

Nowadays, cell phones and personal digital devices are a part of our culture. Everyone, it seems, is connected on the go—whether they're just making phone calls, text messaging, or checking email. Such communication freedom is a luxury we pay for, generally without grumbling.

So why is it that when it comes to electricity—an essential in our modern world—many of us complain when the electric bill comes every month? We expect electricity to be there at the flip of the switch, and when it's not, we get angry or frustrated.

We all expect the lights to come on every time. At San Luis Valley REC, we have a special responsibility to make sure your electric service is safe, reliable, and affordable. When compared to other commodities, electricity remains a great value.

For example, over the past 10 years, gasoline has shot up 12.66 percent on average annually, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. A loaf of white bread rose 3.73 percent annually, and a dozen eggs jumped 7.39 percent per year.

In comparison, electricity has increased just 3.7 percent a year nationally for the past decade. At San Luis Valley REC electricity has increased only 2.1 percent over the past 10 years. When you consider how reliable electricity is, the value goes up even more. REC members experience a very low number of outages each year; something we're proud of, considering electricity is a 24-hour-a-day commodity. Of course, we're working hard to reduce even those brief interruptions, increase our service reliability, and control costs through innovative technology.

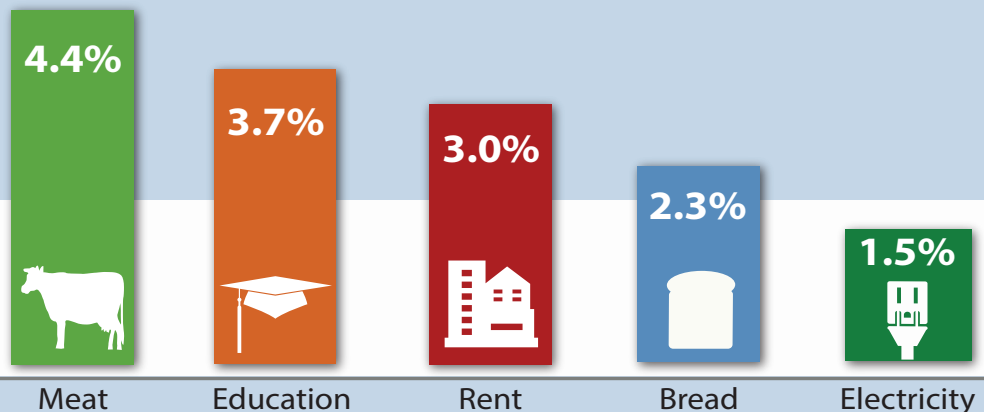
Those cell phones we mentioned earlier? Nearly a third of all U.S. households have four electronic devices, such as cell phones, plugged in and charging, according to the Residential Energy Consumption Survey by the U.S. Energy Information Administration. In the past 30 years, the amount of residential electricity used by appliances and electronics has increased from 17 percent to 31 percent. More homes than ever use major appliances and central air conditioning. Digital video recorders (DVRs), computers, and multiple televisions have become ubiquitous. *(continued on next page)*

## Electricity Remains a Good Value

The cost of powering your home rises at a slower pace than many of your typical expenses. Compare the average price increase of these expenses each year over the last five years, and the value of electricity shines.



### Average Annual Price Increase 2010-2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

### THIS ISSUE

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Loren Howard

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JUNE 2016 | VOLUME 41 | ISSUE 6

# Culture of Safety



There's a children's book titled *Safety 1st, Safety Always*. As you can imagine, it encompasses many of the traditional safety lessons parents should teach their children. We drill youngsters about safety from an early age because we know how important it is to protect ourselves and those we care about. Let's take a look at how electric cooperatives have been stepping up to the plate when it comes to safety at the co-op.

Up until 2007, there was an alarming national trend among electric co-ops, which was the fact that the number of "lost time" accidents was increasing. Lost time is defined as anything resulting in an employee missing time at work; these accidents could range from a sprained ankle to the ultimate tragedy of a fatality.

This is why Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange, which insures the vast majority of electric co-ops nationwide, initiated a campaign called a "Culture of Safety." It was designed to create a much greater awareness about safety issues at all electric co-ops.

Through the use of strategy labs across the country, Federated brought together co-op CEOs, operations supervisors, safety directors and linemen to better understand how each group viewed safety. In doing so, differences in perceptions regarding safety within cooperatives were identified, allowing for much needed conversations and evaluations of

how to raise awareness and improve local safety cultures. The "Speak Up, Listen Up" program is designed to empower anyone who sees a potentially unsafe situation to Speak Up and encourages everyone to Listen Up to their concerns. The results have been dramatic, with more than a 30 percent decline in the number of accidents over the past nine years. The implementation and success of the Culture of Safety program demonstrates a very important point. If we are intentional about our actions, we can indeed change the culture in our organizations. The same is true for our families, our teams and any groups we may belong to.

We also know that living our cooperative principles and values is equally important. We have the best business model because it puts you, the member-owner, at the center of our efforts.

We look forward to being your safe electricity provider and energy advisor long into the future.

