

LPEA hosts 2015 Annual Meeting



Newly elected Directors
Karen Barger and Kohler
McInnis

In spite of the inclement weather on Saturday morning, May 16, more than 200 members of La Plata Electric Association gathered at Pagosa Springs High School for the Annual Meeting. Officially, 185 voting members were in attendance to learn the state of the cooperative, hear the results of the board of director elections, and enjoy lunch with friends and neighbors.

Highlights of the pre-meeting included live music from singer/songwriter and Journeyman Lineman Jerry Sutherlin, plus informational displays covering energy efficient lighting, LPEA's automated metering infrastructure, and the Round Up Foundation helped further member understanding and education.

During the official meeting, in addition to general business reports, service awards were presented to board members Jeff Berman (10 years), Bob Formwalt (15 years) and Davin Montoya (25 years). Retiring board member Jerry McCaw, who was not able to attend the meeting, was nonetheless recognized for his 15 years of service to the cooperative.

"As a rural electric cooperative, LPEA exists to serve its members. Everyone has an economic interest and voice in LPEA's future," says CEO Mike Dreyspring, referencing the election. "We thank those who cast their votes and took time to participate in the cooperative process."

In accordance with LPEA's bylaws, annually one seat in each of LPEA's four districts comes up for election. Out of the 31,829 ballots mailed, 7,209 LPEA members cast votes for an approximately 22.6 percent return.

In District 1, Archuleta County, 1,578 of the

approximately 7,900 LPEA members returned ballots with incumbent Bob Formwalt receiving 1,143 votes and challenger Nicholas "Koli" Kazarinoff receiving 435.

With 8,360 ballots mailed in District 2, south and west La Plata County, results of the new candidate competition showed Kohler McInnis with 1,083 votes cast to 769 cast for Gregg Dubit. District 2 incumbent Jerry McCaw did not seek re-election in 2015.

In District 3, the City of Durango, incumbent Britt Bassett received 1,144 votes with challenger Jim Wotkyns receiving 775 votes. District 3 included approximately 7,600 ballots mailed.

Challenger Karen Barger received 936 votes to incumbent Heather Erb's 914 in District 4, which covers north and east La Plata County. Approximately 7,900 ballots were mailed in District 4.

Balloting and tallying was overseen by the La Plata County Clerk's office, retained by the LPEA Board of Directors as an independent third party.

"The annual meeting is the signature event for electric cooperatives," says Dreyspring. "I enjoyed talking with our members, but I definitely want to thank the dozens of LPEA employees who worked before, during and after the meeting to ensure that all flowed smoothly and effortlessly. I don't have room to name them here, but for our members, please know that the employees of LPEA care about the cooperative and its membership. The facilitation of the annual meeting was indicative of that."

Congratulations college scholarship recipients

Recipients of the 2015-2016 La Plata Electric, John Voelker Memorial, Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Tri-State Generation and Transmission scholarships have been announced by La Plata Electric Association [LPEA].

The 31st Annual LPEA College Scholarships, two four-year scholarships (up to \$7,000 annually or \$28,000 for tuition, books and fees), have been awarded to Mallory Byrd and Shayla Wood, both seniors at Durango High School. Byrd (daughter of Sherell and John Byrd) plans to major in engineering and minor in studio art at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. Wood (daughter of Kerry Wood-Dalsaso and Mike Dalsaso) is heading to University of Colorado, Boulder to study architectural engineering.

Durango High School seniors Bryan "BJ" Morgan and Josh Thompson have been awarded LPEA's 15th Annual John Voelker Memorial Scholarships, \$10,000 for two years, for vocational, technical school or junior college.

Morgan (son of Christy and LPEA Lead Meter Reader Collector George Morgan) will enroll in Front Range Community College, Westminster, Colo. and study business, while Thompson (son of Kelly and Charles Thompson) will attend San Juan College in Farmington to study automotive technology. LPEA's John Voelker Memorial Scholarship remembers former LPEA board member John Voelker, who was instrumental in creating the vocational scholarship. Voelker perished in the Egyptian Air plane crash in October of 1999.

Vayle Townsend, a senior at Durango High School, received the \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship. With plans to attend Montana State University, Bozeman, Townsend (son of Thomas

and Maria Townsend) is pursuing his blasting license with intent to become a certified blaster.

The Basin Employee Dependent Scholarship of \$1,000, granted to a co-op employee's child, was awarded to Mackenzie Kemple, step-daughter of LPEA Meter Reader Collector Dusti Riggs. Kemple will attend University of Colorado, Denver following her graduation from Piedra Vista High School in Farmington.

Ryan McInnis, a senior at Pagosa Springs High School, and Christopher Rodriguez, a senior at Durango High School, each received \$500 scholarships from Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association. McInnis (son of Anette and Jeremy McInnis) intends to study mechanical engineering at University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. Rodriguez (son of Deloris Lopez and Alex Rodriguez) will pursue a career in chemical engineering at Colorado School of Mines.

