

# LPEA Currents

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- Davin Montoya, director – District 2

MISSION STATEMENT

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

NEXT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 9 A.M.  
LPEA HEADQUARTERS, DURANGO



## LPEA Receives High Marks in Annual Satisfaction Survey

BY GREG MUNRO, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Annually, La Plata Electric Association contracts National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Market Research Services to conduct a comprehensive Customer Satisfaction Survey to provide us with important feedback from you, our member-owners. This is a statistical telephone survey that has a 95 percent confidence level, with a plus or minus 4.9 percent error rate.



Greg Munro

I am pleased to inform you, after receiving the results of the 2009 survey (conducted in July) that we are meeting your expectations, though some areas for improvement do remain. I'd like to touch on the main conclusions in the final report:

- One of the most notable conclusions is that overall satisfaction, the American Customer Satisfaction Index, and ratings on all the performance quality attributes have remained steady or improved since the 2008 study, and no performance ratings have declined significantly. This is somewhat remarkable given that a rate increase and power cost adjustment occurred in January 2009.

- Attributes related to cost were evaluated less positively than most of the other attributes — which we've come to realize is never surprising in a member satisfaction survey. Cost is the strongest driver of overall satisfaction and value among LPEA members, so it is testament to excellent communication efforts that the co-op's strong satisfaction ratings were maintained through a time of increasing rates.

- Attributes related to the environment and energy efficiency are also strong driv-

ers of satisfaction and value — especially value. LPEA members are very energy conservation conscious and rank renewable energy sources as highly important. However, this importance rating dropped from the past study, likely due to members being more concerned about rising expenses across the board and an

increased understanding that green power comes at an additional cost. Continuing to excel in renewable energy and energy efficiency, while helping members keep their bills low, is certain to increase the value members feel they receive for their money.

- LPEA's employees and customer service each received among the highest ratings in the study, and many surveyed added positive personal comments. In fact, having friendly/courteous employees and being easy to reach showed significant improvement over the 2008 study. Resolving issues and problems is another strong driver of overall satisfaction, thus we will continue to work toward one-call resolution to maintain this ranking.

Overall, member-owner satisfaction with LPEA is 8.70 on a 10 point scale, with 59 percent of those surveyed rating LPEA "9" or "10." This means we are doing well in meeting your expectations and needs as your electric utility; but it also means we have room for continued improvement.

We heard very clearly from you that the key driver of value is "costs," i.e. charging reasonable rates and fees, having cost-conscious management, helping members be energy efficient and keeping the your interests at heart. *[continued on page 8]*



## **NANCY ANDREWS NAMED LA PLATA ELECTRIC ENERGY MANAGEMENT ADVISOR**

*Sustainability professional brings expertise to electric co-op*

**N**ancy Andrews, former resource conservation coordinator for the city of Durango, has been named an energy management advisor at La Plata Electric Association.

Andrews' appointment to LPEA's Corporate Services team is in response to the community's expanding interest in energy efficiency. In her capacity with LPEA, Andrews will take her expertise to a next level, helping LPEA residential and commercial member-customers better manage their electrical usage and conduct the cooperative's complimentary energy audits.

"As we look ahead to federal energy legislation, we all need to be more energy-conscious," says Andrews. "I'm truly looking forward to working one-on-one with community members. It's very gratifying to help people save their energy, the planet and ultimately their money."

A Durango native, Andrews enjoyed a 30-year career with the city of Durango, where she oversaw the growth of the city's recycling program and water conservation efforts. Formerly an engineering technician, she was appointed to the forward-looking position in 1989 as part of the community's growing interest in sustainability. She officially launched the city's recycling program in April 1990.

In her position with the city, Andrews had opportunity to work with LPEA on a number of projects, including refrigerator recycling and "Green Power" purchase. The City of Durango was among the first of LPEA's customers to pay a premium for renewable energy. She was also actively involved in employing energy efficient and "green" efforts in the city's facilities, and was part of the team that initiated and launched the Four Corners Office for Resource Efficiency (4CORE).

"We're very pleased to have Nancy join LPEA," says Mark Schwantes, manager of corporate services. "We've enjoyed working with Nancy for years on various city projects and I know our members will enjoy working with her as well."

Andrews holds a degree in geology from Fort Lewis College, and prior to joining the city, she worked for the Bureau of Reclamation.

Contact Andrews at [nandrews@lpea.coop](mailto:nandrews@lpea.coop).



**Nancy Andrews**

## **Application Deadline for Washington, D.C., Youth Trip Dec. 11**

**L**a Plata Electric Association and The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association will once again host the National Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington D.C., June 11-17, 2010. Deadline for application is Dec. 11, 2009.

