



# WATT'S UP

AT LA PLATA ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

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

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

AUGUST 2018

## Encouraging Renewable Generation



Though installed prior to creating the new grant, the PV solar system on the Socorro Senior Center in Pagosa Springs was the beneficiary of dollars from the Local Renewable Generation Fund. Projects such as this inspired the LPEA Board to formalize the funds distribution process.

In an effort to support area not-for-profit organizations and encourage new renewable electricity generation projects in its service territory, LPEA has established a Renewable Generation Funds Grants Program. Not-for-profit organizations that are current consumer-members in-good-standing, and based within LPEA's service territory, qualify to apply. Application deadline is Nov. 1, 2018.

"Our Board of Directors is very enthusiastic about increasing distributed, renewable generation projects in La Plata and Archuleta counties," says Ron Meier, manager of engineering and member relations. "Cost is often a barrier for our consumer-members – especially not-for-profits. For these organizations, a grant such as this is win-win because by installing renewable generation, they will reduce their electric bills, enabling their valuable dollars to go to serving the community."

The LPEA grant funds will be distributed from the Local Renewable Generation Fund – a separate, opt-in fund to which consumer-members can contribute to support development of renewable generation projects in the region. LPEA's Board of Directors endeavors to put those amassed dollars back into the community for the greatest consumer-member benefit.

Limited funds will be available for this and any future grant cycles. For 2018, LPEA anticipates granting a total of \$40,000. Grants could range between \$5,000 and \$40,000, and preference will be given to projects securing up to 50 percent matching funds. Partial grants may also be awarded.

"We ask that applicants request funds for a specific project," says Dan Harms, manager of rates, technology

and energy policy. "Define the project. For example, installation of solar panels to provide electricity for a homeless shelter or a church, or something as small as solar panels on the dog kennels at our rescue locations to keep the pups warm in the winter, or power a water pump at a non-profit community garden."

All applicants must provide documentation of not-for-profit tax status, as well as proof of easement or title to the property where the renewable generation project will be installed.

Additionally, prior to acceptance and installation of any renewable project, an engineering review is required to identify the system impact at any given location. The review can be made prior to or following application submission, but must be completed prior to release of the grant funds.

"All renewable projects seeking interconnection with LPEA's grid, be they individual homes or businesses – or now with this grant – must undergo an engineering review," says Meier. "It's purely to ensure that LPEA's equipment and that section of our system can manage the new distributed generation load. We also want to help our consumer-members understand the nuances of producing their own electricity."

Detailed requirements are outlined on the grant application, available for download on LPEA's website, [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop). Not-for-profit organizations with questions regarding the grant application process are asked to contact Jeannie Bennett, 970.382.3505 or [jbennett@lpea.coop](mailto:jbennett@lpea.coop).

To learn more about supporting LPEA's Local Renewable Generation Fund, call 970.247.5786.

## Allred promoted



Toby Allred has been promoted to Line Superintendent. He originally joined LPEA as a Journeyman Lineman in January 2018. In his new position, he is responsible for outside contractors, maintenance and construction of LPEA's underground and overhead lines in La Plata County.

Allred had been a construction lineman since 1999, working for various contractors throughout the country. He came to the electrical trade later in life, but has garnered broad, hands-on experience in the military and as a longshoreman, plus he worked construction in the oil fields and explored the agriculture industry as a long-haul cattle driver.

He served his lineman apprenticeship in the Pacific Northwest, in Washington and Oregon, under the IBEW Local 77, and earned his Journeyman Lineman in 2004. Allred and his family reside in Bayfield.

"LPEA prefers to open available positions to existing employees. We like to promote from within," says Justin Talbot, manager of operations. "As a result, we have many, many qualified employees."

LPEA offers a variety of apprenticeships and employment opportunities. To explore employment, or for additional information, visit [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop).

## "Youth Tour...unlike anything I've ever experienced"

BY ALMA WOLF | WASHINGTON D.C. YOUTH TOUR STUDENT

**E**very year, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association hosts what our chaperones called "the best part of their job at an electric cooperative": the Washington D.C. Youth Tour. This year, more than 2,000 students descended upon our nation's Capitol for a week in June to learn about the cooperative business model, visit museums, spend time at memorials, and speak with senators and representatives about important issues. Cooperatives across 47 states sent students to participate, and I was fortunate to be selected by LPEA, along with four other students, to represent our little corner of the Southwest.

