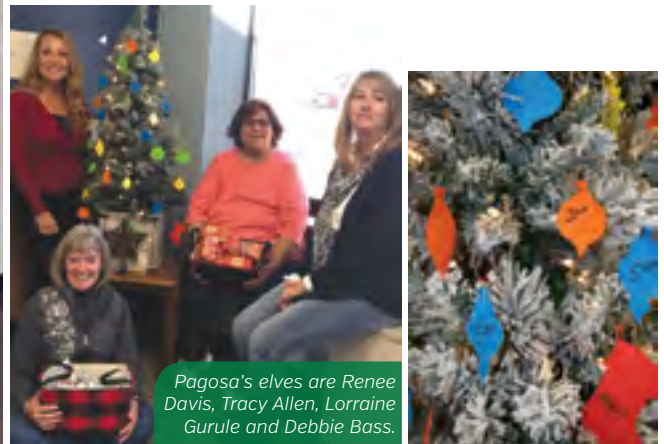




Durango's team shows off the Power of Giving tree. [standing] Lonnie Tucker, Julie McIntyre, Jodi Patcheck, Jeannie Bennett, Jeanne Dittmar, Betsy Lovelace and Denver Hutchins, and [seated] Amy Paylor, Aubrey Gillespie and Cyndi Pierce.

## "The Power of Giving Trees"



Pagosa's elves are Renee Davis, Tracy Allen, Lorraine Gurule and Debbie Bass.

The 'heart of your power,' LPEA's marketing tag line reflects the company's "heart," and it is no more evident than during the holiday season as employees celebrate giving back to our local communities.

Building on the success of the inaugural "Giving Tree" program in 2017, the LPEA Customer Service Representative (CSR) team is once again inviting "The Power of Giving" to assist consumer-members who have difficulty paying their electric bills. "Giving Trees" are now in place in both Durango and Pagosa Springs.

The Power of Giving Trees are adorned with ornaments that have varying dollar amounts (\$5 to \$100). Community members are invited to select an ornament and bring it to the Customer Service window, and that dollar amount will be applied to the account of a fellow LPEA customer-member in need. Being on the front lines every day, the CSRs do become familiar with members who are financially challenged.

"People come in throughout the year offering to help a friend, neighbor or family member... but this time of year it just seems more magical," says Customer Service Representative Julie McIntyre, who initiated the idea with her fellow team members. "Our community is so caring and generous. Last year we saw mothers bringing in their children to select an ornament from the tree to teach

them the power of giving to others. It was very emotional to watch the children 'light up' with giving."

As a thank you, LPEA members contributing to the Power of Giving Trees have the choice of a variety of gifts, including an LED light bulb or LED nightlight or, for larger donors, blankets or emergency roadside packs.

"We know firsthand that many people continue to have difficulty with even the most basic of necessities," says Ron Meier, manager of engineering and member relations. "The gift of electricity is definitely one that can be used and appreciated, and it was heart-warming last year to see our CSRs taking the initiative to help out our members and then initiate the program again this year."

Beyond the Giving Tree, LPEA consumer-members can make specific arrangements to assist family members or neighbors with their bills, as well as non-profit organizations, by applying credit to their LPEA accounts.

"The Power of Giving doesn't need to be something that happens just around the holidays," adds McIntyre. "We can make arrangements for regular monthly credits to any account of your choosing. It can be a gift that keeps on giving."

To assist consumer-members in need with their electric bills, visit either the Pagosa Springs or Durango office during regular business hours, Monday-Friday.

## New Meter Technician named



Debra Herrera has been named LPEA's new Meter Technician. Her position includes working with a variety of LPEA's departments to assist with and advise on proper metering equipment, metering software and meter communications, as well as new and existing installations and maintenance.

Herrera, a Durango native, originally joined LPEA in 2016 as a Billing Clerk, though she has a background in metering as she formerly served as manager of La Plata Services Associates, which was contracted to read LPEA's electric meters. With LPEA transitioning to AMI meters, read remotely, meter reading became automated, so Herrera sought an in-house job at LPEA.

"There are so many things that made this position change so appealing to me," says Herrera. "I was ready for a new challenge, wanted to learn more about electricity and wanted the opportunity to work outdoors. LPEA is such a great company to work for and the only way to do great work is to love what you do. I can honestly say I do love what I do, as well as I enjoy working with everyone at LPEA."

## Annual Green Chili Lunch Dec. 12

In an effort to assist the Salvation Army over the holiday season, LPEA will once again host its Stuff the Kettle Green Chili Lunch, Wednesday, Dec. 12, 2018, at the cooperative's Durango headquarters, 45 Stewart Street in Bodo Industrial Park.

