

Concern for Community

REC provides mutual aid to Town of Center

An accident in the town of Center on Aug. 28 involved a semi-truck hitting an electric pole. Several other poles were pulled down, taking out power to citizens in Center.

As a cooperative, we take our core principles and values to heart— “Concern for Community” hit close to home when the Town of Center (whose electric utilities are run by the municipality) was in need of help to get the lights back on. REC crews finished up their regular work day, only to continue into the evening hours helping out the Town of Center.

Power was restored that evening, even though repair work continued.



Crews worked in Center to repair downed power lines.

Member Information



Fire mitigation continues

As the final step in decommissioning approximately 5-1/2 miles of power line, SLVREC crews spent Sept. 4 working with a helicopter pilot to remove around 100 old poles from Fox Mountain near Wolf Creek Pass.

The power line was de-energized approximately five years ago and has been on REC’s radar to remove when the time was right. With the help of Wolf Creek Ski Area’s Davey Pitcher, that time came in early September. He had a helicopter coming in to help with some work on the mountain and offered to give REC time to coordinate with the helicopter as well.

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Member Information

REC/Tri-State join SLV transmission and energy roundtable

Organized by Alamosa County Commissioner Lori Laske, U.S. Senator Michael Bennet recently met with San Luis Valley leaders to discuss electric transmission lines in and out of the Valley. REC CEO Eric Eriksen and Tri-State representatives were a part of the conversation.

Grant funding secured by Alamosa County will allow for a study on transmission lines into and



Above: US Senator Michael Bennet (center) met with more than 25 members of the community. At right: CEO Eric Eriksen and Tri-State's Chris Pink, Cody Sickler (CCPG) in the background



out of the San Luis Valley— ongoing discussion for a project that has been an decades.

October is National



Co-ops power communities with purpose

Communities come in all shapes and sizes. Some are based on geographical proximity, some are based on shared interests or hobbies, and some communities can even be found in virtual spaces like social media groups. Regardless of where or how they are formed, communities can bring people together and create a sense of belonging.

San Luis Valley REC is deeply committed

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you recently made or plan to make energy efficiency improvements to your home, you may be eligible for federal tax credits. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 empowers homeowners to save money on energy efficiency improvements and upgrades. Homeowners can save up to \$3,000 annually to lower the cost of efficiency upgrades by up to 30%.

A few upgrades covered through the IRA include new exterior doors, windows, insulation, heating/cooling equipment and other major appliances. If you completed an upgrade this year or you are considering one, visit www.energystar.gov/federal-tax-credits.gov to learn if you qualify for a tax credit.

Source: energystar.gov

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Eric Eriksen

Productivity

Three key elements to improving productivity include workforce development, process improvement and technology. You may often hear about businesses leveraging technology to do more with less, but so often their focus shifts away from people and process. This can lead to short-term gains, but over time the organizational knowledge, skills, performance, customer focus and entrepreneurialism may diminish. It is important to keep these three key elements in balance— starting with our people first.

Has your business adopted a process improvement methodology? If not, then imagine the possibilities of investing in your employees with process improvement education simultaneously increasing two of the three key productivity elements— workforce development and process improvement. Engagement, inclusivity and overall employee satisfaction will increase as well. The third element, technology, will naturally follow as teams utilize a process improvement methodology to implement strategic value-add solutions.

Lean Six Sigma certification

That is precisely what the telecommunications giant Motorola did in 1986, when they pioneered the Lean Six Sigma process improvement methodology. Its purpose was to create a strategic advantage over competitors with a team-focused approach that continuously improves performance and eliminates waste. In other words, it's a cultural shift towards constant improvement and customer value

creation by using data to develop informed solutions and waste elimination.

Today, Lean Six Sigma is a recognized competitive advantage used around the world and across all industries (www.investopedia.com).

This is exactly what REC is doing here in the San Luis Valley. This past spring, 16 REC employees enrolled in a Lean Six Sigma yellow belt certification course (leansixsigma.org). They were divided into two teams of eight, consisting of at least one person from each department. Linemen teamed up with accountants, engineers, member service specialists, mechanics and so on. The Lean Machine and The Lean 8 were team names as they navigated a 12-week course curriculum, exams and team projects. The basic five phases of Lean Six Sigma include: Define, Measure, Analyze, Improve and Control.

Team projects

Team projects are the capstone to their certification by demonstrating everything they learned. Each team identified an improvement objective, such as material standard used in powerline construction and applied the five phases. At the end of 12 weeks the teams presented their projects to an evaluation committee and were measured on demonstrated learning, communication, savings and impact. As you can imagine the pressures of achieving success were real.