The Youth Tour was unlike anything I've ever experienced. The LPEA representatives traveled with 37 other students and five chaperones from Colorado and Wyoming. [You can imagine the reaction when we walked into a restaurant!] Throughout the week I got to know many other students: their passions, goals, and plans for the future. It was inspiring and humbling to meet so many intelligent and passionate young people who will undoubtedly shape our nation's future.

A big part of the Youth Tour has nothing to do with Washington D.C.; instead, it's about meeting people from other states. Every state designs a unique pin or sticker for their students, and we're all encouraged to trade pins throughout the week. I met one girl who had pins from all 47 states. I had 30 myself! Trading pins helped us to easily start conversations with strangers and meet many students. It cultivated a feeling of inclusivity throughout the whole Youth Tour, something that I really appreciated.

During our time in Washington, we visited many memorials on and around the National Mall. However, our experience at the Jefferson Memorial is one of my most fond memories of the trip. Sunday morning, we loaded onto our tour bus and were dropped off next to the Tidal Basin. We walked around the dome that houses a giant statue of Jefferson, and sat on the steps looking toward downtown D.C. One of our chaperones spoke about the life of Thomas Jefferson while we had a moment to rest and look at the city before us. Sitting there, I felt immense pride in our country. I was grateful to be surrounded by friends, and I felt so lucky to live in Durango, where our community is enhanced by the presence of local companies like LPEA.

Overall, the Youth Tour was one of the most fun and memorable weeks I've had. I met lifelong friends and got to witness the fabric of our country – what makes it great. To all high school juniors out there – apply for the Youth Tour next year. You won't regret it!



# Furthering energy “education”

**D**urango Adult Education Center science teacher Mary Mullen joined fellow educators from four different states this past June for the Tri-State Generation and Transmission Energy Conference for Educators. LPEA sponsored Mullen's attendance to provide her advanced training to implement innovative hands-on energy classroom units, multi-disciplinary teams and after-school programs.

“Teachers are required to earn Professional Development [PD] hours in order to renew our teaching licenses,” says Mullen. “Training opportunities in rural communities are few and far between.”

During the three-day conference, educators were immersed in hands-on activities designed for use in the classroom. Activities were developed by the National Energy Education Development [NEED] project, and each participant receives a NEED Science of Energy kit, that includes all materials required to teach six lessons on energy, as well as a class-set of NEED Energy Infobooks [at grade level], access to all NEED Curriculum Guides, and supplemental resources.

The mission of NEED is to promote an energy conscious and educated society by creating networks of students, educators and businesses, government and community leaders to design and deliver objective, multi-sided energy education programs.

“The Tri-State Conference provided an exceptional opportunity for me to satisfy my PD requirements while gaining knowledge and understanding of all aspects of electric energy and how to convey those concepts to my students,” says Mullen. “I thank LPEA for sponsoring me.”

## Closed-captioned DurangoTV



To capitalize on LPEA's “Watt's Up” bi-monthly informational pieces produced by and airing on DurangoTV, the co-op is working with the production to do closed-captioning in several locations.

While no one likes to stand in line or “wait,” LPEA members will now have the opportunity to learn more about happenings and services provided by the cooperative at the Durango La Plata County Airport, Durango Urgent Care and the Durango Department of Motor Vehicles.

More outlets and a continual update of videos is planned for the future.

**A:** We believe so, on both counts. When an optional REC contract is signed by the owner of a net metered, solar PV system, LPEA is purchasing the Renewable Energy Credits [REC] or Environmental Attributes. The IRS thus requires that a Form W-9 be filled out by the system owner, and at the end of the year, LPEA is required to issue an IRS 1099-MISC form to the system owner for the amount of the REC payment [as long as the payment exceeds the IRS reporting threshold for that current tax year].

With the excess generation produced by your system, LPEA is purchasing that generation from you, so we do believe that this may be also considered income, and declared as such when you submit your income tax.

As always, LPEA recommends that its members consult a tax expert for tax questions specific to each individual situation.