"We had many qualified students apply this year, but have only so many scholarships and awards," says Jeannie Bennett, coordinator of LPEA's scholarship process. "All of our scholarship recipients are great students with exciting potential. At LPEA we are proud to be able to offer these educational opportunities."

Funds for the LPEA and LPEA/John Voelker Memorial Scholarships come from LPEA's unclaimed Capital Credits. Each year, LPEA endeavors to find "missing" members who are due a share of retired Capital Credits. Those funds unable to be returned to members are then put back into the community – in this case, into college scholarships.

For further information or for questions regarding future scholarship opportunities, contact Jeannie Bennett at 970.382.3505, or jbennett@lpea.coop.



Mallory Byrd



Shayla Wood



Bryan "BJ" Morgan



Josh Thompson



Vayle Townsend



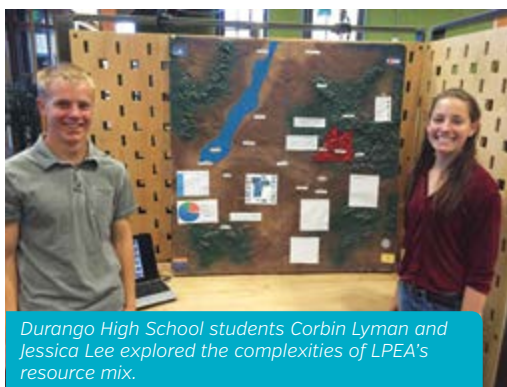
Mackenzie Kemple



Ryan McInnis



Christopher Rodriguez



Durango High School students Corbin Lyman and Jessica Lee explored the complexities of LPEA's resource mix.

DHS Basecamp looks at electricity generation

Where does our electric power originate?

LPEA is especially proud when young people take an interest in learning the details.

Such was the case with Corbin Lyman and Jessica Lee, who contacted Systems Engineer Dan Harms (by email and phone) to learn more about LPEA's power resource mix – looking at everything from coal to solar. The students presented their findings at a special DHS Basecamp exposition at the Powerhouse Science Center.

"I thought Jessica and Corbin did a particularly good job in trying to understand the situation and relationship between LPEA and Tri-State," says Harms, who didn't let the students know who he was until after they presented their findings. "It was a good discovery for them. They are the future and I encouraged them to stay in touch with me if they have ideas for LPEA going forward."

Community benefits from Unclaimed Capital Credits

In an effort to make good use of idle funds left abandoned by former member-customers of LPEA as unclaimed Capital Credits, the cooperative's board of directors has awarded four new Educational/Special Project Grants totaling \$17,000 to non-profit entities in its service territory. Receiving funds for program support in Spring 2015 are:

- Justice Ministries of Pagosa Springs, Inc. - \$10,000
- Women's Resource Center - \$4,000
- Manna Soup Kitchen - \$3,000

Capital Credits are LPEA's margins or revenues remaining after all expenses have been paid. Annually, the electricity payments made by members in excess of the cost to provide their electric service is placed into a patronage capital account in each member's name. When the cooperative is able, Capital Credits are returned to members. The dollars become "unclaimed" when LPEA cannot find members deserving of the refund. The board has determined that these unclaimed funds should be invested in the community and thus established the Educational/Special Project Grants program.

Grant applications are accepted twice annually. Visit www.lpea.coop to learn more or call 970.382.3505.

LPEA Golf Tourney June 20

LPEA will host its annual Golf Tournament at the Pagosa Springs Golf Course, Saturday, June 20, 2015. Space is limited and registration deadline is June 17.

Organized by LPEA's line personnel, members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers [Local IBEW 111 26A] based in Pagosa Springs, the LPEA Golf Tournament is open to all community members and will benefit the Darin Rome Memorial Scholarship Fund. The fund, which remembers Rome, a journeyman lineman with LPEA and musician, supports aspiring music students.

The tournament is a four-person scramble, with four flights beginning with a 9 a.m. shotgun start, rain or shine. Entry fee is \$65 per person, which includes lunch, golf cart, prizes and more. Hole sponsorships are available for \$150, \$500 and \$1,000, and independent donations are welcome. Cash or checks only. No credit cards.

"Once again we are going to be golfing for a good cause," said Lineman Jeremy Matney, who is organizing the event with LPEA Equipment Operator Garrett Hammer. "Golfers can enjoy a day on the links, plus lunch, and are eligible for some \$5,000 in prizes, in addition to raising funds for a good cause.

To register, or for further information regarding the golf tournament visit www.lpea.coop or contact Matney [970.759.8881] or Hammer [970.946.9434].

Since the LPEA Golf Tournament's inception in 2003, the event has raised nearly \$60,000 for a variety of non-profit entities in Archuleta County, including local food banks, Archuleta County Search & Rescue, Pagosa Early Learning Center, and Archuleta County Victim Assistance.

WE LOVE YOU MIKE ALLEY



The end of April marked the retirement of Mike Alley, LPEA line superintendent in Pagosa Springs, and he leaves in his wake a long legacy of commitment to community.

