

## Concern for Community

### Investing in the future: Meet our 2026 scholarship recipients

San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative (SLVREC) is proud to announce the recipients of its 2026 scholarships. Supporting local students and their educational goals continues to be a priority for the cooperative, which has awarded more than \$200,000 in scholarships to Valley students in the past five years alone.

#### 2026 scholarship recipients:

*SLVREC Adams State University Four-Year Scholarship:* Jessilynn Malouff, Alamosa High School

*Martin Christensen Memorial Lineworker Scholarship:* Joshua Gonzalez, Alamosa High School

*Michael Rierson Scholarship:* Reagan Futrell, Monte Vista High School

*James & Thomas Magness Scholarship:* Tanner Houser, Sargent High School

See **SCHOLARSHIPS** continued on Page 2



Jessilynn Malouff



Joshua Gonzalez

## Member Info

### DOE awards \$854,618 grant to SLVREC

In September, San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative received \$854,618 in federal funding from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) through the State of Colorado's Grid Hardening for Small & Rural Communities 2024 RFA Program to modernize the electric grid and reduce impacts due to extreme weather and natural disasters.

Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grants aim to ensure the reliability of power sector infrastructure so that communities have access to affordable, reliable, clean electricity.

"This investment will

See **GRANT** continued on Page 4

## Meet Your Co-op

### A fond farewell to Mary Davis: honoring her years of service

After more than a decade of dedicated service, SLVREC is proud to celebrate the retirement of Mary Davis, a valued member of our cooperative family.

Mary joined SLVREC in March 2015 as a Customer Service Representative, and over the years, brought a positive attitude and strong work ethic to every role she held. In April 2025, she transitioned into an Accountant position, continuing to support the cooperative with the same dedication and care.

During her time at SLVREC, Mary witnessed significant growth and change across the organization. From the early days of Ciello to the continued expansion of services, she saw firsthand how the cooperative evolved to better serve its members. "The changes with computer programs here is unending. Technology changes, such as all the AI advancements, we didn't even talk about that when I started," Mary commented.

While there have been many highlights, her favorite memories center around the strong sense of community at the coop.

Whether participating in leadership team See **MARY** continued on Page 5



Mary Davis

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Concern/Member Info/Meet Your...

Member Info/Efficiency/Ciello

Eric Eriksen

Articles continued

Lineworker Day/Historical Happenings

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# Member Information

## Irrigation assessments help Valley producers improve irrigation efficiency

In early March SLVREC joined partners from across the region at the Colorado Master Irrigator Program, hosted by the Colorado Ag Water Alliance.

During the workshop, CEO Eric Eriksen, Stephen Akinlabi (Adams State / CSU Engineering), Steve Valdez and Laura Getts from Tri-State Generation and Transmission shared information about SLVREC's

**“With the recommended efficiency improvements, I could save more than \$20,000 per year.”**

– Kent Reinhardt, member

See **ASSESSMENT** continued on Page 4



SLVREC CEO Eric Eriksen

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

As we prepare for the seasonal shift, remember to set your ceiling fan rotation accordingly. In winter months (or whenever your home heating system is running), fan blades should rotate clockwise, which produces an updraft that pushes warm air down. In summer months (or whenever your home cooling system is running), blades should rotate counterclockwise, which produces a downdraft or windchill effect that makes you feel cooler. When used correctly, ceiling fans can boost comfort and allow you to adjust the thermostat a few degrees for energy savings.

Source: energy.gov

## Attention irrigators

Please call 719-852-3538 with any account changes on your meters ASAP. You will need the responsible billing party for the meter: the name, address and phone number of the individual to be billed for the account.



## SCHOLARSHIPS

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*Robert Wolfe Scholarship:* Noah Bailey, Del Norte High School

*SLVREC Past Director/Tri-State Scholarship:* Autumn Gallegos, Del Norte High School

*SLVREC Past Retired GM Ray Villyard & CEO John Villyard/Tri-State Scholarship:* Stefany Fabiola Lopez-Moreno, Center High School

*Cole Wakasugi Memorial Ag Scholarship:* Mitchell Peterson, Sargent High School

*Tri-State Scholarships:* Emilie Ida Gonzalez, Antonito High School and Addison Roepke, Del Norte High School

*SLVREC Dependent Scholarships:* Reese Anderson, Queen of Heaven Academy; Nelson Arambula, Alamosa High School; Hannah Henderhan, Monte Vista High School; Madison Henderhan, Monte Vista High School; Alejandro Vialpando Alamosa High School

## ciello THIS IS OUR WHY...

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–Lupita Ortega, Center

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**Eric Eriksen**

## Reducing wildfire risk

**SLVREC’s commitment to safe, affordable and dependable power**

Wildfire conditions across Colorado have changed dramatically in recent years. Rising temperatures, prolonged drought and increased fuel loads—particularly from beetle-killed forests—have contributed to longer fire seasons and greater ignition risk. As development continues to expand into the wildland–urban interface, more communities are exposed to the potential impacts of wildfire.