## CO-OP MEMBERS

### Ask...

**Q:** Are there tax implications for the REC payments I receive from LPEA for my renewable generation system and for funds received from LPEA if that system produces excess generation?

## LIVE WIRES

### Board meeting August 15

The next meeting of the LPEA Board of Directors is set for Wednesday, August 15, 9 a.m. at LPEA headquarters in Durango. The agenda will be posted 10 days in advance of the meeting at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop). All members are reminded that public comment is heard at the beginning of the meeting.

### Closed for Labor Day

LPEA's offices in Durango and Pagosa Springs will be closed on Monday, Sept. 3, 2018, in honor of Labor Day.

### Survey reminder

NRECA, as an agent for LPEA is currently conducting a survey of LPEA consumer-members. If you receive a call or email, please participate. Please help us learn how to better serve you.

### Save the Date!

LPEA will celebrate 80 years of service in 2019. Plan to attend the Annual Meeting, Thursday, May 2 at the Community Concert Hall at Fort Lewis College.

### Round Up Grants

The following organizations received Round Up or Educational grants, distributed by the Round Up Foundation Board of Directors, in July: Trails 2000, Justice Ministries of Pagosa, Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Effective Education Program - Durango High School, San Juan Symphony, and Pagosa Peak Open School.



## New hotness – doing the EV thing in Colorado

BY GAYLE NORMAN | STAKING MANAGER | GNORMANLPEA.COOP

**I**n recently learned that the term “new hotness” is a noun describing a “new popular thing.” There is no “old hotness,” which I guess would be, merely, a euphemism for “old and busted.”

It was “old and busted” that brought us to town on a pleasant Saturday in mid-May. While the intended purpose was to purchase a new wall oven in stainless steel, we ended up purchasing “new hotness” in the form of a 2018 Nissan Leaf. Now, for clarity, the Leaf is silver and we did ultimately purchase the wall oven in stainless steel, so ....

Living just east of Bayfield and working in Durango, the Leaf has proven to be an excellent commuter car. It had been used for just this intended purpose until a group of friends recently organized “Mission: Eat, Drink, Over-Tip, Buy Stuff - A Sunday Drive to Silverton.” Our hope was to assuage, in any small way, some of the financial angst that Silverton’s residents are experiencing due to the relatively snowless winter, followed by the heartbreaking “416 Fire.”

Feeling a bit like Marco Polo (or perhaps, Lewis and Clark), donning our expedition wear, we decided to venture into the unknown...the realm of EV battery range [consumption vs. regeneration]. Completely forgetting [for reasons related to weight and range] the Leaf comes without even a spare tire or a jack, we invited two friends to join us on this maiden voyage.

I am a Durango native and aware that with the exception of the two longer downhill runs on the north sides of Coal Bank and Molas, it is all uphill to Silverton. With this suddenly in mind, somewhere between Cascade and the top of Coal Bank, I noticed the power indicator read 48 percent. Since we were planning for this to be a round trip, it seemed that the math was not working out. I thus experienced my first case of EV range

anxiety, and began making promises to the gods of consumption and regeneration.

Whew, as we topped Coal Bank and started downhill, those beautiful blue lines on the instrument panel, which indicate regeneration, appeared! At the foot of Molas, we were up to 51 percent! However, by the time we approached Andrews Lake, the uphill climb had again taken its toll. The power indicator read 43 percent. I cut the A/C, opened windows, and was, seriously, considering whether or not there was a need to jettison passengers and gear with a promise of waiting for them at the top of Molas. I then experienced concern that this might impact our friendship in a less than positive way. Mind you that, in true “Thurberesque” fashion, this debate was occurring entirely within the confines of my own mind, and, fortunately, was concluded as we reached the summit. Yippee! Hallelujah! Hail the return of those beautiful blue lines!

We rolled into Silverton with power to spare (~50 percent)! The earlier mention that the trek from Durango to Silverton is uphill might lead you to, correctly, believe that the inverse would be true on the return. Whew! What a relief!

In conclusion, after our day of merriment and spending opportunity, we returned safely to Durango, with a healthy 48 percent charge, which was more than enough to get us home, where upon our return, we poured a glass of wine and cooked up some spanakopita in the new oven!

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### Mission Statement:

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