

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

**NOVEMBER 2019**

## Be Storm Prepared

### Are you ready if a power outage occurs?



Winter is right around the corner in Southwest Colorado, and the possibility of multiple winter storms are projected in long range weather forecasts. Residents of Browning, Montana recently experienced a historic blizzard during September that produced more than four feet of snow in two days and caused prolonged power outages. Record cold temperatures accompanied the blizzard that brought Browning to a standstill.

La Plata Electric Association (LPEA) is continuously monitoring the weather forecasts and analyzing our electric distribution system's performance. Your LPEA employees are prepared and ready to respond if a power outage occurs, but we need our members to "Be Storm Prepared" this winter as well.

"Prepare now. Sign up for local weather alerts and warnings. Receiving timely information about weather conditions or other emergency events can make a significant difference in knowing when to act," said LPEA Customer Service Representative Renee Davis. "Members should sign up to receive local emergency notifications through the Community Notification System in Archuleta County and Code Red in La Plata County."

"Communication is key during a power outage. Members should add La Plata Electric to their mobile device's contact list for quick access in the event of a power outage," said LPEA Dispatcher Baker McKonly. "Members need to contact LPEA and verify the phone number associated with their account is correct. The Interactive Voice Response System we use during power outages identifies the incoming phone number and automatically adds the members account information to our outage data."

Members are also encouraged to download and install the SmartHub app. SmartHub gives you the ability to report a power outage or service issues, manage your account, check your usage, pay your bill or contact us anytime, anywhere on your mobile device or computer. LPEA's Outage Texting Service also provides members with a convenient way to stay connected and communicate during a power outage in our service territory.

"Planning and preparing can make a big difference in your safety and well-being during a winter storm," said LPEA Dispatcher Rachel Killinen. "Having an emergency plan in place and being prepared, especially during a power outage, will help you endure the winters in Colorado."

"Winter storms can cause power outages that last for several hours or days," said LPEA Customer Service Representative Denver Hutchins. "Remember to never use a camp stove, charcoal grill, propane heater or generator indoors. They can start accidental fires, cause electric shock and produce deadly carbon monoxide gas."

"You may not be at home when a storm begins. So, it's important to have the basic supplies of food, water, blanket, flashlight and extra batteries in your vehicle," said LPEA Customer Service Representative Julie McIntyre. "You can build your emergency supply kit over time by simply adding a few items each week or month. Collect the necessary supplies needed to help you and your family stay safe during a storm."

The right time to prepare for a winter storm is now. The emergency supply kit checklist featured below will help get you started. Make sure to include your family in the preparation and discuss your emergency plan with them. Each family is different, so be sure to consider your family's specific needs when organizing an emergency supply kit.

### Emergency Supply Kit Checklist:

- La Plata Electric (970) 247-5786 Option 5 Report Power Outage
- Telephone numbers for friends, school, work, doctors, etc.
- Address of local emergency shelter
- Flashlights and fresh batteries
- Battery-powered AM/FM radio or NOAA weather radio
- First-aid kit and medications
- Supply of bottled water
- Non-perishable foods that don't require heating
- Hand-operated can opener
- Paper plates and plastic utensils
- Blankets, bedding or sleeping bags
- Identification and copies of important family documents
- Small bills and change
- Special items for infants, the elderly or family members with special needs

La Plata Electric Association provides power outage updates on our Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram social media platforms. Members can view current outage information on LPEA's Outage Viewer Map, <http://outage.lpea.coop>, and report and receive power outage information through LPEA's SmartHub and Outage Texting Service programs. Both services are available for download at <https://lpea.coop>.

## LED HOLIDAY LIGHTING CONTEST



LPEA's third annual LED Holiday Lighting Contest is scheduled to "light" the holiday spirit across LPEA's service territory the first week of December. "We want to give our members enough time, so they can plan their lighting designs for this year's contest," says LPEA Energy Management Advisor Nancy Andrews, who coordinates the competition.

To be entered in the contest, registration is required by December 1, via email: 2019lightcontest@lpea.coop, or call (970) 247-5786.

"Prizes will be awarded in both Archuleta and La Plata counties for the most creative home LED lighting displays," stated Andrews.

"LED holiday lights are also energy efficient and cost effective on all fronts – from the initial purchase to the amount of electricity they draw," said Andrews. "Plus, the jewel tones are beautiful. For safety, be sure to install those lights specified for exterior use, and never puncture the cords when hanging the lights."

Lighting displays will be judged by LPEA employees the week of December 9. For additional LED Holiday Lighting Contest information, contact Nancy Andrews at [nandrews@lpea.coop](mailto:nandrews@lpea.coop) or (970) 382-7775.

## Call for applications: Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp

La Plata Electric Association (LPEA) invites high school sophomores to participate in the Colorado Electric Education Institute (CEEI) Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp – an all-expenses paid educational/leadership camp set for July 11-16, 2020 at Glen Eden Resort outside of Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

"As part of our cooperative principles, Education, Training, and Information, LPEA looks to inspire students and give them a competitive edge," said LPEA CEO Jessica Matlock. "The camp uses a hands-on approach to learning as students interact with industry and government leaders. They will develop greater confidence, leadership and teamwork abilities that will benefit them in the future."

