

Shaping the future by building trustworthy community partnerships as an innovative, forward-thinking industry leader, delivering excellence in our member-owned cooperative.

JANUARY 2019



Lighting up a partnership

All of our communities in Southwest Colorado are known for community partnerships, and LPEA will always assist when possible.

In 2007, LPEA responded to a request from the Durango Chamber of Commerce to help with “lighting” the giant spruce tree at the corner of Main Ave. and 12th St. for the holidays with the “new” LED lighting technology. Lighting the tree is a celebration at the culmination of the “Singing with Santa” caroling procession in Downtown, officially launching the holiday season.

Since that initial learning curve with the LED lighting technology (and figuring out how to get that many strings of lights on that tall of a tree), the partnership has been sustained, and in recent years Singing with Santa has been adopted by the Durango Business Improvement District, so Executive Director Tim Walsworth took on management of the LED lights.

“Most of us don’t think about these things, but healthy trees do grow (and we’re glad our giant spruce is healthy), so we need to redo the lights to accommodate our tree growing. We appreciate Eagle Crane for helping us get the lights up there each year,” says Walsworth, noting 1,650 lights were strung for this past holiday season.

In brainstorming about improving the event, Walsworth thought there must be a better way to “trigger” the lights during Singing with Santa (rather than just attaching two extension

cords). That’s where LPEA’s creative team came to the table, building a decorative switch box for the event. Electronic Technician Joe Frankland accepted the challenge as lead.

“I built most of it out of upcycled parts,” he says. “The wood came from a transformer shipment. I happened to see unused 4x6s in the yard, so I got creative and used a couple of them for the wooden frame. The box that holds the wiring was once a metering cabinet at one of our substations, which was set aside to be recycled. The conduit for the wiring and the wiring itself was all scrap we had left over from various projects.”

In technical terms, the lighting switch is a 30-amp disconnect mounted in a large box, and LPEA’s mechanic Curt Piccoli welded a longer handle on the disconnect – something for Walsworth to “switch” outside of the main cabinet with the door closed.

“After I finished the assembly, wiring and painting, it was on to Dan Harms (Rate, Technology and Energy Policy Manager) for the installation of the LED backlighting, and the laser etching on the top piece of the switch, which was done at the MakerLab at the Powerhouse in Durango,” says Frankland.

“It is awesome. What a great community collaboration,” says Walsworth. “Dan even provided me with an App for my phone so I can control the lights remotely. We are so appreciative of LPEA. LPEA folks have been, and always are, super supportive.”

FILLING THE FOOD BANK SHELVES



“A big shout out to all who participated in the food drives this past Saturday!” announced Rachel Killinen, dispatcher and member of LPEA’s local International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), which annually organize food drives in advance of the holidays.

LPEA personnel and the “bucket trucks” were stationed at both City Market and Hometown Food Market in Pagosa Springs, and in Durango at South City Market, collecting non-perishable food items (and cash) to stock the community food banks in both Archuleta and La Plata counties.

“Pagosa delivered 2,225 pounds of food to the local Food Bank and \$910 in cash,” says Lorraine Gurule, Pagosa engineering clerk. “We would like to thank everyone who helped out.”

“In Durango we had a fun time together and collected a lot of food and monetary donations,” adds Killinen. “Preliminary total is 1,028 pounds of food and \$522! You all are awesome and I can’t wait for the additional good things we will accomplish by working together.”

The Local IBEW 111 26 and 26A, hosted the 11th Annual “Fill the Bucket” food drive, on Nov. 17.

College scholarships available

All high school seniors, including home school students, who receive their electricity from LPEA are eligible to apply for the variety of college scholarship and awards available through the cooperative. Deadline for application is Monday, March 4, 2019.

