

## Meet Your Co-op

### Welcome Eric Eriksen

"Listen and learn..." that's the first priority for SLV REC's new CEO Eric Eriksen. Beginning work on March 1, Eric spent much of his time the first few days listening to employees and learning their duties, ideas and visions for the future.

"I'm here to listen and learn; my first priority is the employees, then the members and communities we serve. I won't have all the answers, but I will listen. We will navigate any barriers or challenges and find solutions together," Eric stated. "This is a long-term commitment for me; I'm optimistic and looking forward to the future."

Eric brings over 25 years of industry experience in electric, gas and telecommunications with degrees in Electrical Engineering and Master of Business Administration. He most recently served three years as Northwest Lineman College's National Vice President of Engineering Operations and President of the Texas and Idaho Campuses. His prior experience includes 14 years as Vice President of Transmission & Distribution for Alaska Electric Light & Power and President of Kwaan Electric Transmission Intertie Cooperative.

Notable projects include connecting the first cruise ship to shore power, developing an 80MW hydroelectric powerplant, interconnecting one of the world's largest silver mines through a 138KV submarine cable, receiving a \$2M grant to electrify Eaglecrest Ski Resort, developing a world class industrial avalanche and mitigation program and advancing 69KV Avian protection.

SLV REC is a perfect fit for Eric as he loves outdoor recreation and the mountains and enjoys engaging with people. "Connecting with people is so much better in rural communities. They're more neighborly and supportive of each other. I love the family-oriented atmosphere in the Valley. Coming from Alaska where there are not a lot of people, you learn to pitch in, work together and get things done. It's more enjoyable and you can appreciate and



New SLV REC CEO Eric Eriksen

empathize with others when you're working in their shoes too," he stated.

The cooperative world may be new to Eric, but he's very service-oriented and always has been. In fact, in the few weeks he's called the San Luis Valley home, he's already signed up to be a part of Trout Unlimited, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and a local flying club.

Looking forward, Eric sees the outstanding things being done at SLV REC; he's not looking to make changes just for the sake of making changes. "There will be constant evaluation and moving forward to provide the most reliable

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APRIL 2023 | VOLUME 51 | ISSUE 4

# Concern for Community



## Scholarship winners announced

For the past several years, the San Luis Valley REC has made secondary education a priority when giving back to the Valley. With more than \$200,000 given in the past five years, the REC annually awards several scholarships to local students.

The board of directors have announced the 2023 scholarship recipients:

*Martin Christensen Memorial Lineworker Scholarship:* Leighton Curtis, Centauri

*Michael Rierson Scholarship:* Madison Miller, Monte Vista

*Robert Wolfe Scholarship:* Aden Howell, Del Norte

*SLVREC Past Director Scholarship:* Estevan Vega, Centauri

*SLVREC Past Retired GM Ray Villyard & CEO John Villyard Scholarship:* Peyton Metz, Sangre de Cristo

*SLV REC Scholarships:* Arielle Atencio, Del Norte; Jaden Twite, Creede; Ryder Whitehorn, Creede; Peyton Willett, Sanford

*Tri-State G&T Scholarships:* Kashley Canty, Sanford; Burke Temple, Sargent

## ATTENTION

Due to unforeseen circumstances, we have reopened the application process for the **Adams State Four-Year Scholarship**. For details, go online to [www.SLVREC.com](http://www.SLVREC.com) **Community Tab**. **Deadline is Monday, April 17th**

## SLVREC Annual Meeting

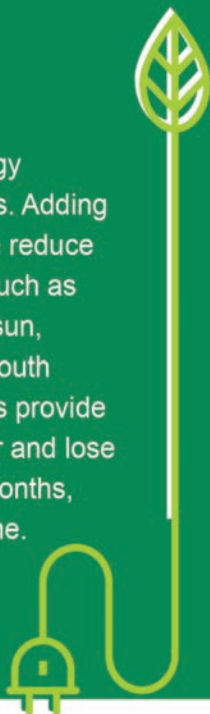
**Tuesday, June 13, 2023, 7 p.m. at Ski Hi Events Center**