LPEA will sponsor three local students for the July 11-16, 2020 Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp. The camp has brought together more than 3,500 high school students selected by electric cooperatives in Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming since 1976. The goal is to help build leadership skills that will assist the students in meeting future challenges, plus learn about the organization and operation of a cooperative.

"It's not just another camp," said LPEA Communications Coordinator Lonnie Tucker. "This is an experience that will help students build for their future and help them gain valuable leadership and interpersonal relationship skills that will benefit them in an increasingly competitive world."

The students will visit Craig Power Plant, explore a community solar farm, watch a high-voltage safety demonstration and tour Yampa Valley Electric Cooperative. Organizers note that "fun" is also part of the weeklong experience, and scheduled activities include a river trip and dance, a visit to Steamboat Springs and Fish Creek Falls, plus free time at the swimming pool.

To be considered, students must complete the 2020 Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp application and submit it to LPEA, along with a 500-word essay reflecting the student's personal perspective on leadership. Applicants should have a strong academic record, be interested in enhancing their leadership potential and have an interest in meeting new people.

Information and applications are available at [www.lpea.coop/cooperative-youth-leadership-camp](http://www.lpea.coop/cooperative-youth-leadership-camp). Deadline is Friday, January 24 at 5 p.m.



LPEA Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp delegates, shown here visiting Fish Creek Falls in Steamboat Springs in 2019, will pass the torch of leadership to a new group of high school sophomores this spring. Current delegates shown above, now high school juniors, include (L-R): Trevor Harms of Animas HS and Aiden Quayle of Durango HS.



More than 90 high school students from Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming attended the 2019 Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs. LPEA will sponsor and send three students in 2020.



Colorado's future cooperative employees and leaders.

## LPEA's Power Restoration Plan

During the restoration of electrical equipment due to storm damage, La Plata Electric Association works to restore power to equipment that feeds the largest number of customers. This could include high-voltage transmission lines and structures, substations or main feeder lines. After the damage is repaired, we work to restore the greatest number of members in a timely manner, keeping safety in mind. As power is restored to communities and neighborhoods, we then work to restore individual members. If your home or business' power source is damaged by severe storms, you may need to make specific repairs to the equipment.

# Meet LPEA's New Billing Clerk

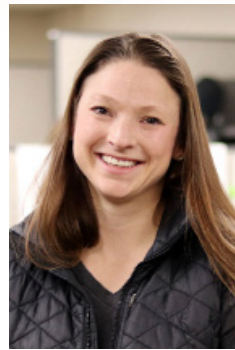
**E**rin Sims has joined the LPEA Finance & Accounting team as a Billing Clerk.

Working in coordination with LPEA's finance personnel and customer service representatives, Sims assists members with billing concerns as well as troubleshooting meter reading and billing issues.

Originally from Durango, Sims previously worked at Hyland Software in Ohio for eight years in their System Operations Department providing process review. She has a business degree in management from Arizona State University's W. P. Carey School of Business.

"I'm excited to work with such a talented group of employees dedicated to providing our cooperative members with superior customer service," says Sims, who resides with her daughter in Durango.

LPEA offers a variety of apprenticeships and career opportunities. To explore employment, or for additional information, visit [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop).



Erin Sims, LPEA Billing Clerk

## "Fill the Bucket" food drive Nov. 16

**T**he Heart of Your Power. More than just a brand tagline. A cooperative way of life. The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (Local IBEW 111 26 and 26A), of La Plata Electric Association (LPEA), will host the 12th Annual "Fill the Bucket" food drive, Saturday, November 16, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

LPEA personnel are dedicated to making a difference in our communities. The "bucket trucks" will be at City Market in Pagosa Springs and South City Market in Durango, to collect non-perishable food items (canned goods or boxed/bagged dry goods) during the event. The donated food will be distributed to the Community United Methodist Church Food Pantry in Archuleta County and the Durango Food Bank in La Plata County.

"We truly enjoy hosting this event each year and supporting the food pantries," said Pagosa Springs Fleet Mechanic Jeremy Gurule, who annually coordinates the event. "The number of individuals and families receiving assistance from the food pantries continues to grow. The amount of food we collect and donate will make a difference in our local communities."

Cash donations for the food banks are also welcomed, and donors can give directly at each food drive location, or by bringing a donation to the LPEA offices in Pagosa Springs (603 S. 8th St.) or in Durango (45 Stewart St. in Bodo Park). Checks can be made payable to the IBEW Local 111 Brotherhood Fund. All donated funds will be distributed directly to the food banks.

"We are very proud of the LPEA IBEW members and employees who are working together to help those in need," said Jessica Matlock, LPEA CEO. "We encourage our cooperative members to participate in LPEA's "Fill the Bucket" campaign and bring their food or cash donations to support the local food pantries."

