



A career for you?



Lineman Justin Barnum practices a pole top rescue during LPEA's regular safety training.

Photo: Indiana Reed

Electric utilities offer a variety of positions that require specific (and on-going) training. Currently, LPEA is realizing the need for more Journeyman Linemen – those at the cooperative who actually do the work to keep the lights on. One of the challenges is reaching high school graduates who are suited to the often physically demanding, but exciting and rewarding jobs.

“Trade school or apprenticeship programs may be the best career path for some of our young people,” says Operations Manager Justin Talbot, who earned his Journeyman Lineman in 1999, noting that high school graduates can go right into the workforce and be paid while they apprentice.

“We can provide training in a field that will give them a life-long career, anywhere in the country, with good pay and benefits,” says Talbot. “But selfishly, LPEA has a need for apprentices. We would like to hire and train our own local young people.”

Truly, LPEA (and electric utilities across the country) are in great need of Journeyman Linemen, as what is being called the “Grey Tsunami” will see a bulk of trained professionals retire in coming years.

“Employer-sponsored apprenticeship programs are the best educational and training tools our industry ever invented,” says Mike Dreyspring, LPEA CEO. “It’s an excellent process for perfecting the professional and highly-skilled work trades our industry requires, and we look forward to training our young, aspiring linemen.”

The lineman’s job attracts a “different breed,” according to Talbot. Linemen tend to be adventurous, independent, athletic and self-starting, and they take their responsibility for keeping electricity flowing to members quite seriously.

“The job takes common sense,” says Talbot. “And good work ethic. There’s a lot of satisfaction in getting people’s power back on.”

The varied challenges and knowing that no two days will be alike also appeals to linemen. Indeed, one day they could be hiking out in the San Juans to repair equipment in the middle of rugged terrain, and the next working on complex, high tech switching equipment in an urban environment.

LPEA’s lineman apprenticeship program is sanctioned by the IBEW as well as the Department of Labor. It involves working with a mentor who has experience in the field and who will provide hands-on lessons, plus three years of simultaneous scholastic education.

“We have 30-year veterans who have been passing on their secrets,” says Talbot. “The whole process, and how it sustains itself from one generation to the next is gratifying to observe. Plus we’re able to provide good jobs here at home. We’d like to continue this effort.”

“We strongly encourage young people seeking an exciting career to explore an apprenticeship at an electric cooperative,” says Dreyspring. “As long as we have an electrical grid, we will need these talented men and women.”

Homegrown... Urban Market takes a chance

Launching a retail operation does admittedly take guts, but not only did Danielle Chick, Lynn Howland and Monica Broderick open their now wildly popular Urban Market on Durango's Main Ave. three years ago, this past spring they took the step to add a second location, Urban Market Home, also in Downtown Durango.

Urban Market is known for its clever gifts and unique kitchen items. Urban Market Home, located in the old Polo clothing outlet in Rio Grande Land, features home furnishings. Both stores are lit with LED lights.

"When Urban Market opened, I kept visiting the store and encouraging them to change out the lights," says Ray Pierotti, LPEA's project specialist. "They have such great merchandise, I knew if they would invest in LEDs it would make the items 'pop,' in addition to saving them a lot of energy – both electricity and just going up and down ladders changing out old flood lights."

"It took a while to convince me," says Chick. "We had no money when we started. We had nothing to spare and it was super scary."

"It seemed like a lot of money out-of-pocket to some guy who just walked in the door," confirms Howland.

Indeed, the cost for retrofitting the original store was more than \$4,300 over time, but \$1,487 in rebates came from LPEA, and the store reduced its kilowatt consumption dramatically – plus lowered air conditioning costs, and gone are the days of purchasing and replacing light bulbs, as LEDs can last for decades.

The big story, however, is with the new store, Urban Market Home. On the heels of the positive experience with the original operation, the ladies took a chance and invested in all LEDs up front. After three months of analysis [comparing usage to the old Polo store], Urban Market Home is using nearly 80 percent less electricity than Polo did [comparing actual days], and the only change was replacing energy guzzling fluorescents with LEDs.

