

## Making sense with ETS

Furry girl Olivia appreciating her mom's ETS heater.

They may not be stylin', or look glitzy and glamorous, but Electric Thermal Storage (ETS) systems are the rock stars of electric home heating.

"With the enhancement of LPEA's Time-of-Use program, it now truly makes sense to look at heating your house with one of our ETS systems," says Suzy Bynum, LPEA energy management advisor. "Options include room units, hydronic boilers or forced air furnaces."

ETS heating systems utilize low-cost, off-peak electric rates, and provide owners excellent comfort along with substantial savings on their utility bills. Whether building a new home, adding a room, replacing an older heating system, or just looking for a replacement for a fossil fuel system, ETS is a solution to consider.

The ETS systems are 100 percent efficient and have been providing reliable home heating for 30 years – and technology continues to improve. Additionally, the combination of the ETS and LPEA's Time-of-Use rate with solar photovoltaic systems is proving advantageous.

"As the electric industry evolves and moves toward clean and renewable sources of energy to power homes, ETS heat could be one of keys for offering the storage needed to work in conjunction with those members who have photovoltaic systems," says Dan Harms, manager of rates, technology and energy policy. "Although solar generation occurs during LPEA's off-peak hours, ETS heaters will store that energy for use during on-peak periods."

The ETS heaters contain high-density ceramic bricks that store and capture heat [generated by electricity]

for use during LPEA's on-peak hours when the rate is more expensive. Simply put, an ETS system is a heater that can store excess generation from a solar photovoltaic system.

ETS is also a great alternative to electric baseboard heat. To confirm this benefit, the co-op conducted a study at a local senior living center. Each apartment previously had baseboard electric heat and they were charged at LPEA's standard residential rate. The baseboard heaters were changed out to ETS units, and each apartment was put on the Time-of-Use rate.

"We gathered data for a year and compared the costs of the previous baseboard heating to the changed-out ETS systems," says Debbie Bass, LPEA energy management advisor. "On average our members saved 40 percent on their electric bills by merely changing their heat from electric baseboard to ETS."

"We're encouraging our members to at least consider Electric Thermal Storage for their space heating needs," says Bynum. "We always want to help our members save money on their electric bills."

To learn more about LPEA's ETS heating systems, and size a system to fit your needs, contact Bass [Pagosa Springs], 970.382.7722, dbass@lpea.coop; or Bynum [Durango], 970.382.3506, sbynum@lpea.coop. Learn more about Time-of-Use at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop).



## REMINDER: Ranchers, look up and LIVE

⚡ LPEA employees shudder to hear a story like this.

"But if we can use this as an example to educate people, there was at least a little bit of value to this close call," says Operations Manager Justin Talbot. "We almost had a member electrocuted. We really did."

A rancher on La Plata County's Dry Side was moving irrigation pipe – 20-ft. steel/aluminum piping. Instead of rotating the pipe horizontally, he inserted it in the ground and pushed it up vertically, where it came in contact with LPEA's power lines.

"He was lucky because the pipe end was down in some mud and water, so the current naturally traveled to the ground by that route, instead of through him," says Talbot.

Because of the pipe's contact with the lines, LPEA's system automatically locked open, cutting power, but not before shocking the rancher and knocking him to the ground.

"He's OK, but it's a reminder that all of us need to pay attention when we're doing anything outside in the proximity of power lines," says Talbot. "Look up and live."

## LPEA employees take on new challenges

With rapidly changing technology in the electric utility industry, LPEA is adapting and shifting employee roles. Chris Edmondson, former Meter Reader Collector, has moved "inside" taking on the challenge of Meter Technician, working with the advanced metering infrastructure.

Additionally, Joel Mann has been promoted to Lead Meter Reader Collector based in Durango. The Meter Reader Collector team works in the field, trouble-shooting, handling collections and meter readings and change-outs.

Originally from Tennessee, Edmondson had a 20-year career with the Raton, N.M. Police Department, retiring as a Captain in 2011. Opportunity opened up for his wife at the Durango base for Flight to Life, so the family relocated. Not desiring to return to police work, he hired on as a meter reader with a local independent contractor in 2012. Edmondson then joined LPEA in 2014 as a Meter Reader Collector when an opening became available.

Mann joined LPEA as Meter Reader Collector in 2007. Originally from Tucson, Ariz., he and his family came to Durango in 1996, where he served as a line-locator for U.S. West, doing some 7,000 underground cable locations per year. He took a similar position in 2000 with WESODI [Western Energy Services of Durango, Inc.] before joining LPEA.



Chris Edmondson



Joel Mann

## Patcheck and Rivers join LPEA



Jodi Patcheck



Shea Rivers

Jodi Patcheck and Shea Rivers have recently joined the LPEA team. Patcheck is a new Customer Service Representative, along with Rivers named as a new Accounting Clerk.

Patcheck is virtually a Durango native. Though born in Chicago [so she's a Cubs fan], she was raised in Durango and attended Fort Lewis College, playing volleyball on scholarship. She majored in Business and Education, but ultimately graduated with her Business degree.

Initially she was hired to run the Recreation Department at Tamarron Resort, and continued in the hospitality industry, turning to AAA where she facilitated travel for 23 years.

"I was hoping for a new opportunity," she says. "Customer service at LPEA is similar to the travel industry as it's working with people, helping and problem-solving."

Originally from Seattle, Rivers moved to Durango with his family when he was a teenager. Following high school, he enlisted in the US Army, where he served for five years, achieving the rank of E-5 Sargent.

"I was in the Airborne Infantry," says Rivers, who returned to school following his military service. "I got my Bachelor's degree in Accounting from Fort Lewis, and am excited to have my first accounting job here at LPEA."