But **NEW** this year, donations will be split between the Salvation Army and the new Veterans Outreach Center in Bodo Park, dedicated to those who have served our country.

No reservations are required for the sumptuous lunch scheduled for 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Guests can enjoy a variety of green chili stews (featuring local Sunnyside meats and prepared by Bart's Deli), tortillas or homemade corn bread, and a beverage for a donation of any amount (suggested donation is \$5). An array of homemade desserts will be available for an extra donation.

"Just come on by the office during your lunch hour. We'll have everything set up in the lobby and front conference room," says Jeannie Bennett, public relations coordinator. "Not only will you enjoy a warm, hearty lunch, you'll know you've helped your fellow La Plata County residents."

The fundraising lunch coincides with the regular meeting of the LPEA Board of Directors. Directors will be joining the community effort and will be available to speak over lunch with cooperative members.

LPEA employees Suzy Bynum and Rachel Schur Wagner



## Calling high school juniors!

Application deadline is by 4:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 14, 2019 for high school juniors to apply to participate in two very special (all expenses paid) programs:

- The National Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington D.C., set for June 12-20, 2019.
- The Colorado Electric Education Institute Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp – an all-expense paid educational/leadership camp set for July 13-18, 2019 in Clark, Colo.

The Washington D.C. Youth Tour features an intimate look at the federal government and the sights and experiences found in the city, including museum and monument tours, plus interaction with Colorado's elected representatives. Social activities are also part of the adventure.

With the Youth Leadership Camp, "It's not just another camp," says Lonnie Tucker, who is coordinating the application process. "This is an experience that will help students build for their future and gain valuable leadership and interpersonal relationship skills that will benefit them in an increasingly competitive world."

To be considered, high school juniors must reside in LPEA's service territory and complete the applications available for download at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop) or from high school counselors. Home school students are eligible to apply.

Direct questions to Tucker at 970.382.3511 or [ltucker@lpea.coop](mailto:ltucker@lpea.coop).

Have you signed up for our LED Holiday Lighting Contest? Visit [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop) for details or call 970.247.5786 for details. Win prizes!



## Enhancing Operations

Michael Juliano has “journeyed out” and completed the LPEA Lineman Apprenticeship program, earning his Journeyman Lineman Certification. He joins the ranks of the professionals responsible for constructing and maintaining electric power distribution lines and facilities.

In addition, furthering continuity in the Operations Department, Equipment Operator Trey Buffalo has now been selected as an Apprentice Lineman.

LPEA's apprenticeship program is sanctioned by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers as well as the Department of Labor. The four-year apprentice program includes 8000 working hours on-the-job, with mentor linemen in the field, as well as simultaneous scholastic study in the evenings, and written examinations.

A native of Bayfield, Juliano was selected as an Apprentice Lineman I 2014. Prior to joining LPEA, he spent nine years working for Hydro-X as a hydrovac operator, and ultimately operations manager – a position that familiarized him with LPEA.

Born and raised in Salida, Buffalo came to LPEA in 2015 as an Equipment Operator, and has served in the field with the line crews since that time. Prior to LPEA, he served for eight years with Crossfire LLC, provider of oil and gas construction services, where he worked in construction with heavy equipment.

“Employer-sponsored apprenticeship programs are the best educational and training tools our industry ever invented,” says Justin Talbot, LPEA manager of operations. “It’s an excellent process for perfecting the professional and highly-skilled work trades our industry requires, and we are seeing this with the growth, training and transition of great guys like Michael and Trey.”



Michael Juliano



Trey Buffalo

## Plan for Board elections

LPEA members interested in running for the LPEA Board of Directors are advised to begin their education about the cooperative and understand obligations and fiduciary duties of the directors.

Visit the website, [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop), for policies and company information, plus interested candidates are encouraged to attend LPEA board meetings, typically held the third Wednesday of each month (though adjusted for holidays) beginning at 9 a.m. at LPEA headquarters in Durango. Election packets for those interested in running for a seat will be available in March 2019, at LPEA offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs, as well as online.

Pursuant to LPEA bylaws, one-third of the director's seats are up for election annually, one in each of LPEA's four districts.

Ballots will be mailed to LPEA's full membership in April, and results announced during the LPEA Annual Meeting, set for May 2, 2019, 5:30 p.m. at the Community Concert Hall at Fort Lewis College.

### CO-OP MEMBERS

### Ask...

**Q:** I'm very interested in the Board of Directors meetings. I'd like to hear the discussion on important topics, but I cannot attend the monthly meetings. Is there any way I [and all members] can be kept informed without waiting a month for the minutes to be posted?

