

Meet Your Co-op

Apprentice to journeyman

Going from apprentice to journeyman lineman is no easy feat; it takes four years— 8,000 working hours, 40+ tests and many hours of studying. SLVREC Lineman Gabe Gutierrez recently journeyed out after completing all the steps and is happy to be finished.

Graduating from Alamosa in 2007, Valley native Gabe spent 11 years doing landscaping before going to Rocky Mountain Line School in 2018. Upon graduation, he worked for Xcel Energy as a meter reader and in collections prior to coming to REC as an apprentice lineman in 2019.

As far as the day-to-day work, Gabe says there isn't a lot of change in his duties as a journeyman; "it's more of a culture thing." But he is now qualified to take outages on his own. "Working at REC is good; I like the camaraderie on the crews, and it's not boring. I am definitely not a desk-person; I enjoy being outside—not in the same place every day. When troubleshooting, you always have to be thinking and problem solving," he said.

One of the challenges of his job is that "you always have to be thinking ahead— what tools you'll need and what is the best way to complete the job safely *and* efficiently. You always have to be watching everyone's back," Gabe commented.



Gabe Gutierrez

Gabe and Kristen have three children: Liam, Hailey and Jillian. He enjoys spending time with his family and in the mountains— camping and riding side-by-sides, as well as golfing.

Arguello finishes apprenticeship

Following two years of coursework, San Luis Valley REC's Tomas Arguello has finished his apprenticeship and is now officially a system operator.

The apprenticeship included 38 books, a requirement to pass every exam with a 70% or higher, 2,500 hours of on-the-job training and the completion of four practical



tests. Different topics studied included switching, radio communications, record keeping, outage & emergency actions and more. One of the practicals saw Tomas working on a server upgrade of the SCADA system with no faults or issues, which was a proud accomplishment for him.

With his apprenticeship complete, Tomas is now working on a sectionalizing plan for the Baca area— determining where to

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Tomas Arguello

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Meet Your Co-op



MV City Council appoints Howard to fill vacancy

At the Dec. 15, 2022 meeting, the Monte Vista City Council chose Loren Howard to fill the vacant council seat.

Howard was sworn into the office by City Clerk Unita Vance and immediately took his position with City Council.

“Monte Vista has been my home for the past 11 years. While not always living in Colorado, I have for many decades had great affection for this state having lived in

Colorado back in the 1970s. Now living in Monte Vista, Karen and I have come to call this home. I appreciate the opportunity to continue to support this fine city and help find paths to a successful future. I hope residents of Monte Vista find me open, honest and willing to work for the best interests of this community,” Howard stated.

Howard was one of three candidates that submitted

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TOMAS

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add fuses and interrupters. He also recently was involved in upgrading REC's vehicle tracking system through Geotab.

He feels like there are a few new challenges with taking on more responsibilities in this role. “Because the nature of our system is older, there is more maintenance, which means I'll be using my knowledge in a more focused sense to restore power quickly,” Tomas stated. “But it's exciting, I don't always know what I'm walking into on a daily basis.”

Since joining REC in December of 2020, Tomas has married his long-time girlfriend; they have a

one-year-old daughter and they've purchased a house in the Valley. “Working here is interesting, and I'm super thankful. We've put roots down here and started a life. I don't think I could have done that as easily anywhere else in the state, which is great,” Tomas commented.

His hobbies include hunting, fishing, mountain biking, camping, carpentry, skiing, sports and cooking (just to name a few) and spending time with his wife and daughter.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Do you have a home office? Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life.

Another way to save in the home office is to use energy efficient lamps for task lighting. Small lamps use less energy than whole-room lighting.



ciello *This is our why...*

“It's amazing but it's true: we get better Internet service from Ciello in the remote areas of the SLV than we got in the burbs in TX. The human service is also quite excellent, light years beyond. Please keep up the great work!”

—Darrell Burgan, Crestone

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Loren Howard

Our technology dependence

In the 11 years of writing Newsboy articles, I don't believe I have ever written an article based on contemporaneous events, but there is always a first – like now. I am sitting in an airport waiting for a delayed flight because the Federal Aviation Administration's computers had a problem last night and FAA issued a ground stop on all flights in the USA. Now, it is easy to fantasize that this was caused by some deliberate event, but likely a software or hardware system had a problem and the FAA's computers had to be restarted. While that is the likely case, it is a reminder how much our lives are controlled by technology which brings me to write about what REC and Ciello are doing to ensure the best reliability and performance of the electric and Internet services we provide.

First topic to consider is the separation of REC's electric control system and Ciello's Internet service system. From the beginning, specific and deliberate design of the fiber network that serves both systems is both electronically and physically separate. While there is one connection between these two systems, that connection is tightly controlled and continuously monitored. While it is impossible to ensure that absolutely no one could penetrate either system, the electronic security is robust and managed by diligent and qualified personnel.

