

Outage information update!



To better inform consumer-members in the event of an electrical outage, back in 2010 LPEA initiated an on-line “real time” Outage Viewer that is “user friendly” for the general public and accessed through LPEA’s website, www.lpea.coop.

While the on-line Outage Viewer remains a great resource for consumer-members to get an overview of outages across LPEA’s service territory, LPEA’s technology specialists have continued over the years to advance the Outage Management System (OMS), and the latest in the family of services – a new texting service – is anticipated to be available to members on Nov. 12.

“Keeping our consumer-members informed is a priority for us,” says Tyrell Stapp, IT specialist. “We’re introducing a new power outage texting service that will harness the ease and convenience of texting to help consumer-members to stay informed during outages.”

With the new service, consumer-members will be able to text keywords, such as OUT to report an outage or STATUS to request an update on outages affecting their service to LPEA’s toll-free number. Members can also receive automatic alerts regarding planned outages and notifications when their service is interrupted and when power is restored.

The integration of the new text option also enables LPEA additional direct communication with consumer-

members, such as sending automatic texts for payment delinquencies and pending disconnect notices.

LPEA will initially send texts to consumer-member cell phone numbers that are on record with the cooperative, and the introductory text will include brief instructions about how to opt out, if desired. Consumer-members who do not have a cell phone on file can add the information on SmartHub via www.lpea.coop or call the co-op directly.

To optimize the LPEA outage text service, Stapp recommends that consumer-members add LPEA’s toll-free number (888.839.5732) and the local number (970.247.5786) to their phone’s contact list.

“Having LPEA as a contact in your phone will make it easier for consumer-members to quickly identify text messages sent from LPEA and make reporting outages more convenient,” says Stapp. “Helping our consumer-members be prepared and informed to the best of our abilities is our goal. We invite our consumer-members to provide feedback on this new program as we continue our efforts.”

Additional information about the new power outage texting service is available at <https://lpea.coop/ots>.



LPEA wishes you a warm and wonderful Thanksgiving.

LPEA offices will be closed November 22-23.

Stapp new IT Specialist



Tyrell Stapp has joined LPEA's technology team as IT Specialist, working on network security as well as communications through the co-op's Outage Management System.

Stapp comes to LPEA most recently from the Midland, Tex.-based Sharyland Utilities – an investor-owned utility, where he served as an Operations Technology Specialist.

A native of Texas, originally from the Lubbock area, Stapp earned an Associate's Degree in Computer Electronics from the High Tech Institute in Phoenix, and for nearly seven years, served with Milsoft Utility Systems in Abilene, Tex.

"Milsoft is the power behind LPEA's Outage Management System. We've been working with Milsoft for years now, so the addition of Tyrell, who has been integrally involved with the program, is great," says Drew Timmerman, IT supervisor. "A win-win for our consumer-members."

The Stapp family had long vacationed in Southwest Colorado, with Stapp explaining, "We've been coming to South Fork ever since I can remember... camping, backpacking, fishing, riding four-wheelers. Durango is a beautiful place. I'm super glad to be here."

LPEA distributes unclaimed Capital Credits to local non-profits

In an effort to make good use of idle funds left abandoned by former consumer-members of LPEA as unclaimed Capital Credits, the cooperative's board of directors has awarded 17 new Educational/Special Project Grants totaling \$150,000 to non-profit entities.

