

## Lighting for the Holidays!

This year is rapidly drawing to a close, and that means the holiday lighting season is back. If your home space is in need of a decorative refresh, here are some tips to take your artistic styling to the next level. There are two areas to cover, so let's get started.

Safety is up first. If your lights are ground mounted or can be installed standing on the floor or ground, you can skip ahead. However, since most decorations involve some installation at height, you need to do the following:

1. Have a ground crew (one or two people) to steady your ladder and pass up the decorations...an invaluable part of safety and for keeping you supplied with untangled light strings, fasteners and encouragement.
2. Remember to keep a safe distance from your overhead electric service.
3. Don't overreach. If you cannot get to a point with your body completely centered between the sides of the ladder, get down and relocate it.
4. Don't overextend the ladder. If your ladder is too short, rent or borrow a longer one. A ladder extended beyond its working limits is dangerous as is standing on rungs too close to the top.
5. Do not overload circuits by stringing more light sets together than the manufacturer recommends. Check the packaging for details.
6. Check your wires for breaks and cracks in the insulation that can lead to shorts.

Most of these tips apply equally to inside and outside decorating activities.

Light selection is next. If at all possible, invest in LED lights this season. Unlike the first versions to hit the market that were

characterized by rather harsh and unattractive colors, the newest generation's colors are reminiscent of the incandescent lights of yore.

Why go the LED route? Longevity and cost of operation are the two key reasons. Unlike incandescent lights, whether the large or mini bulb, LEDs will last for many, many years. LEDs have no filaments to burn out. Aside from physically destroying the bulb, the LED is amazingly robust. Given the modest number of hours of operation, you can expect LEDs to last seven or more years.

Then there is the cost of operation benefit from LEDs. These gems of technological advancement truly sip electricity. A reasonable estimate of power consumption is 7 watts per 100 lights. How does that compare to the old incandescent? Each of those bulbs used 12 watts, so a string of 100 lights devoured 1,200 watts.

Truly want to manage the cost-of-operating holiday lights? Invest in timers to turn them on and off automatically. Really into gadgets? Invest in a smart plug for your lights that you can program and control from your smart phone.

Once you have your design finalized and installed, it is my recommendation to leave as much of the outdoor lighting display as possible in place. No, don't be that person who leaves the holiday lights on all year. Simply disconnect them after the holidays, protecting the plugs and sockets from dirt and debris. Think of the reduced stress and risk if you set and forget your design. With the longevity of the LEDs, you can enjoy this freedom and practically eliminate the risks associated with high-wire seasonal gymnastics.



### THIS ISSUE

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Loren Howard

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# Meet Your Co-op!



## Meet Andy Price!

I was born and raised here in the Valley, out in the Carmel area. I currently live in Manassa with my wife Cynthia and our five children. I started working for REC on the Cielo project in June of this year, after working for CenturyLink for 18 years.

I was really excited to join the team. Cielo is such an important project for the Valley, and has so much potential. I hope to bring my experience and knowledge to help. I also hope to bring with me great service and reliability to the co-op, its members, and the great people of the Valley. My personal goals are too continue the traditions of hard work and kindness that are so prevalent here.

# Irrigation Demand Rate Explained\*



San Luis Valley REC has eliminated the Horsepower (HP) rate and modified the existing Demand rate to encompass both the HP rate and previous Demand rate. This created a revenue neutral change for our irrigation rates.

The charge currently based on HP will change to the modified Demand rate, effective 1/1/18. Currently, the HP Charge is \$2.65 per total connected HP; Demand kW Charge is 75% of HP Charge which equals \$3.50 ( $\$2.65/.75 = \$3.50$ ). 1 HP is equal to .75 kW therefore; if your HP was not correct, you will see a change. This change will allow us to accurately charge for the power being used.

## Why Did We Do This?

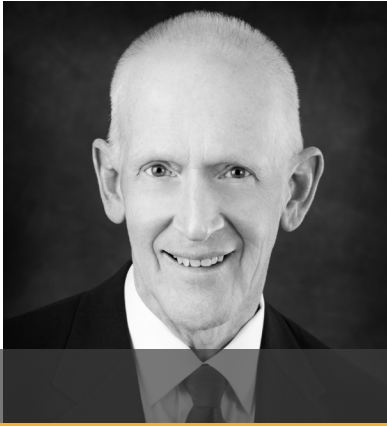
- Basing charges on demand is more equitable, as you are charged on your actual load instead of your estimated load.
- Our current technology allows us to calculate a rate that is more accurate for all members.
- This allows for a more equitably distributed charge for the individual member.

## What to Expect:

- Consumer Charge is \$20 per meter. This cost is associated with meter reading, metering equipment, and billing.
- Demand Charge (no longer HP Charge) includes transformer, lines, maintenance of all equipment, property taxes, and property insurance. This provides for capacity and availability.
- Demand Charge is based on the highest demand of the past 12 months including the current month. If the demand is less than 10 kW, it will be billed at 10 kW.
- There is no change to the demand charge for fallowing; however there will be a new customer charge of \$10 per month.
- The energy blocks will be 150 kWh per maximum kW demand. The rate of kWh charges did not change.

\* kW = kilowatts

kWh = kilowatts per hour



## LOREN HOWARD

### Be Aware!

Unfortunately, in today's world scams are inevitable. Scammers can threaten you with everything from legal action involving the IRS to turning off power to your home.