Instructions on how to become a director are available online at [slvrec.com/annual-meeting](http://slvrec.com/annual-meeting). *Deadline is April 17, 2023*

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

This planting season, include energy efficiency in your landscaping plans. Adding shade trees around your home can reduce surrounding air temperatures as much as 6 degrees. To block heat from the sun, plant deciduous trees around the south side of your home. Deciduous trees provide excellent shade during the summer and lose their leaves in the fall and winter months, allowing sunlight to warm your home.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



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*Diane Gonzales,  
Monte Vista*

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## Eric Eriksen

### New home, new neighbors

The light was fading and temperatures dropping as we steadily moved toward our destination—the San Luis Valley. A winter storm turned the normal six-hour drive into an adventurous 11. Fortunately, these conditions are familiar to us having grown up in Alaska, and we were prepared. My son, Luke, was helping drive the 26-foot U-Haul to my new home— tire chains clapping as they gripped the road. Another snow marker passing our right-side window— this indicated the road was still under us as we crept over Wolf Creek Pass. Other than an occasional semi-truck chaining up or snowplow helping keep the pass open for us, there was very little traffic the next 20 miles. Google map guiding us through the whiteout.

“We made it!” Acknowledging our success as we pulled to a stop in the driveway. Then finding our way into the house. As we opened the door, warm air and visible light greeted us, which felt so welcoming. It didn’t take long before crawling into bed while the winter storm passed. The next morning was blue skies over a beautiful landscape. It was exciting to walk out and see the surroundings of my new home. “It’s perfect!” I am here to stay and ready to go to work for you.

You live in an incredibly beautiful place, and I am so happy to be here. It is a great honor and privilege to be serving you. A big “thank you” to you, the Board and the SLV REC team for such a warm welcome. I look forward to meeting you as I actively learn about your communities and engage with all the wonderful people— the best people.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Loren Howard for supporting my smooth transition into the role as SLV REC’s CEO. He has been very transparent with information, made introductions and is helping bring me up to speed on the many important issues ahead.

I’ve been preparing my whole life for this opportunity to serve you. My parents were hard working and adventurous— loading up all our belongings into a homemade livestock trailer and heading from Nebraska, north to Alaska, when I was four years old. Weather permitting, I can’t recall ever missing a weekend outside. On occasion my mom would warn my dad: “Don’t let the bears eat Eric!” I spent decades exploring the wonders Alaska has to offer. Please ask me to share stories. I am looking forward to hearing yours too as I eagerly explore the San Luis Valley— my new home and neighbors.

At the age of 14, I started staking new electrical services and repairing meters in remote villages. This sparked a passion and career advancing public utility service. Constantly learning from others and gaining valuable experiences. One of my favorite quotes by Morgan Freeman, “To challenge yourself; it’s the only path which leads to growth.” Constantly moving forward no matter the challenge ahead.

In the spring of 2008, a monstrous avalanche destroyed a large section of 138KV transmission line connecting Juneau, Alaska from its primary hydroelectric resource. Electric rates

**See ERIC continued on Page 4**

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Your email will be forwarded based on the direction you provide in your subject line.

### CEO

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719-852-3538

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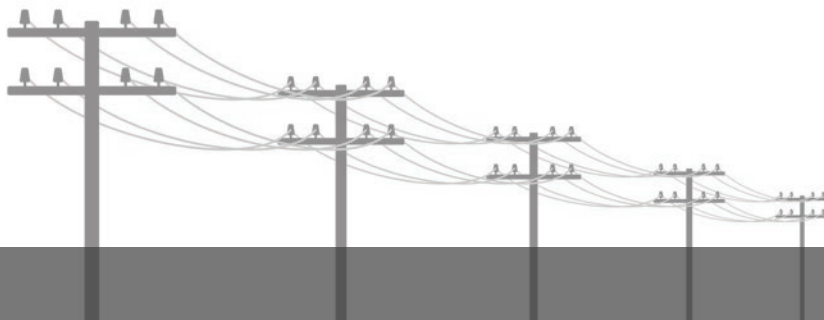


[www.facebook.com/SLVREC](https://www.facebook.com/SLVREC)



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## CEO

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and responsible power we can. I see SLV REC as an organization that is already moving the area forward with engagement and innovation. We're going to continue to hold a high standard and bring others up. We want to be better tomorrow than we are today, and we're going to do that through strategic planning, partnership and ownership. The result will benefit members and employees; we'll continue to change lives and make living in the San Luis Valley better."

