

# LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

## Watt's Up

AUGUST 2020



### MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 2750  
Durango, CO 81302-2750



### STREET ADDRESS

45 Stewart Street  
Durango, CO 81303-7915



### HOURS

Monday – Thursday  
7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.



**ph** 970-247-5786

**tf** 888-839-5732

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



Facebook.com/laplataelectric/  
Twitter: @LaPlataElectric  
instagram.com/laplataelectric

## NEWS RE: COLORADO COUNTRY LIFE SUBSCRIPTION

The LPEA board voted in June to discontinue our subscription to Colorado Country Life Magazine effective November 2020. The decision was made after evaluating costs, readership rates, and member preferences. From November 2020 onward, you will receive a newsletter in your bill and an e-newsletter in your inbox monthly. This change will save our members \$110,000 annually. Questions or concerns? Email [comments@lpea.coop](mailto:comments@lpea.coop).

# LPEA

La Plata Electric Association, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

## READY, SET, MITIGATE!



### Mitigation Day

Residents of Cedar Mesa Ranches using a chipper to clean up after thinning trees on their properties.

Are you at risk for wildfire? Here in SW Colorado, we are all at risk. According to the Colorado State

Forest Service, more than two million Coloradans live in the so called “wildland-urban interface (WUI)”, which is any area where man-made improvements are built close to, or within, natural terrain and flammable vegetation.

“More than 90% of the residents of La Plata and Archuleta counties live within the WUI,” said Ashley Downing, Executive Director for Wildlife Adapted Partnership (WAP) in Durango. “As new structures are built here every year, it becomes increasingly necessary to engage homeowners in the importance of mitigating their wildfire risk. This is crucial for resident and emergency-responder safety, and for general forest health.”

Since 2013, WAP and LPEA have collaborated to make funding possible for their Chipper Rental Rebate Program. The WAP (formerly FireWise of Southwest Colorado) program encourages residents to chip the slash they produce when cutting flammable vegetation on their property. WAP reimburses homeowners 50% of their chipper use expenses, up to \$250 per household. HOAs or communities that rent chippers or hire contractors to provide chipping services may also qualify for a 50% rebate of up to \$750.

The Chipper Rental Rebate Program serves homeowners and community associations and indirectly benefits neighbors who choose not to participate by lowering their overall wildfire risk as well. The program encourages residents to proactively treat their properties for wildfire risk and reduce the buildup of hazardous fuels. In 2018, 73 families/property owners participated in the program. For more information, visit <https://www.wildfireadapted.org/>

In addition to funding fire mitigation organizations and programs, LPEA actively works to prevent fires in our service territory through specialized equipment installation and vegetation management. If you are experiencing a power outage, visually survey your property and neighboring homes. If you see or smell any indication of fire, call 911 immediately and then call LPEA at 970-247-5786. And remember, never approach a downed power line. Stay 100 feet away to ensure your safety.



## NEW FACES AT LPEA

Meet the newest employees on your LPEA team!

Retirements, promotions, and the need to fill several vacant positions means we've added a number of new employees to the LPEA roster since our last employee update. You may speak to them on the phone, or see them working out in your neighborhood, but either way they have been hired to serve you – our members. Help us in welcoming them to the LPEA cooperative team!



**Amanda Williamson**  
Billing Clerk

Amanda lives on a 4-acre farm with her family. She enjoys hiking, camping, fishing and competing in cutting competitions with her horse.

**Tanya Roberts**  
People Services Specialist

Tanya joins LPEA from Animas Surgical Hospital, where she worked as an HR specialist for 5 years. She loves to camp, hike, and hangout with her English Bulldog.



**Jeff Rogers**  
Electronic Technician

Jeff joins LPEA from the Public Service Company of New Mexico. He hasn't missed a snow season since 1996 and enjoys fishing, camping, hiking and hunting.

**Ryan Rich**  
Apprentice Lineman

Born and raised in Cortez, Ryan graduated from the Electrical Line worker program at Colorado Mesa University in 2019. He enjoys trail riding on his SxS, hunting, fishing and hiking.