Annually, high school juniors sponsored by LPEA join students from electric co-ops across Colorado for this dynamic trip that includes an intimate look at the federal government and the nation's capitol. Social activities with new friends are also part of the adventure.

All area high school juniors, including home school students, who receive their electric power from LPEA are eligible to apply. LPEA endeavors to sponsor one student from each municipality — Durango, Bayfield, Pagosa Springs and Ignacio.

Applications are available on the LPEA website, [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop), from high school counselors or at the LPEA Durango and Pagosa Springs offices. For further information or questions, contact Jeannie Bennett, 970-382-3505, or [jbennett@lpea.coop](mailto:jbennett@lpea.coop).

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## **LPEA Receives High Marks in Annual Satisfaction Survey**

*[continued from page 7]*

Your board of directors and staff are now in the process of developing LPEA's various budgets, forecasts and strategic plans for 2010. We are doing so keeping the aforementioned in mind and with goals to increase reliability, energy efficiencies and communications to you, with NO rate increase in 2010. Thank you and stayed tuned.

## **HISTORY WALL SHOWS EVOLUTION OF RURAL ELECTRIFICATION**

**T**he LPEA lobby in Durango has a new feature — a custom mural painted by artist Victoria Fae Roberts. At its core a story board reflecting the evolution of rural electrification over the past 70 years, the mural is a welcome addition. LPEA thanks Victoria for her thoughtful work.



**John Stephenson, a veteran of LPEA's operations department, jokes that he's portrayed in the new mural's pole planting image.**



# Green Power Funding Local Renewable Generation Projects

In these challenging times, LPEA's member-owners have requested that the cooperative do what it can to support the local generation of electricity from renewable resources.

LPEA is a transmission company — making sure electricity from generation sources gets to end users in La Plata and Archuleta counties — but with “Just One Block,” the community can help LPEA make a difference.

“If all our members will voluntarily purchase just one block of Green Power through LPEA — that’s just 80 cents a month, less than \$10 a year — we can fund installation of educational solar photovoltaic (PV) panels at our area’s middle schools and libraries, and more,” says Mark Schwantes, manager of corporate services. “It’s a tremendous start on our ability to facilitate local renewable generation.”

Green Power is electricity generated from a renewable resource, such as wind, solar or small hydro. Currently the \$0.80 per 100 kWh block premium helps finance wind generated power through Tri-State Generation and Transmission (\$0.40), with the remaining \$0.40 remaining at LPEA for local use.

The idea to use that \$0.40 per block to fund educational PV systems emerged from two of LPEA’s successful initial solar



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projects at Bayfield and Escalante middle schools. While the approximate 2 kilowatt systems at each location generate a small amount of energy and lessen

the demand from outside the area, a central focus is the educational value, helping youth in LPEA’s service territory better understand solar electricity generation. By adding systems at all local libraries, complete with lobby displays, the educational effort will be open to all residents.

“Perhaps you’ve seen our ‘Just One Block’ stickers around town, or our promotional posters and ads,” says Indiana Reed, marketing communications specialist. “We want to get the word out that it’s easy — just one block of Green Power for our future, for our kids and for the planet. The more members who purchase ‘just one block,’ the more we’ll be able to do to support local generation projects.”

To assist with the promotion, LPEA asked Jeff and Sherri Watson, owners of



McCarson Jones of Red Scarf Shots sets up a promotional “Just One Block” photo with Paul and Ava Watson, children of Jeff and Sherri Watson of Nature’s Oasis.

Nature’s Oasis (one of the first businesses in town to offset their electricity consumption with purchase of 100 percent Green Power through LPEA), if their 6-year-old twins, Paul and Ava, could be the “faces” for the effort.

“Our kids and our environment — what more is there?” says Sherri Watson, who has been a leader in local sustainability.

While Paul and Ava didn’t quite understand the purpose of the photo shoot, the results, thanks to photographer McCarson Jones (Red Scarf Shots), are now reminding everyone in LPEA’s service territory of the importance of the project.

To participate with “Just One Block” Green Power, visit [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop) or call 970-247-5786.

## CO-OP MEMBERS ASK ...

**Q:** *Is there an easy way for me to figure out how energy efficient my home is?*

**A:** Yes, Energy Star offers a “Home Energy Yardstick” – a five-minute online survey that calculates your home’s energy usage. You can link to it through LPEA’s website, [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop). Click on the **Education — Energy Education** buttons, and scroll down to Energy Star. You will need to enter some basic information about your home, as well as your energy consumption for a 12-month period. If you don’t have your bills, you can sign up on LPEA’s web site to have e-access to all your account information. Click on **Pay Bill On-Line**.

