

The Heart of Your Power

WATT'S UP

2017 Annual Report to the Members of
La Plata Electric Association, Inc.

LPEA

La Plata Electric Association, Inc.
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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LPEA

La Plata Electric Association, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Mission Statement

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

Vision Statement

Shaping the future by building trustworthy community partnerships as an innovative, forward-thinking industry leader, delivering excellence in our member-owned cooperative.

From the President

BY DAVIN MONTOYA



I have been self-employed all my adult life. Right out of school, I worked for my dad. It would be an understatement to say he didn't pay well, but I gained a wealth of knowledge when it came to making business decisions, and that has helped

guide me throughout my life.

When you have your own business, you realize a mistake can cost everything. I have used my life-long education to guide me, treading prudently, in making decisions while serving on the LPEA board.

LPEA is a not-for-profit cooperative, and all costs are borne by its members, so we, as board members take a measured approach and are selective in the projects we pursue. Electricity is a necessity, and must be affordable and reliable. While we have members who are willing to pay more, we also have members who are living day-to-day. Missteps can be costly, and there is no reason to rush decisions that could impact the financial viability of the company.

The electric industry is changing almost daily, and what may be the best technology today may be obsolete tomorrow. A good example is CFL (compact fluorescent light) bulbs. When put on the market, people bought them up. Then along came LEDs, which made CFL bulbs old technology. And then we learn that it's problematic to get rid of CFLs, because they contain mercury. Be careful what you wish for. Let's all have level heads.

LPEA is a distribution co-op, not a power generator, which means LPEA purchases all the electricity it delivers to you from a power generation source. LPEA has a 30-year contract with Tri-State Generation and Transmission to provide electricity, and we are an owner of this generation cooperative along with 42 other electric distribution co-ops. We have a say in their decisions, and have a \$75 million investment in the company.

In addition, Tri-State provides incentives to develop local renewable programs and improve member efficiencies for its local distribution cooperatives. I think it's important to note that Tri-State forecasts no rate increase for the next five years. If you do the research, entities that have pushed renewable energy without prudent planning are experiencing significant rate increases. Much has recently been written about Tri-State, misinforming our membership, and taken out of context. We ask that members truly learn the facts.

I believe LPEA has among the most respected staff in the industry. The staff keeps up with the issues and new technology. If the board has questions that can't be answered immediately, they get the answers for us. It is the board's goal to keep our members informed through the *Colorado Country Life* magazine and other communications outlets. LPEA's directors must weigh all facts when making important decisions. Sometimes, unfortunately, the politics of emotion outweigh common sense.

Lower cost, renewable energy comes from utility-scale projects. To facilitate local renewable projects, LPEA, in partnership with Tri-State, has initiated programs to help members produce their own solar energy. Not only did Tri-State subsidize the projects, but our members need to understand that it is costing LPEA members about \$800,000 a year more than what is paid to Tri-State. Tri-State felt this was necessary to get renewable projects started, but now that the costs have come down, most all recognize that these projects must be in line with the market. We need to be smart about how we proceed in the future. LPEA needs to proceed on a cost-based program. The good news is that in 2018, power delivered by Tri-State will be approximately 30 percent renewable at no additional cost to members.

In 2017, LPEA's member delinquencies averaged 3,636 notices per month, or 8.5 percent of our membership. This is troubling to me. It is not fair to ask these members to continue to subsidize members who are currently getting their power free from the sun. I am a solar advocate - in fact I have several solar installations on my property, except mine are stand-alone, not connected to the grid.

December through February, little solar power is generated due to snow and clouds. LPEA members rely on Tri-State to provide electricity to people who have installed rooftop solar during these times, as well as at night. Currently we cannot manage without Tri-State as a backup. In spite of Tri-State's 452 megawatts of utility scale wind and solar, at a January peak for electricity demand, wind and solar generation were only able to contribute 23 megawatts, [5 percent of the total potential output], so fossil fuels were needed to replace the 95 percent of the renewable energy that was not available.

LPEA directors attend seminars, Tri-State meetings plus educational classes and rely on a very savvy LPEA staff to guide the company. This is complicated business and not as simple as some might think. It is important to be an informed member of your cooperative.

