

## A tale of two programs

Like the new look?

LPEA has updated its graphics for the Green Power programs, celebrating members' increased involvement in supporting renewable energy. The new "look" also signals the LPEA Board of Directors' commitment to a formal process for applying the Voluntary Green Power fund monies to local projects, helping further the memberships' renewable energy goals.

"We always endeavor to be proactive," says Ron Meier, manager of engineering and member relations. "So we continue to explore ways to develop more local renewable projects, which is something our members have requested, but we need the involvement of the membership."

"Do remember, LPEA is a distribution cooperative," says CEO Mike Dreyspring. "We're responsible for getting power to the end users. We're not a generation company, so we do not build or run projects that generate electricity, renewable or not. This doesn't mean we don't support distributing electricity from renewable resources. We've developed the Green Power programs to help facilitate support of renewable energy."

The two Green Power programs enable LPEA members to make minimal monthly contributions to participate in further development of renewable generation.

The Voluntary Renewable fund isn't tied to any specific power generation. The fund accumulates dollars directly contributed by LPEA members for support of local renewable projects. Last year,

LPEA, using these donated dollars, helped with a solar installation now powering a low income housing facility's water system at Southwest Horizons Ranch, and helped finance installation of a solar array to off-set electricity costs at the Socorro Senior Living facility in Pagosa Springs.

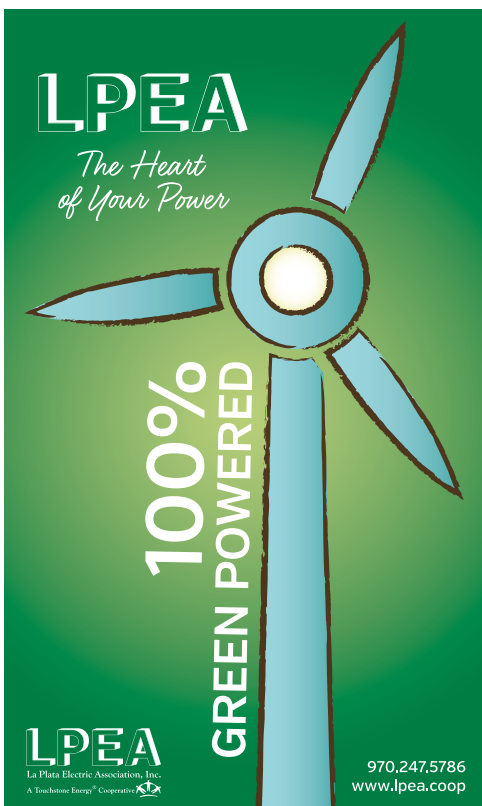
"This fund is completely voluntary," says Dreyspring. "If you'd like to help out, give us a call and ask to contribute to the fund. Each month, your contribution – at whatever amount you specify – will be added to your electric bill."

The second, and long-time established Green Power program is a direct off-set of the electricity used by members. Members can pay an additional 9 cents per 100 kilowatt hour block to off-set their electricity used through renewable energy generated by LPEA's wholesale power provider, Tri-State Generation and Transmission. Commercial members often opt for this program to off-set their electricity consumption and be "100 percent green-powered."

"Both of these programs are valuable and provide our members with tools to achieve their renewable objectives," says Meier.

Call [970.247.5786] or stop by LPEA's offices to sign up to participate in the Green Power program that meets your renewable goals – and get a new promotional decal to celebrate your involvement.

LPEA recognizes Member Services Representative Aubrey Gillespie for her artistic inspiration of the new promotional designs, and thanks Cindy Coleman of Duck Girl Art for the further development and refinement of the images.



## Rodriguez new Assistant Controller



With an eye for improved efficiencies, LPEA has established the new position of Assistant Controller, tapping CPA Monica Rodriguez for the position.

In addition to finance and accounting support, Rodriguez will assume purchasing agent duties at the co-op, most recently overseen by Purchasing Agent Larry Redman, who, after 39 years, has retired from the cooperative.

For the past four years, Rodriguez has served as financial manager for LPEA's telecom subsidiary, FastTrack Communications.

Rodriguez has dual degrees in Business Administration and Accounting from Fort Lewis College, and is a Certified Public Accountant. She was raised in Durango, though traveled and studied throughout the country. Rodriguez is the daughter of Bruce Sumner, former Administrative Services Manager at LPEA.

*Thank you for  
all your years  
of Service Larry  
Redman!*

## Streetlight retrofit underway

In the continued effort to save energy and provide further service to members, LPEA is retrofitting more than 2,000 streetlights owned by the co-op in the City of Durango.

