



LPEA CEO Mike Dreyspring addresses the assembly at the 2018 Annual Meeting at the Sky Ute Event Center.

Results of the Board of Directors elections were announced at LPEA's Annual Meeting, held Saturday, May 12 at the Sky Ute Casino & Resort, Ignacio. For the first time in remembered history, however, the LPEA Director Election faced a recount in District 4.

Incumbents Kohler McInnis and Britt Bassett retained their seats for additional three-year terms representing Districts 2 and 3, respectively, with new director Kirsten Skeehan elected to represent District 1.

The election in District 4, between incumbent Karen Barger and challenger Tim Wheeler, had a margin of less than 1 percent, which triggered a recount to ensure accuracy. The recount was held at the La Plata County Clerk's office on Monday, May 14, and following a thorough recount process, Wheeler was named the new District 4 Director, edging out Barger by 17 votes.

La Plata County Clerk and Recorder Tiffany Parker administered the recount process at the Clerk's Office in Durango (Bodo Industrial Park), supervising a team of seven Election Judges, and observed by the four volunteer members of LPEA's Election Supervisory Committee, as well as members of the community, including the two candidates.

The recount was necessarily held at the County Clerk's Office and not performed at the Annual Meeting, as the County's new ballot tabulation system is not mobile, and could not be transported to the meeting location in Ignacio. Those votes cast at the Annual Meeting were hand-counted by the Election Judges and

securely returned to the Clerk's Office to be placed with the ballots that had been mailed.

County Clerk and Recorder Tiffany Parker was gratified that all numbers tabulated during the recount exactly matched those of the initial election, giving her confidence in the County's new system.

In accordance with LPEA's bylaws, annually one seat in each of LPEA's four districts comes up for election. Also this year, the membership was asked to vote on changes to 10 bylaws, and all 10 were approved by a wide margin.

Out of the 33,150 ballots mailed, 8,744 LPEA members cast votes for an approximate 26 percent return. This is less than last year's 28 percent return, but exceeds ballot return compared to the past several years.

Also, per the LPEA bylaws, officers for the Board are elected at the first meeting following the Annual Meeting. The regular Board meeting was May 16.

Bob Lynch [District 1] will serve as 2018-2019 president, with Bassett as vice president. Dan Huntington [District 2] and new director Wheeler were named secretary and treasurer, respectively.

New director Skeehan was elected to the Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association Board. Jack Turner [District 4] will serve as the delegate for the Colorado Rural Electric Association (CREA) and McInnis was appointed as the Western United representative. Mike Alley [District 1] and Rachel Landis [District 3] were chosen to sit on the LPEA Round Up Foundation board.

More information is available at www.lpea.coop.

“To-Do” List for Spring

Red flag warnings and fire danger continue in the region, and members can assist in mitigating fire danger, protecting homes and helping LPEA restore power in the event of an outage:

Update your subdivision's gate codes: Gate-guarded subdivisions are urged to contact LPEA and register any new/updated gate codes. In the event of an outage, LPEA's personnel need access to affect repairs. Plus, it's wise to make sure all emergency personnel in the community have any new access codes as well. Help us help you.

In La Plata County, sign up for Code Red: La Plata County wants you to be prepared in case of emergency and offers a simple, free way for you to stay informed during events that could affect your safety or property. Floods, wildfire, evacuation notices, weather events, and biohazards can unfold quickly and unpredictably. Those who sign up for the CodeRed emergency notification service can receive voice or text updates with alerts to pending situations. Sign up for CodeRed at <https://public.coderedweb.com/CNE/en-US/BFEA18547A8D>.

Notify LPEA of hazardous branches: As wind and dry conditions remain (or increase), tree branches can present a hazard to power lines – not only the risk of them falling through the lines and causing an outage, but potentially also causing a fire. Look up and check your trees. If you have any branches potentially impacting LPEA's power lines call 970.382.9734 to have LPEA's tree trimming crews remove them safely.

Use of LPEA membership information questioned

In response to a member inquiry during the LPEA Annual Meeting regarding director candidates' unauthorized use of the membership list for campaign solicitation, LPEA has determined that, at this juncture, there has been no unauthorized use of member information.

Suggestion was made during the meeting that one or more director candidates had disclosed the list to an unauthorized third party.