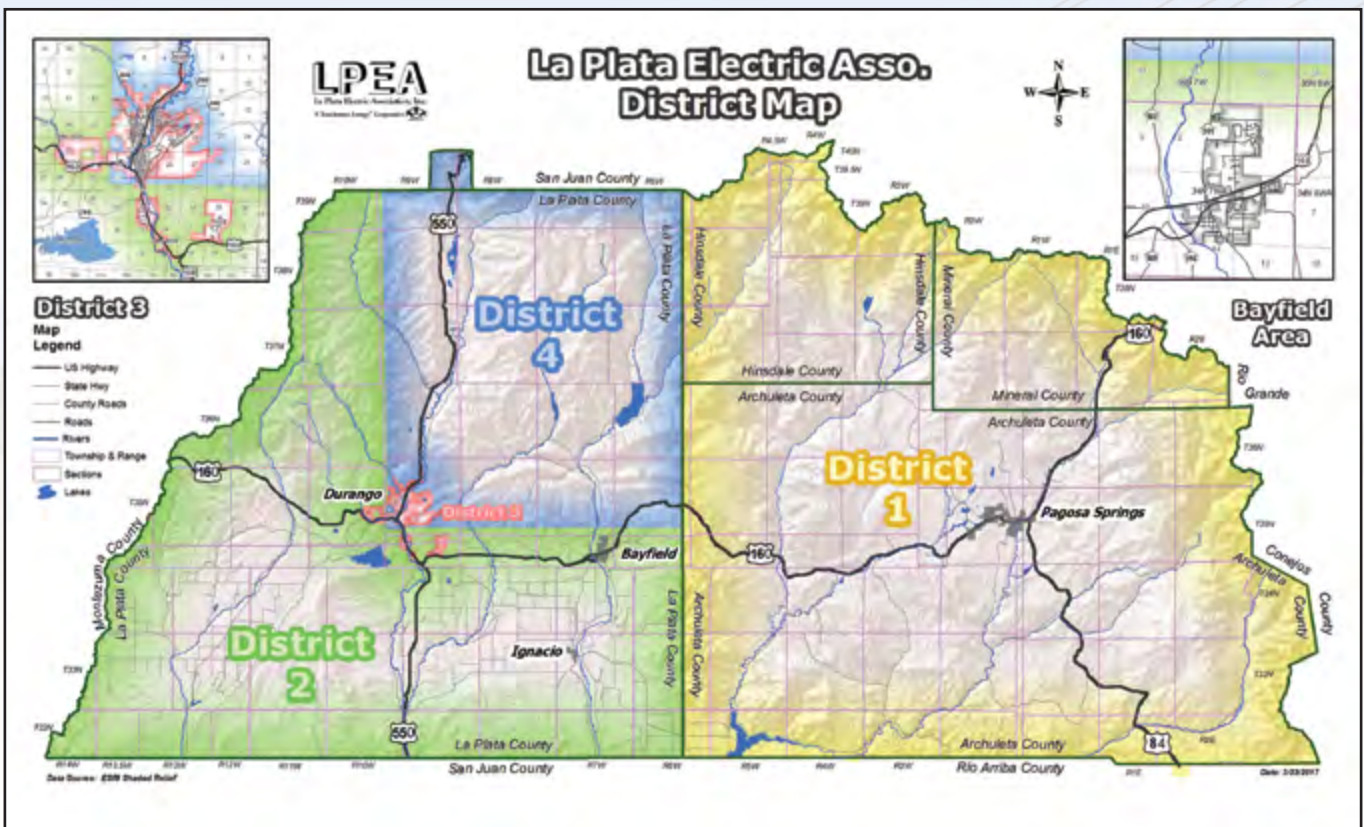
A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Davin Montoya". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



LPEA's Board of Directors (LtoR): Guinn Unger (District 4), Bob Lynch (District 1), Rachel Landis (District 3), Britt Bassett (District 3), Jack Turner (District 4), Bob Formwalt (District 1), Davin Montoya (District 2), Dan Huntington (District 2), Kohler McInnis (District 2), Mike Alley (District 1), Karen Barger (District 4) and Doug Lyon (District 3).

LPEA Vision Statement

Shaping the future by building trustworthy community partnerships as an innovative, forward-thinking industry leader, delivering excellence in our member-owned cooperative.





From the CEO

We do it for you

BY MICHAEL A. DREYSPRING

The year 2017 is on the books. Financially and operationally, LPEA continued its march on year-over-year improvements in financial position and performance, while improving reliability.

Our members purchased more than 50 electric vehicles in 2017, which creates new opportunities and helps improve our local environment. While that may seem like a relatively small percentage of LPEA's overall membership, the number is only going to grow. If you review the announcements of the various car manufacturers, there is a commitment of substantial resources for multiple models of electric vehicles. It is the beginning of a new trend in transportation. This past year, we installed electric vehicle charging stations at our headquarters in Bodo Park in Durango. We're also working on installation of a charging station in Pagosa Springs, as well as moving ahead toward installation of a Level 3, fast charging station in our area.

Further, LPEA has seen the beginnings of wall battery systems for the home. One member is incorporating LPEA's Time-of-Use rate in conjunction with a battery system to explore the effectiveness of battery systems in controlling energy costs. LPEA is monitoring their usage and pricing through our AMI system and we expect to learn a great deal about the future role of battery systems interconnected with our grid.

On our power supply side, Tri-State Generation and Transmission, LPEA's wholesale power supplier, closed its coal plant ownership in the San Juan plant just outside of Farmington, and has plans to close coal plants in Nucla in 2022 and one unit in Craig sometime in 2025. Tri-State continues to diversify its generation portfolio by expanding solar and wind projects, taking advantage of the lower prices these utility scale projects can offer.

During 2017, I shared my vision for the cooperative with your Board, and we're working through incorporating it into our Strategic Plan. One key aspect is how we will continue to deploy and support renewables.