San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative (SLVREC) recognizes these challenges and the role electric infrastructure can play in wildfire risk. In response, we have developed a comprehensive Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) that focuses on prevention, system resilience and coordinated response. This plan represents an ongoing commitment to deliver safe, affordable and dependable power while protecting our employees, members and communities we serve.

### Assessing & prioritizing wildfire hazards

Effective wildfire mitigation begins with understanding where risk is greatest. SLVREC uses a data-driven approach to assess wildfire hazards across our service territory, combining local conditions with system-specific information to identify areas of elevated concern.

Hazard assessments consider multiple factors, including vegetation density, proximity to forested or grassland fuels,

terrain, historical fire activity, weather patterns and the presence of critical infrastructure or communities within the wildland–urban interface. These factors are evaluated alongside the location and condition of electric facilities to better understand where wildfire ignition or impact risks may be higher.

Using this information, SLVREC prioritizes mitigation activities where they will have the greatest benefit to public safety and system reliability. Higher-risk areas receive increased inspection frequency, targeted vegetation management and enhanced system protections.

This structured prioritization ensures that limited resources are applied strategically, focusing first on locations where the potential consequences of wildfire are greatest. As conditions change, hazard assessments are updated to reflect new data, lessons learned and evolving environmental factors.

### Wildfire mitigation methods

1. *Vegetation Management* – Vegetation Management is one of the most effective tools for reducing wildfire risk. SLVREC is expanding and maintaining right-of-way clearances to increase the distance between power lines and surrounding vegetation.

Improved methods are being used to identify hazardous trees and vegetation that could contact lines during high-wind or extreme weather events. While this work can be disruptive at times, it is

**See FIRE 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.

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# FIRE

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essential to keeping the grid safe.

2. *Enhanced Inspections and Monitoring* – Regular inspection and early detection are critical to preventing equipment-related fires. SLVREC is enhancing inspections using advanced technologies, including 360-degree vehicle mounted cameras, infrared cameras and drones for data collection that are then analyzed with artificial intelligence (AI). These new tools and data-driven approaches will help identify higher-risk areas and allow maintenance resources to be prioritized more effectively.

3. *System Hardening and Protection* – Building a more resilient electric system is a key pillar of the Wildfire Mitigation Plan. SLVREC is investing, with the help of a \$854,000 federal grant, in system hardening strategies such as fire-resistant poles, covered overhead conductors and targeted undergrounding where practical. Advanced system protection technologies provide faster awareness of downed lines or faults, allowing issues to be isolated more quickly and reducing both wildfire risk and outage impacts.

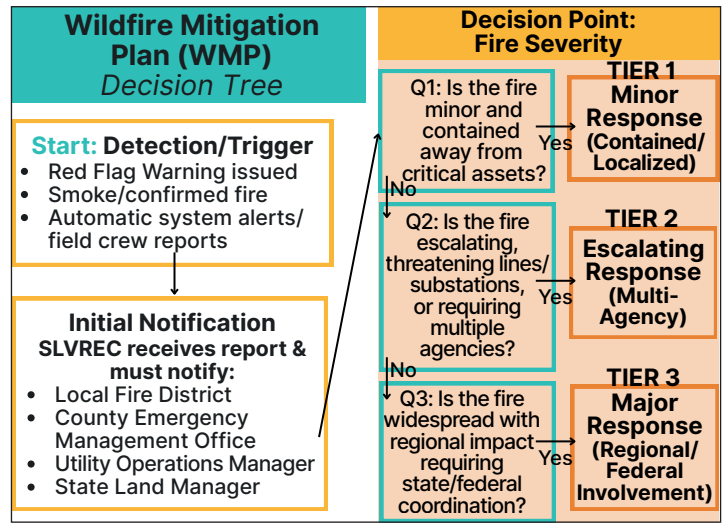
4. *Weather Monitoring and Operational Readiness* – Wildfire risk changes rapidly based on weather conditions. SLVREC is enhancing weather monitoring by integrating real-time data into operational decision-making during high-risk periods. The cooperative is also developing a criteria for a Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) program that would be targeted to specific high-risk conditions while prioritizing public safety and minimizing service disruptions.

## Collaboration and long-term commitment

Wildfire mitigation is a shared responsibility. SLVREC works closely with local fire districts, emergency responders, counties and partner agencies to align mitigation efforts and improve regional preparedness.

The Wildfire Mitigation Plan will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect changing conditions, new technologies and lessons learned. As a member-owned cooperative, SLVREC remains committed to protecting the people, power and landscapes of the San Luis Valley.

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. Tom Bodett said it best, **"We'll keep the lights on for you."**



# GRANT

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help us take meaningful steps toward a stronger and more resilient grid for the communities we serve,” said CEO Eric Eriksen. “These funds allow us to harden critical infrastructure, improve outage response, and continue building a sustainable energy future for the San Luis Valley.”

As part of this award, SLVREC will focus on enhancing system reliability, upgrading aging infrastructure, and integrating advanced technologies that reduce the frequency and duration of outages. The project will also support wildfire risk mitigation efforts and strengthen lines serving rural and hard to reach areas.

