

## Member Information

### Progress with unmanned aircraft

*By Kurt Taffin*

Interest in Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS), otherwise known as drone technology, is growing at SLVREC. This relatively new application for the cooperative is positioned to be woven into both construction and engineering best practices to accomplish projects more economically. Drones have the capability for either manual or autonomous flight, where they can be programmed to inspect lines, 1080p image capture and survey accuracy mapping photogrammetry.

Within the 8,000 square mile region REC serves seven counties with approximately 2,147 miles of distribution line and 81 miles of transmission line. As drone use becomes more implemented, providing design, engineering and construction services will certainly benefit. Using accurate visualization allows mapping of large areas to acquire detailed, precise data and design with accurate geographic coordinates. Evaluating large construction projects in a reality model will generate better route designs compatible with a variety of different software. With designing in a live mapping environment, drone technology lifts the visual constraints in many mountainous and high vegetation areas within REC's system, allowing the advantage of



Kurt Taffin joined the REC team in 2006; he began as a journeyman lineman before transitioning to staking engineer in 2014.

spatial accuracy right from the field.

In many cases, standard equipment such as bucket trucks can be used to assess damage and inspect power lines, however a bird's eye view can sometimes be safer and more efficient. Drones can quickly cover miles of damage after a storm

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REC lines are captured by drone footage.

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## DRONE

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or major outage event as the System Average and can go places that Interruption Frequency would be inaccessible by Index (SAIFI) and System vehicle. Routine pole line Average Interruption inspections can also be Duration Index (SAIDI). augmented using a full The Federal Aviation frame 45-megapixel lens Administration (FAA) identifying bird nests, requires all commercial lightning strikes, corrosion pilots to operate under or small cracks in Title 14 Code of Federal porcelain insulators, all of Regulations (CFR) which ultimately improves Part 107 and pass an reliability metrics such aeronautical knowledge

test every 24 months for re-certification. Currently REC has five sUAS remote pilots since the advent of the program in 2018. Pilots are trained in visual line of sight (VLOS) flight, the National Airspace System (NAS), meteorology and documentation to name a few.

If you see someone from our team flying around the power lines, we are always willing to take a moment and talk with members about how REC is using drone technology to develop and improve the system for the future.

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## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know ceiling fans can make a room feel 4 degrees cooler? To save energy through ceiling fan use, remember to raise your thermostat a few degrees while fans are turned on. Ceiling fans can help improve comfort year-round. In the summer, operate ceiling fans in a counterclockwise direction. Reverse the direction to clockwise during winter months and set fans on a low speed so warm air can circulate from the ceiling to the lower levels of the room. Remember, ceiling fans cool people, not spaces. Be sure to turn them off when you leave the room.

Source: Dept. of Energy



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"Marvin and Kelby are the absolute best! I had such a great experience with my installation. Marvin was so informative and explained what he was doing; he was so good to work with. The people are the core of what you do, and it's so great to have great people like Marvin & Kelby to work with. And we're really enjoying our WiFi." *-Arlet Dunsworth, South Fork*

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**Ciello is proud to feature testimonials from our satisfied customers in issues of the Newsboy. Send your testimonials to [jalonzo@slvrec.com](mailto:jalonzo@slvrec.com).**





**Eric Eriksen**

## Pirates of the Valley

Ahoy mates! The infamous Black Pearl sails on the high seas filled with stolen treasures and pirates. These theatrical movie pirates of the Caribbean may be seen wearing tall black boots, three cornered hat, long buccaneer coat, compass and of course a pirate's sword—a rare sighting in the San Luis Valley. So why would I be informing you about pirates today?

Because Pirates of the Valley are here too. According to the modern Oxford Dictionary, a pirate not only robs at sea but on land or through the Internet—illegally profiting without permission. Yes, pirates are attempting to steal electricity through powerlines and digital content like movies, books, games and music online. Don't be afraid. REC/Ciello is working hard every day to stay ahead of these potential pirates with the aid of advanced technologies.

Today, almost every REC electric member's service is metered through advanced metering infrastructure (AMI). This technology provides faster more accurate data with the means of implementing member solutions such as: outage reporting, cost savings and tamper notification. A tamper notification is sent to our system operator instantly when a pirate attempts to profit from stealing electricity. And immediately the system operator dispatches personnel. Having this capability helps support lower rates for members and protects the safety of potential pirates.

Torrenting is the term used for



distributing and downloading Internet files using the BitTorrent protocol. This protocol enables very large files to be shared across the Internet. It's what big companies like Facebook, Twitter, Netflix, Apple and Amazon use to reach millions of users. It is also used by pirates to illegally acquire copyrighted content like movies to be resold. Copyright infringement fines can be as much as \$150,000 if the pirate is caught. Now imagine a small local business providing customers with WiFi access. Many businesses today provide this convenience. Unfortunately,

the unsuspecting business owner might not be aware that a pirate is disguised as one of their patrons. Could this be your home or business?

Pirates beware! Ciello has launched the "MyCiello" app to protect you from these pirates. It will assist you with blocking torrenting on your Ciello service. This means any device connecting to your Ciello WiFi will not be able to run the software used to pirate digital content. You will be safer from these types of pirating activities. Go to [www.ciello.com/my-ciello-app](http://www.ciello.com/my-ciello-app) to download the app or call 719-852-3538 for more information or assistance.