Though the initial cost was more than \$3,000, with LPEA's rebate of \$1,555, the company will realize a return on the investment in less than five months – plus continue to reap energy savings going forward, and showcase the home furnishings in clean, bright LED lighting.

"They are saving more than \$3,600 in electricity per year," says Pierotti, referencing what the Polo store spent. "That's huge."

Pierotti plans to continue the analysis throughout the year for both stores as part of LPEA's service to its members.

"I can't tell you how helpful he's been," says Chick about Pierotti. "Every decision he's led us to has been the right decision for us."

Learn more about LPEA's LED lighting program at www.lpea.coop, or contact Pierotti at 970.382.7770.



Lovely under LEDs – Urban Market Home co-owners Lynn Howland and Danielle Chick enjoy the energy efficient lighting in their home furnishings store.

Culture of SAFETY

Acknowledging LPEA's culture of safety, the Colorado Rural Electric Association recently honored LPEA with an award for "no time lost" in 2014. Bret Cochrane, line superintendent in charge of LPEA safety program was on hand to accept the award.

"We were one of very few cooperatives in Colorado to have no on-the-job injuries for a full year," says Cochrane. "It's not just the line crews. It is all of LPEA in both offices."

"Congratulations to LPEA for this award for no-lost-time accidents," says CEO Mike Dreyspring. "I'm so gratified when our employees are acknowledged for their commitment to safety. Our safety culture realizes that past safety awards don't keep us safe today, and our employees continue to remain focused and vigilant."



Save the Date
"Lunch & Lights"
Lighting Information
Workshop
Oct. 13, 2015
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Information: www.lpea.coop

HR Administrator hired

LPEA welcomes Nadine Ontiveros as Human Resources Administrator, assisting LPEA Human Resources Director Linda Looman. Her current responsibilities include hiring and LPEA's succession planning, setting up a new human resources information system, and organizing an internal Wellness Committee.

Born and raised in Zimbabwe, Ontiveros is a sixth generation African. She immigrated with her family to Orange County, Calif. at age 17, and attended Westmont College in Santa Barbara. She worked in her family's entrepreneurial businesses, relocating to Grand Junction in 2001.

In 2003, Ontiveros and her husband moved to Durango, where she earned a position at Durango Joe's. Employed for seven years at the successful coffee vendor, she was eventually promoted to HR Manager, serving on the leadership team, overseeing hiring, customer service training and management succession planning. She went on to San Juan Basin Health for nearly two years as Director of Culture, Leadership and HR before coming to LPEA.

Ontiveros is soon to complete her undergraduate degree in Business with an HR emphasis through the University of Phoenix.



Maintain your ETS heater

The seasons are changing and cold weather is right around the corner. LPEA's energy management advisors encourage members with electric thermal storage (ETS) heating systems to take time now to make sure it is good working order.

Here are a few tips:

- While the breaker is off, vacuum in and around the heater making, using a certified or licensed technician when needed.
- Make sure nothing is set on top of the heater or too close to the right hand side, which can affect heater performance.
- Turn the heater on making sure display is reading correct time of day and room temperature and is not displaying an error message or PLC fail message. This is applicable to 1000, 2000, and 2100 series room units.
- For the EXT model heaters, make sure on-peak and off-peak indicator lights are on at the correct times and functioning correctly. For the S model heaters, turn on charge level and wall thermostat, making sure they charge.
- Allow for one day to charge ETS units.
- Those members who have whole house ETS units, make sure the digital display is reading correct time of day. Utilize the HELP menu to review settings. Change out the filter in a forced air furnace system.

For additional information, contact Suzy Bynum in Durango, 970.382.3506, or in Pagosa Springs, Debbie Bass, 970.382.7722.

Cash for scholarships

LPEA celebrated the donation of nearly \$11,000 to the Darin Rome Memorial Scholarship Fund for aspiring music students, raised through the annual LPEA Golf Tournament.