A part of my vision is garnering a better understanding of the value of our wholesale contract with Tri-State. Tri-State is a cooperative in which LPEA has ownership, shared with 42 other electric cooperatives. It's a business that has invested billions in generation and transmission facilities to provide electric service to our members. LPEA will not abandon that investment lightly. Nor should we permit higher rates to our members to simply "buy out" of the contract. Nevertheless, while Tri-State has done more from a utility scale model in renewables, our members do expect continued development of local renewable electric generation, and we respect that.

In closing, I want to share my hope that you're taking advantage of LPEA's Time-of-Use rate, just like my household and more than 3,000 other members. My wife Sabra and I continue to realize savings on our personal electric bill without really changing our lifestyle, and with every bit of energy use we shift to the off-peak rate of \$0.06 per KWh, we save even more. If you're not on Time-of-Use, and want to save money on your electric bill, do contact us. We can do a quick review and let you know how much you would have saved last year just by being on the TOU rate.

And LPEA has more ways we can help... tools in the energy tool box, as it were. And we expect to provide even more for you in the future.

I hope to see you at the Annual Meeting on Saturday, May 12, 2018 at Sky Ute Casino in Ignacio.



La Plata Electric Association: keeping the lights on

BY INDIANA REED, MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Electricity remains one of the most vital components of our contemporary lives, and it's rural electric associations like LPEA, that distribute electricity, that enable a quality of life in these relatively isolated corners of paradise such as Archuleta and La Plata counties.

This region's history is interwoven with the birth of alternating current (AC). Indeed, in 1892 the Durango Light and Power Company, then later the Western Colorado Power Company (LPEA's predecessors) embraced the fledgling AC technology, "lighting" the town of Durango long before Eastern U.S. cities realized its viability.

At the time, few urban residents believed that the rural parts of Southwest Colorado would ever be illuminated, due to the tremendous cost of extending lines and service to isolated farms and ranches. But LPEA's founding fathers (and mothers) were determined, and when spurred by the federal Rural Electrification Administration (REA), established in 1936 to provide loans explicitly to "shine the light" in rural areas, they came together to make La Plata Electric happen.

Where the "big" cities have public utilities, areas such as La Plata and Archuleta counties realize electric power thanks to electric cooperatives. Cooperatives are businesses owned by and operated for the benefit of those who use the services – and in the case of LPEA, this is all who sign up for electric service in their name.

The cooperative is a not-for-profit entity, and excess profits, when available, are returned to member-owners proportionate with use. LPEA also operates as a representative business, with each member having a vote. Member-owners maintain control of the company by electing the 12-member board of directors.

"As members of a cooperative, all who we serve can take an active role in managing their electricity," says Mike Dreyspring, CEO. "We encourage our members to understand what they can do to keep their costs down, help with sustainability and do what's right for the community as a whole."

Throughout its 3,370 square mile service territory stretching across La Plata and Archuleta, with portions of Hinsdale, Mineral and San Juan counties, LPEA maintains 3,714 miles of energized distribution and transmission line, plus 30 substations. This provides service to nearly 43,000 meters.

In 2017, LPEA purchased 973,938,543 kilowatt hours (kWh) of energy, which includes 45,008,633 kWh from local renewable generators.

- LPEA member-owners purchased 931,419,417 kWh in 2017.
- The average residential monthly use was 650 kWh.
- The average monthly bill was \$100.
- LPEA paid property taxes in 2017 of \$1,050,769 to five counties.

Energy efficiency as well as local distributed generation (with 1,042 individual rooftop systems), continues to grow in importance with LPEA's members, and the LPEA board and staff have embraced these efforts.

"At LPEA, we believe if we can lower our members' electric bills, teach our members how to use our service – which is electricity – more efficiently, and help people explore new technology, we are serving our constituency to the best of our ability, plus we are doing what we can to be responsible global partners," says Dreyspring.

To learn more about LPEA's programs, visit www.lpea.coop.

LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEETS DECEMBER 31, 2017 AND 2016

Assets

	2017	2016
Utility Plant & Nonutility Plant, Net	\$177,523,632	\$182,608,666
Investments, Other Assets & Other Properties	\$104,035,325	\$94,785,278
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	10,992,117	11,899,360
Accounts and Notes Receivable	11,980,812	14,249,486
Materials and Supplies	1,521,537	1,767,892
Prepayments and Other Assets	564,916	678,998
Total Current Assets	\$25,059,382	\$28,595,736
Deferred Debits	\$5,091,510	\$343,178
Total Assets	\$311,709,849	\$306,332,858

