

# LPEA Currents



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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
 Pam Patton, president — District 4  
 Terry Alley, vice president — District 1  
 Davin Montoya, secretary — District 2  
 Jeff Berman, director — District 3  
 Herb Brodsky, director — District 4  
 Harry Cole, director — District 1  
 Tom Compton, director — District 2  
 Bob Formwalt, director — District 1  
 Harry Goff, director — District 3  
 Bobby Lieb — District 3  
 Jerry McCaw, director — District 2  
 Joe Wheeling, director — District 4

**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, JUNE 24, 9 A.M.  
 LPEA HEADQUARTERS, DURANGO



## Taming the Trees to Ensure Safety and Reliability

BY STEVE GREGG, MANAGER OF OPERATIONS

**W**ind, snow and trees — and electricity. They are not the most compatible bedfellows.



Steve Gregg

Indeed, when those elements of “Mother Nature” come into close proximity with electricity, they can cause significant damage to LPEA member-owner property and to our electrical system. To do our best to mitigate problems, and to avoid danger to humans and pets, fires and electrical outages, La Plata Electric has an aggressive tree trimming program.

While any damage to our system creates problems, the primary hazard to you, our members comes from the overhead power lines that carry the distribution voltage from LPEA’s substation to our members’ transformers. (The transformers convert the distribution power to manageable service voltage for the house.) La Plata Electric’s Tree Trimming Group begins as early in the spring as snow thaw allows, working throughout La Plata and Archuleta counties, trimming tree branches and removing trees that have created potential hazards by growing beneath, over or alongside these power lines.

Trees planted for landscaping, wind screening, shade or privacy can conflict with LPEA’s effort to maintain a safe environment around the system. As an owner of trees that provide shade and screening around my home, I constantly review what I believe an arborist should attend to and remove and trim during prudent maintenance of the yard. I encourage our members to do the same.

One area that is often overlooked dur-

ing regular yard maintenance is the site where the utilities (electricity, phone, cable/network) enter the home. Vegetation that has been neglected can cause damage to the home where the utilities attach — and that is the member’s responsibility. The damage can be significant if the meter base, riser and breaker box are damaged or

destroyed due to tree parts falling into or across the system. It is expensive and time consuming to repair, thus, the vegetation around that attach point is not something to be ignored. La Plata Electric’s tree trimmers will spend time attending to the trees around the distribution system at the street, and provide a safe distance from that electrical equipment, but your arborists need to continue trimming the landscaping around the meter/service line areas in the yard.

As our tree trimming program has been in place for a number of years, our crews are aware of those areas requiring the most maintenance. Prior to moving into an area, LPEA mails notification to homeowners, and when our crews arrive, they also knock on doors just to let everyone know they’re working in and around the property.

If you notice a damaged tree, or one that has simply grown too close to the power lines, give us a call at LPEA. As mentioned, we do have a regular tree trimming schedule, but when there’s a hazard, we will take care of it. For your safety, please don’t attempt to remove branches or trees near a power line on your own. Above all we want you to be safe as we continue to provide reliable power.

## LPEA Celebrates 70 Years of Service at Annual Meeting

**H**onoring the past while looking to the future could have been the theme of LPEA's annual meeting, held May 9 at Pagosa Springs High School.

Nearly 200 member-owners came out to the event that included presentations by CEO Greg Munro, President Pam Patton, Colorado Rural Electric Association President Tom Compton, LPEA attorney Barry Spear, and from Tri-State Generation and Transmission, Mac McLennan, senior vice president of external affairs and member relations.

Key concerns involved issues surrounding, as McLennan put it, "how to live in a carbon-constrained world." Indeed, Tri-State is taking a long view of energy generation, exploring a variety of options ranging from renewable projects such as the solar farm in northern New Mexico (that will be on line by the end of 2010), to increasing incentives for energy efficiency among its members, of which LPEA is one of 44 electric cooperatives.

"We have to look very rationally and very calmly at transitioning," said McLennan of the new energy economy, adding that though activity has slowed recently,



Greg Munro, Pam Patton and Mac McLennan discuss industry issues at the annual meeting.

Tri-State's forecast continues to predict significant growth. "We need to find long term, large scale options, and that could include nuclear... Our infrastructure is 50 years old, and we are trying to find the right set of generation tools."

Of additional importance to the membership was pending federal carbon tax or cap and trade legislation — an issue about which the LPEA board recently distributed a letter. As Patton noted, the board is in support of new energy policy, and doesn't oppose the legislation, per se.

