do minor firearms repair. Donations to the club are welcomed, but no payment is required. LPEA has contributed \$500 to cover costs incurred by the club for the Sight-In Days.

The Durango Gun Club's outdoor range is located on CR 213 [La Posta Road]. For further information, contact Joseph Perino, Durango Gun Club secretary/treasurer, 970.749.3453. ⚡

Round Up supports American Red Cross

It's just a vehicle. Well, no, it's a vehicle that provides sustenance and support to the folks who are assisting the community, as well as a refuge for those who have been impacted by a personal disaster such as a fire. And it belongs to the American Red Cross Chapter of Southwest Colorado.

Thankfully, the region has not experienced a mass catastrophe in recent years, but that doesn't mean the Red Cross Disaster Team hasn't been deployed to help individuals throughout the region. Funding from the LPEA Round Up Foundation has enhanced the effort.

"We have been able to retrofit an emergency response vehicle thanks to Round Up and community member donations," says Cindi Shank, local Red Cross executive director, of the retired ambulance donated by the Los Pinos Fire Department. "The vehicle will be used to provide food and water support to our local emergency responders (fire, police, EMS) during extended response."

It also is a solution for the Red Cross in isolated instances, to provide victims with a safe and quiet place to work with Red Cross volunteers after, for example, a fire.

The vehicle will serve communities in Southwest Colorado and the San Luis Valley.

The La Plata Electric Round Up Foundation contributed \$1800 that helped purchase new tires and batteries for the vehicle.

All LPEA members can "round up" their electric bill to the next higher dollar, and those pennies add up to enable the volunteer Round Up board to make grants that benefit the community, as with the Red Cross vehicle. Visit www.lpea.coop and click on the Round Up icon to sign up to "round up." ⚡



Ready to serve – pictured with the vehicle enhanced by the LPEA Round Up Foundation are Renate Widder, mass care lead for the Southwest Colorado Red Cross Chapter, Greg Rossell, disaster volunteer and Cindi Shank, Red Cross, Southwest Colorado Chapter, executive director.

LIVE WIRES

Lighting workshops set

LPEA will reprise its Free Information Series with two "Lunch & Lights" workshops. Technology continues to rapidly evolve so sessions will include an update on the latest in energy efficient lighting. Lunch & Lights are set for Tuesday, Oct. 22 at the Ruby M. Sisson Library, Pagosa Springs, and Thursday, Oct. 24 at LPEA's multi-purpose room, Durango. Both sessions are 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. and lunch is included. R.S.V.P.s are required to Ray Pierotti, 970.382.7770 or rpierotti@lpea.coop.

Read Colorado Country Life on line

LPEA posts each month's Colorado Country Life newsletter on its web site, www.lpea.coop, so those members who wish to opt out of receiving the hard copy magazine can do so by emailing info@lpea.coop or call 970.247.5786. Members are encouraged to sign up for email notices. A reminder that CCL is posted will be emailed. On the LPEA home page, click on "Contact Us" to sign up. ⚡

Charge it up here

It looks a bit like a regular gas pump, but it's significantly more compact, and the "power" that it generates is electricity for the new vehicles that run on clean electric energy.

Currently Durango residents and visitors can find an LPEA meter stationed in the middle of the Durango Transit Center parking lot, registering the "power" pumped into any electric plug-in vehicle that needs a recharge from the City's new EV charging stations.

As part of the Colorado Energy Office Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment [EVSE] grant incentive program, the City of Durango purchased and installed the dual-cord, level two [240 volt/ 40 amp] electric vehicle charging stations, which are available and open to the public. Additional stations are planned for the future.

As the City notes, "The City of Durango recognizes the importance of developing and investing in infrastructure to support a variety of alternative-fuel and transportation options... Access to EV Charging infrastructure plays a critical role in furthering the City's efforts. The project enhances the regional potential for electric vehicle procurement and provides a viable alternative to conventional petroleum products."

The hourly rate for charging vehicles ranges from \$1.80 to \$2.20, which covers the base charge/infrastructure costs, administrative fees and cost of electric power. Hourly charging payments can be made in a variety of ways – from purchase of a pre-paid ChargePoint card to use of personal credit cards. Visit www.durangogov.org for additional information. ⚙️



Power up – Electric Vehicle Charging Stations are located at the Durango Transit Center.

Trick-or-Treat (for kids) at LPEA

It'll be a "howling good time." LPEA will host a special Open House for Children on Halloween, Thursday, Oct. 31, 2:30-5:00 p.m. at both of the cooperative's offices, 45 Stewart St., Durango (Bodo Industrial Park) and in Pagosa Springs at 603 S. 8th St. The event is designed to offer a fun-filled, safe environment for youngsters (infants to 12-years-old) to enjoy Halloween festivities.

LPEA's facilities will be transformed [thanks to the "spirit" of LPEA employees] into "frightfully fun" venues for trick-or-treating.