LPEA directly offers the LPEA Scholarship (four-year) and LPEA/John Voelker Memorial Scholarship (two-year), per LPEA Board of Directors policies No. 411 and 416, plus provides for additional affiliated rural electric scholarships/awards offered by Tri-State Generation and Transmission and Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

Specifically, LPEA will award two, four-year scholarships (140 credit hours) for students attending any college or university beginning with the 2019 academic year. LPEA will cover tuition, books and fees, up to \$28,000 over four years, given that the students maintain minimum qualifications.

The LPEA/John Voelker Memorial Scholarship recognizes two students attending accredited vocational schools, technical schools or junior college. This two-year scholarship covers fees, books, tools and supplies up to \$10,000 over two years, per student.

Funds for the LPEA and LPEA/John Voelker Memorial Scholarships come from LPEA’s unclaimed Capital Credits. Those funds unable to be returned to members are then put back into the community – in this case, into college scholarships.

For further information and to download applications, visit www.lpea.coop or contact Jeannie Bennett at 970.382.3505, or jbennett@lpea.coop.



Connecting with Community

President/CEO of Community Connections Tara Kiene adjusts ornaments on the holiday tree, sponsored by LPEA, at the 13th Annual Festival of Trees, a fundraiser held at the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Grange in Downtown Durango. LPEA’s Jeannie Bennett facilitated and assisted the Community Connections clients of Holly House decorate the LPEA tree, which sported dozens of energy efficiency items on and beneath the tree. All proceeds from the annual Festival of Trees benefit Community Connections, the non-profit organization that supports and creates opportunities for local youth and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Learn more about the integration efforts of Community Connections at www.communityconnectionsco.org.

Exploring future power supply

Following an extensive search, and thorough Request for Proposals (RFP) process overseen by the Power Supply Committee, the LPEA Board of Directors has authorized retention of two outside consulting entities to assist in study of LPEA's future power supply options.

- Albuquerque, N.M.-based Enchantment Energy Consulting, Inc. and Rio Energy, LLC (as partners for purposes of the LPEA project) - to conduct a study of the wholesale power contract between LPEA and Tri-State Generation and Transmission.
- Salt Lake City, Utah-based Energy Strategies - to conduct an analysis of wholesale power markets and potential opportunities that may be available to LPEA.

Reports from the consultants are to be presented to the full LPEA Board of Directors in April 2019. The Board of Directors has authorized up to \$100,000 to be spent on the two studies.

"Power supply is very complex," says CEO Mike Dreyspring. "Putting together a committee and retaining the consultants made sense to allow us to devote the time required to fully understand the issues surrounding this important aspect of our industry."

The LPEA Board formed the Power Supply Committee (PSC) in October 2018 specifically to study the challenges and opportunities of power supply, assess the value of LPEA's contract with wholesale power supplier, Tri-State Generation and Transmission, and identify options for increasing LPEA's flexibility to provide more local renewable generation.

"Establishment of the committee is an outgrowth of LPEA's consumer-members' desire for more flexibility when it comes to where we source the electricity we deliver," says Ron Meier, manager of engineering and member relations. "We continue to hear our consumer-members say that local renewable generation is important to them, and for that, we need flexibility to help fulfill their and our expectations."

The PSC is made up of three voting LPEA directors, Britt Bassett, Tim Wheeler and Kohler McInnis and one non-voting director, Jack Turner, along with two LPEA management team members, CEO Dreyspring and Dan Harms, manager of Rates, Technology and Energy Policy.

Spicy chili warming hearts

In December, LPEA organized the annual Stuff the Red Kettle Green Chili Lunch to raise funds for the Salvation Army and, new this year, the Veterans Outreach Center. The \$1,350 contributed by community members, who came to enjoy lunch, was divided (\$675 each) between the two organizations. LPEA thanks all community members who supported the event and enjoyed the camaraderie and great lunch of green chili (prepared by Bart's Deli with Sunnyside Meats) and homemade cornbread and desserts (prepared by LPEA employees especially for the event).



LPEA staff members Amanda Miles and Rachel Schur Wagner serve up Bart's spicy green chili with Sunnyside beef to Serviceman Ty Mortensen.

