



January 15, 2020

# NEWS

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**  
Jessica Matlock, Chief Executive Officer, (970) 382-3509

## **LPEA Supports Tri-State's Responsible Energy Plan, But Wants to See a Local Solution** *LPEA and Community members want to partner to open doors for new opportunities*

DURANGO, Colo. – La Plata Electric Association is supportive of Tri-State's announcement today that it is working to decarbonize its energy portfolio. LPEA will be further analyzing the details of the plan to make sure it works for members and includes opportunities for the co-op to develop its own clean-energy sources.

In March 2019, LPEA approved a goal of reducing its carbon footprint by 50 percent from 2018 levels by year 2030 while keeping members' cost of electricity lower than 70 percent of Colorado cooperative peers.

“While Tri-State's future goal will help meet our carbon reduction goal, we do not yet know what the costs of its plan will be to our members and what LPEA's role will be for producing local, renewable energy into the future,” said Jessica Matlock, LPEA's chief executive officer.

LPEA wants the opportunity to develop, own, and operate large-scale renewable energy generation projects in partnership with local communities in La Plata and Archuleta counties. LPEA could then provide Tri-State with yet another source of clean energy.

“Such a partnership will assist Tri-State in meeting its renewable energy goals, while allowing LPEA to support local economic development through job creation, construction, and operation of clean energy generation facilities to assist LPEA in achieving its carbon reduction goals by 2030,” Matlock said.

But without the ability to rework LPEA's contract with Tri-State, local opportunities are not possible. Tri-State has delayed working with LPEA on its unreasonable 50-year contract. LPEA is requesting that the Colorado Public Utilities Commission order Tri-State to work with LPEA on a new arrangement.

Private businesses and public institutions also believe it is important that LPEA be involved in energy production and local economic development.

“Durango city council adopted goals of 100 percent renewable electricity and 80 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050,” said Mayor Melissa Youssef. “The city supports LPEA’s request for more flexibility from Tri-State to help meet the City’s goals and would like to see locally generated renewables to promote local resilience and economic development.”

“While increasing the renewable energy portfolio of Tri-State is a step in the right direction, it does not address local energy resiliency and reliability,” said Monique DiGiorgio, executive director of the Local First Foundation. “We have the opportunity to be training our coal work-force locally to transition them to the renewable energy sector, keeping jobs in our community.”

Local, renewable energy generation projects would allow LPEA to partner with local schools like Fort Lewis College on research and development projects and provide students with incredible learning opportunities.

“As a leading member and consumer of LPEA services, Fort Lewis College offers not only its support for renewable energy projects but the expertise of our faculty and research capabilities of our students to actualize solutions for residents and the future of our communities,” Fort Lewis College President Tom Stritikus said.

“LPEA is gearing up to be a leader in local, renewable energy generation. For our members, it’s important for LPEA to partner with key local organizations, and institutions to respond to our members’ request for renewable energy generation. We can create jobs and keep more of the communities’ money recirculating locally in our economy,” Matlock said.

LPEA is a member-owned, not-for-profit, electric distribution cooperative serving La Plata and Archuleta, with segments of Hinsdale, Mineral and San Juan counties. There are 22 cooperatives in Colorado, LPEA is the fifth largest cooperative in the state, providing safe, reliable electricity at the lowest reasonable cost to approximately 34,000 members.

# # #