He is passionate about sharing his many years of industry experience to help serve employees, students and the community. One of his favorite past-times is being a private pilot. Eric also enjoys hunting, fishing, hiking and skiing. He has a 19-year-old son that just graduated from Northwest Lineman College and recently did a ride-along with REC crews. Eric's 17-year-old daughter lives in Alaska and enjoys ballet. His significant other, Lena, is in a commercial pilot program with Alaska Airlines. She'll have her private pilot's license in a few weeks, then will spend another year taking classes, followed by gaining experience and flight hours before she makes the San Luis Valley home.

In closing, Eric is committed to making SLV REC the best he can. He's looking forward to being here for the long-term. "I never really felt settled in my previous position in Idaho; there were always moving parts. I've only been in the Valley a few weeks, but I can feel home here."

## ERIC

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increased 500 percent over night as the backup diesel generators came online. My coworkers, friends, neighbors, and even my own mother were fearful for their livelihood. It was a daunting challenge as the remote transmission line was buried under 20 feet of snow and supporting towers crushed. In moments like this I feel keenly aware of my real responsibility and impact to others, which drives me forward. Yes, I went to work after the avalanche to successfully restore affordable power for the community. I then continued innovating solutions further improving

## Concern for Community



San Luis Valley BOCES, the Colorado Army National Guard and Colorado Workforce Center hosted a career fair on March 1 at Adams State. High school students from across the Valley took part in the event. Area Serviceman Rudy Vialpando, Marketing Coordinator Jennifer Alonzo and Apprentice Stetson Edgar talked with students about the numerous employment opportunities electric cooperatives have to offer.

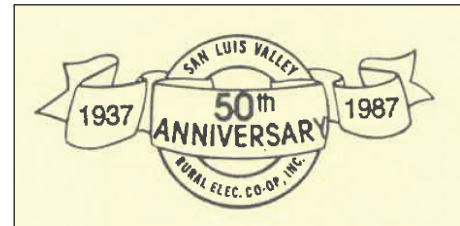
reliability today.

You can expect this same passion, integrity, and excellence from me as I lead with the great people of SLV REC to best serve you— improving your future. Today SLV REC is among the best cooperatives in Colorado, and we will constantly work at being better tomorrow.

You can reach me at [EEriksen@SLVREC.com](mailto:EEriksen@SLVREC.com) or 907-321-6336. Feel free to stop and visit at the SLV REC office or just say "hi" anytime. I look forward to meeting you and listening to your feedback, concerns and ideas.

