

WATT'S UP

AT LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 2014

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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

Board of Directors:

Michael Rendon, President – [District 3]
Heather Erb, Vice President – [District 4]
Mark Garcia, Treasurer – [District 1]
Jeff Berman, Secretary – [District 3]
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Bob Formwalt [District 1]
Bob Lynch [District 1]
Jerry McCaw [District 2]
Davin Montoya [District 2]
Jack Turner [District 4]
Joe Wheeling [District 4]

Mission Statement:

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

Statement of Non-discrimination

LPEA is an equal opportunity provider and employer M/F/Disability/Veteran.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.



Hey, watt's up?

BY MIKE DREYSPRING | CEO | MDREYSPRING@LPEA.COOP

Allow me to introduce myself. I am Mike Dreyspring, La Plata Electric Association's Chief Executive Officer.

Now that the formalities are out of the way, here's a little bit of information about your new CEO.

I have 31 years' experience in the electric utility industry – 20 serving as a CEO, and I hail from the financial management side of the business. I was CEO at Lea County in New Mexico and most recently served at CoServ Electric in the Dallas, Tex. area. I've also worked at co-ops in Arkansas and Oklahoma. If you'd like more details about my experience and education, connect with me on Linked In, under Michael Dreyspring.

So, the big secret's out. Yes, I am from Dallas, which means I am totally burned out on traffic and poor air quality, AND I have no clue what a "real" winter is (and rumor is that my first one is going to be a big one). I am definitely open to your suggestions on how to survive winter here in Southwest Colorado. Please send me any tips you have to mdreyspring@lpea.coop. You might even save my marriage.

I am excited to be working with the board of directors and employees at La Plata Electric. The board and employees have stepped up to help me learn the culture here and to assimilate. I would also appreciate your help as well. I am fascinated with the diversity in this area, and understanding the full, "big picture" will help me serve you best.

On a personal level, my wife Sabra and I have been married 35 years. We have two grown daughters and seven grandchildren. My oldest grandson, Steven, went fly fishing with me for the first time back in June as we floated in a canoe on the San Marcos River south of Austin. He loved it, which means I loved it. I can hardly wait to get him up to Colorado to experience the great outdoors here.

I tie flies, am a perpetual guitar student, read history and collect sports cards. I love watching live baseball and soccer on the Spanish channel, and I live to hike into a secluded spot to fish (any suggestions?). Sometimes, I just like to hike. My entire life experience has prepared me to enjoy this area I now serve.

Sabra is an artist and chef. I've deemed her a chef since I am an expert diner – which also means I am keenly interested in any local recipes anyone is willing to share.

Regarding work, I'll hone in on that in time with the help of your directors and employees – and you. We're a cooperative, but "cooperative" doesn't just describe who we are. It tells a great story about how we work and live.

I look forward to meeting you, and I am happy to serve you. ⚙️



BREAKING NEWS

LPEA will host two public forums to discuss options for the meter reading fees possibly to be implemented for those who opt out of AMI Meter installation: Oct. 8, Ross Aragon Community Center, Pagosa Springs, and Oct. 9, LPEA headquarters, 45 Stewart St., Durango. Both meetings begin at 5:30 p.m.

LIVE WIRES

Board of Directors Meeting

The next meeting of the LPEA Board of Directors is set for Wednesday, Oct. 15, 2014, 9 a.m. at LPEA headquarters in Durango. The agenda will be posted 10 days in advance of the meeting at www.lpea.coop. All members are reminded that public comment is heard at the beginning of the meeting.

LPEA at GBR

LPEA Directors will provide an update on the Community Solar Gardens program at the Green Business Roundtable, Wednesday, Oct. 8, Noon, at the Henry Strater Theatre. Lunch cost: \$15. Reservations required at info@sanjuancitizens.org.

Recycling CFLs

Free Compact Fluorescent Light bulb recycling is now available at all Ace Hardware and Home Depot locations nationwide. In LPEA's service territory, recycle the "curlicue" CFL bulbs at Kroeger's Ace Hardware and Home Depot in Durango and Terry's Ace Hardware in Pagosa Springs. Recycling these bulbs allows reuse of the glass, metals and other materials that make up fluorescent lights.

Tough Men

A celebration of the book *Tough Men in Hard Places*, an insider's view of how the west was wired and the emergence of power companies, will be held Sunday, Oct. 26 at the Powerhouse Science Center in Durango. Information: angela.zbornik@graphicartsbooks.com.

LPEA: the co-op business model

October is National Cooperative Month, a time for the some 29,000 co-ops across the country to celebrate this unique business model that continues to prove viable.

Cooperatives around the world operate according to the same set of core principles, adopted by the International Cooperative Alliance. The roots of these principles date back to the first "modern" cooperative founded in 1884.