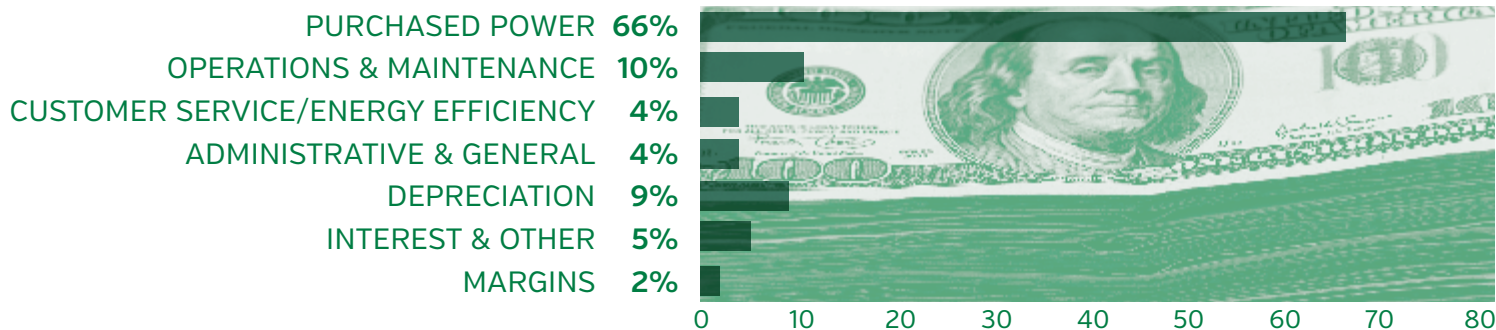
Liabilities and Equity

	2017	2016
EQUITIES		
Patronage Capital	\$142,249,413	\$138,910,613
Donated Capital	183,820	354,982
Total Association Equities	\$142,433,233	\$139,265,595
Noncontrolling Interest	1,852,921	1,648,951
Total Equities	\$144,286,154	\$140,914,546
Long-Term Liabilities	\$127,127,956	\$125,731,518
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	5,030,260	6,283,471
Accounts Payable	8,252,991	3,781,557
Accrued Expenses	4,284,839	4,490,610
Accrued Taxes	1,554,534	1,361,853
Customer Deposits	1,248,987	1,206,972
Total Current Liabilities	\$20,371,611	\$17,124,463
Deferred Credits	\$19,924,128	\$22,562,331
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$311,709,849	\$306,332,858

Where Did the Electric Revenue Come From?



Where Did Your Electric Payments Go?



LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION
CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF MARGINS AND PATRONAGE
AND OTHER EQUITIES
FOR THE YEARS ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2017 AND 2016

	2017	2016
OPERATING REVENUE		
Electric Energy Revenue & Gross Sales	\$104,789,645	\$101,611,192
Miscellaneous Revenue	6,680,261	6,161,534
Total Operating Revenue	\$111,469,906	\$107,772,726
OPERATING REVENUE DEDUCTIONS		
Cost of Power & Goods Sold	\$72,010,480	\$66,190,464
Operating Expenses - Transmission	799,515	1,246,609
Operating Expenses - Distribution	8,245,977	7,979,748
Maintenance of Distribution Plant	3,485,159	4,089,974
Accounting and Collection Expenses	1,800,057	1,981,625
Other Customer Expenses	2,372,419	2,290,382
Administrative and General	5,190,934	5,089,661
Depreciation	10,134,055	10,534,218
Total Operating Revenue Deductions	\$104,038,596	\$99,402,681
Operating Margin Before Fixed Charges	\$7,431,310	\$8,370,045
Less: Interest on Long-Term Debt	4,800,798	4,705,398
Operating Margin Before Capital Credits	\$2,630,512	\$3,664,647
G&T and Other Capital Credits	\$4,088,362	\$2,012,905
Operating Margin	\$6,718,874	\$5,677,552
Interest Revenue	\$515,650	\$475,490
Other Revenue	620,679	460,058
Nonoperating Margin	\$1,136,329	\$935,548
Net Margin Before Income Taxes	\$7,855,203	\$6,613,100
Provision for Income Taxes	[36,124]	\$285,050
Net Margins	7,891,327	6,328,050
Less Net Margins Attributable to Noncontrolling Interest	\$203,970	\$109,486
Net Margins Attributable to the Association	\$7,687,357	\$6,218,564
Patronage & Other Equities - Beginning of Year	\$140,914,546	\$138,800,120
Subtotal	148,805,873	145,128,170
Distributions, Net	[4,519,719]	[4,213,624]
Patronage & Other Equities - End of Year	\$144,286,154	\$140,914,546

The "Heart" of your power...LPEA's employees

LPEA's chief executive and the Board of Directors are often the most well-known of those involved with the cooperative, it literally takes an entire team of talented individuals, skilled in a variety of disciplines to ensure that power is delivered on demand to all who require it.

Currently, LPEA employs 109 full time, but also contracts and consults with dozens of additional local residents to ensure that the vital commodity of electricity is delivered reliably, safely and in an environmentally responsible way.

From operations (our line crews and dispatchers who are "on" 24-7), to finance and member services, to engineering, and then the up-and-coming next generation that continues to explore, embrace and implement advanced technology - LPEA is a living, breathing entity.

The heart of the power you receive is indeed LPEA's employees, and service to members is a top priority.



Pagosa Springs District Office

Front Row: (LtoR) Pagosa Springs District Manager Jerry Wills, Serviceman Nathan Bryant, Energy Management Advisor Debbie Bass, Engineering Clerk Lorraine Gurule, Working Foreman Phil Dietrich, Customer Service Representative Renee Davis, Mechanic I Jeremy Gurule.

