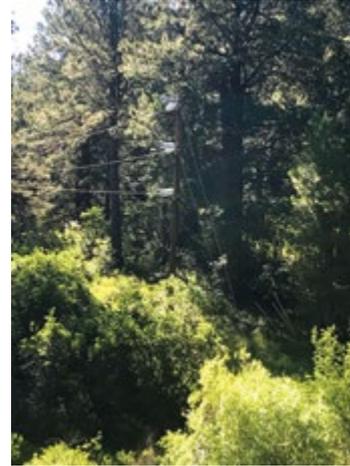


Shaping the future by building trustworthy community partnerships as an innovative, forward-thinking industry leader, delivering excellence in our member-owned cooperative.

**AUGUST 2019**

## Enhancing service to Archuleta County



*The heavily forested and aging section of LPEA's transmission line in Yellowjacket between Bayfield and Pagosa is scheduled to be one of the first to be rebuilt and enhance reliability of service to Archuleta County.*

To help ensure reliability of electric service to members, LPEA endeavors to have in place “redundancy.” Members will often realize LPEA’s effort in this arena when lightning strikes, a storm takes a line down or some other outside entity causes the LPEA system to say “Hey, we see there’s a problem, so we’re shutting this line down because there is a fault.”

That’s where redundancy comes in, and why oftentimes, LPEA members are back in power in a short period of time because the Operations team is able to analyze the system and “switch” circuits, putting members back in power – rerouting power from a different direction or substation. Redundancy.

Unfortunately for Archuleta County - while the “in county” system between substations has redundancy - the major transmission line that brings the “power” to the county from generation stations elsewhere, is not of adequate capacity to supply the needed redundancy. This is the reason when the transmission line between Bayfield and Pagosa experiences a fault, Archuleta outages can be significant.

“It’s angst for us. With the mountain terrain, as well as rights-of-way, building a redundant line into Archuleta County has been slow in realization,” says Ron Meier, manager of engineering and member relations. “It’s not that we haven’t been working on it – and examining how we can get more ‘power’ to Archuleta County in a reliable and affordable fashion. It’s just a greater challenge given our service territory.”

But the good news is – the “redundancy” is truly underway. LPEA has initiated the design and permitting process to rebuild in place and convert the 69kV line to 115kV from Bayfield to Pagosa, bringing a transmission line of adequate capacity to increase the reliability of power into Archuleta County.

“That’s the very good news,” says Gayle Norman, manager of staking services. “This is the very beginning of a multi-year

project to design the line, obtain easements and permits to rebuild and replace the existing 67-year-old line. But it’s underway.”

The rebuilt 115kV line will follow the existing transmission line route from the Tri-State Generation and Transmission substation in Bayfield (at which LPEA’s substation is co-located) to LPEA’s Ponderosa substation on the western side of Archuleta County.

The line to be rebuilt and enhanced is approximately 27 miles – through forested, mountainous terrain, and the visual corridor along Highway 160 will be preserved. Consultant ESC has been retained to provide professional engineering, land rights, and permitting services for the LPEA Bayfield – Ponderosa 115kV project.

“More good news is that we will be able to install fiber as part of the project,” says Meier. “Archuleta County has been challenged with internet connectivity, so this will definitely help the county and its residents.”

All costs are being amortized and budgeted over the coming years of the project. Ultimately, the rebuild is anticipated to cost \$1.2 million.

“But when you consider the reliability benefit to all our members in Archuleta County, that’s a bargain,” says Meier, noting that no increase in rates will be incurred because of the project. “Outages are something we loathe, and repairs to our system can take time. This should be a tremendous help to our members in Archuleta County and enhance overall reliability for LPEA.”

LPEA will keep members informed as the process ensues.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

LPEA will host two complimentary luncheons for all members, Wednesday, Sept. 11 in Durango, 45 Stewart St. (Bodo Industrial Park), and Thursday, Sept. 12 in Pagosa Springs, 603 S. 8th St.

All LPEA members – those who pay their electric bills to LPEA – are invited to drop by either LPEA office between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. on the scheduled luncheon dates. No reservations are required.

“It’s great for all of us here at LPEA to have an opportunity to meet our members face-to-face in a casual, relaxed environment,” says Jeannie Bennett, public relations coordinator. “We love serving you lunch and having time to chat and laugh and provide information.”

THEN, look ahead to next spring, as the LPEA Annual Meeting will be held Saturday, May 16 at Pagosa Springs High School – registration (breakfast) 9 a.m. and the business meeting beginning at 10 a.m., followed by a complementary luncheon.

Information to run for the Board of Directors will be available early in 2020, though members interested in running for the Board are encouraged to begin their education of the cooperative early by attending board meetings (or reviewing the video recordings of the meetings online at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop)), and familiarizing themselves with the cooperatives bylaws and principles.

Stay tuned for more details on all events.