**LPEA offices in Durango**

**and Pagosa Springs**

**will be closed:**

**November 11 — Veteran’s Day**

**November 26 and 27 —**

**Thanksgiving**

# Energy Management Team Helping LPEA Member-Customers “Save Their Energy”

**W**alking the talk to “Save Your Energy,” LPEA’s energy management team is continuing to provide energy audits for residential and commercial member-customers interested in discovering ways to lower their energy costs.

Audits, which are free to LPEA members, provide a base-line look and possible ways a home or business owner can improve energy efficiency. LPEA has compiled a list of certified energy auditors in the region who can perform more extensive work, if needed.

“Some of it is just common sense,” notes Suzy Bynum, energy management advisor. “But it helps to have an independent, trained eye come in with a checklist and review all those things that might be causing a higher than necessary electric bill.”

Oftentimes LPEA advisors can identify an unexpected energy hog in a home, or offer solutions a customer may not have con-



**Project Specialist Ray Pierotti reviews his energy audit findings with Cocina Linda proprietor Linda Illsley.**

sidered. They also can analyze usage history, and further educate member-customers on efficient use of electricity. As part of each visit, a complimentary energy efficient kit is provided.

Recently Linda Illsley, proprietor of Cocina Linda in Durango, requested an audit, and was gratified to learn her consumption had dropped as much as 2000 kWh during some months because she’d changed her kitchen equipment for more energy efficient models. To benefit Illsley even more, LPEA is helping her change out the 150 6-watt decorative lights that drape the

exterior with energy efficient LEDs, as well as providing some window and outlet insulation, and more.

“Each of us needs to start taking responsibility in our own little way,” says Illsley. “We can’t rely on politicians to do it for us.”

To initiate an LPEA audit, contact Ray Pierotti, 970-382-7770 or [rpierotti@lpea.coop](mailto:rpierotti@lpea.coop). In addition to Pierotti, the LPEA team includes Suzy Bynum, Debbie Bass, Richard Archuleta, Nancy Andrews and Sue Maxwell.

## LPEA AND TRI-STATE REPRISE LED HOLIDAY LIGHT REBATES FOR 2009

**T**o encourage consumers to replace old holiday light strings with new, energy efficient LED lighting, LPEA, in partnership with Tri-State Generation and Transmission, will reprise its rebates on LED holiday lighting through Dec. 31, 2009.

LPEA customers who purchase strings of LED lights can receive a rebate of \$2 per string of 49 bulbs or less, or \$4 per string of 50 bulbs or more. There is no limit to the number of strings purchased, but the original sales receipt must be submitted with the rebate form (pictured on the right). Forms are also available at local retailers, as well as at LPEA offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs, and on the web, [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop).

Light emitting diodes or LED holiday lights are a great example of the on-going research to increase energy efficiency. LEDs save up to 98 percent of the electricity needed to power conventional painted or ceramic coated bulbs. The electricity cost to light a holiday tree with LEDs is \$0.13 to \$0.17 per season, compared to \$6 to \$10 for incandescent bulbs.

Cost is a great motivator, but LEDs are also environmentally friendly. The low energy demand means less electricity is required, and thus less carbon emissions from power plants. Also, in addition to their long “glowing” life, the LEDs are more durable, with the tiny semiconductor chips that cause the illumination encased in hard-to-break plastic. A string of LED lights is expected to last up to 10 years.

## LED Holiday Light Rebate

**Thank you for purchasing energy-efficient LED holiday lights!**

La Plata Electric Association will rebate member/customers \$2 for each 49-bulb or less LED Holiday light string, or \$4 for each 50-bulb or more LED light string. Please complete the following and return this form with the ORIGINAL sales receipt to:

<p><b>BY MAIL:</b> LPEA – Attention: Ray Pierotti PO Box 2750, Durango CO 81302-2750</p>	<p><b>DROP OFF:</b> In Durango: 45 Stewart St. (Bodo Park) In Pagosa Springs: 603 S. 8th St.</p>
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Name on LPEA Account: \_\_\_\_\_

LPEA Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

LPEA Account Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of 49-bulb or less LED light strings purchased: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of 50-bulb or more LED light strings purchased: \_\_\_\_\_  
(No limit on number of strings purchased)



**LPEA**  
La Plata Electric Association, Inc.  
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

**Deadline: December 31, 2009**  
Questions: Contact LPEA Project Specialist Ray Pierotti, 970.382.7770  
Rebates will be credited to your LPEA bill.