For further information regarding the "Fill the Bucket" food drive visit [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop) or contact Jeremy Gurule at [jgurule@lpea.coop](mailto:jgurule@lpea.coop) or Rachel Killinen at [rkillinen@lpea.coop](mailto:rkillinen@lpea.coop).



The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (Local IBEW 111 26 and 26A), of LPEA, will host the 12th Annual "Fill the Bucket" food drive, Saturday, Nov. 16, 2019, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the City Market in Pagosa Springs (left), and South City Market in Durango (right).

## LIVE WIRES

### Board meeting November 20, 9 a.m.

The next meeting of the LPEA Board of Directors is scheduled for Wednesday, Nov. 20, 9 a.m. at the LPEA headquarters in Durango (Bodo Park). The agenda will be posted 10 days in advance of the meeting at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop).

### Round Up Grants

In October, the LPEA Round Up Foundation Board awarded Round Up and Educational grants to Community Foundation serving Southwest Colorado and Thrive Living Wage Coalition.

### Last chance for Sight-in Days

The final two days for all hunters to sight their scopes during Sight-In Days at the Durango Gun Club outdoor range are Thursday and Friday, Oct. 31 and Nov. 1, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The free opportunity, open to all hunters, is courtesy of LPEA.

### Remember to "Fall Back"

Daylight Saving Time ends Sunday, Nov. 3. Remember to set your clocks back one hour.

### Holiday office closures

LPEA'S offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs will be closed Thursday, Nov. 28 and Friday, Nov. 29 for Thanksgiving. We wish you a warm and wonderful holiday!



# Concern for Community

BY LONNIE TUCKER | COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR | LTUCKER@LPEA.COOP

## LPEA can help advise members seeking assistance with winter electric bills

Winter officially arrives next month on December 21, but colder temperatures and higher heating bills are expected to arrive in Southwest Colorado from November through April. Anyone can experience difficult times, but the cost of keeping a home warm inside when the temperatures drop outside presents a particularly difficult situation for many in our community.

La Plata Electric Association (LPEA) cares about its members who struggle to pay their winter utility bills. LPEA employees can help connect members to local agencies who can assist those unable to afford the cost of heat. Each winter, LPEA works with members to gather the necessary documentation used to apply for assistance through the Colorado Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP).

The LEAP program is a federally funded assistance program designed to support eligible residents with a portion of their power bills during the winter.

Cooperative members wishing to apply for LEAP heating cost assistance must do so at their local help agencies. However, La Plata Electric Association encourages members seeking assistance to contact LPEA's Customer Service Representatives for help compiling the documentation required by the agency assisting the applicant.

"If electricity is the primary source of your heat, we can provide members seeking assistance with a LEAP application form, needed

to begin the process, and a copy of their most recent LPEA bill," said LPEA Customer Service Representative Jeanne Dittmar. "Members who qualify can receive one LEAP benefit during the heating season which runs November 1 through April 30. LEAP may elect to divide this benefit into two separate payments."

Customer service representatives have a list of local assistance agencies that are willing to facilitate the LEAP application process to ensure the application is complete and submitted with the required documentation. If a member does not qualify for LEAP assistance there may be benefits available through Energy Outreach Colorado or the Community Emergency Assistance Coalition.

### To apply, a household must:

- Have at least one U.S. citizen or non-citizen who meets the eligibility criteria
- Maximum family income falls below 60% of the Colorado median income level
- Be responsible for the household heating bills

For Colorado Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) information visit <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/leap> or contact the Department of Human Services in Archuleta County at (970) 264-2182 or La Plata County at (970) 382-6150.

Call (907) 247-5786 to speak with an LPEA Customer Service Representative or visit [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop) for additional information.

## Support for Community Connections

LPEA Public Relations Coordinator Jeannie Bennett will facilitate and assist the Community Connections clients of Holly House as they decorate this year's LPEA tree for the 16th Annual Festival of Trees, a holiday tradition benefitting children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities across Southwest Colorado.

The fundraiser kicks off on Friday, December 6 and runs through December 8 from 12-5 p.m. at the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Grange in Downtown Durango. Event proceeds go directly to support the children and adults Community Connections' serves to live independently, attain employment and become actively involved in their community.



Jeannie Bennett, LPEA Public Relations Coordinator, and Community Connections' clients show their pride at decorating the tree sponsored by LPEA at Community Connections' 2018 Festival of Trees.



### Mission Statement:

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

### 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)  
Guinn Unger, Secretary (District 4)  
Tim Wheeler, Treasurer (District 4)  
Dan Huntington (District 2)  
Rachel Landis (District 3)  
Joe Lewandowski (District 3)  
Kohler McInnis (District 2)  
Holly Metzler (District 1)  
Davin Montoya (District 2)  
Kirsten Skeehan (District 1)  
Jack Turner (District 4)

### Chief Executive Officer:

Jessica Matlock

### Social Media:

La Plata Electric Association is on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