"We're changing out the old high-pressure sodium and metal halide streetlights to energy efficient LEDs," says Ray Pierotti, LPEA project specialist who oversees lighting technology. "Beyond the energy savings, the streets and sidewalks will have far superior lighting, adding to safety in the city. And because the streetlights will last 15 years with little or no maintenance, this project reduces LPEA's operations costs, thus saving members' money."

In its first phase, LPEA has retrofitted 100 lamps on N. Main and the adjacent east avenues of 2nd, 3rd and 4th, as well as the Bennet St. area north of North City Market. Working with manufacturer Cooper/Eaton, which has done extensive research and completed photometrics along different types of roadways and intersections, the co-op tested a variety of lamps to find the optimum solution. The lighting selected surpasses the standards and guidelines required for pedestrian safety set by the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America.

On the energy savings front, LPEA (and thus members) will realize a 70 to 80 percent wattage reduction for the streetlights. For example, the project replaces 465 watt high pressure sodium lamps with 151 watt LEDs. The actual wattage reduction will vary from location to location as more lighting is required in high traffic areas, with lower levels in the neighborhoods.

"The new lamps are also all 'Dark Sky compliant,' which is important to the City," says Pierotti. "The lamps we have installed have zero 'up-light.' They have very tight specifications for backlight and glare as well, plus we can install backside and side shields upon member request if members experience any glare through their home windows."

The lamps' color or "hue," which is measured in kelvin [k], is 3,000k. This is the recommendation of the Dark Sky Consortium and the American Medical Association, which has studied the harmful effects of exposure to certain high levels of kelvin.

To further accommodate the neighborhoods, at 10 p.m., when traffic is reduced, a photo sensor will dim lights to 50 percent – still providing the proper amount of light, but moderating light pollution during traditional hours of sleep. The lamps will return to 100 percent at 5 a.m.

Once Durango's project is complete, plans are for similar retrofits of LPEA-owned streetlights in the municipal centers throughout LPEA's service territory in La Plata and Archuleta counties. Simultaneously, the City of Durango (which owns the streetlights in Downtown Durango) will soon be retrofitting its historic lighting to improve safety Downtown.

"This project aligns with our mission statement to provide reliable power, as the streetlights need to always be 'on,' and the old technology was not always reliable. Plus we're providing electricity at a reasonable cost while being environmentally responsible," says Pierotti.





## Simpson HR & Payroll Specialist

**J**eannette Simpson has been promoted to the staff position of Human Resources & Payroll Specialist. Most recently she served as Payroll Specialist.

A Bayfield resident, Simpson joined LPEA in June 2002 as a Customer Service Representative, but was accepted into an accounting position within a year, and subsequently was appointed to handle accounts payable in 2006. In 2012 she moved to Billing Clerk, and in 2016 she was promoted to Payroll Specialist.

Originally from Arizona, Simpson studied at Arizona Western College and completed her Associate's Degree in Accounting at Portland Community College. Following her move to La Plata County, she garnered banking experience at Bank of Colorado and worked in accounting with SoundTraxx in Durango.

"I'm enjoying the challenge of learning more about Human Resources," says Simpson. "And I continue to appreciate LPEA's practice of filling positions and promoting from within. This is a great opportunity."



## LPEA shines at the Snowdown Light Parade!

## LPEA honored statewide

**L**PEA has once again been honored for newsletter excellence by the Colorado Rural Electric Association (CREA) for our "Watt's Up," newsletter. CREA annually organizes the competition among the rural electric cooperatives it serves throughout the state.

LPEA was eligible for writing/photography awards in four categories within its division of cooperatives of 25,000 meters or more, as well as the overall Award of Excellence in competition with all co-op newsletters published by CREA. This year LPEA received the award for overall excellence as well as first place in all four categories in its division.

Indiana Reed was singled out among many entries across the state for her work, receiving four 1st Place awards. The articles recognized by the judges included the profile of LPEA's assistance in installation of new energy efficient lighting for the Southwest Safehouse ["Lighting the Darkest Nights"], the feature on standby generator safety ["Do You Have One of These?"] and the article discussing LPEA's efforts in supporting "Green Power" ["Working Toward Renewable Energy"]. She also received 1st Place honors in photography for the photo that accompanied the feature highlighting LPEA's support of Fort Lewis' new GPE building.

"This is the first time we've received all the first place awards in our division, as well as the overall award for excellence in one year," says Ron Meier, manager of engineering and member relations. "Indiana Reed is a very talented writer and a trained, award-winning journalist, so she continues to work to make our *Colorado Country Life* newsletter informative, readable and enjoyable for our members. As a consultant, she has been a true professional and remains an asset, helping LPEA meet our on-going goal to keep our membership informed. We really encourage our members to read CCL each month."