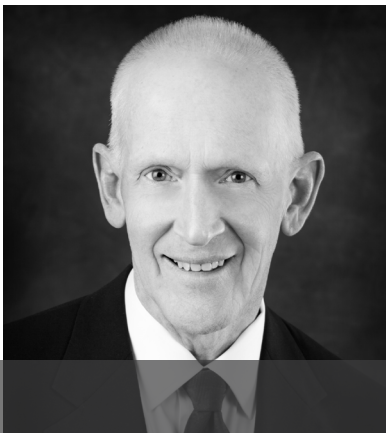


*Continued from page 1*

Clearly, our appetite for electricity shows no signs of slowing down. So the next time you flip a switch, use your toaster, or run your washing machine, remember the value electricity holds. And know that we at San Luis Valley REC are looking out for you by working together to keep electric bills affordable, controlling costs through innovation, and putting you, our members, first.

We would also like to take this opportunity to address Ciello in conjunction with rate changes at REC. Although Ciello

is a subsidiary of REC, the deployment of the fiber optic network has not impacted the rate structure of REC. The fiber optic system will also fortify our SCADA network and help to reduce outage response times. The goal of San Luis Valley REC is to bring new and diverse economic benefits to the Valley with Ciello powered by REC.



**LOREN HOWARD**

## We Are Your Cooperative

One of the most attractive features of cooperatives is that we answer the popular question, “What’s in it for me?” with “What’s in it for we!” Cooperatives are formed when the market fails to offer a good or service, with decent quality, at an affordable price. San Luis Valley REC was formed in 1937 because, when investor-owned utilities realized there was not enough profit to be made in our community, they refused to offer electricity.

The founding members of REC went door to door to collect \$5 in order to raise a portion of that original investment the co-op needed. Those “go-getters” realized the only way to get electricity for me was to get it for we, the whole community.



Cooperative ownership is in the hands of the people who use the co-op’s goods and services (not in the hands of investors), so not only do co-ops start out answering the question of “What’s in it for we?” – they continue to answer that question for as long as they exist.

These days, we often hear about companies that abandon their local communities and move overseas in search of cheaper labor. This negatively impacts the community through job loss, decline in housing values and school closures. Because local residents own a majority of cooperatives, the co-ops are less likely to leave their community. In fact, it would be impossible for REC to leave the San Luis Valley. The co-op is a critical part of what makes the community a community.

The way co-ops continue to answer the question, “What’s in it for we?” is critical to their survival. It is imperative that we keep you — our members — as the primary focus. Keeping rates as low as possible is one major part of that focus, but ensuring that we provide real value as your trusted energy advisor is also extremely important.

By maintaining that focus with your help and support, we will continue to be able to serve the “me” and the “we” in our community long into the future.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Scott Wolfe, President  
719-852-0966

Cole Wakasugi, Vice President  
719-379-2629

Ernie Ford, Secretary  
719-588-0255

Carol Lee Dugan  
719-852-5412

Mike Rierson  
719-754-2588

Rick Inman  
719-658-2455

Eleanor Valdez  
719-274-5680

Email: [power@slvrec.com](mailto:power@slvrec.com)

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

### CEO

Loren Howard  
719-852-6630

SLVREC Office (toll free)  
800-332-7634

SLVREC Office (local calls)  
719-852-3538

### PUBLISHER’S STATEMENT

The Newsboy (publication #551-450) is an official publication of the San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 3625 US Hwy 160 W, Monte Vista, CO 81144. The Newsboy is published monthly for SLVREC’s members. Periodical postage paid at Monte Vista, CO 81144. Subscription price \$20/year.

Postmaster, send Form 3579 to NEWSBOY, P.O. Box 3625, Monte Vista, CO 81144-3625.

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[www.twitter.com/SLVREC](http://www.twitter.com/SLVREC)

## COMPANY NEWS

### Happy Trails Jim Bearss

After 27 years with San Luis Valley REC, Jim has decided to move on to greener endeavors. Literally, he will be delving into the world of landscape architecture with his son Joshua. Jim started his journey with REC as a draftsman. He then moved into the world of geographic information systems (GIS) and global positioning systems (GPS) to collect data for work orders. His work often takes him out to remote locations with only his GPS pack and his thoughts for company. He doesn't mind though, as there is a certain sense of satisfaction in that solitude.

Jim's wry sense of humor and mischievous chuckle will be missed in the hallways of REC. He is headed out for some well-deserved relaxation and, hopefully, a little fishing in Montana with his son Benjamin. Of course, hunting with the family is on the horizon and so is biking.

Jim Bearss has been a great asset to the San Luis Valley REC family. We thank Jim for his dedication, his humor and the skills he has brought to REC. On to the next chapter!



## Conservation Corner

Make the Most of Your Ceiling Fan:

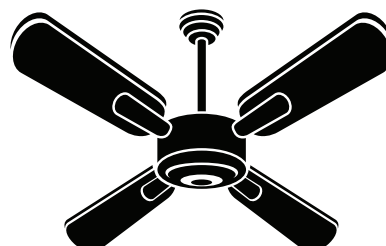
1. **FLIP THE SWITCH** – Most ceiling fans have a switch near the blades. In warm months, flip the switch so that the blades operate in a counter clockwise direction, effectively producing a “wind chill” effect. Fans make the air near them feel cooler than it actually is. In winter, move the switch so the fan blades rotate clockwise, creating a gentle updraft. This pushes warm air down from the ceiling into occupied areas of the room. Regardless of the season, try operating the fan on its lowest setting.