**A:** Yes! LPEA has now begun live-streaming of our regular Board of Directors meetings. The simplest way to tune-in each month is to log on to [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop), but other social media platforms are available as well. Agendas are posted 10 days in advance of the meetings, so you will be able to get an idea of the timing and topics to be discussed.

## LIVE WIRES

### Board meeting Dec. 13, 9a.m.

The next meeting of the LPEA Board of Directors is set for Wednesday, Dec. 12. 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 meeting.

### Project Merry Christmas

LPEA once again in partnership with Four Corners Broadcasting, will host a live radio remote on Saturday, Dec. 15, encouraging donations for Project Merry Christmas. Help deserving families in our community. Bring your new toys, blankets, canned goods or cash to LPEA's offices in Durango between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m.

### Round Up Grants

The LPEA Round Up Foundation Board awarded Round Up and Educational grants to:

- Fraternal Order of Police Lodge - 8 Foundation: \$3,000
- Silver Spruce Academy: \$2,000
- Ruby Sission Memorial Library: \$2,000
- Exceptional Student Services: \$3,500

### Holiday office closures

LPEA's offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs will be closed Monday and Tuesday, Dec. 24 and 25, 2018, and Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2019 in honor of the Christmas holiday and New Year's Day celebrations.



*From the CEO...*

## Here we go: 2019!

BY MIKE DREYSPRING | CEO | MDREYSPRING@LPEA.COOP

Sometimes (in jest) I've been accused of being "asleep at the wheel," (but never by my wife when I am driving). But as I think about that adage, I do shake my head and am wondering where those years between 2001 and 2018 went, as it seems just yesterday we were all preparing for Y2K.

Saying "time flies" is an understatement, right?

My past four years at LPEA have prepared me for perhaps the most significant work and decision in LPEA's history and future. It's regarding LPEA's power supply - the source of your electricity generation.

There are some significant questions for us to ask, and more importantly, answer. How can LPEA achieve greater flexibility in its power supply mix to generate more electricity with local renewable resources? What opportunities lie ahead for LPEA to better control wholesale costs and thus our local retail rates? Is the cooperative business model still viable for electric generation and supply?

LPEA is well positioned to answer these questions and meet the challenges ahead. We're in good stead, in part, because of your LPEA employees - an exceptional group that has implemented substantial technological improvements, which ultimately benefit you. For example, LPEA has deployed and utilizes GIS correcting software and tools in our Operations vehicles, which is critical to ensuring our maps and facilities are up to date. Also, linemen now use a mobile application tool for job briefings to reduce paperwork in our safety processes. These and more are driving us to improved reliability, performance and enhanced service to you, our consumer-members.

From a governance standpoint, after thoughtful and extensive discussion at the Board of Directors level, Bob Lynch, LPEA's board president, appointed a Power Supply Committee. The job of the committee is to analyze our wholesale

power contract and the market in which we operate. This is no small task, but we anticipate to complete the work by March 31, 2019.

This committee was set up differently than any committee I've experience in my long career. It's made up of three LPEA directors and two management team members, all with voting rights on the committee. Bob felt, and I love his approach, that this would ensure collaboration between the elected board's vision for the cooperative's future and the day-to-day, operational excellence our management and employees are expected to provide to you.

Lastly, our consumer-members are engaged in your cooperative. LPEA's consumer-members show up at our elections and they show up at monthly board meetings when they're interested in learning more or have something they want to communicate to our cooperative.

For those of you who can't attend meetings, we have begun live streaming our board meetings through our website and social media, and I personally believe in the near future, we will be archiving copies of those meetings for consumer-members to review at your leisure.

All in all, things are moving ahead, and in the right direction for 2019. Rip Van Winkle did indeed awaken to a changed world. Don't worry if you sleep through the 2018 holidays. We've got the wheel for 2019.

And guess what - in 2019 it's LPEA's 80th Anniversary. We're proud of 80 years of serving you.

#### 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)

#### Board of Directors:

Bob Lynch, President [District 1]  
Britt Bassett, Vice President [District 3]  
Dan Huntington, Secretary [District 2]  
Tim Wheeler, Treasurer [District 4]  
Mike Alley [District 1]  
Rachel Landis [District 3]  
Doug Lyon [District 3]  
Kohler McInnis [District 2]  
Davin Montoya [District 2]  
Kirsten Skeeahan [District 1]  
Jack Turner [District 4]  
Guinn Unger [District 4]

Chief Executive Officer:  
Michael A. Dreyspring

**LPEA**

La Plata Electric Association, Inc.  
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

#### Mission Statement:

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