## Star Liquors “shining” in new light

Stan Crapo, owner of Star Liquors in Durango readily admits that he’s “prudent” in spending money. In spite of steadily building one of the largest liquor stores in Durango (located at the corner of Florida and East Animas) (and being exceedingly generous in supporting non-profit organizations with adult beverage donations), he’s never been one to spend money frivolously on the business, always deferring to keeping customer costs down.

“But times have changed for independent liquor stores in Colorado,” says Crapo, referencing the new Colorado laws that allow for beer sales in grocery stores, and pending changes to come – all competing with independent family-owned liquor stores. “We need to keep current and be more consumer-friendly, as well as look at saving money, because we don’t know how our revenues will be impacted. I’ll admit it – it took me a little while to really bite the bullet, but understanding the energy efficiency we’d be realizing, plus better lighting, plus the support of LPEA – I finally had the epiphany and we pulled the trigger.”

Indeed, former LPEA lighting specialist Ray Pierotti, now working as an independent sales/consultant, worked through all the details for Crapo and the Star team. Ultimately Star Liquors changed out 81 total fixtures/lamps, upgrading to LED technology. The old, retired fixtures, tubes and ballasts were recycled.

All the bottles now shine under a “whiter” light of 5,000 lumens (which replaces the older 4,000 lumen tubes.) The older tubes had begun to degrade as well, putting out less light before they finally burned out.

“My employees do a lot of heavy lifting, as you might imagine,” says Crapo. “The continual changing out of light fixtures when they burn out takes them away from customer care, and plus the ladder lugging and all that goes with it. The new LEDs will eliminate this extra employee labor as the life of an energy efficient LED is so superior to what we’ve been using.”

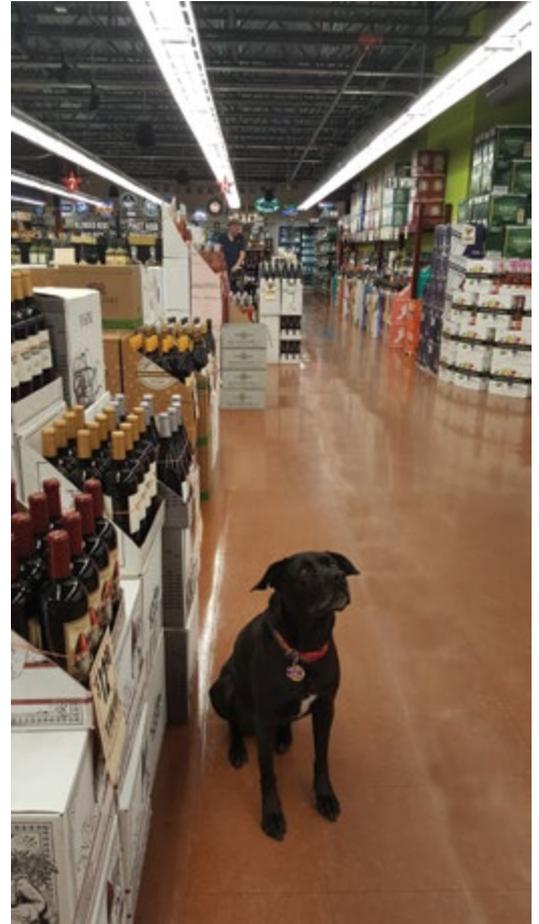
As it is a liquor store, lighting 24-7 is paramount, so Pierotti based estimates on the lamps “on” 5,000 hours per year.

Cost for materials and installation was \$11,499, but replacing the lamps is saving Star 7.89kW of electricity, and with the \$1,919 rebate from LPEA for installing the lighting, estimates are that Star will begin to fully realize a payback in less than 2.5 years – and the savings will continue long down the road.

“We totally appreciate that it’s a huge investment to look at complete change out of lighting to LEDs for a 10,000 square foot facility,” says Pierotti. “But his existing lighting was fading – more than 25 percent – and I’m an old retail guy, so I know it benefits a business to have the products ‘pop’ with good lighting.”

“I’m really happy to have been able to do this,” says Crapo. “Yes, it’s good for the business, but in the bigger scheme of things, it’s good for the environment. We will always strive to be a good neighbor and support our community.”

Learn more about LPEA’s lighting rebate program at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop).



Bubbles, Star Liquors’ mascot, admires the new lighting. Her dog “mom” Tamara agreed that now when they pose Bubbles for a photo shoot, she’s not “lost” in the dark of the floor because of the new LEDs.

# Renewable Grants available

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

Application deadline is Dec. 1, 2019. Notification of awards will be made in February 2020.

"We continue to be 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 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 members can contribute and support development of renewable generation projects in the region. LPEA endeavors to put those amassed dollars back into the community for the greatest member benefit.

Limited funds will be available for this and any future grant cycles. For 2019, LPEA anticipates granting a total of \$36,000. Grants could range up to \$18,000, and successful applicants must secure 100 percent matching funds.

