

Watt's Up

OCTOBER 2020



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LAST EDITION

This is your last edition of Colorado Country Life magazine. From next month, you will receive a paper newsletter in your bill and an e-newsletter in your inbox monthly. This change will save our members \$110,000 annually. For more details visit: lpea.coop/watts-member-newsletter



La Plata Electric Association, Inc.
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

BY JESSICA MATLOCK CEO LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

October brings many things to celebrate, including cooler temperatures, fall colors, and seasonal traditions. It also brings National Cooperative Month, which gives us an opportunity to pause and celebrate the benefits of being powered by one of America's 900+ rural electric cooperatives.



Instead of getting electricity from a for-profit corporation, we get our electricity from LPEA, founded in 1939 by the community for one single purpose – to bring power and light to all corners of the area, improving lives and powering a strong economy.

81 years later and LPEA is still supporting the initial cooperative principles on which it was founded: voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, member's economic participation, autonomy and independence, education training and information, cooperation amongst cooperatives, and concern for community.

2020 has been a difficult year. We've missed seeing you at the fairs, home shows, our lobbies and board room, and all the other places we usually connect face-to-face. We were disappointed to cancel our in-person annual meeting and member appreciation lunches and look forward to reprising and rebooting these events as soon as is safely possible.

Despite these COVID limitations, we are still serving you. Here's a few ways we can stay connected during these odd times:

(continued on page 10)



LPEA Virtual Town Hall

October is National Cooperative Month. Connect with LPEA leadership, learn more about LPEA's future power supply options, and win some cool prizes.

- LPEA District 1 (Archuleta, Hinsdale and Mineral County): Monday, October 26th at 7:00 p.m.
LPEA District 2 (South & West La Plata County): Tuesday, October 27th at 7:00 p.m.
LPEA District 3 (City of Durango): Tuesday, October 20th at 7:00 p.m.
LPEA District 4 (North & East La Plata County): Thursday, October 29th at 7:00 p.m.

Meetings are online and open to the public. More details at lpea.coop/board-directors

ALL ATTENDEES WILL BE ENTERED TO WIN \$50 GIFT CARDS FROM LOCAL BUSINESSES.

THRIVE CHIROPRACTIC STUDIO: MAKING GREAT THINGS HAPPEN



When husband and wife team Bethany and Dr. Trapper Niccum started Thrive Chiropractic Studio, their vision was to create a comfortable and natural healing space. That is still true 20 years later. The yard outside their building is beautifully (and responsibly) landscaped, the entrance warm and inviting, and there's a large sign on the wall in the reception area that reads "Great Things Happen Here..." In case anyone is nervous, in the adjustment room, a three-piece sign reads "inhale...exhale... and repeat."

They opened for business at 202 West 22nd Street in a 46-year-old building that used to be apartments. Building standards were different back then and nobody was thinking about energy efficiency, greenhouse gasses, and the environment like we are today. But old buildings have their charm. Bethany says the windows are "crazy old" and not well insulated, so it was cold in the winter and hot in the summer.

Being the environmentally-aware and globally-conscious team they are, they enlisted the help of Four Corners Office For Resource Efficiency (4Core) to conduct an energy audit. They received helpful yet simple and inexpensive tips to help them reduce their energy use and save money. 4CORE recommended replacing all their old incandescent light bulbs with LED bulbs. 4CORE, a local non-profit organization LPEA regularly collaborates with, told them about LPEA's Commercial LED Lighting Rebate Program and the Niccums took advantage of the savings to quickly replace their bulbs. They were shocked by the difference it made.

The Niccums said the savings on their bill has been significant and appreciated, but the other wonderful and unexpected difference has been the lack of heat. "In our adjusting studio we had four sets of track lights with five bulbs on each. They radiated so much heat that in the summer, Trapper would be sweating all day. It wasn't

comfortable for him or our patients. We would try to keep the lights off in between people to reduce the heat emanating from them because like most Durangoans, we don't have A/C so it was pretty miserable in the summer in that one room" Bethany said.

In addition to the commercial LED lighting rebates LPEA offers, we offer a residential version as well as a host of other rebates and programs to help our members save energy and money. Our Energy Management Specialists are available to conduct a basic energy assessment of your home or business at no charge. Call (970) 247-5786 to set up an appointment.

For more information on LPEA's rebate programs, visit lpea.coop/rebate-programs or give us a call at (970) 247-5786 to learn more about how you can save money and make your home or business more comfortable.



October 2020
Energy Efficiency
Tip of the Month

LAUNDRY TIP

Use rubber or wool dryer balls, which help separate clothing in the cycle, providing better airflow and a shorter drying time. Wool dryer balls can help absorb moisture, which also reduces drying time.

Source: energy.gov

FROM PAGOSA TO PURGATORY: EV INFRASTRUCTURE IN OUR DISTRICT



In September, Bayfield Town Hall became the latest location in LPEA's district to host a public electric vehicle (EV) charging station. It joined a growing list of other places also providing level 2 EV chargers in our community, including the LPEA offices in Durango, Centennial Park in Pagosa Springs, Fort Lewis College, Mercy Medical Center, the Durango Transit Center and the Smiley Building.