Retired Line Superintendent Mike Alley launched the tradition of actually giving "cash" to the tournament's non-profit recipient. Pictured with the bills are (ltoR) Deanna Rome, Equipment Operator Garrett Hammer, Alley, Laura Rome, and Lineman Jeremy Matney. Hammer and Matney took over coordination of the tournament with Alley's retirement.



LIVE WIRES

Board meeting
Sept. 16, 9 a.m.
The next meeting of the LPEA Board of Directors is set for Wednesday, Sept. 16, 2015, 9 a.m. at LPEA headquarters in Durango. The agenda will be posted 10 days in advance of the meeting at www.lpea.coop. All members are reminded that public comment is heard at the beginning of the meeting.

Hunters: plan to sight your scopes
LPEA will once again sponsor "Sight-in Days" at the Durango Gun Club outdoor range. Plan to sight your scopes for hunting season free of charge on Oct. 8-9, 15-16 and 29-30. The range will be open 9 a.m.-5 p.m. each day.

Offices closed for Labor Day
LPEA offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs will be closed Monday, Sept. 7 in observance of Labor Day.

Reminder for LED rebates
Remember the rebate for residential LED light bulb purchase is limited to 50 bulbs per calendar year, and be sure to include the packaging from one of the light bulbs purchased – a whole package. LPEA staff thanks you.



From the Round Up Foundation... Pocket change for positive change

BY ROBIN DUFFY-WIRTH | ROUND UP FOUNDATION BOARD PRESIDENT

Will you be part of the second million? Over the last nearly 20 years, since the organization of the LPEA Round Up Foundation, LPEA members, by rounding up their electric bills and donating pennies each month, have amassed more than \$1 million dollars. We, the Round Up Foundation Board of Directors, in turn, over those 20 years have built grants out of those pennies, and have supported hundreds of deserving non-profit organizations in La Plata and Archuleta counties.

The LPEA Round Up Foundation is a service your electric cooperative provides for the community beyond keeping those lights on [it has nothing to do with the cost of electricity!]. I'm so amazed by this organization, and I think the main reason why more people don't participate is that they don't know about it. It's so easy, so small, yet it makes a tremendous difference.

So often when people think

about donating money to non-profits, they think of a large amount. With Round Up, you sign up to round up your electric bill to the next highest dollar and forget about it. Cost to you averages about \$6 a year extra on your electric bill – but that \$6 doesn't go to LPEA, it goes to the Round Up Foundation. The impact of contributing just those pennies is huge. We work together, as a community, to influence a much bigger picture.

Round Up Foundation Volunteer Board	
Sheryl Ayers	Werner Heiber
Doug Bowen	Bruce Keuning
Teresa Campbell	Bob Lynch
Robin Duffy-Wirth	Kohler McInnis
Michele Harris	Faye Schrater

Round Up offers grants to all types of organizations that support people from Allison to Pagosa to Breen to Durango – organizations that help families who have loved ones in the military [or who have lost loved ones in service to our country], to kids we're trying to keep in school, to people who can't afford to feed themselves, to seniors and elder care, and more.

The way it works – we are a board appointed by the LPEA board of directors, made up of volunteer community representatives from

each of LPEA's districts. So we're as diverse as the organizations to which we give. We have a lot of discussion about the grants before we agree to them. The culture of the board is to open up and put our own personal opinions aside, and if requesting organizations' projects meet our mission, we fund them to the best of our ability. And it feels so good to know we – and **YOU** who contribute – are making such a great difference.

I was actually on the other end for a while, requesting funding from Round Up for the Family Center. Coming from the non-profit organization side, I understand how hard it is to make ends meet. When we went through the recession, every organization got hit, and sitting on Round Up through that, I truly saw where Round Up was able to help so many people. You can see the list of our 2014 grant recipients at www.lpea.coop/programs/roundup.

Unfortunately, our requests are greater than our available dollars. Please join us and be a part of that second million dollars that Round Up will put back into our community. Visit www.lpea.coop and click on the Round Up logo, or call 970.247.5786 and tell LPEA's customer service representatives, "I want to Round Up!" You WILL make a difference.

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:
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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.