In the end, both teams greatly exceeded expectations. Their projects both focused on standardizing processes

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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719-849-8304

Stephen Valdez, Vice President
719-588-0430

Wade Lockhart, Secretary
719-588-9246

Carol Lee Dugan
719-588-4711

Creede Hargraves
708-638-0039

Scott Wolfe
719-852-0966

Kim Wakasugi
719-588-3440

Email: power@slvrec.com

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

CEO

Eric Eriksen
719-852-6630

SLVREC Office (toll free)
800-332-7634

SLVREC Office (local calls)
719-852-3538

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LEAN

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in inventory and warehousing with substantial savings realized. Once an improvement is made, then it gets carried forward year after year. I am so proud of our people and their accomplishments. We really have the best working for you.

A culture of continuous improvement

Change can be uncomfortable and hard work. For it to become cultural requires long-term focus and dedication. The investment in our people and continuous improvement is not a one-and-done activity.

Following this year’s introduction of Lean Six Sigma, we’ve developed a new ongoing program, providing increasing growth opportunities for employees, recognition and development of new skills for creating member value. The program fosters an organizational culture of continuous improvement. If you’re curious to learn more, then feel free to ask an employee about it or check out the certification website at leansixsigmainstitute.org

We’re here whenever you need us. Connect with us online, in person, or through our social media channels. However you choose to connect, please let us know how we can serve you better. I’ll close with one of my favorite quotes:

“Challenge yourself; It’s the only path which leads to growth.” ~Morgan Freeman



Crestone Energy Fair Panel educates



Photo courtesy of Crestone Energy Fair
Engineering Manager Terry Daley (second from right) took part in a panel discussion at the Crestone Energy Fair this past weekend. Topics of discussion included grant opportunities for both REC and Tri-State, the Rocky Mountain Transmission Study as well as basic info and benefits for REC members.

OCTOBER

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to our members, and we’re glad you are part of the electric cooperative community.

This month, more than 30,000 cooperatives across the U.S. are celebrating National Co-op Month. It’s a time to reflect on all the aspects that set cooperatives apart from other types of businesses, but more importantly, it’s a time to celebrate the power of co-op membership.

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit utilities that are built by the communities they serve. For SLVREC our mission has always been to provide you with reliable power. We care about your quality of life, and because we are locally operated, we’re uniquely suited to meet our members’ evolving energy needs.

Beyond the business of electricity, our employees and directors are equally invested in our local community. Why? Because we live here, too. That’s why we work hard to support local economic development projects, youth programs and scholarships, charitable giving initiatives and additional programs that make our community a better place to call home. We hope you recognize the aspects that set electric cooperatives apart. Our purpose is people—the local communities we’re proud to serve.



Recipe of the Month

INGREDIENTS

- 4 T. unsalted butter
- 3 large yellow onions, *thinly sliced into half-moons*
- 2 T. all-purpose flour
- Kosher salt
- 1/2 c. dry white wine
- 4 c. low-sodium beef stock
- 2 c. low-sodium chicken stock
- 8 sprigs thyme, plus more for serving
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 8 baguette slices
- 1 c. finely shredded Gruyère

FRENCH ONION SOUP

1. In a large pot over medium heat, melt butter. Add onions and cook, stirring occasionally, until deeply golden brown, 45 to 60 minutes.

2. Add flour and cook, stirring, until incorporated, 1 to 2 minutes; season with salt. Add wine, bring to a simmer, and cook, stirring occasionally, until evaporated, 1 to 2 minutes. Add beef stock, chicken stock, and thyme and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and bring to a simmer. Cook, stirring occasionally, until liquid is slightly reduced and flavors have melded, about 15 minutes. Remove thyme; season with salt and pepper.

3. Preheat broiler to high. Ladle soup into heatproof ramekins. Top each with 2 bread slices, then top with cheese. Broil soup, watching closely, until bubbling and golden, 1 to 2 minutes.

4. Top soup with thyme.

www.delish.com

Historical Happenings



REC attorney Rowe retires

On April 1, 1996 REC Board Attorney Gordon Rowe retired from his position after 25 years of service to the Cooperative. "I leave with fond memories. It is a wonderful and effective organization," Gordon said. He also said that he will continue to practice law in partnership with his son Gordo in Monte Vista.

Board President Sam Holland presents Gordon with a certificate inscribed "25 Years of Legal Counsel."

From the May 1996 Newsboy

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October 2024



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REC's office is open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday. We will be closed on Monday, Sept. 2 for Labor Day.

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866-HEAT HELP (866-432-8435)
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SCHEDULED MEETINGS
October Board Meeting: TBA
The REC Board of Directors typically meets the last Tuesday of each month unless otherwise stated. Members are welcome; advance notice required.

This institution is an equal opportunity employer.