**Sabrina Ruiz**  
Customer Service Representative

Sabrina is a graduate of Fort Lewis College, where she studied Business Administration with a focus in international studies. She loves to travel, hike, camp, boat, cook, and eat Mexican food.



**Shane Martinez**  
Equipment Operator

Born and raised in Pagosa Springs, Jeff joins LPEA from the Town of Pagosa Springs, where he was an equipment operator. He's worked in the field for 18 years.

**Jenny J Taylor**  
Visual Communications Specialist

A Durango native, Jenny has more than 10 years' experience in the design industry working with various companies and running her own design business. If she's off the clock, you can find her on the trail or enjoying time with friends and family.



**Jenn Rummery**  
Digital Communications Specialist

Jenn has lived in Durango for 18 years, working in marketing and PR for non-profit and for-profit industries. She enjoys hiking, being on the water, reading, and dancing.

Want to join the LPEA team? Keep an eye on our careers page and sign up for alerts when new positions are available at: [lpea.coop/employment-career-opportunities](http://lpea.coop/employment-career-opportunities) You can also learn more about LPEA's leadership team at [lpea.coop/leadership-team](http://lpea.coop/leadership-team)



## ALERT for Hikers + Bikers

Animas Mountain Trail

**You'll see the signs?**  
Sign at Animas Substation Improvement Project instructs trail users how to stay safe around the construction site.



Bikes maintain a safe speed and yield to pedestrians

Keep your dog on leash

Social distance

Stay on the detour trail

Keep out of construction site

In July, LPEA began upgrading our Animas Substation, which feeds electricity to roughly 3,000 members in the north Durango and Junction Creek areas. The project will increase reliability, safety, and efficiency of power distribution by replacing aging equipment with new technology. It will also support the future electrical needs of residents and businesses in the area.

Construction in and around the substation, located near the East Animas Mountain Trailhead on 32nd and West 4th Avenue in Durango, is expected to continue into October of 2020. During that time, trailhead parking will be limited along 4th

street and access to the trailhead will be re-routed to an alternative trail. Users are requested to park only in allowed areas and keep their dogs on leash. Given the narrow nature of the alternative trail route, bikes are also asked to maintain a safe speed and yield to pedestrians.

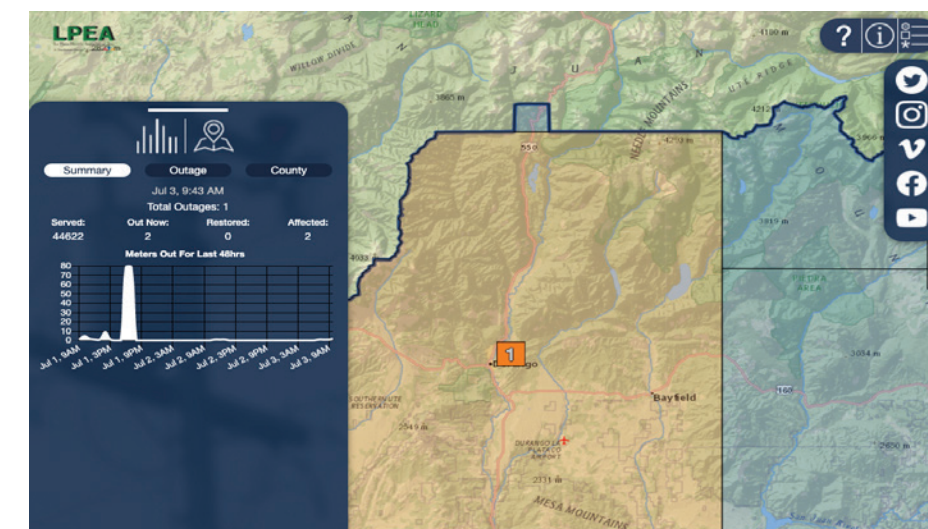
LPEA designated more than \$16 million in 2020 to conduct needed upgrades to our aging electric distribution infrastructure," said LPEA CEO Jessica Matlock. "The Animas Substation rebuild is just one of the projects we are undertaking to ensure we can continue to power the lives of our community, safely and reliably."

## DID YOU KNOW?

LPEA's website houses an outage map, which provides a live snapshot of all outages in our district, members affected, and line crews assigned.