As LPEA Dispatcher Baker McKonly sums it up, a cooperative, like LPEA, is "people coming together with a common interest for the good of the whole."

"A cooperative is a true American endeavor: of the people, by the people, for the people!" echoes Engineering Clerk Carolyn J. Foster.

Indeed, 75 years ago, enterprising families in the region joined together to figure out a way to bring electricity to their farms and ranches. Everyone, as members of the cooperative, chipped in a little bit of money, which eventually led to the construction of the first distribution system.

Obviously LPEA's system has grown dramatically since those early days, yet so many LPEA member-customers don't realize, if they pay an electric bill to LPEA, they qualify as a member of the co-op, just like those original founding fathers and mothers.

This is Cooperative Principle #1 – Voluntary and Open Membership.

And as Customer Service Representative Marilyn Arnaout notes, sometimes LPEA "customers" forget.

"Since any of us at LPEA, who have an electric account, is a member, when we work with a member, it's basically 'member helping member,' as opposed to an LPEA employee just working with a customer."

In La Plata County, a co-op other than LPEA has recently been in the news, Durango Natural Foods, with its membership rising up to recall board members who were exploring a merger with a larger natural foods operation. The members will take a "vote" to determine the board members' futures with DNF.

"A cooperative is a democratic, membership-run entity that serves to work for the benefit of its entire membership base," says Customer Service Representative Amy Paylor. "Co-ops strive to work, in all capacities, solely for the good of the communities they serve."

This is Cooperative Principle #2: Democratic Member Control. For LPEA that means an annual election to vote for the members of the LPEA Board of Directors who meet monthly to determine the overall policies and direction of the cooperative. The Directors represent the membership and have a fiscal responsibility to the company. All members, however, are invited to actively engage with the co-op. This is a major difference between LPEA and an investor-owned electric company.

For LPEA, a big part of the cooperative model is Education, Training & Information [Principle #5] as well as Concern for Community [Principle #7]. It's why members see the co-op sponsoring informational workshops, and stressing education in, most recently, energy efficiency and renewable energy, and more.

Perhaps CEO Mike Dreyspring brings it all home the best, "My cooperative, La Plata Electric Association, means progress for our community, not just by providing energy services, but by focusing on the quality of life for our members."

Learn more about your electric cooperative, LPEA, and review all seven Cooperative Principles, at www.lpea.coop. ⚡

COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

| | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1st Principle | Voluntary and Open Membership |
| 2nd Principle | Democratic Member Control |
| 3rd Principle | Member Economic Participation |
| 4th Principle | Autonomy and Independence |
| 5th Principle | Education, Training and Information |
| 6th Principle | Cooperation Among Cooperatives |
| 7th Principle | Concern for Community |

Halloween at LPEA

It'll be a "Jolly Roger good time" for young ones at LPEA, as the cooperative will host its 2nd Annual Open House for Children on Halloween, Friday, Oct. 31, 2:30-5 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 free to all young children accompanied by an adult LPEA member.

The event, this year themed "Pirate's Treasure," is designed to offer a fun-filled, safe environment for youngsters (infants to 12-years-old) to enjoy Halloween festivities, according to Laura Rome, LPEA executive assistant.

"We launched this event last year, and it was very popular. It offers our members with very young families, who don't want to be out on the streets for trick-or-treating, an alternative for their kids to dress up and have some fun," says Rome, noting that several hundred young LPEA members came to the cooperative offices in 2013. "We'll have 'treats' in both Durango and Pagosa from Davy Jones' locker [our pirate's treasure chest]. So, bring your little ones by."

In Durango, the LPEA employees, who will all be in costume, will also decorate the front conference room as a "haunted pirate ship" for children to explore, including games and refreshments.

LPEA employees contributing their creative ideas to the event, in addition to Rome, are Charlene Sandoval, Jeannie Bennett, Suzy Bynum, Aubrey Gillespie, Renee Davis, and Don Short.

For additional information, contact Rome at 970.382.3508 or lrome@lpea.coop. ☀



Laura Rome got into the "spirit" of Halloween in 2013

HUNTERS: SIGHT-IN DAYS HERE

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 on La Posta Road, Thursdays and Fridays, Oct. 9-10, 16-17, and 30-31.

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 as well as expensive and dangerous repairs.

Durango Gun Club staff, plus volunteer club members, will be on hand during Sight-in Days 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. ☀

His name was Clark

Young LPEA member Holli Timmerman dropped by the August LPEA Board of Directors meeting to address the Board and thank LPEA for bidding on and purchasing her goat "Clark" during the annual Youth Livestock Auction at the La Plata County Fair.