Second Row: (LtoR) Equipment Operator Garrett Hammer, Working Foreman Brent Tanner, Journeyman Lineman Jurgen Montgomery, Equipment Operator Eric Hoover, District Storekeeper Steve Haning.

Top Row: (LtoR) Journeyman Lineman Jeremy Matney, Customer Service Representative Tracy Allen, Journeyman Linemen Gregg Smith, Riley Christensen, and Faron Sullivan.



Executive Office

Executive Assistant Charis Christopoulos and
CEO Mike Dreyspring



Customer Service and Member Relations

Seated: [LtoR] Customer Service Representatives Amy Paylor and Aubrey Gillespie, Public Relations Coordinator Jeannie Bennett, Customer Service Representative Jeanne Dittmar.

Standing: [LtoR] Customer Service Representatives Donna Arriza, Jodi Patcheck, Cyndi Pierce, Manager of Engineering and Member Relations Ron Meier, Customer Service Supervisor Betsy Lovelace, Communications Coordinator Lonnie Tucker, Customer Service Representative Julie McIntyre.

Not Pictured: Customer Service Representative Denver Hutchins

The
"Heart" of your
power

Seated: (LtoR) Apprentice Staking Engineer Carolyn Foster, Right of Way Agent Morgan Carey, Distributive Generation Energy Advisor Amanda Miles, Staff Engineer Ryne Waggoner.

Standing: (LtoR) Manager of Engineering and Member Relations Ron Meier, Staking Engineer Jerry Fleener, Manager of Staking Services Gayle Norman, Systems Engineer Jake Wills, Engineering Clerk Tiffany Quimby, Staking Engineer Monty Caudle.

Not Pictured: Major Projects Engineer Dave Gebhardt, Apprentice Staking Engineer Ashley Tokarczyk.



Rates, Technology & Energy Policy

Network Administrator Tracy Graybeal, IT Supervisor Drew Timmerman, Project Specialist Ray Pierotti, GIS Field Technician Misty Fredrickson, Staff Engineer Rachel Schur Wagner, Manager of Rates, Technology & Energy Policy Dan Harms, Project Specialist Sue Maxwell, GIS Services Specialist Don Short, Energy Management Advisor Suzy Bynum, Engineering IT Specialist Brad Fuqua, Engineering Technician Clifford Field, Energy Management Advisor Nancy Andrews.

Finance

Seated: (LtoR) Work Order Specialist Brandi Fassett, Billing Administrator Cindy Straight, Controller Rachel Gilman, Engineering Clerk Jackie Doyle.

Standing: (LtoR) Billing Clerks Sandie Marlatt, Debbra Herrera, and Howard Dickman, CFO Dennis Svanes, Billing Clerks Jacque Ireland and Jennifer Colomb, Assistant Controller Monica Rodriguez.

Not pictured: Accounting Clerk Shea Rivers, Purchasing Agent Larry Redman



Human Resources

Human Resources & Payroll Specialist
Jeannette Simpson and Manager of Human
Resources Nadine Ontiveros.



Operations

(LtoR) Serviceman Jerry Sutherlin, Journeyman Linemen Michael Messier, Toby Allred, and Ryan Carmen, Equipment Operator Trey Buffalo, Journeyman Lineman Fernando Zubia, Lead Meter Reader Joel Mann, Working Foreman Gary Hubbs, Inventory Control Specialist Robert Lloyd, Mechanic I Curt Piccoli, Journeyman Lineman Brandon Debates, Substation Maintenance Steve Lynch, Apprentice Dispatcher Dusti Riggs, Line Superintendent Curt Marlatt, Substation Maintenance Foreman Ryan Peacock, Electronic Technician Joe Frankland, Equipment Operator Dennis McCarthy, Journeyman Lineman Matt Galloway, Meter Technician Chris Edmondson, Apprentice Lineman Dalton Hotter, Equipment Operator Randy Dunton, Apprentice Lineman Evan Moore, Storekeeper Brian Marshall, Meter Reader Collector Decker O'Rand, Dispatcher Aaron Renner, Line Superintendent Bret Cochrane, Apprentice Lineman Michael Juliano.

Not Pictured: Manager of Operations Justin Talbot, Superintendent Darrick Robinson, Engineering Clerk Charlene Sandoval, Dispatchers Les Hahn, Rachel Killinen and Baker McKonly, Meterman Foreman Doug Moore, Journeyman Linemen Tim Lee and Archie Ribera, Serviceman Ty Mortensen, Plant Maintenance Donnie Lucero, Electronic Technician Matt Kibel, Meterman John Branam.

Retired in 2017:
Kenny Sutherlin
George Morgan
Marilyn Arnaout
John Shafer
Sharon Walter
Mark Head
Pat Fahrion
Bill Holtsford
Linda Looman



Reliability: It's part of our mission

BY JUSTIN TALBOT, MANAGER OF OPERATIONS

LPEA's Mission Statement has what we as employees see as three mandates as we go about doing our jobs: affordability, reliability and environmental responsibility. And though costs and renewable energy receive a lot of the publicity, as the person in charge of the team that keeps the lights on, I can assure you that reliability is something we manage 24/7, 365 days a year. It doesn't quite get the attention of the other two mission goals, so I'd like to celebrate our successes.