"We're excited to offer a safe alternative for young families to celebrate Halloween," says Linda Looman, LPEA human resources director who's working with a staff committee to make the event a reality. "Our employees will be in costumes and be distributing treats from their offices to all children who come to visit."

Trick-or-treaters will also be given a reflective sports-pack and enjoy light refreshments as part of their "haunted" tour.

"Internally, we're also holding a contest for our employees, with awards to be given for top costumes and best decorated office, area or truck," says Looman. "We're all getting in the 'spirit' so we hope a lot of our younger members will come by and join us for the fun."

The event is free to all LPEA children [and their parents]. For additional information, contact Looman at 970.382.3572 or llooman@lpea.coop. ⚙️

CO-OP MEMBERS

Ask...



Q: What's happening with the PUC complaint against Tri-State's discriminatory rates?

A: The Administrative Law Judge [ALJ] recently denied Tri-State's motion to dismiss our Complaint filed at the Colorado Public Utilities Commission challenging Tri-State's A37 Rate structure. The ALJ's decision is a good first step toward a more equitable rate design. Over the next 45-60 days, Tri-State can file exceptions to the decision with the PUC Commissioners, after which LPEA will file a response and the PUC Commissioners will render a decision. The PUC process will be lengthy but we look forward to an opportunity to debate the merits of the case before the PUC. The cooperatives and Tri-State continue to work in good faith to seek resolution and it is with this attitude that LPEA has maintained our positive and professional relationship with Tri-State and its staff. Although there are several steps yet to take before this issue is resolved, we remain committed to finding a solution that benefits everyone. ⚙️

Welcome CSR Donna Arriza

To further enhance LPEA's member care, Donna Arriza has been selected as a new Customer Service Representative. Based at LPEA's headquarters in Durango, Arriza works with LPEA customers on billing issues, new accounts and the cooperative's various products and services.



Raised in Delta County, Colo., Arriza comes to LPEA from the La Plata County Clerk's Office, where she oversaw coordination of elections held in the county, including LPEA's board of director elections. She joined the county staff nearly eight years ago, initially handling customer information, following her return to Colorado after a 15 year "side trip" to California. While in Orange County, Calif., she worked as Customer Care Manager for the Irvine Company.

"We're thrilled to have Donna as part of the team," says Betsy Lovelace, customer service manager. "Her wealth of experience from her varied positions over the years has prepared her perfectly for this position with LPEA."

The mother of two grown boys, Arriza and her husband are active in Durango's outdoor pursuits.

"I'd heard a lot of great things about LPEA, so I'm excited to be part of it now," says Arriza. "I enjoyed working at the county, but I'm now looking forward to this new chapter in my life." ⚙️

Remember co-op values...

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relevant news. We also have regularly updated web site, work closely with our local media, and utilize "social media" to keep you, our members, informed.

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Even though co-ops are independent entities, they still rely on one another to share resources, information and, in some cases, manpower. Electric co-ops have long relied on one another to get power restored more quickly after severe weather emergencies. Called mutual-aid agreements, it works just as it sounds: When we need extra hands during a major snow storm, our sister co-ops do help out. Mutual aid assistance helps all of us get the power back on much faster.

Concern for Community

Possibly the most visible of all the cooperative principles, Concern for Community is what drives electric co-ops to be good stewards of the communities they serve. LPEA undertakes a variety of projects, from college scholarships to sponsorships of many local events. We also are active in economic development efforts in both La Plata and Archuleta counties – effort that helps to sustain our communities for the long-haul.

While our first priority is delivering safe, affordable, reliable electricity to those we serve, while also being environmentally responsible, we also believe strongly in supporting and contributing to the development of our communities. Even if there were no "concern for community" principle, every person who works at LPEA lives here, too. We're friends and neighbors first.

Keep current on activities at YOUR electric cooperative at www.lpea.coop. ⚙️

CAROLYN FOSTER NAMED ENGINEERING CLERK

Carolyn Foster has joined the Engineering team at LPEA as Engineering Clerk, filling the position recently vacated by Dennis Baxter, who retired.

As Engineering Clerk, Foster is the first point of contact for members and/or contractors initiating new construction projects or seeking changes to existing electric infrastructure. Based at LPEA's headquarters in Durango, she oversees project coordination from concept to the start of construction.

Foster, who grew up in a military family and lived throughout the world, is also a veteran of the US Army Reserves, where she achieved the rank of Sergeant and served in psychological operations. A graduate in liberal studies from San Diego State University, she worked for seven years with San Diego Gas & Electric in positions similar to her new one with LPEA.

Foster and her family had been visiting Colorado on hunting trips for many years, and when her husband, also a military veteran, retired five years ago, they relocated to Pagosa Springs.

"I feel so comfortable in the electric industry, so I always hoped to get a position here," said Foster, who is also mother to four and a passionate gardener. "I get to live in a wonderful, beautiful place and I get to be part of a company that's looking toward the future and thinking of green power. It's gratifying to see everything growing in such a positive way." ⚙️

