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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**LPEA's 2026 Budget Holds Rates Flat, Protecting Members from Rising Costs**

**DURANGO, Colo., (November 19, 2025)** – The La Plata Electric Association (LPEA) Board of Directors has unanimously approved the cooperative's 2026 budget, which includes **no rate increase for members**. This decision comes even as Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association (Tri-State), LPEA's wholesale power supplier until April 2026, implements a rate increase that would have raised costs by \$9 per month for the average residential member starting in January.

"Our members count on stability, and we are proud to announce that LPEA is holding rates flat for 2026," said LPEA CEO Chris Hansen. "Through disciplined financial management and forward planning, we're protecting our members' wallets at a time when costs are increasing nearly everywhere else."

Utilities nationwide continue to face rising cost pressures due to inflation, supply chain challenges, infrastructure demands, and tariffs. With careful planning and sound governance, LPEA will continue to provide safe, reliable, and affordable power as it prepares for a more flexible, locally driven energy future.

In addition to holding rates steady, the 2026 budget reinforces LPEA's cooperative values and long-term financial strength. It includes a patronage capital allocation, ensuring margins are returned to members over time in alignment with cooperative principles. The budget also meets the Board's policy expectation of achieving a 3% operating margin, sustaining financial stability while enabling continued investment in infrastructure and member programs.

"This is the cooperative difference," said LPEA Board President Nicole Pitcher. "As a locally governed cooperative, not a corporation, we make decisions that put our members, not shareholders, first. Holding rates steady in 2026 is the result of disciplined, long-term planning in preparation of our transition to a new business model."

The budget also reflects growing flexibility as LPEA prepares for its transition away from its wholesale contract with Tri-State. It maintains and optimizes member rebates, launches a new, opt-in, peak management program, and expands investments in wildfire mitigation, local energy generation, and system reliability across LPEA's service territory.

The decision to keep rates flat also aligns with LPEA's updated strategic goal of striving to keep members' cost of electricity lower than 70% of other Colorado electrical cooperatives, and by

2030, reducing carbon emissions by more than 80% from 2005 levels, surpassing state climate goals.

“As we enter this next chapter, LPEA is focused on protecting our members and building a stronger, more resilient cooperative,” Hansen added. “We’re not just keeping the lights on, we’re ensuring long-term affordability, lower emissions and high reliability for Southwest Colorado.”

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### **About LPEA**

LPEA is a member-owned, not-for-profit, electric distribution cooperative serving La Plata and Archuleta counties, with segments of Hinsdale, Mineral, and San Juan counties. LPEA is the fifth largest cooperative of 22 in Colorado, and aims to provide safe, reliable electricity at the lowest reasonable cost to its approximately 37,500 members. For additional information, contact LPEA at (970) 247-5786 or visit [lpea.coop](http://lpea.coop).