“Grid resilience is essential to protecting communities and ensuring dependable power in the face of evolving climate and security threats,” said a spokesperson for the DOE Grid Deployment Office (GDO). “We are proud to partner with cooperatives like SLVREC who are taking proactive steps to modernize infrastructure and support local energy reliability.”

Administered by DOE’s Grid Deployment Office, the Grid Resilience State and Tribal Formula Grant Program is helping with the development of new and upgraded electric infrastructure across the country by maintaining and investing in critical generation facilities; developing and upgrading high capacity electric transmission lines nationwide; and deploying transmission and distribution technologies.

To learn more, visit the Grid Deployment Office online at <https://www.energy.gov/gdo/grid-deployment-office>.



## From the December 2002 Newsboy...

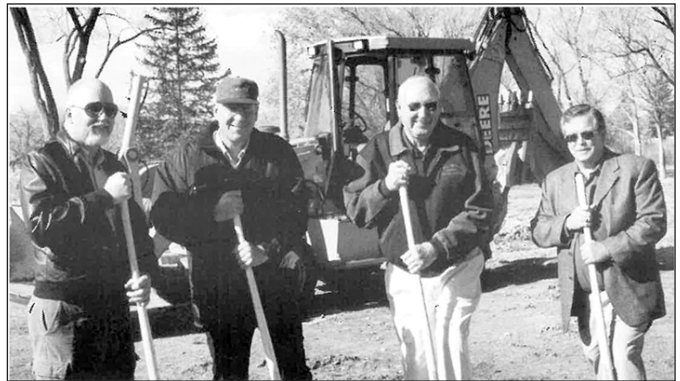
### Groundbreaking ceremony held for new shop

San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative held a groundbreaking ceremony on Nov. 8. The cooperative is starting construction of a new shop.

The main building was built in 1957. The last major renovation took place in 1974 when warehouse space was added. Since 1974, the cooperative has almost doubled the number of meters it serves and the number of employees has increased from 36 to 59.

CEO John Villyard said, "The construction of the shop is phase one of a three-phase proposal."

The new shop will have four work bays and will provide safe storage for flammable materials.



Pictured from left to right: Arvin Van Ry, Colorado Construction CEO; David Holland, SLVREC board president; Vern Rominger, Rio Grande County Commissioner; John Villyard, SLVREC CEO

## MARY

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projects like building homes with Habitat for Humanity, helping bring Wi-Fi to La Jara Park or creating cornhole boards with coworkers, she has cherished every opportunity to give back.

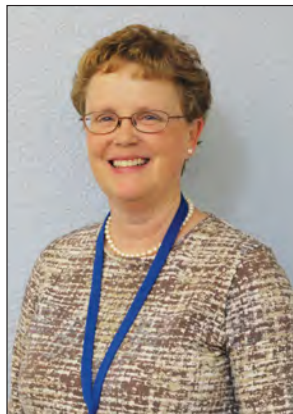
"I also love Christmas time at REC. The day we get together to celebrate Christmas here with our REC Family is awesome!!! I love big families, and this is definitely a BIG family. It is such a wonderful blessing for me," Mary stated.

What she will miss most is the REC family. "I have seen kids grow up, people get married, retire, have children. And everyone here gives terrific hugs!!!" she said.

In retirement, Mary is looking forward to spending more time with her husband of 30+ years, as well as their two sons and three grandchildren. Her plans include helping on the farm, fishing, traveling and being a "stay at home girl."

Reflecting on her time with the cooperative, Mary shared her gratitude: "I can't thank REC enough for all the opportunities, friendships and learning it has given me. This is a great company to be a part of. May all of you stay safe and keep up the good work!! Hugs for everyone!"

We thank you, Mary, for your years of service and wish you all the best in this next chapter.



Mary Davis, 2015

## ASSESSMENT

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Electrify & Save Irrigation Program. The program offers irrigation assessments that help producers identify ways to improve efficiency, reduce energy use and lower operating costs.

REC member Kent Reinhardt also shared his experience participating in the program. Reinhardt noted how simple the assessment process was and how helpful the team was throughout the project. With the recommended efficiency improvements in place, he estimates the changes could save more than \$20,000 each year.

Programs like Electrify & Save highlight the value of partnerships between utilities, agricultural producers and regional organizations to support more efficient and sustainable operations across the San Luis Valley.

To learn more about the Electrify & Save Irrigation Program, visit: [www.slvrec.com/irrigationsmall-business-assessments](http://www.slvrec.com/irrigationsmall-business-assessments)

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April 2026



**Register online for the  
Annual Meeting now!**  
Tuesday, June 9, 2026, 6:30 p.m.  
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**Interested in being a Board Director?**  
Instructions available online at  
[slvrec.com/annual-meeting](http://slvrec.com/annual-meeting) *Deadline: April 9*

## POWERING OUR COMMUNITY

San Luis Valley REC's office is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

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### SCHEDULED MEETINGS

Board Meeting: Tuesday, April 28, 2026, 9:30 a.m.  
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.



Atamosa High School Senior  
Joshua Gonzalez