"We want to make sure that the money goes to renewable energy solutions and new technology," she said, explaining that



LPEA's Jeannie Bennett (right) enjoyed lunch with Gennelle Macht, attending the annual meeting in memory of her late husband Ray, a long time LPEA board member.

discussion has been that some of the carbon tax funds might be put into the general fund for use in balancing the budget or other non-energy related activities. "Right now, none of the bills explain what they're going to do with the money."

LPEA, and rural cooperatives across the country are maintaining vigilance to ensure transparency in the legislation.

Honored during the annual meeting was John Gardella, retiring from the LPEA board after 15 years. Also, in thanks for Harry Cole's 25 years of service as a director, the LPEA board presented the Pagosa Springs High School athletic department with \$250.

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## La Plata Electric Members Elect Herb Brodsky and Bobby Lieb

**I**ncumbent Herb Brodsky and new candidate Bobby Lieb have been elected by La Plata Electric Association member-owners to fill director seats for Districts 4 and 3, respectively. Votes were tallied during the 2009 annual meeting.

Incumbent Brodsky was challenged by John Beebe in District 4 (north and east La Plata County). District 3 incumbent John Gardella retired from the board, leaving Lieb, Connie Imig and Harry Riegler to vie for the open seat in District 3 (Durango proper).

Pursuant to LPEA bylaws, one-third of the director's seats are up for election annually, one in each of LPEA's four districts. Elections were cancelled in two districts as Bob Formwalt (District 1 – Archuleta County) and Jerry McCaw (District 2 – south and west La Plata County) had no challengers.

On April 15, approximately 6,700 ballots were mailed to member-owners in District 3, and 1,449 cast votes. Lieb received 709 votes, followed by Riegler with 431 and Imig with 309. In District 4, approximately 7,200 member-owners received ballots and 1,306 cast votes. Brodsky received 801 votes and Beebe 505.

Ballots were prepared in accordance with requirements of the La Plata county clerk, and the county's electronic voting equipment was used by an independent tally committee to count the ballots.

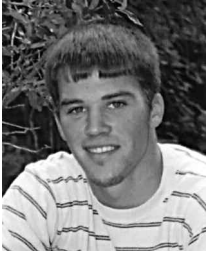
"We congratulate Herb Brodsky on his re-election," says LPEA CEO Greg Munro, noting that Brodsky has, during his tenure, been an active, involved and conscientious board member. "We also welcome Bobby Lieb to the board. We know his business background will go far to further LPEA's fiscal integrity. As a company, LPEA exists to serve its members. Everyone has an economic interest and voice in LPEA's future. We thank those who cast their votes and took time to participate in the cooperative process."



Herb Brodsky



Bobby Lieb



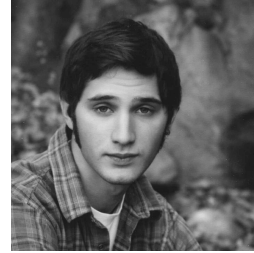
Jesse Krueger



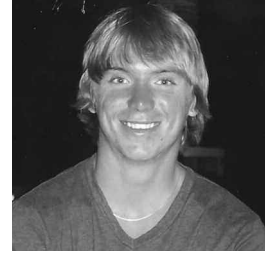
Stephanie Lowe



Matt Mulligan



Michael Salka



Ben Southworth

# LPEA's College Scholarship Recipients Named

*Academic achievements of five area high school seniors recognized*

**L**PEA is proud to announce the recipients of the 2009-2010 La Plata Electric, John Voelker Memorial, Basin Electric Power Cooperative and the Tri-State Generation and Transmission scholarships.

**Ben Southworth**, a 2009 graduate of Durango High School and son of Robin Lucie and Scott Southworth of Durango, has been awarded the 25th Annual LPEA College Scholarship, a four-year scholarship (up to \$5000 annually) to any college or university. Earning a cumulative 4.2 GPA, Ben has been accepted to Middlebury College in Vermont where he plans to major in energy engineering, with minors in mathematics and environmental studies.

LPEA's John Voelker Memorial Scholarship for vocational, technical school or junior college has been awarded to **Jesse Krueger**, son of Marge and Joel Krueger of Bayfield. He is a 2009 graduate of Bay-

field High School, where he achieved perfect attendance and a cumulative GPA of 3.964. Jesse plans to pursue a career as an airframe and power plant aircraft mechanic at Colorado Northwestern Community College in Rangely.

**Michael Salka**, son of Jill and Carl Salka of Durango, was awarded the \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship. Graduating in 2009 from Durango High School with a cumulative 4.2 GPA, he plans to attend University of Colorado Boulder in the fall.

**Stephanie Lowe** and **Matt Mulligan**, each received \$500 scholarships from Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association.

Stephanie is 2009 graduate of Pagosa Springs High School with a cumulative 4.0 GPA. She is daughter of Christina Hall of Pagosa and Ed Lowe of Denver, and plans to attend Metropolitan State College in Denver.