REC and Ciello employ many programs to reduce the possibility of intrusion by outsiders. Employees regularly receive training on recognizing phishing emails

and bogus text messages. Logging into computers and servers now requires two-factor authentication which means that accessing a computer requires something you know and something you physically possess. Computer software is regularly updated, and all computers run an up-to-date antivirus software.

In order to ensure Ciello's Internet service is as reliable as possible, Ciello maintains multiple circuits going out of the Valley to both Denver and Albuquerque. This attention to reliability has kept Ciello's services up through forest fires and recently a major fiber cut along the Front Range. Ciello continues to expand both the cable diversity and geographic diversity of its connections to the Internet's major points of presence.

As technology, i.e. computer software and hardware, have evolved over the past decades, it has become virtually impossible to avoid reliance on its benefits. At the same time, I believe we need to redevelop our ability to live without it for periods of time. Sitting at the airport, the rerouting of my travel and the delays it caused were— rather trivial as to time, inconvenience and money— but I was prepared to manage living in an airport even for a few days. Electricity and computer technology has added immeasurable convenience to most lives, and while I would hate to live without it, I could manage for extended periods if required. I encourage you to consider the same if you have not already gone down that road.

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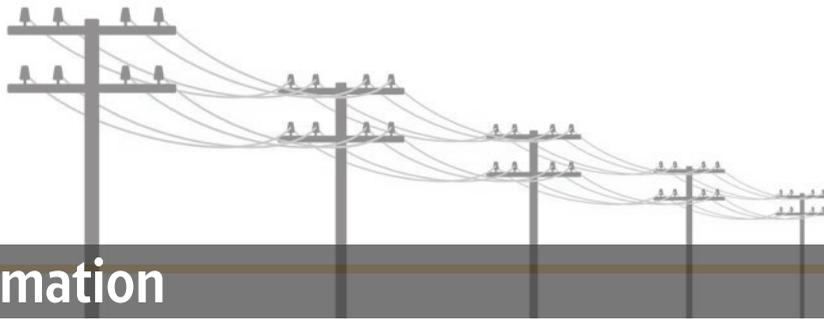
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Member Information




5 Ways to Save During Winter

Winter weather typically means increased energy use at home. Keep your bills in check with these tips to save energy—and money!

Mind the thermostat.

If you have a traditional heating and cooling system, set the thermostat to 68 degrees or lower. Consider a smart or programmable thermostat for additional savings.

Get cozy. Add layers of clothing for additional warmth, and snuggle up under your favorite heavyweight blanket.

Don't block the heat.

If your air vents or heating elements (like radiators) are blocked by furniture or rugs, your home isn't being adequately heated.

Take advantage of sunlight.

Open window coverings during the day to let natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to block the chilly night air.

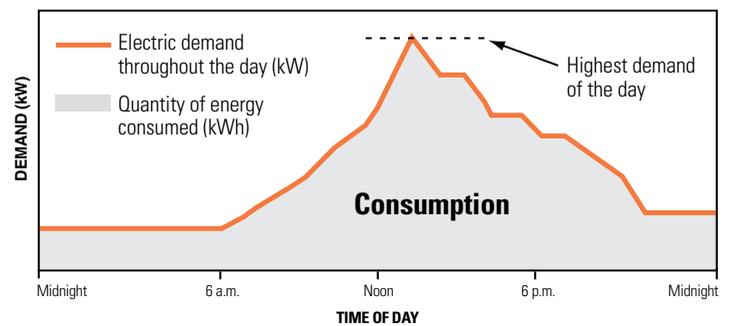
Block air leaks. Seal windows and exterior doors with caulk and weather stripping to improve indoor comfort and decrease the amount of energy used to heat your home.

Understanding demand charges

Knowing how your electric use is billed and how your demand and energy charges are calculated will help you understand and manage your total energy costs.

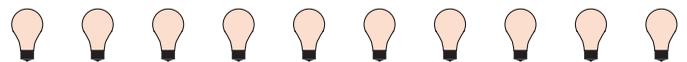
The electricity use diagram below shows the difference between energy (kWh) and demand (kW):

Electricity Use Profile (sample)



Understanding the energy charge

Energy charge is the calculation of the amount of electricity kilowatt-hours (kWh) consumed during the billing period.



Each of the 10 light bulbs above uses 100 watts of electricity. If all 10 are lit for one hour, they will have consumed one kWh of electricity:

10 light bulbs x 100 watts x one hour = 1,000 watt-hours (1 kWh)

Depending on your rate, your meter may also record the amount of energy used on-peak and off-peak.

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LOREN

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letters of interest to fill the vacant seat.

The seat became vacant after Larry Foster resigned in November.