Alley joined LPEA in 1995, though he's been in the business for nearly 46 years. Aside from his devotion to keeping the lights on for members in Archuleta County and seeing to member needs, his name and face are well known throughout the area on any number of volunteer fronts.

Wearing his LPEA hat, Alley launched the LPEA Golf Tournament, which has raised nearly \$60,000 for local non-profit organizations. Each year he and the Pagosa team "Fill the Bucket" [trucks] with donated food for the county's food banks, and whenever a safety issue is at the forefront - such as the Archuleta Safety Expo - Alley has been part of the planning.

He and his wife Liz served as chairs of the United Way campaign, and other organizations that have enjoyed Alley's support include National Turkey Foundation, Kid's Fishing Derby, Search and Rescue, and so much more.

Alley may have retired from LPEA, but he plans to still be there for his community. "Retiring" from "work" only leaves him more time to give back.

LATE BREAKING NEWS

The LPEA Board of Directors, at the regularly scheduled May board meeting, elected new officers for the 2015-2016 year. Officers for the coming year are: President - Michael Rendon, Vice President - Tom Compton, Secretary - Jeff Berman, Treasurer - Karen Barger, Tri-State Delegate - Joe Wheeling, CREA Delegate - Jeff Berman, Western United Delegate - Bob Formwalt, Round Up - Bob Lynch and Kohler McInnis, and 4CORE - Jack Turner.



From the Finance Department Technology helps us serve you better

BY DENNIS SVANES | CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER | DSVANES@LPEA.COOP

When it comes to the Finance and Accounting Department, La Plata Electric Association has made quite a few changes in the past several years, all of which have allowed you, our members, more options in how you interact with us, receive your bills, pay your bills, and manage your account with us.

Technology is, of course, leading the way here. For example, there's an "app" for that. Those who have mobile devices, Android or Apple, can download a free application entitled SmartHub, and you can manage your account wherever you are via your phone or tablet. SmartHub can also be accessed on line at www.lpea.coop, and click on the SmartHub icon, or go direct via lpea.smarthub.coop.

SmartHub, as a secure software program, allows our members to view and pay their bills, set up

different payment options such as Auto Pay, report an outage, monitor electric usage on a daily basis, and contact us. The usage data is a key tool, a first step as it were, to using less energy by knowing how much power is being used and when. This is the first place to go if you notice a spike in your electric bill. The SmartHub data will show the days/times of your higher usage, which might help you pinpoint the activities that caused you to use more electricity. Of course, if it's still not clear, do call our Energy Management Advisors, and they can help you troubleshoot.

Another big change is with our Prepay program. This is a longstanding program that allows our members to place funds in their account upfront – including the original deposit made when opening an LPEA account. This eliminates the need for monthly payments. Previously, the Prepay program required our members to come into the office to add to their accounts, but no longer. Notifications of low balances are sent by text, email, or phone, as desired, and additional funds can be added to an account balance through SmartHub, by phone (Option 3 on our phone system), or, of course, at our offices. Virtually all residential accounts can

now utilize our new Prepay system.

At both our Durango and Pagosa Springs offices, we now have self-serve kiosks in our drive-throughs, which are open 24-7, every day of the year. No matter your schedule, these kiosks will take payments and post to your account any time, day or night. They accept cash, credit/debit cards, and check payments. (But do note, they can't make change. If you pay by cash and pay a little over, those dollars or cents will be credited to your next bill.) You can also check the status of your account.

We have also added mini-kiosks in our lobbies. They don't accept cash, but do accept the other payment forms. If there's a line at the window, you can quickly do your business at the mini-kiosks. At both the lobby and drive-through kiosks, Auto Pay options such as updating credit card information can be done.

On a final, and slightly different note, when you're setting up your billing options, consider signing up to "round up" to the next highest dollar. This amounts to typically about 50 cents per month. These pennies go to LPEA's Round Up Foundation, which provides grants to deserving non-profits in our community. It's an easy way to give a little but help a lot.

Mailing Address:
PO Box 2750 Durango, CO 81302-2750

Street Address:
45 Stewart St. Durango, CO 81303
603 S. 8th St. Pagosa Springs, CO 81147

970.247.5786 | www.lpea.coop

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

Board of Directors:
Michael Rendon, President [District 3]
Tom Compton, Vice President [District 2]
Karen Barger, Treasurer [District 4]
Jeff Berman, Secretary [District 3]
Britt Bassett [District 3]
Bob Formwalt [District 1]
Mark Garcia [District 1]
Bob Lynch [District 1]
Kohler McInnis [District 2]
Davin Montoya [District 2]
Jack Turner [District 4]
Joe Wheeling [District 4]

Chief Executive Officer:
Michael A. Dreyspring

Statement of Non-discrimination
LPEA is an equal opportunity provider and employer M/F/ Disability/Veteran.
If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call [866] 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax [202] 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