We're all human and busy in our day-to-day lives, and we just want the power on when we want to use it. My family is the same way. And it's frustrating when the power goes out. That's when most of you consciously think about your electric company, right? And our phone starts ringing.

Sometimes we cannot avoid outages – the big, heavy wet snow storms, a vehicle collision with a pole, Mother Nature sending a bolt of lightning. Aside from getting repairs accomplished as quickly (and safely) as possible, daily we do much behind the scenes to ensure regular reliability.

We keep track of outages through SAIDI, System Average Interruption Duration Index. It indicates the total duration of interruption in minutes for the average customer within a defined reporting period. According to SAIDI, in 2017, across LPEA's system, our members were out

of power an average of about 15 minutes – all year. I know – some of you were out for longer periods (refer to the snow, vehicle collision and lightning reference above), but this is an average. And in the industry this is a very good average. Our team is proud of this.

We have additional indexes we watch, for example, we watch your power frequency interruption. Again more good news, in 2017, LPEA members on average experienced a sustained power interruption for a total of .18025 times. [Remember, this is an average across our entire membership, and this number does not include blinks or customer-responsible outages.]

As said, there's much we do on a day-to-day basis to keep these numbers as low as possible. Every morning our crews assemble and we review a list of work orders. When you see LPEA trucks out there in the field, they're not necessarily responding to an outage, they're working on system upgrades and thus keeping the flow of electricity reliable. In 2017 our crews completed 1,787 maintenance work orders.

We also contract with arborists, who work, weather-dependent, the year-round trimming trees. We all like our Ponderosas, but to maintain reliability, we need to keep a handle on them because those big trees or their branches falling through our lines do cause outages.



In 2017 LPEA's contractors removed 15,662 trees that were at least 2" in diameter, and trimmed 6,680. We need to keep the distribution line right-of-way clear to make sure we keep you in power.

You may also have heard our mantra "Call Before You Dig." That not only helps ensure your safety, or the safety of contractors, it keeps folks from digging into and severing underground lines. In 2017, LPEA responded to 11,405 line locate requests. [People did a lot of digging this past year!]

To further enhance reliability, LPEA continues to explore, test and implement new technology. In fact, we're often pleasantly surprised when we attend conferences with our peers from other cooperatives at how far ahead of the curve we are.

We have upgraded our SCADA system, which allows us to receive timely information from the substations in the field, plus we now have in place our automated metering infrastructure, which often tells us something's wrong on the distribution system before issues develop, and we can attend to the preventative measures. [The AMI system also assists us in outages, as we often know you're out of power before you do, and we can often pinpoint the exact location of the fault to more expediently make repairs.]

Additionally, to help with maintenance, members of LPEA's tech team have developed a number of applications for the line crews to use in the field through their phones or tablets. From LPEA headquarters, crews receive information on location for maintenance of, for example, street lights or

pole inspections, and repairs are tracked.

When changing out equipment in the field, a bar code of the new installation is scanned and the data immediately filed. Keeping good data also assists us in reliability.

To put it colloquially though, all this is a no-brainer for us. The employees at LPEA are conscientious professionals and want to serve our members to the best of our ability with safe, reliable electricity, and we want to do it affordably and with an eye for the environment. Oh, there are the other two prongs of that Mission Statement. I guess everything is tied together to make sure we're a solid company here to reliably serve you, our members.

5.648	1.647	4.259	2.084	2.147	4.254
5.648	1.647	4.259	2.084	2.147	4.254

Q3
2017 - 11.553
2017 - 11.553

Q4
2017 - 8.484
2017 - 8.484

New Lineman scholarships!

Adding to the cooperative's mix of scholarships, the LPEA Board of Directors in 2017 adopted a La Plata Electric Lineman Scholarship. The effort supports the next generation of Journeyman Linemen.

The La Plata Electric Lineman Scholarship funds two annual scholarships. Inaugural Lineman Scholarships were awarded to Mark Kempinski and Alex Svanes.

A graduate of Ignacio High School, Kempinski interned in LPEA's warehouse in 2016, which fostered his interest in becoming a lineman. Svanes is a graduate of Bayfield High School, and also aspires to be a part of the line crews, raised in the co-op world as his father, Dennis Svanes is CFO at LPEA. The two have been classmates at Colorado Mesa University in Grand Junction, enrolled in the Electric Lineworker Program (also known as "Hotline School") to train as future linemen.



Mark Kempinski



Alex Svanes

EV Charging Stations at LPEA

Customer Service Representative Donna Arriza powers her Nissan Leaf at LPEA's EV Charging Stations with assistance of Project Specialist Ray Pierotti.



PHOTO: INDIANA REED

To support cooperative members who have purchased electric vehicles, LPEA installed two Level II ChargePoint electric vehicle charging stations at its Durango headquarters, 45 Stewart St. in Bodo Industrial Park, Durango. Four outlets are available for members to charge vehicles at no cost.

A Charge Ahead Colorado grant provided the approximately \$12,000 needed for the station installation. LPEA also enhanced its electrical infrastructure at the location to make installation of the charging stations possible.