“LPEA takes protecting its members' information very seriously and has always taken a proactive approach to limiting how our members' information may be used during a campaign,” says CEO Mike Dreyspring,

LPEA is governed in accordance with policies and procedures approved by the LPEA Board of Directors. Dissemination of member information, as it pertains to director candidate elections is Policy 117, which states: “[a] list of members of the Cooperative and their addresses are available to . . . bona fide candidates for director at the next annual meeting pursuant to C.R.S. Section 40-9.5-110(1)(b).”

To protect member information, in accordance with Policy 117, a candidate requesting the list of members is required to sign a nondisclosure agreement and must attest that the purpose of receiving the list is for the distribution of candidate position statements.

In order to receive the membership list, the candidate must also promise to destroy or return the list after the annual meeting. The list cannot be used for any other purpose, including advertising, marketing, solicitation, or used in computerized auto dialer systems, though phone numbers are not included in the membership list provided to candidates.

“All candidates who requested the list for the purposes of running for a Board position in this year's election signed a nondisclosure agreement ostensibly preventing them from using the membership list for any purpose other than what was set forth in the request for information filed with LPEA pursuant to Policy 117,” says Dreyspring. “Disclosing, disseminating, or using the list for any other reason would be a violation of the nondisclosure agreement signed by each of the candidates. At this time, LPEA has no evidence to show that a candidate has violated the provisions of Policy 117.”

Dreyspring's complete letter to the membership regarding this matter has been posted at www.lpea.coop. Further information is also available directly from Dreyspring at 970.382.3509 or mdreyspring@lpea.coop.

If any LPEA member believes that a third party has obtained and used private information as a result of the LPEA Board election process, they are asked to contact LPEA immediately 970.247.5786.

Carmen promoted to Working Foreman

Journeyman Lineman Ryan Carmen has been promoted to Working Foreman at LPEA.

Born and raised in Albuquerque, N.M., Carman entered the electrical field immediately out of high school. He earned his Journeyman Lineman in 2009 and performed electrical contract work throughout the country, though predominantly in the Southwest, and joined the LPEA Operations team in 2014.

As a Working Foreman, Carmen serves as one of the four men who make up a hot crew, which works on LPEA's system in the field. Carmen's responsibilities include supervising the crew, ensuring that his men know the scope of the job or project, and that they're doing it safely and efficiently.

With Carmen's promotion, his lineman's position becomes available. Visit www.lpea.coop for employment opportunity information.



Moore earns credentials

Metering Foreman Doug Moore has successfully passed his Metering Exam through Rocky Mountain Meter School, hosted by Colorado State University, further enhancing his qualifications in overseeing the building, testing and programming of the meters that monitor the energy consumption by all LPEA consumers.



Metering technology continues to advance, and from the co-op's perspective, colloquially, they are LPEA's cash registers. As an electricity distribution company, LPEA's income is a result of member consumption of electricity, and the metering system needs to accurately register the consumption. Also, meters are being "asked" to do more, such as early notification of outages, so maintaining the co-op's meters is a critical job.

Moore is virtually a Durango native, having moved to town when he was 10, plus he is one of LPEA's veteran employees. He joined the co-op in 1978, first as a Groundman and then becoming an Equipment Operator before entering LPEA's Lineman Apprenticeship Program in 1982. He completed the program, "journeying out" as a Journeyman Lineman in 1986.

Following work on the line crews, he was appointed as a Serviceman in 1993, where he served for 23 years before moving into the Metering Shop last year.

"It's been a good job. I've enjoyed working here," says Moore. "I've finally hit #1 on the seniority list [in Operations]. I never thought I'd see that."

LPEA bids adieu

This spring, LPEA bid adieu to two members of the Engineering team, Dave Gebhardt and Morgan Carey.

Gebhardt after 23 years at LPEA, has retired. He enjoyed an extensive career in the electric utility industry. At LPEA as Major Projects Engineer, he oversaw the SCADA [Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition] system, which enables LPEA to monitor and control the entire electrical system and operations from a central computer and oversaw substation and transmission line engineering and construction.

Carey is moving on to Yampa Valley Rural Electric as a Line Designer, after 12 years at LPEA. He entered the LPEA Staking Engineer Apprentice program in 2006, earning his credentials in 2010. In 2015 he was promoted to Land Rights Administrator.

LPEA wishes both talented gentlemen well, and they will be missed.