## LPEA youth shines at State Fair

More than a half million dollars was raised for Colorado's agricultural youth at the 2017 Colorado State Fair, thanks to Colorado's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, of which LPEA is a part.

The state's electric cooperatives come together annually to sponsor the fair's Junior Livestock Sale in support of the future of Colorado's agribusiness as it demonstrates the importance of raising quality livestock and the work required of those who pursue careers in agriculture.

From LPEA's service territory, Krystalyn Anderson, (pictured here), of Hesperus celebrated the sale of her prize, 1,110 lb. heifer to the Denver Rustlers for \$3,750. In the last 36 years, the sale has raised nearly \$10.3 million for the youth involved in Colorado's 4-H and FFA programs.



## Hunters: Sight-in Days scheduled

In an effort to both assist hunters and protect valuable electrical equipment, LPEA will resume its underwriting support of "Sight-in Days" at the Durango Gun Club Outdoor Range in advance of the three big game seasons, Thursdays and Fridays, Oct. 12-13, 19-20, and Nov. 2-3, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

During Sight-in Days, the Durango Gun Club on La Posta Road is open to the general public/hunters for rifle scope sighting, and hunters are encouraged to take advantage of the controlled environment to prepare their firearms for the season. LPEA has contributed \$500 to cover costs incurred by the club for the Sight-in Days. In past years, some 500-600 hunters have taken advantage of the complimentary service.

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.

"We really want to help discourage sighting scopes in uncontrolled environments," says Operations Manager Justin Talbot. "Taking aim at LPEA equipment is vandalism. Beyond the expense and inconvenience to our customers if an outage occurs, repair requires dangerous work by our LPEA crews to get everyone back in power."

For further information, contact Joseph Perino, Durango Gun Club secretary/treasurer, 970.749.3453.

### CO-OP MEMBERS

Ask...

**Q:** I paid to have a power line installed for service to my house. Why do I not get any money back when my neighbor uses it for his new house?

**A:** The power line that LPEA installed for you is owned by LPEA, not you. LPEA's Line Extension Policy lays out how our cooperative handles members' requests for electric service. The funds that you needed to pay to have electric service hooked up to your home was to cover LPEA's costs, less any credits that are allowed in the policy. The Line Extension Policy is reviewed by the Board of Directors from time to time to keep it current with the various goals of our cooperative. View the Line Extension Policy at <http://ow.ly/ZfxS30fiLy4>

## LIVE WIRES

### Board meeting Oct. 18, 9 a.m.

The next LPEA Board meeting is Wednesday, Oct. 18, 9 a.m., at LPEA headquarters in Durango. The agenda will be posted 10 days in advance of the meeting at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop). All members are reminded that public comment is heard at the beginning of the Board meeting.

### Time for "Fall Back"

Daylight Saving Time ends Sunday, Nov. 5. Enjoy an extra hour of sleep! Be sure to set your clocks back, and Time-of-Use customers, make sure your ETS and water heater timers are reflecting the accurate time. Questions? Call 970.382.3506.

### Member Survey

LPEA, through NRECA, will conduct a new Member Survey beginning Nov. 13, 2017. A random sampling of members will receive phone or email requests to participate, and help LPEA better serve our members.

### Round Up Grants

The following organizations were awarded grants by the Round Up Foundation in September: KSUT Public Radio, Tiospaye, Durango Cowboy Poetry Foundation and Pagosa High School Building Trades Program.





*From the CEO*

## October is National Cooperative Month: “Co-Opted”

BY MIKE DREYSPRING | CEO | MDREYSPRING@LPEA.COOP

On a recent road trip to Wyoming, my wife and I were driving across some pretty rural areas of Colorado and Wyoming. Incredibly scenic, but it was a long drive. So, we listened to a book entitled *Horse Soldiers*, by Doug Stanton. The book tells the story of American Special Forces soldiers deployed to Afghanistan soon after Sept. 11, 2001. Once in country, the lightly-equipped soldiers were connected with the Northern Alliance, and shocked to learn that their transportation on mission was to be horses provided by their compatriots.

The stories of American soldiers (who had been trained for virtually every scenario but had NOT learned how to ride a horse) were generally funny. If I'd been in their place, I doubt I would have fared any better. This is, though, the best example I've heard recently that demonstrates “co-opted.”

Co-opting is simply adopting another's processes, ideas or products as our own. You do what you need to do. It's been said that imitation is

the sincerest form of flattery, and this highlights one of the things I like the most about cooperatives. For 75 years-plus, LPEA has been co-opting other utilities' processes, programs, and systems and making them our own to benefit our members.

October is National Cooperative Month. This is always a big deal for me because my career has been in the co-op industry and I love co-ops – what they stand for and how they work. Co-ops have taught me I don't have to do something alone. There are a lot of great minds out there that I can “co-opt” for LPEA's benefit.

That said, I work with some very talented people here at LPEA, and they have great work ethics, and we don't necessarily need to “co-op” anything when there's such a conglomerate of great minds. I am inspired by the employees here at LPEA. Why does that matter? Think big, wet snowstorms, lightning or fire. When we're dealt a difficult hand by nature or man, we have courageous and talented linemen out working to get the lights back on. But remember, they count on the rest of us to keep all the behind-the-scenes

operations functioning: vehicles running in top form, communications to keep both you and our line crews informed, technology to improve our service to you, and the list goes on. We “cooperate.” It's not only how we work, it's who we are.

We do, however, have a great “co-opted” program at LPEA: Round Up. LPEA originally “co-opted” the Round Up Foundation from a South Carolina cooperative, and from that germination, now all of us work together to provide funds to the less fortunate in our community.

Here's another really cool part – it's “cooperation” that created LPEA. It's your “cooperation” that justifies our existence and our future. So, we're all in this together, and our members are the heart of the power of LPEA.

**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](http://www.lpea.coop)

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