“We thank Mr. Foster for his time served on Council and we wish him great success in his future endeavors. Mr. Howard will fill this position until Dec. 31, 2023, which would conclude Mr. Foster’s remaining time. Mr. Howard will be eligible to run in the 2023 election if he so chooses,” City officials stated in a press release.

Howard has been a resident of Monte Vista for 11 years and he and his wife plan on staying here. Howard is the CEO for San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative and plans on retiring in early 2023. Prior to that Howard spent 25 years with the Holland Board of Public Works in Michigan.

Mayor Becker stated, “It will be an honor working with Mr. Howard; his knowledge and experience will contribute to making Monte Vista Council even better.”



Recipe of the Month

INGREDIENTS

- 1 banana
- 1 apple
- 1 (8-oz.) container strawberries, hulled
- 2 t. orange juice
- 1/2 c. unsweetened natural cocoa powder
- 1/3 c. sugar
- 1/2 c. nonfat evaporated milk
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 2 oz. dark chocolate, (60 to 70 percent cocoa solids) finely chopped

CHOCOLATE FONDUE

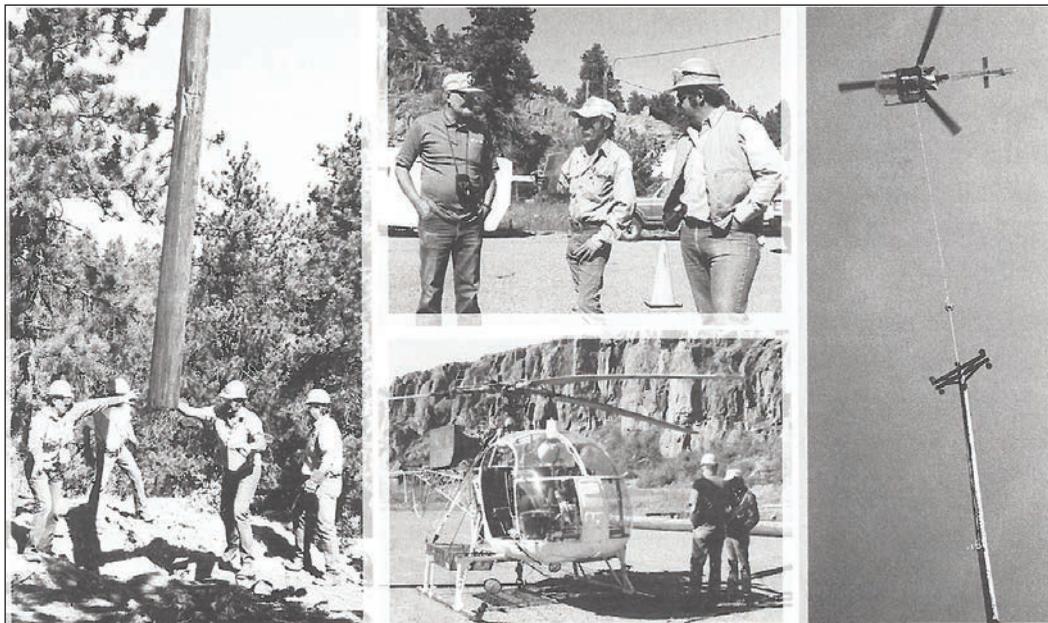
1. Peel and cut the banana and core and slice the apple. Place the banana slices, apple slices and strawberries in separate piles on a serving plate. Sprinkle the banana and apple slices with the orange juice and toss gently. Cover the fruit with plastic wrap and refrigerate while you make the fondue.

2. In a medium saucepan whisk together the cocoa powder and sugar. Gradually pour in the evaporated milk and whisk well to make a paste. Place the saucepan over a low heat and cook, stirring constantly, until simmering. Remove from the heat and whisk in the vanilla and chocolate and stir until the chocolate is melted. The mixture will thicken as it cools slightly. Transfer chocolate to a fondue pot, and keep warm. Serve with cut fruit for dipping.

www.foodnetwork.com

Historical Happenings

October 1987



Setting poles by helicopter in South Fork

DEMAND

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Understanding the demand charge

Demand is the rate at which you consume electricity – or the amount needed to power your home/business at any given point in time. Your demand charges are based on the highest level of electricity supplied at one time during the billing period and at the time of day it's needed by your home/business.

A single light bulb demands 100 watts of electricity at any given moment.

In the energy charge example, the 10 light bulbs demanded 1,000 watts (1 kW) of electricity to operate.

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Clay McCarroll
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Photo by Tyler Cerny

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SCHEDULED MEETINGS

Board Meeting: Tuesday, Feb. 28, 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.

Annual Meeting update

SLVREC's annual business meeting will be held
on **Tuesday, June 13, 2023 at 7 p.m.**

at Ski Hi Events Center.

Petition packets will be available online
by Feb. 15, 2023 at slvrec.com/annual-meeting.

Ballots will be mailed on May 11, 2023.