## Historical Happenings

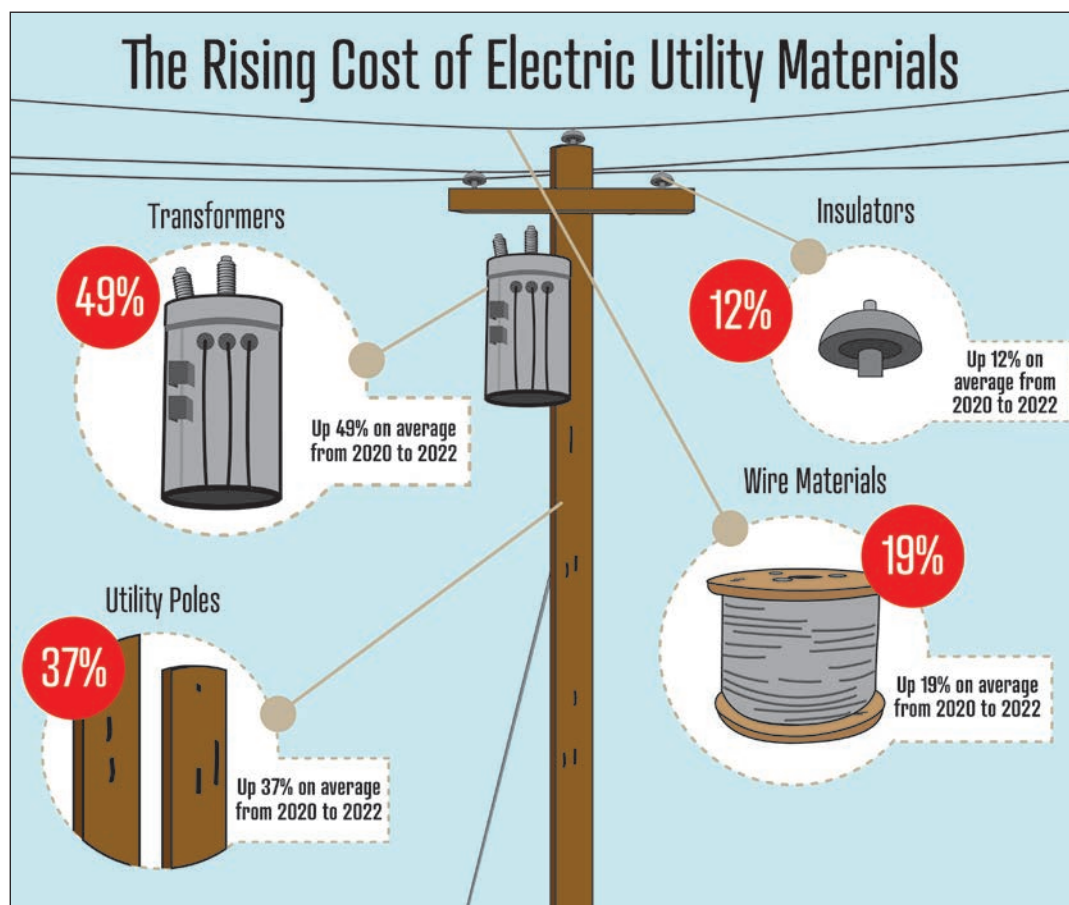
### Celebrating 50 years, 1987



The 1987 Board of Directors included front row, from left: Sam Holland, vice-chairman; Gerald Lorenz, chairman and Ron Garchar, manager. Pictured in the back row are William Ford, Greg Bahr, David Holland, Robert Wolfe and Howard Lamb.

‘Recipe of the Month’ will return next month

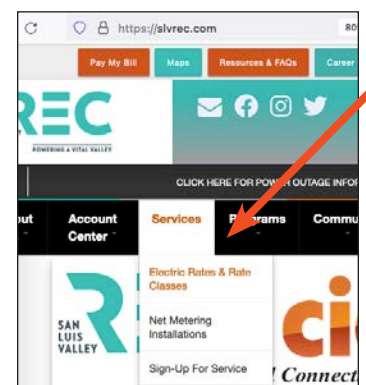
## Member Information



## REMINDER

The NEW RATES, will be EFFECTIVE on April 1, 2023.

For more information, go online to [www.SLVREC.com](https://slvrec.com) Services Tab, Electric Rates







POWERING A VITAL VALLEY

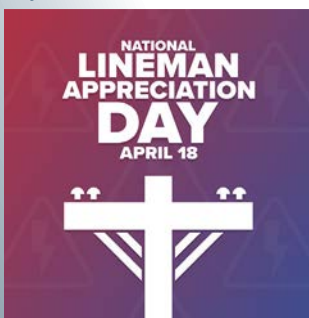
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Rudy  
Wade  
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*Thanks for being a part of the SLVREC team!*

## POWERING OUR COMMUNITY

REC's office is open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

### ENERGY ASSISTANCE

866-HEAT HELP (866-432-8435)  
[www.energyoutreach.org](http://www.energyoutreach.org)

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### SCHEDULED MEETINGS

Board Meeting: Tuesday, April 25, 9:30 a.m.  
The REC Board of Directors meets the last Tuesday of each month unless otherwise stated. Members are welcome; advance notice required.

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Avalanche training



Congrats, Loren!