"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 church or a fire station."

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 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 members understand the nuances of producing their own electricity"

Detailed requirements are outlined on the grant application, available for download on LPEA's website, <https://www.lpea.com/local-funding-renewable-projects>. Non-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 contributing to LPEA's Local Renewable Generation Fund, call 970.247.5786.

## CO-OP MEMBERS

# Ask...

**Q:** I understand management is changing at LPEA. What's up and what's the timing?

**A:** Yes, CEO Mike Dreyspring has retired, though he will remain available remotely for consult with LPEA's new CEO Jessica Matlock, who began work officially at LPEA on July 22. By the time this publication is distributed, we expect our new CEO to have begun getting out and about and meeting members, and learning about her new community. She also looks forward to hosting community listening sessions with members. Her direct phone number is 970.382.3509, or email her at [jmatlock@lpea.coop](mailto:jmatlock@lpea.coop). Please welcome our new CEO, but please do have patience and give her a little breathing space to learn about our corner of paradise. Aside from natives, don't we all remember the learning curve when we moved here?

## LIVE WIRES

### Board meeting August 21

The next meeting of the LPEA Board of Directors is set for Wednesday, Aug. 21, 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. 2, 2019, in honor of Labor Day.

### Survey Reminder

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

### RoundUP Grants

The following organizations received RoundUP or Educational grants, distributed by the RoundUP Foundation Board of Directors, in July:

- Loaves & Fishes for Archuleta County
- Pagosa Springs Historical Museum
- Upper San Juan Search and Rescue
- Archuleta County Education Center



# A few cents for CHANGE for local nonprofits

BY BRIGGEN WRINKLE | LPEA ROUND UP FOUNDATION BOARD PRESIDENT



## *The beauty of the Round Up program is its simplicity.*

Since 1997, LPEA's Round Up program has raised almost \$2 million. While individually the contributions are small, over time those pennies really add up. Last year, the Board granted \$100,000 to local nonprofits.

However, we always have more requests than we have dollars to give, so the Board must make hard decisions and often can only partially fund requests.

The LPEA Round Up Board, made up of a representative from each of LPEA's districts, reviews grant applications from nonprofits in La Plata and Archuleta counties and makes grants to support our community's needs.

The Board grants to a variety of organizations including health and human services, early childhood education and care, youth programs, arts and veterans. The Board takes great care to support programs that are fiscally responsible and have solid leadership.

When you Round Up, you are supporting local nonprofits with the extra due diligence of the LPEA Board review. Since we meet monthly, we often see projects that need quick turnaround, like youth groups and teams that need financial support to compete in regional or national competitions.

Since the LPEA Board is all volunteers and supported by LPEA staff, there is no administrative cost, which means all Round Up donations go back to the community.

If you don't already Round Up, please sign up for Round Up today. You can Round Up to the nearest dollar or add a few bucks a month with our Round Up Plus program.

A few cents can create a lot of change when you Round Up. Go online at [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop) to sign up to "round up" today, or give LPEA call at 970.247.5786.

*Wrinkle also serves as Executive Director of the Community Foundation serving Southwest Colorado. Contact her at [briggen@swcommunityfoundation.org](mailto:briggen@swcommunityfoundation.org).*



**T**he LPEA Round Up Board asks you to take action. Currently we have slightly more than 15,000 members of the 33,000 eligible members, participating in Round Up and Round Up Plus. While this is amazing participation, we are always looking for more members to join us and increase grants given to the local nonprofit community.

As the Executive Director of the Community Foundation, one of my key roles is to strengthen the nonprofit sector, ultimately making it more sustainable. I plan professional development classes, encourage best practices and ensure nonprofits optimize opportunities. LPEA's Round Up Foundation is an opportunity for local nonprofits to ask for funds for an unexpected expense, or to increase outreach, or to update a program using new technology as a few examples. Round Up grants to more than 75 nonprofits each year - organizations that in turn help thousands of our LPEA members.

La Plata Electric Association's Round Up Foundation is dependent on LPEA members rounding up their electric bills to the next dollar. On average, donations are approximately 50 cents per month, or \$6 per year. If you want to give a little more, sign up for Round Up Plus, where participants can add an additional donation to their bills. For example, a family of four can request an additional \$1 per month and the donation would be approximately \$18.00 per year.



### Mission Statement:

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

### Mailing Address:

PO Box 2750  
Durango, CO  
81302-2750

### Street Address:

45 Stewart St.  
Durango, CO 81303  
603 S. 8th St.  
Pagosa Springs, CO 81147

970.247.5786 | [www.lpea.coop](http://www.lpea.coop)

### Board of Directors:

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Britt Bassett, Vice President (District 3)  
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Tim Wheeler, Treasurer (District 4)  
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Kirsten Skeehan (District 1)  
Jack Turner (District 4)

### Chief Executive Officer:

Jessica Matlock