Director Davin Montoya was LPEA's representative at the auction and had the winning bid of \$8 per pound for Clark. He weighed 98 lbs.

According to Holli, LPEA's financial support allowed her to pay back her parents for the initial cost of the goat, and pay her tab at Basin Co-op for food and supplies, plus provide funds for a new "kid" for next year – as well as put away a little money for college or a new horse, as Holli, at 10, is a budding rodeo star.

And why "Clark"?

"I got two goats, and my dad told me I needed to name them after a famous couple," says Holli. "Since they were both boys, I named them Lewis and Clark."

LPEA annually supports the county fair youth livestock auctions in both La Plata and Archuleta counties, recognizing that 4H and FFA are valuable educational programs for the region's young people. ☀



Holli Timmerman presents LPEA Director Davin Montoya with a special thank-you card and photo in appreciation for his support of her efforts in raising Clark the goat.

CHANGE OF JOBS FOR TOKARCZYK



Ashley Tokarczyk, who joined LPEA as a Billing Clerk in June 2013, has been named Accounting Clerk.

In her new position, Tokarczyk is responsible for handling accounts payable as well as receivables for Marathon water heaters and ETS space heaters, and prepares LPEA's sales tax returns.

Tokarczyk came to LPEA following employment in the medical field where she garnered experience in customer relations and billing.

Raised in Durango, she attended CSU at Fort Collins for two years before being wooed by Fort Lewis College's Athletic Department to return to her hometown. As a result, Tokarczyk completed her degree in psychology at Fort Lewis while competing on the school's mountain biking team.

Tokarczyk won the 2007 women's BMX 17-24 Cruiser Class at the Union Cycliste International BMX Championships.

Now retired from competitive racing, Tokarczyk continues to train and rode the Iron Horse Bicycle Classic in 2014. ⚡

Solar Gardens moving ahead

Progress is being made on the Community Solar Gardens (CSG) approved by the LPEA Board of Directors, with expectation that four of the original six applicants will be generating renewable energy by the end of the year.

"We understand that the solar installers who will be completing their projects are accepting subscribers," says Mark Schwantes, manager of corporate services. "LPEA is not involved in this part of the projects. Once the CSGs are generating electricity, our billing department will be applying credit to the subscribers' electric bills for their percentage investment in the CSGs."

Shaw Solar was the first installer to break ground, and the company is building two projects, collectively called Durango Solar Gardens. The 200-kW garden on private land in Ignacio was, at press time, expected to be fully operational by October.

"We are so excited to be a part of the Durango Solar Garden" says Durango resident Marsha Porter-Norton. "We've always wanted to go solar, but it just didn't work to put it on our roof. Joining the garden also made financial sense for us as there was no large up-front cost, and we will be saving money on our utility costs long into the future."

With the CSGs, LPEA members are able to "subscribe" or purchase a percentage share in a CSG from one of the developers, thereby enjoying the environmental and financial benefits of solar power without installation of a full system on their homes.

"The best part of the Community Solar Garden program is that it makes locally generated solar energy accessible to *all* LPEA members," says Lori Schell, an energy consultant with Empowered Energy, and CSG investor. "LPEA members can choose how much solar energy they can afford and it requires no large up-front investment. Solar energy is not a silver bullet, but it is becoming an increasingly important component of the energy mix locally, nationally, and globally."

As part of the CSG agreement with LPEA, installers are required to donate a percentage of each project to an area non-profit. Durango Solar Gardens has stipulated that 2.5 kilowatts be donated to the Boys and Girls Club of Durango and the Women's Resource Center, according to Shaw Solar's Amanda Saunders.

"Similar to the more commonly known 'Buy a Brick' campaign that many non-profits employ, individuals in LPEA's territory can now 'Buy a Solar Panel' as a unique way to give to their favorite non-profit," says Saunders. "This is a gift that will keep on giving, as the non-profit will save on their energy costs into the future."

For solar garden installer contact information, visit www.lpea.coop. ⚡



Panels are rising at the Durango Solar Garden I in Ignacio, the first Community Solar Garden in La Plata County. (Photo: Evan Goldstrand)

Directors thank LPEA employees

Thirty lbs. of bacon; 17 dozen eggs; 10 lbs. of pancake mix and more were part of a "Thank-you" Pancake Breakfast held at LPEA's headquarters prior to the September Board of Directors meeting.

The board members were at co-op at 6:30 a.m., flipping pancakes and scrambling eggs to show their appreciation to the LPEA staff.

Notes Board President Michael Rendon, "It was a great opportunity for the Board and staff to get to know each other - with bacon!" ⚡



LPEA Board President Michael Rendon and Vice President Heather Erb [Right] serve breakfast to Customer Service Representative Amy Paylor and Lead Meter Reader Collector George Morgan.