In Archuleta County:

- Justice Ministries - \$12,295 – Tiny House Construction and Financial Education
- Pagosa Peak Open School - \$25,000 – Charter School Capital Campaign
- Rise Above Violence - \$12,000 – Office Renovation & Program Support
- Region 8 Skills USA - \$4,000 – Skills USA Student Education

In La Plata County:

- Boys & Girls Club – \$8,468 – Technology Upgrades & STEM Programs
- Community Health Action Coalition - \$4,000 – Community Program Initiative
- Community Foundation of Southwest Colorado - \$5,000 – Computer Upgrades
- Durango Education Center - \$6,100 – GED and ESL Program Expansion
- Habitat for Humanity - \$6,500 – ADA Home Construction
- Manna Soup Kitchen - \$19,920 – Child Backpack Food Program
- Environmental Center - \$6,500 – Climate Change Symposium
- Housing Solutions of the Southwest - \$5,000 – CEAC Funding
- iAM Music - \$5,217 – Musical Equipment & Program Expansion
- La Plata Youth Services - \$5,000 – Truancy Remediation
- Mercy Health Foundation - \$10,000 – Vascular Machine
- Trails 2000 - \$5,000 – Trail Mitigation & Sawyer Program
- Fort Lewis Mesa and Sunnyside Branch Libraries - \$10,000

Capital Credits are LPEA's margins or revenues remaining after all expenses have been paid. Annually, the electricity payments made by members in excess of the cost to provide their electric service is placed into a patronage capital account in each member's name.

When the cooperative is able, Capital Credits are returned to members. The dollars become "unclaimed" after three years, when LPEA cannot locate members deserving of the refund. The board has determined that these unclaimed funds should be invested in the community and thus established the Educational/Special Project Grants program.

A: Yes, LPEA helps however we can. In addition to working one-on-one with consumer-members who may have hit a hard patch, LPEA's Round Up Foundation contributes a portion of its grant monies to the Durango Community Emergency Assistance Coalition (CEAC) and Pagosa Springs Outreach Coalition, both which do exactly that – help folks with their energy bills. You can assist in this effort by signing up for the Round Up Foundation, to "round-up" your bill to the next highest dollar. Visit www.lpea.coop to sign up online.

CO-OP MEMBERS
Ask...

Q: With everything getting more expensive, is there anything LPEA does to help those who have difficulty paying their electric bills?

Further, LPEA supports Energy Outreach Colorado and its efforts. Since 1989 the organization has helped thousands of families pay their energy bills, fund energy efficiency upgrades for affordable housing and provide energy efficiency education and more. Visit www.energyoutreach.org for further information, or give LPEA a call, 970.247.5786 to make a donation.

Energy Management Supervisor named

Durango native Dominic May has been named Energy Management Supervisor, a new position designed to address LPEA consumer-members' growing concern for energy efficiency and conservation.

May comes to LPEA from Simple Energy, an "energy action" platform that facilitates how utilities engage customers, enabling consumers to make energy-wise decisions. The company has grown to being the second largest marketplace next to Amazon powering applications such as instantaneous rebates. He was one of the initial employees and helped build the company from one marketplace to 14 when he made the decision to return to Durango.

Prior to Simple Energy, he was instrumental in the growth of a Boulder-based software company, SendGrid, where he was Product Owner. He was the 13th employee hired, and part of the team that took the company public. By the time he moved on to Simple Energy, SendGrid had grown to employing some 350, with clients ranging from small businesses to entities such as Microsoft, Google and more.

Early on, out of college, before heading to the Front Range, May was one of Durango's Brainstorm Industries' first employees where he managed the support team, and also independently provided network and computer support tech in La Plata County through his own LLC.

Four generations of Mays reside in Durango, which inspired May to return home. He is a graduate of Fort Lewis College, and also earned his economics degree at the University of Economics in Prague.



LIVE WIRES

Board meeting Nov. 14, 9a.m.

The next meeting of the LPEA Board of Directors is set for Wednesday, Nov. 14, 9 a.m. at LPEA's 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.

Last chance for Sight-In Days

The final two days for all hunters to sight their scopes during Sight-In Days at the Durango Gun Club outdoor range are Thursday and Friday, Nov. 1 and 2, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The free opportunity, open to all hunters, is courtesy of LPEA.