Expect passion, integrity and excellence from me as I lead with the great people of SLVREC to best serve you—improving your future. Today SLVREC is among the best cooperatives in Colorado, and we will

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## Concern for Community

### SLVREC employees give back

In June SLVREC employees spent time away from their regular day-to-day duties to assist local communities.

One group worked at the Creede Fairgrounds, painting bleachers and setting a flag pole, while another group took time to set a pole at Higher Ground BMX Course in La Jara. The BMX park will see a WiFi access point installed later this summer with the help of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the San Luis Valley.

In addition, REC participated in a career fair at High Valley Community Center in Del Norte, and all employees hit the highway and gathered trash as part of CDOT's Adopt-a-Highway Program.

As a local business, we are proud of our role in helping bring good things to our community. While the larger environment in which we operate is constantly changing, one thing remains constant... working together with the members we serve, we'll continue to be a catalyst for good.

One of the seven cooperative principles is Concern for Community, and at REC we take those principles to heart, always striving to better the communities where we live, work and play.



Clockwise from above:  
Creede, trash pickup and  
La Jara

### PIRATES

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constantly work at being better tomorrow.

Feel free to stop in to say "hi," write [EEriksen@slvrec.com](mailto:EEriksen@slvrec.com)

## Meet Your Coop

### Erin Dowers retiring after 20+ years

Erin Dowers has spent the past nearly 22 years doing building maintenance for San Luis Valley REC and will hang up her rake for the last time at the end of August.

Erin came to the San Luis Valley from Oregon 25 years ago with a friend to help build a house. She then managed a hardware store's rental department in Monte Vista before joining REC in 2001.

Over the years Erin has watched the "tiny electric cooperative" transform into the 54-employee entity it is today. Additional outbuildings and much more square footage has come with the progression, adding to her daily job description. Not to mention, the trees on the grounds have grown immensely. "I've always taken a lot of pride in the yard here, but it has blown up, and I'm tired."

Checking the daily weather and helping honor employee requests have become a staple in her busy schedule. No day is ever quite the same— she could be adjusting a garage door, waxing floors, raking leaves or even popping kernels for Popcorn Thursday. "Everyone has their little quirks," she said. Whether it's finding an employee a different chair, rearranging an office or adding paint to the walls, Erin does her best to oblige.

One thing that always seems to bring a smile to Erin's face is her sidekick Sophie. Her long haired chihuahua can often be seen strolling the REC halls during holiday celebrations. "She's kind of like the REC mascot." Sophie was rescued from the Conour Animal Shelter when she was five months old and has become a fixture in Erin's life ever since.

As retirement comes for Erin at the end of the month, she plans to head back to Oregon where her three brothers live. She will take time to decompress and go to the beach with Sophie by her side. She will miss the people she's come to know as family but is ready for change.

Your friends and family at REC will miss you, Erin, but we wish you the best of luck in your future!



or call anytime to 719-852-6630. I look forward to your feedback, concerns and bright ideas.





## Recipe of the month

### INGREDIENTS

3 lbs. zucchini and squash (about two medium zucchini and two medium squash)

1 t. garlic powder

1 t. onion powder

2 t. oregano

1-3/4 t. kosher salt, divided

2 T. olive oil or butter

3/4 c. + 2 T. shredded Parmesan cheese

1/2 c. + 2 T. 2% milk

1 T. flour

1/2 c. seasoned Italian panko or Italian breadcrumbs (contains salt)

### SQUASH & ZUCCHINI CASSEROLE

1. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees F.

2. Slice the zucchini and squash into 1/4-inch thick rounds. Place them in a bowl and stir them together with the garlic powder, onion powder, oregano, and 1 t. kosher salt.

3. In a large skillet, heat the olive oil or butter over medium high heat. Add zucchini and squash. Cover the skillet and cook for 2 minutes; stir. Cover again for 2 minutes and stir, moving slices to the bottom layer as necessary to brown them. Cook 2 minutes, flipping carefully, until they are crisp tender.

4. Reduce the heat to low. Add another 3/4 t. kosher salt, 1/2 c. milk, 1 T. flour whisked into 2 T. milk, and 1/2 c. Parmesan cheese. Cook 2 to 3 minutes until slightly thickened.

5. Pour zucchini and squash into a small baking dish (2 quart or 11" x 8"). Top with panko and 2 T. Parmesan cheese.

6. Bake for 10 minutes until golden brown. Allow to stand for at least 10 minutes so the sauce thickens slightly.

*www.acouplecooks.com*

## Historical Happenings

### 1979 Wolf Creek



Wolf Creek Ski Area lines iced up and took out power often in the 1970s and 80s. Lineman Jim Clare commented that he "spent many days restoring services there. We had to use snowshoes and four-wheelers to get there. Then the lines went underground in the 90s which was very helpful."

*Photos courtesy of Jim Clare*



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Photo by Michelle Heredia

## POWERING OUR COMMUNITY

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

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**SCHEDULED MEETINGS**  
Board Meeting: Tuesday, August 29, 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.

This institution is an equal opportunity employer.