2. **ADJUST YOUR THERMOSTAT** – In the summer, when using a fan in conjunction with an air conditioner, or instead of it, you can turn your thermostat up three to five degrees without any reduction in comfort. This saves money since a fan is less costly to run than an air conditioner. In the winter, lower your thermostat's set point by the same amount. Ceiling fans push the warm air from the

ceiling back down toward the living space, which means the furnace won't turn on as frequently.

3. **CHOOSE THE RIGHT SIZE** – Make sure your ceiling fan is the right size for the room. A fan that is 36-44 inches in diameter will cool rooms up to 225 square feet. A fan that is 52 inches or more should be used to cool a larger space.

4. **TURN IT OFF** – When the room is unoccupied, turn the fan off. Fans are intended to cool people - not rooms.







## RECIPES OF THE MONTH

### INGREDIENTS

3 1/2 pounds skin-on, bone-in chicken quarters  
Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper  
1 lemon, halved  
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil  
1 pound fingerling or other small potatoes  
2 bunches radishes  
1 bunch scallions  
1 bunch baby carrots  
1/4 cup chopped fresh dill

### Roasted Chicken with Spring Vegetables

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Season with salt and pepper, then place skin-side up on a rimmed baking sheet. Squeeze 1/2 lemon over the chicken and drizzle with 1 tablespoon olive oil. Roast 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, cut the potatoes and radishes in half and cut the scallions into thirds. Toss the potatoes, radishes, carrots, scallions, and the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil in a bowl; season with salt and pepper.

Remove the chicken from the oven and scatter the vegetables around it. Continue to roast until the vegetables are tender and the chicken is golden and cooked through, about 20 more minutes. Squeeze the remaining 1/2 lemon over the chicken and vegetables. Top with the dill and season with salt.

Per serving: Calories 569; Fat 31 g (Saturated 7 g); Cholesterol 132 mg; Sodium 655 mg; Carbohydrate 27 g; Fiber 5 g; Protein 44 g

### INGREDIENTS

1 roll (16.5 oz) Pillsbury™ refrigerated sugar cookies  
1 tablespoon grated lemon peel and 1/4 cup lemon juice from 1 large lemon  
2 packages (8 oz each) cream cheese, softened  
1/4 cup sugar  
2 containers (6 oz each) Yoplait® Original lemon burst yogurt  
3/4 cup heavy whipping cream

### Easy Creamy Lemon Bars

Heat oven to 350°F. Let cookie dough stand at room temperature for 10 minutes to soften.

In medium bowl, mix cookie dough and 1 teaspoon of the grated lemon peel with hands or spoon until well blended.

Press dough in bottom of ungreased 13x9-inch pan. Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until golden brown. Cool completely, about 30 minutes.

In large bowl, beat cream cheese, sugar, lemon juice and remaining 2 teaspoons lemon peel with electric mixer on medium speed until smooth and creamy. Add yogurt; beat until well blended.

In another large bowl, beat whipping cream on high speed until soft peaks form. Gently fold whipped cream into cream cheese mixture until well blended. Spoon onto cooled crust; spread evenly. Cover; refrigerate about 2 hours or until set. Cut into 5 rows by 4 rows. Cover and refrigerate leftovers.



Periodical Postage  
Paid at Monte Vista, CO

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## POWERING A VITAL VALLEY

P.O. Box 3625  
Monte Vista, CO 81144

June 2016

**REMINDER:**

**Please remember to update your credit card information online. This will help avoid past due charges and declined cards.**

Your Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup>  
Cooperative 



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## POWERING A VITAL VALLEY

## COMMUNITY

SLVREC's offices are open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Monday through Thursday.  
Offices are closed Friday through Sunday.

**ENERGY ASSISTANCE**

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

**SCHEDULED MEETINGS**

Board Meeting June 28 @ 9:30 a.m.  
The Board of Directors meets the last Tuesday of each month unless otherwise stated. Members are welcome.

This institution is an equal opportunity employer.

You are invited to attend the  
SLVREC Annual Meeting  
Tuesday, June 14, 2016.

Located in the  
Banquet Rooms at  
Adams State University

Light refreshments will be served in lieu of dinner.  
Door prizes this year include a 40" television, a  
KitchenAid mixer, four Tablets, four \$250 bill credits,  
1/2 a beef, 1/2 a pig and various other gift cards.  
Prizes are limited to those who attend the meeting.

**Annual Meeting Agenda**

5:30 p.m. Registration Opens  
6:45 p.m. Presenting of Colors  
6:50 p.m. Invocation  
7:00 p.m. Determination of Quorum &  
Start of Business Meeting

**Please RSVP**

**If you are planning to attend please  
RSVP with the number in your party by**

**June 7, 2016  
719-852-3538**