For the most up-to-date details on outages in our area: [outage.lpea.coop](http://outage.lpea.coop)

OR follow us on for updates:





# NEW OFFICE HOURS

Starting in July, LPEA's customer service teams in Durango and Pagosa Springs are available 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Emergency and automated services are still available 24/7 at 970-247-5786.

The rationale behind the hours change is two-fold: we want to be more accessible to our members and we want to improve operational efficiency and cost-savings. We've received feedback from members that they would appreciate extended hours during the week so they can conduct business with us outside of standard 8 to 5 working hours. This shift allows us to be available two extra hours a day, Monday through Thursday, to serve our members.

We also anticipate this change will improve LPEA's operational efficiency and cost savings. Our field staff will have more hours in a day to complete projects, which means less overall driving time within our large service territory, and less overtime hours. Our Colorado cooperative peers who have already made the switch have realized great benefits, and we hope to follow suit.

Keeping health and safety as a top priority, our lobbies and meeting facilities remain closed to the public. Drive-through and phone payment options are available, as are online services through SmartHub. Sign up or log in at [lpea.coop](http://lpea.coop).

# RATE RESOURCES REMINDER

## Avoid Energy "Rush Hour"

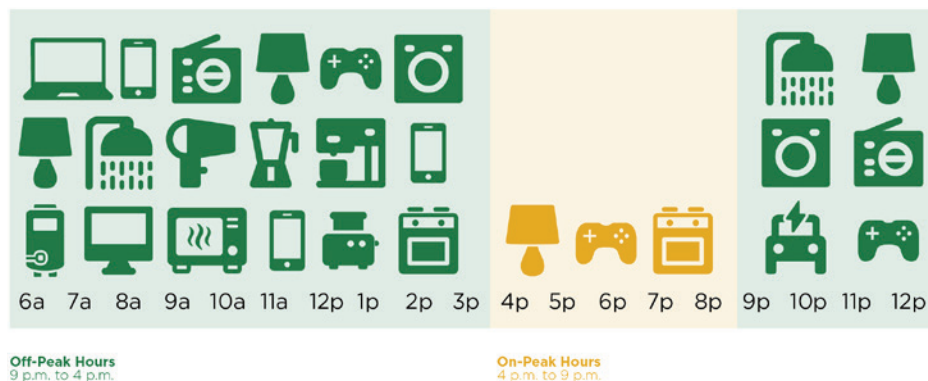
LPEA's new rates have been effective since July 1st, so you likely saw a change on your most recent bill. If you have questions about your bill, or would like to learn more about the rate change and the steps you can take to reduce your monthly bill:

**Visit:** [lpea.coop/rates](http://lpea.coop/rates)

**Email:** [comments@lpea.coop](mailto:comments@lpea.coop)

**Call:** 970-247-5786

## Shift Energy Usage to Avoid Energy "Rush Hour"



Not applicable to Time of Use rates. Time of Use on and off-peak hours and days remain the same.



The latest news, services, programs, and resources from LPEA. Have a question or comment? Email us at [comments@lpea.coop](mailto:comments@lpea.coop).



### BOARD MEETING:

The August LPEA Board of Directors meeting is Wednesday August 19th. The agenda, board packet and access/location details will be posted online in advance of the meeting. Public comments are heard at the beginning of the meeting shortly after 9 a.m. All meetings are open to the public and live streamed.

More at: [lpea.coop/board-directors](http://lpea.coop/board-directors)



### FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING:

The August Finance and Audit Committee meeting is Thursday August 13th from 2 – 5 p.m. All meetings are open to the public and live streamed.

More at: [lpea.coop/finance-and-audit-committee](http://lpea.coop/finance-and-audit-committee)



### RESIDENTIAL LED LIGHTING REBATES

LPEA offers 50% rebates (up to \$8 per bulb for up to 50 bulbs) for the purchase of energy-efficient LED light bulbs. To qualify, applications must be submitted within 120 days of the purchase.

More at: [lpea.coop/residential-led-lighting-rebate-program](http://lpea.coop/residential-led-lighting-rebate-program)