Dave Gebhardt



Morgan Carey

This is the "Heart of your Power"

The Heart of your Power at LPEA is not only providing electricity, it's the people behind the power. LPEA's Pagosa Springs District Manager Jerry Wills related this heartwarming story...

"An elderly gentleman was in the office looking for help with his home telephone, as it was not working. Customer Service Representative Tracy explained that we are LPEA [the electric company] and not the telephone company. This was pretty upsetting to the gentleman and he could not figure out how he would get his phone working. Tracy questioned if he had anyone around that could call in for him and help him out. His answer was no, so Customer Service Representative Renee went out into the lobby, sat him down and using her phone contacted Century Link and set up repair of his phone service. Thank you ladies, this kind of service is appreciated by our members and LPEA."

LIVE WIRES

Board meeting June 20

The next meeting of the LPEA Board of Directors is set for Wednesday, June 20, 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.

LPEA Golf Tournament!

Are you signed up? Want to sponsor? The LPEA Golf Tournament benefitting the Foundation for Archuleta County Education, is June 17 at the Pagosa Springs Golf Course. Visit www.lpea.coop for details or contact Garrett Hammer, 970.946.9434 or Jeremy Matney, 970.759.8881.

Round Up Grants

The following organizations received Round Up or Educational grants, distributed by the Round Up Foundation Board of Directors, in May:

- Third Avenue Arts
- Archuleta School District Destination Imagination
- Pine River Shares Exploring Health Foods Together Youth Programs
- Advisory program training – Animas High School





Safety Always!!!

BY BRET COCHRANE | SAFETY/REGULATORY COMPLIANCE SUPERINTENDENT
BCOCHRANE@LPEA.COOP

Electricity. Can you see it? Smell it? Taste it? Hear it? Not normally, but if you do, it means something has gone wrong on LPEA's system. When an outage does occur, one or more members of our Operations team is called out to troubleshoot the problem.

During the power repair and restoration process, safety becomes the top priority, as electricity is inherently dangerous in its nature and deserves the utmost respect. We always want to caution the general public, please remember to stay away from downed power lines and equipment. Even when the power is out at your house, a downed line could still be energized. This is a point you should also reinforce to your children. [LPEA assists in this education, as we have an Arc Demonstration program we take out to the schools. Kids get to witness – safely of course – the “power” of electricity.]

A near miss/close call recently occurred while our crews were working in a substation. Crew members had set about working on a tagged de-energized cable, but upon testing, it was discovered to be energized. It could have been deadly if they hadn't followed proper procedures and safety rules. Thankfully, everyone went home that day, safely and without an accident.

Recently, CREA [Colorado Rural Electric Association] conducted “Speak Up, Listen Up” training for LPEA employees. It is an NRECA [National Rural Electric Cooperative Association] program that encourages employees at every level of the organization to call attention to safety issues and discuss ways to mitigate risks. Continual training is one way to keep the safety program at LPEA moving forward and make sure the safety culture follows.

Technology has also allowed us to update our safety measures by incorporating new tools. For example, OSHA requires a pre-job briefing before work commences. In the past this was done on a paper form, but is now being done electronically on a mobile device. This allows the crews to review every aspect of the job and provides every crew member an opportunity to voice concerns if something doesn't feel right.

LPEA employees take their jobs seriously. Most members do not realize what our employees endure during an extended outage on a cold blustery night or a hot windy day - from the call center, to dispatch and to the line crews. No one is looking for recognition. All they want to do is keep the lights on for you, our members, and to do it in a safe manner.

Our Board of Directors has also embraced the safety culture by passing a Resolution that supports safety as a #1 Priority. This speaks volumes for the employees to know that the Board members are also making safety the primary concern at LPEA.

LPEA wants to keep all our members in power, but we never want our employees to rush and do something that might impact their safety. If it means you're out of power a little longer as we make repairs, just remember, at the end of the day we want everyone to go home safely to their families.

Safety
is our #1
Priority.



Mission Statement:

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

Mailing

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Board of Directors:

Bob Lynch, President [District 1]
Britt Bassett, Vice President [District 3]
Dan Huntington, Secretary [District 2]
Tim Wheeler, Treasurer [District 4]
Mike Alley [District 1]
Rachel Landis [District 3]
Kohler McInnis [District 2]
Kirsten Skeeahan [District 1]
Jack Turner [District 4]
Guinn Unger [District 4]

Chief Executive Officer:

Michael A. Dreyspring