Level II EV stations advertise to provide a full charge for new generation electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles such as the Nissan Leaf, Chevy Volt, and Ford Focus in about four hours. Currently, "plugging in" to LPEA's charging stations is free.

The EV LPEA charging stations are located along the north edge of LPEA's parking lot, clearly marked. The stations are safe, reliable and easy to use with an active ChargePoint card.

Board Members earn credentials

LPEA District 4 Board Member Jack Turner, elected in 2013, completed both his National Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) and Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) in 2017.

Additionally, Board Members, District 2 Director Kohler McInnis and District 4 Director Karen Barger earned their CCD certificates in 2017, and are pursuing the BLC certification.

"It is essential for all directors to keep abreast of the various issues that assist the cooperative make more informed decisions and do the best possible job of representing our members," says CEO Mike Dreysspring.

The NRECA CCD program requires attendance and demonstrated understanding of the basic competencies contained in five core courses, Director Duties and Liabilities; Understanding the Electric Business; Board Roles and Relationships; Strategic Planning and Financial Decision Making.

The BLC is awarded following completion of the CCD, and requires more advanced courses related to board leadership. As noted by NRECA, the BLC is designed to ensure boards have a diverse set of knowledge and skills relevant to governing electric co-ops. Directors complete 10 credits from among eight categories including: Communications; Cooperative Business Model; Financial; Governance; Grassroots; Power Supply; Risk Management; and Technology.

NRECA is the national service organization that represents the nation's more than 900 private, not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, which provides service to 42 million people in 47 states.



PHOTOS: ASPEN MCCARTHY

Tunisian engineering student interns at LPEA

Rihab Ammar, a Fort Lewis College student from Tunisia, was a wonderful addition to LPEA as an intern while she pursued her engineering degree in Durango through the spring semester 2017. The co-op recently received word that she has officially graduated from the National Engineering School of Monastir.

Fluent in Arabic, French, English and Spanish, Ammar was chosen for a full IREX scholarship to attend Fort Lewis. As part of the scholarship requirements, she needed an internship in her academic field of choice, which back in Tunisia is “power and energy.” (IREX, the International Research & Exchanges Board, was established in 1968 by leading universities to foster the exchange of scholars, teachers, students and ideas.)

“So La Plata Electric was the ultimate as a choice for me,” says Ammar. LPEA staff worked with her to explore a variety of possibilities to expand her education, especially as they relate to renewable energy.

“I’m really grateful that they chose Durango,” says Ammar of the IREX process of selecting schools to suit the students. “I loved Durango and the community.”



PHOTO: ASPEN MCCARTHY

LPEA hosts Operations & Engineering Conference

Annually, engineers and operations personnel from Colorado rural electric cooperatives convene at the CREA Operations & Engineering Conference to further education and networking for the benefit of co-op members. In April 2017, LPEA, with Manager of Operations Justin Talbot and his right hand Charlene Sandoval at the helm, organized the event and brought some 200 professionals, many with their families, to Durango.

“I really wanted to ramp it up,” says Talbot, noting that while a trade show at the La Plata County Fairgrounds was part of the four-day event (where vendors could promote their services and products), the focus of the conference was on education. “All our speakers discussed trends in the industry, solutions for addressing coming challenges and more.”

As a La Plata County native, Talbot also wanted to showcase Southwest Colorado and made sure as part of the conference, participants had the opportunity to experience the flavor of Durango. Attendees got to travel back in time and ride the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad on a special train to the Tacoma Hydroelectric Generation Station.

“It was a great opportunity for people who really understand how electricity is generated to get up close, touch, and even feel, the power at Tacoma,” says Talbot. “And it was great fun for all those folks who don’t live among wildlife to spy it from the train, as well as experience the stunning beauty of the Animas Canyon. LPEA was honored to host the 2017 conference. I’m very happy they enjoyed Durango. I talked to many who said they will be coming back here for vacation.”



Participants in the 2017 Operations & Engineering Conference road the D&SNGRR to tour the historic Tacoma Hydroelectric Generation Station.



PHOTOS: INDIANA REED



A reminder...

Round UP? Why should you?

BY TERESA CAMPBELL, 2017 ROUND UP FOUNDATION BOARD PRESIDENT

Let's start with the basic information: What is the La Plata Electric Association Round Up Foundation? It is a nonprofit organization supported by funds generated by LPEA members when they "round up" their electric bills to the next higher dollar amount [which amounts to an average of 50 cents per month, or \$6 per year]. A member can also select "Round Up-Plus," which "rounds up" the dollar amount and then monthly adds an additional donation of choice for the good cause. Each month the Round Up Board reviews applications from local nonprofits and allocates these donated funds to support our communities' needs.

OK, BUT WHY ROUND UP??

Let's take a look at that... We know you care about your community. You care about kids... kids having books to read... meals to eat... attending camp... participating in science fairs... having safe places to "be"... kids growing into healthy adults. I'm sure you embrace art, theater, community gardens, community centers, science, playgrounds and more community efforts. Round Up supports all of these. Round Up is a very easy way to give back to your community and show that you care about others. You can rest assured that all of the pennies donated from Round Up are collectively putting substantial dollars back into La Plata and Archuleta counties. All members of the Round Up Board are volunteers, and we have no overhead, so donations all go to our local non-profits.