CO-OP MEMBERS

Ask...

Q: I understand that rates for those of us on residential Time-of-Use have changed. Can you clarify?

A: Yes... the Base Charge of \$20 per month remains the same. Using electricity in the On-peak periods (Monday-Saturday, 6-9 a.m. and 5-10 p.m.) has been adjusted from \$0.23 per kWh to \$0.233 per kWh. Off-peak period (Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and 10 p.m.-6 a.m., and all day Sunday) rates have been adjusted from \$0.059 per kWh to the new \$0.062 per kWh. The holiday Off-peak days remain the same. Contact LPEA Customer Service, 970.247.5786 if you have any questions.

LIVE WIRES

Board meeting Jan. 16, 9a.m.

The next meeting of the LPEA Board of Directors is set for Wednesday, Jan. 16. 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 shortly after 9 a.m. LPEA is also now live streaming meetings. Log on to www.lpea.coop to connect via our website or other social media platform.

Application deadlines

High school juniors are reminded to apply for two very special 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

Application deadline for both programs is Monday, Jan. 14, 2019.

Round Up Grants

The LPEA Round Up Foundation Board awarded Round Up and Educational grants to Aspire, DAV Chapter 48, Durango Nordic Ski Club, Durango Independent Film Festival, BeFrank Foundation, Pagosa High School Building Trades Program, and Sexual Assault Services Organization (SASO)

Holiday office closure

LPEA's offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs will be closed Monday, Jan. 21, 2019 in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Thinking about being a Board Member?

BY RON MEIER | MANGER OF ENGINEERING AND MEMBER RELATIONS
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of the membership to elect that neighbor, the new board member will find a supportive environment to help them start the path of learning. Other board members are always there to help them learn how we conduct board meetings and the role of the board. Additionally, the staff at LPEA is constantly evolving and enhancing our on-boarding process for our new board members. New board members will gradually be introduced to all aspects of LPEA, but, everyone needs to remember, it takes time.

Also, our national (National Rural Electric Cooperative Association) and state-wide (Colorado Rural Electric Association) organizations provide certificated training for new and longtime board members. Many educational opportunities are provided for our board members.

So, if you are considering raising your hand to run for the board, what do you need to know? Do you need to understand all aspects of running a \$100 million-dollar business? Well no, but you do need to know that each board member brings something different to the table – unique experience, skill sets and even personalities – and you can too. If you have a passion, we have a place for it. You don't need to be financial whiz, an electrical engineer, marketing specialist or even understand how a lineman repairs a downed line. A board member needs to listen to all their neighbors, think about the future, and set the direction of our cooperative – and share that vision with our local communities, the communities in which they reside.

Each board member is part of our local community representing US, setting our cooperative on a path of success. It's an important responsibility, and we should all commend those who commit the time and energy to help govern our local rural electric cooperative.

Us. We are you, and you are us. We are all neighbors. This is one of the most important concepts of the cooperative business model. Our Board of Directors - the body that is our primary regulatory body - is made up of people who are our neighbors and reside in the communities we serve.

LPEA has a diverse 12-person board. While each one of the board members is charged with representing the entire membership, LPEA is set up with four different districts that elect three board members from their district. Each year, one seat in each district is up for re-election/election.

So what exactly is role of the board? They are the body that establishes the strategic vision for the cooperative, reviews and sets the policies to put LPEA on the path to meet the vision, and ultimately determine the budget, which dictates the rate policy and makes final decisions on how to set rates.

A board member needs to commit to being a lifelong learner. Even though LPEA is turning 80 in 2019, the electric industry is still rather young, and we are experiencing constant change, and every board member needs to keep informed. This helps them make good decisions in a very complex business.

When one of our neighbors raises their hand to join the board, and our neighbors agree through an election



Mission Statement:

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

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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 Skeehan (District 1)
Jack Turner (District 4)
Guinn Unger (District 4)

Chief Executive Officer:

Michael A. Dreyspring