Round Up Grants

In October, the LPEA Round Up Foundation Board awarded Round Up and Educational grants to:

- Veterans Memorial Park
- Aid for Pets
- Education REU-FLC

Remember to "Fall Back"

Daylight Saving Time ends Sunday, Nov. 4. Remember to set your clocks back one hour.

Help LPEA "Fill the Bucket"

Responding to community needs in advance of the holidays, LPEA's Pagosa Springs employees and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers [Local IBEW 111 26A] will host the 10th Annual "Fill the Bucket" food drive, Saturday, Nov. 17, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The "bucket trucks" will be at both City Market and Hometown Food Market in Pagosa Springs to collect non-perishable food items [canned goods or boxed/bagged dry goods]. Donated food will be distributed to community food banks in Archuleta County.

"We really love doing this every year, helping support our members," says Pagosa Fleet Mechanic Jeremy Gurule, who is assisting in coordinating the event. "Staples and food aren't getting any cheaper, and the need continues to grow, so once again we want to help people stock their pantries for this coming winter."

Cash donations for the food banks are also welcomed, and donors can make arrangements to give directly by calling Gurule at 970.317.0496, or bring a donation by the LPEA office in Pagosa Springs [603 S. 8th St.]. Checks can be made payable to the IBEW Local 111 Brotherhood Fund. All donated funds will be distributed to the food banks.

For further information regarding the "Fill the Bucket" food drive, contact Jeremy Gurule, 970.317.0496.





From the CEO...

The future of our “power supply”

BY MIKE DREYSPRING | CEO | MDREYSPRING@LPEA.COOP

As we continue to move ahead in this ever-changing energy world, your rural electric co-op Board of Directors and staff endeavor to be proactive in our approach to supplying electricity for the benefit of you, our consumer-members.

To that end, your LPEA team has formed a Power Supply Committee – or PSC. It’s been created to study the challenges and opportunities of power supply, assess the value of LPEA’s contract with our wholesale power supplier, Tri-State Generation and Transmission, and identify options for increasing LPEA’s flexibility to provide more local renewable generation.

Establishment of the committee is an outgrowth of our consumer-members’ desires for more flexibility. We continue to listen to all of you and hear that local renewable generation is important. To make local renewable energy a reality, fulfill your and our expectations, we need flexibility.

Power supply is a very complex issue – and a significant part of our consumer-members’ budgets, especially as we become increasingly tied to the grid with all those devices that power our lives. We strive to ensure that you never have to think about where your electricity comes from on a daily basis. Rest assured, we know you need electricity and so we always endeavor to make sure that when you flip the light switch or power up your computer, electricity is there. But, as said, things are changing, and putting together a committee made sense to allow us to devote the time required to fully understand the issues surrounding this important aspect of our industry.

The PSC is made up of three LPEA directors, Britt Bassett, Tim Wheeler and Kohler McInnis, along with two management team members, Dan Harms, manager of rates, technology

and energy policy and myself. The committee also expects to utilize outside expertise for research and analysis, and as a committee, we will report back to the full board with all findings.

This is the first board-appointed committee I’ve been involved with in my long co-op career that includes staff management team members, and I’m finding it a rewarding and terrific thing. It’s important that we all work as a team on this challenge, and I send a “shout out” to Board President Bob Lynch, as he established this committee with teamwork in mind.

PSC meetings are the first and third Thursdays of each month at our LPEA Durango headquarters in Bodo Park, typically starting at 10 a.m., but occasionally we may have different start times. Agendas are posted 10 days in advance in LPEA’s offices and online at www.lpea.coop, and the public is invited to attend any of the meetings to observe our committee’s progress.

The Power Supply Committee is set to conclude its work in spring 2019. We’ve now got some precedence on reporting as the Long-Term Strategies Committee submitted a substantive report to the full LPEA board earlier this year. I expect the same results from the PSC.

As always, we’re guided by our mission on this. Whatever we do, we must provide reasonable rates for our members, while continuing to enhance reliability and safety, as we continue to enhance our environmental efforts.

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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.