"We've seen a major increase in interest for EV infrastructure and for LPEA's EV rebate programs over the past few years," said Nancy Andrews, LPEA Energy Management Advisor. "This is due to a combination of factors including Colorado legislation, the increased availability of competitively-priced electric vehicles, and growing concern for our environment."

In 2018, the Colorado Energy Office released the Colorado Electric Vehicle Plan, which aims to build EV fast-charging infrastructure within Colorado through public-private partnerships. The fast-charging stations will be located in 34 communities along six corridors in Colorado, allowing travelers and locals alike to drive an EV anywhere in the state. Unlike standard level 2 EV chargers, which take 3 to 8 hours for a full charge, these level 3 DC fast chargers take just 30 minutes.

The first fast-charging station in LPEA's service territory became available in August in Centennial Park in Pagosa Springs. An additional fast-charging station is slated for Durango and another location along the Highway 550 North corridor.

While electric vehicle adoption is still relatively low in La Plata and Archuleta counties with just under 400 EVs registered, Andrews predicts their popularity will increase. "Several local dealerships sell

EVs and hybrids now, and likely more will in the future with new EV models on the horizon like the electric Ford F-150," she said. "LPEA looks forward to working with local dealerships to ensure EV choices are brought to Durango. EVs are officially moving from fringe to mainstream."

To support in the development of EV infrastructure in our service territory, LPEA and our power provider Tri-State, offer a combined rebate of \$2,000 per pedestal to any business or property owner seeking to install level 2 chargers in our service territory. We also offer the free use of a Level 2 ChargePoint Flex plug-in charger (UL Listed and ENERGY STAR certified - \$700 value) for home use for our members with electric vehicles. A rebate up to \$500 (not to exceed 50% of electric parts and labor costs) is also available for installation fees if a suitable home outlet (NEMA 14-50 50A 240V) is installed.

"We want to do what we can to support our members who want to invest in electric vehicles," said Andrews. "This is part of our greater effort to support beneficial electrification in our communities, which aims to replace direct fossil fuel use (e.g., propane, heating oil, gasoline) with electricity to reduce overall emissions and energy costs."

For more details visit lpea.coop/electric-vehicles-evs or call us at 970-247-5786.

For a full list of all EV charging stations in Colorado and beyond, visit Plugshare.com

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

(continued from page 7)

1. LPEA has been busy planning for the future and exploring how to best source inexpensive, reliable, and sustainable electricity to power our communities. To learn more about the choices on the table, and where we are in the exploration process, join the Virtual Town Hall Meeting in your District during the month of October (details on page 7). Participants will also be entered to win door prizes supporting our local businesses.
2. We know the impacts of COVID-19 are still hitting our communities hard. Starting in June, we put our members with outstanding debts on automatic six-month payment plans to help repay amounts due over time. If you can't pay your bill, call us at 970-247-5786. There are options to help.
3. Our monthly board meeting and Finance and Audit Committee meetings are live streamed and



open to the public. We welcome your attendance and participation. Meetings are recorded and available on our website for later viewing. More details at lpea.coop/lpea-board-directors-resources.

4. Engage with us online! We are active on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Follow us for the latest news, services, and offerings from LPEA daily. We respond to all comments and questions.

I look forward to the day when we can relaunch our member engagement programs and meet with you all live. In the meantime, I hope to see as many of you as possible at the virtual town hall meetings, our board and committee meetings, and online!

NEW LPEA BOARD MEMBER FOR DISTRICT 4



Director Jack D. Turner. His term began on September 16th and will run through the LPEA Annual Meeting in 2022. Witchel has more than 20 years of experience serving on boards, including Animas High School and the Durango Creative District. He is also an expert in energy finance having managed the creation of Tesla's financial software infrastructure and having led a dozen start-ups including GitPrime in Durango.

John Witchel was elected by the LPEA Board of Directors to fill the director seat in district 4 vacated by

More at lpea.coop/posts.



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



BOARD MEETING:

The October LPEA Board of Directors meeting is Wednesday October 21st. 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



FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE MEETING:

The October Finance and Audit Committee meeting is Thursday October 8th from 2 – 5 p.m. All meetings are open to the public and live streamed.

More at: lpea.coop/finance-and-audit-committee



ROUND UP GRANTS

Four Round Up Grants totaling \$10,500 were approved in August for:

- Seeds of Learning - Pagosa Springs
- La Plata Youth Services - Durango
- Community Foundation Serving Southwest Colorado - La Plata County
- KDUR Community Radio at Fort Lewis College (FLC) - Durango

LPEA approved three Educational Grants in August totaling \$10,001.49 for:

- Pagosa Peak Open School - Pagosa Springs
- PCs for Kids - La Plata County
- Four Corners Rainbow Youth Center - Durango