A 2009 graduate of Durango High School, Matt is the son of Geri and Tom Mulligan of Durango. He plans to pursue filmmaking and business/marketing at Colorado College in Colorado Springs.

"We had a tremendous response to our call for applications this year," says Jeanie Bennett, coordinator of LPEA's scholarship process. "All the scholarship recipients this year are tremendous students with great potential. At LPEA we are proud to be able to offer these educational opportunities to help build for the future."

Scholarships are awarded annually, selected by a volunteer committee representing communities within LPEA's service territory – Durango, Bayfield, Ignacio and Pagosa Springs.

For further information or questions regarding future scholarship opportunities, contact Bennett at 970-382-3505 or [jbennett@lpea.coop](mailto:jbennett@lpea.coop).

## Building Toward the Future a Priority at the Cooperative

**A**s part of LPEA's efforts to build toward the future, the co-op regularly participates in job fairs and programs that further education and employment opportunities for La Plata and Archuleta counties youth.

This past spring, LPEA Human Resources Director Linda Looman and Manager of Operations Steve Gregg participated in the Durango High School Job Fair, speaking with students regarding internships and potential positions in the electrical cooperative industry.

"It truly is a great opportunity for us to get out there and talk one-on-one with the students," says Looman. "The more we can do to help them understand how an electric cooperative works, and how to train for jobs in this industry, the better for our community.

To keep current on employment opportunities at La Plata Electric, visit the website, [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop).



Linda Looman and Steve Gregg introduce DHS students to job opportunities at LPEA.

# Larry Day Retires from LPEA

*Electrical engineer/key accounts executive retires after 46 years in industry*

**A**fter 46 years in the electric utility industry, Larry Day has retired from his position as key accounts executive at La Plata Electric Association. The cooperative celebrated his retirement at a festive luncheon reception on April 30, his final day of employment.

Day, who holds bachelor's and master's degrees in electrical engineering, as well as an MBA, began his career in 1963 as a general engineer with El Paso Electric Co. (1963-1976). From 1976 to 1990, he served as vice president of operations at Colorado-Ute Electric Association, opening the electric consulting firm Day & Associates when Colorado-Ute reorganized into a variety of entities. LPEA brought him in house in 1999 to essentially provide the same type of services specifically for LPEA member-owners.

"It was many moons ago that Larry and I met, when he was with Colorado-Ute and I was just starting out at Delta-Montrose Electric Association," said LPEA CEO Greg Munro. "Those were good times with a lot of activity, and I had great respect for Larry then, as I do today. We sincerely appreciate all that Larry has brought to LPEA and its membership."

In addition to numerous gifts from his co-workers, Day received a miniature custom-painted 1939 Chevy truck to help him recall his contributions to LPEA and the industry in general, and recognize his many years of service.



Larry Day shows off his miniature 1939 Chevy truck.

## ARCHULETA COUNTY VICTIM ASSISTANCE TO BENEFIT FROM LPEA GOLF TOURNAMENT

**P**agosa Springs Golf Course is the location for the annual LPEA Golf Tournament, this year set for Saturday, June 20. Designed as a four person scramble, with four flights, the tourney will get underway at 9 a.m.

Cost to enter is \$65 per person (tax deductible) and proceeds from the day will benefit the Archuleta County Victim Assistance. In 2008 the event generated more than \$2,000 for the Pagosa Mountain Hospital.

For further information, or to participate, donate or volunteer, contact Mike Alley, 970-749-0260, or Darin Rome, 970-946-2398.

**TIP:** ETS owners, during the warm summer months, turn your ETS unit off at the breaker box. It not only saves electricity, it protects your unit from damage during summer electrical storms.

# Inaugural Archuleta County Safety Expo Proves Successful — In Spite of Rainy Weather

**I**n spite of sometimes torrential rain that fell throughout the day on May 2, safety officials, first responders and local organizations offered members of the public demonstrations and information on "being safe" at the inaugural Archuleta County Safety Expo.

LPEA's linemen were on hand with the rural cooperative's equipment used on the system. Visitors witnessed a simulated rescue of an electrocuted co-worker suspended from a utility pole, as well as how a lineman repels from the top of a bucket truck, locked high in the air.

The "arc demo" reinforced the "power" of electricity as crews, among the various demonstrations, simulated the effect of voltage on a human body, literally "cooking" a hot dog and grapefruit.



Lineman Brent Tanner prepares to demonstrate what electricity can do to a grapefruit.

LPEA's line superintendent Mike Alley was instrumental in organizing the event, and he has assured the expo will return in 2010, bigger and better.



Bobby Turner simulates the rescue of an electrocuted co-worker.