IT'S EASY TO SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY

All you have to do is sign up to Round Up (www.lpea.coop) and the rest is done by the Round Up Board. The Board meets monthly to allocate funds to worthy nonprofits such as: Celebrating Healthy Communities, Manna Soup Kitchen, Trails 2000, Project Merry Christmas, Gold Star Parents Weekend, Federal Order of Police, THRIVE, Seeds of Learning, SASO, Lions Club, After Prom, Women's Resource Center, Merely Players, Friends of the Library, and many, many more.

BUT WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

What's in it for you is knowing that you are thinking from your heart about sharing with others... knowing you are joining with people to collectively make a huge difference to those around us who are in need... knowing you can be counted in the mix of donors who help to keep much-needed programs running [which may otherwise have to cut services]. You are contributing to our communities. And for all of you already donating to Round Up, thank you. I know you're not doing it for accolades, but I want to tell you, you should be proud.

If you're not a Round Up participant, and I've still intrigued you and you are still reading this article, I want to thank you because I feel certain you will sign up to participate in the LPEA Round Up or Round Up-Plus programs.

2017  Donations:	
Community Assistance:	
Community Emergency Assistance Coalition	\$21,540
CEAC Reserve - Housing Solutions of the Southwest	\$1,134
Pagosa Springs Outreach Coalition	\$7,528
Total Community Assistance	\$30,201
Community Service Programs:	
Animas High School Interact Club	\$1,750
Archuleta County Special Olympics	\$1,000
Bayfield After Prom	\$1,000
Bayfield Lions Club	\$3,000
Bayfield Music Program	\$1,500
Be Fit Be Able	\$1,000
Big Brothers Big Sisters	\$1,500
Cancer Coalition of SWCO	\$1,000
CASA of the Southwest	\$2,000
Chimney Rock Interpretive Association	\$1,500
Colorado Outdoor Learning School	\$1,200
Community Foundation Serving SWCO	\$1,000
Cross Bar X Youth Ranch	\$1,200
Destination Imagination of SW CO	\$2,000
Durango Food Bank	\$3,260
Durango Nature Studies	\$2,000
ELHI Association	\$2,500
Four Corners DHMCA, Inc.	\$400
Four Corners Rainbow Youth Center	\$4,500
Friends of the Library (Pagosa)	\$3,000
The Garden Project	\$1,500
KSUT	\$3,000
La Plata Youth Services	\$3,000
Our Savior Lutheran School	\$1,500
People Improving Communities Kids	\$500
Pine River Shares	\$2,000
San Juan Historical Society	\$1,000
Seeds of Learning	\$1,500
Sexual Assault Response Team	\$4,600
Silver Spruce Academy	\$1,500
Southwest Center for Independence	\$3,000
Tiospaye	\$1,500
Title VI Parent Advisory Committee	\$1,000
VFW - Durango	\$500
Women's Resource Center	\$1,000
Total Community Service Programs	\$63,410
TOTAL ROUND UP DONATIONS: \$93,611	



What about ETS heating?

Warm, wonderful (maybe even as cuddly as a fluffy Golden Retriever)...

But on a more practical note, LPEA's ETS systems work with our Time-of-Use program and can be an efficient method for heating your home - plus save you dollars.

Let us tell you more about Electric Thermal Storage heating systems.

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The “power” of people

The ‘heart of your power’ was no more evident during the 2017 holiday season as employees celebrated giving back to our local communities.

As has become tradition, many non-profit entities including the local food banks, Project Merry Christmas and the Salvation Army, were supported. But new in the repertoire, the Member Services Representatives [MSRs] “Powered it Forward” to help LPEA members who have difficulty paying their electric bills with Power of Giving Trees in both Durango and Pagosa Springs. Nearly \$4,000 was raised.

“People come in to pay their bills and when standing in line they hear the person in front of them at the window struggling to pay their bill,” says MSR Julie McIntyre, who initiated the idea with her fellow team members. “When they get up to the window, they ask if they can put some extra money on that person’s account. People have been so caring and generous. It’s so wonderful.”

The Power of Giving Trees were adorned with ornaments that featured varying dollar amounts [\$5 to \$100], and any amount was valued. Community members were invited to select an ornament and bring it to the customer service window, and that dollar amount was applied to the account



Durango’s “elves” show off the Power of Giving ornaments, [standing] Jodi Patcheck and Jeanne Dittmar, and [seated] Donna Arriza, Amy Paylor, Aubrey Gillespie, Julie McIntyre and Cyndi Pierce.

of a fellow LPEA member.

In addition to the Giving Tree, LPEA members can throughout the year make arrangements to assist specific family members or neighbors with their bills, as well as non-profit organizations, by applying credit to their LPEA accounts.

“The Power of Giving doesn’t need to be something that happens just around the holidays,” says McIntyre. “We can make arrangements for regular credits to any account of your choosing. It can be a gift that keeps on giving.”