## LIVE WIRES

### Board meeting Mar. 21, 8 a.m.

The next meeting of the LPEA Board of Directors is set for Wednesday, Mar. 21. The agenda will be posted 10 days in advance of the meeting at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop). All members are reminded that public comment is heard at the beginning of the meeting shortly after 8 a.m.

### Call before you dig!

Before starting any outdoor digging project, call 8-1-1 and within two days, LPEA will send a professional line locator to mark underground electrical lines. The service is free to LPEA members. The simple step of calling 8-1-1 could prevent serious injury, or even save a life. A line locate request can also be made on line at [www.colorado811.org](http://www.colorado811.org) or through the link on LPEA's home page, [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop).

### Round Up Grants

The LPEA Round Up Foundation Board awarded Round Up and Educational grants in January to The Durango Arts Center/Community Connections Programs for Special Needs program, and DAC for LED lighting retrofit, SOS, Fort Lewis College Police, FLC American Indian Business Leaders, Park Elementary Education, and Southwest Rural Philanthropy Days.

### Spring Ahead!

Daylight Saving Time begins on Mar. 11. Be sure to set your clocks ahead one hour.



## We have Bylaw revisions for YOU to vote on

BY MIKE DREYSPRING | CEO | MDREYSPRING@LPEA.COOP

The Bylaws of La Plata Electric Association is the governing document for your cooperative. In Colorado, the bylaws of an electric association constitute a contract between you, the members, and your cooperative. For a CEO, like me, it's critical to comply with the bylaws.

From time to time – and now is one of those times – bylaws need to be updated. In the coming LPEA election, you will be asked to vote on 10 bylaw changes.

The following is a summary of the changes you'll find in your ballot packet, which will be mailed in April:

1. Changes throughout to ensure the bylaws reflect current state law regarding married couples, and make references gender neutral.
2. Changes to Article III Section 2 – Director Qualifications – to be qualified to be a director, candidates must have been a member for at least one year and reside in the district they want to represent for four months prior to becoming a director.
3. Eliminate Article III, Section 2c “not in any way employed in the business of selling electric energy or a major supplier of the cooperative.” The cooperative reasons that members selling excess energy under a standard net metering tariff should not be exempt from being qualified as a director. The cooperative also deems that conflicts of interest require a robust “conflicts policy,” with proper disclosure and recusal methods, which LPEA has.
4. At the request of members at a 2017 board meeting, a campaign finance disclosure provision is being added. The cooperative is developing a campaign finance policy to be implemented if the members approve this provision.
5. Change to Article III Section 2 – to specify through the bylaws, provisions for the board of directors to remove any director

who is no longer qualified.

6. Change to Article III Section 4 – to add 15 days for director nominations, creating a time buffer for insurance of the accuracy of documentation on ballots and other information related to director elections.
7. Change to Article IV Section 3 – to update the method of communication and allow notice to be delivered by email.
8. Change to Article V Section 10 – Bonds of Officers – to add language that the co-op may acquire insurance in lieu of bonding, when it is more cost effective.
9. Changes to Article X – Set-off – to more clearly permit the retirement of capital credits to be offset with any amounts owed the cooperative.
10. Change Article XV – Amendments – to not require every member bylaw change initiative through a petition, but, at the discretion of the board, put the issue before the members.

You can review the current bylaws on LPEA's website, at [www.lpea.coop/pdf/policies/LPEA\\_Bylaws.pdf](http://www.lpea.coop/pdf/policies/LPEA_Bylaws.pdf).

Please take time to study the proposed bylaw changes. And if you have any questions, please contact me, the directors, or staff at LPEA. We have a slide deck presentation with the details of these proposed changes, which I am happy to present and discuss with any group. Just contact us if you'd like to arrange for this for presentation.

Reviewing and voting on our LPEA Bylaws is a central example of your opportunity to make your cooperative better.



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

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#### Board of Directors:

Davin Montoya, President [District 2]  
Bob Lynch, Vice President [District 1]  
Karen Barger, Secretary [District 4]  
Doug Lyon, Treasurer [District 3]  
Mike Alley [District 1]  
Britt Bassett [District 3]  
Bob Formwalt [District 1]  
Dan Huntington [District 2]  
Rachel Landis [District 3]  
Kohler McInnis [District 2]  
Jack Turner [District 4]  
Guinn Unger [District 4]

**Chief Executive Officer:**  
Michael A. Dreyspring