Utility scams often involve an individual or group posing as an employee of your electric cooperative. The scammer may use threatening language in order to frighten you into offering your credit card or bank account information. Don't fall victim to these types of scams. Understand the threats posed and your best course of action:

- If someone calls your home or cell phone demanding that you pay your electric bill immediately, gather as much information as you can from that individual, hang up the phone, and contact the local authorities. Scammers often use threats and urgency to pressure you into giving them your bank account number or loading a prepaid credit or debit card. San Luis Valley REC will never ask you to divulge personal financial information over the phone. If you have any doubts about your utility bill, contact our member payment center, either in person or over the phone at 719-852-3538.
- If someone comes to your home claiming to be an employee of REC that needs to collect money or inspect parts of your property, call us to verify that they are, in fact, an employee. If they are not, call local authorities for assistance and do not let the individual into your home. There are other types of scams consumers

should watch out for:

- Government agencies like the IRS will never call to inform you that you have unpaid taxes or other liens against you. You will always receive this type of information in the mail. If someone calls claiming to be the IRS, hang up immediately.
- If you receive an email from an unknown sender; an email riddled with spelling errors and typos; or an email threatening action unless a sum of money is paid — do not click any links provided within the email, and do not respond to the email. Simply delete the email.
- If someone calls your home claiming to have discovered a virus on your computer, hang up. This caller's intent is to access personal information you may be keeping on your computer.

San Luis Valley REC wants to make sure you avoid any and all types of scams that could put you or your financial information in jeopardy. If you have any questions or would like more information about how you can protect yourself from scammers, call us at 719-852-3538 to speak with customer service about utility scams.

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

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# SAFETY FIRST



## BE PREPARED BEFORE A STORM STRIKES

In the event of a power outage, be prepared by keeping the following items in an easy-to-find emergency supply kit.



### ■ WATER

Three-day supply, one gallon per person per day.



### ■ TOOLS

Flashlight, extra batteries, manual can opener, battery-powered or hand-crank radio, NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert.



### ■ FIRST AID KIT AND PRESCRIPTIONS

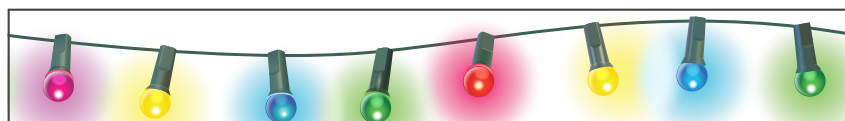
First aid supplies, hand sanitizer and at least one week's supply of prescriptions and medications for the family.

Learn more at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

Source: American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency.



## Conservation Corner



## MERRY, BRIGHT AND EFFICIENT HOLIDAY LIGHTING

Decking the halls doesn't have to take a toll on your energy bill! Keep your holiday lighting merry, bright and energy efficient with LED light strands.

- Consider replacing older light strands with new ENERGY STAR LED® lights. LED strands are 70 percent more efficient and last 10 times longer than the age-old standard bulbs.
- You can get the look of cozy lighting with LEDs. Just look for "warm white" on the label.
- Unlike older light strands, LED lights give off virtually no heat, making them safer for kids and pets (and reindeer).
- Save energy by setting a timer for outdoor lighting and decorations. Program the timer so the lights turn on in the evening and turn off later at night when you typically go to sleep.

Source: Dept. of Energy





## RECIPES OF THE MONTH

### INGREDIENTS

1 cup sifted all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/4 cup butter or margarine, melted  
1/2 cup packed brown sugar  
1/2 cup white sugar  
1 egg  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1/2 cup chopped apple  
1/2 cup finely chopped walnuts  
2 tablespoons white sugar  
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

### Apple Squares

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 9x9 inch pan. Sift together flour, baking powder, salt, and 1/4 teaspoon of cinnamon; set aside.

In a large bowl, mix together melted butter, brown sugar, and 1/2 cup of white sugar with a wooden spoon until smooth. Stir in the egg and vanilla. Blend in the flour mixture until just combined, then stir in the apples and walnuts. Spread the mixture evenly into the prepared pan. In a cup or small bowl, stir together the remaining cinnamon and sugar; sprinkle over the top of the bars.

Bake for 25 to 30 minutes in preheated oven; finished bars should spring back when lightly touched. Cool in the pan, and cut into squares.

### INGREDIENTS

3 1/2 cups peeled and diced potatoes  
1/3 cup diced celery  
1/3 cup finely chopped onion  
3/4 cup diced cooked ham  
3 1/4 cups water  
2 tablespoons chicken bouillon granules  
1/2 teaspoon salt, or to taste  
1 teaspoon ground white or black pepper, or to taste  
5 tablespoons butter  
5 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
2 cups milk

### Ham and Potato Soup

Combine the potatoes, celery, onion, ham, and water in a stockpot. Bring to a boil, then cook over medium heat until potatoes are tender, about 10 to 15 minutes. Stir in the chicken bouillon, salt and pepper.

In a separate saucepan, melt butter over medium-low heat. Whisk in flour with a fork, and cook, stirring constantly until thick, about 1 minute. Slowly stir in milk, so as not to allow lumps to form, until all of the milk has been added. Continue stirring over medium-low heat until thick, 4 to 5 minutes.

Stir the milk mixture into the stockpot, and cook soup until heated through. Serve immediately.





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December 2017

80  
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*Lighting the Way*



**Closures for December:**  
**Monday 12/25/17**  
**Tuesday 12/26/17**  
**Monday 01/01/18**

## POWERING OUR COMMUNITY

SLVREC's office is open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Monday through Thursday.  
The office is closed Friday through Sunday.

### ENERGY ASSISTANCE

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

### SCHEDULED MEETINGS

Board Meeting — December — To Be Announced  
The REC Board of Directors meets the last Tuesday of each  
month unless otherwise stated. Members are welcome.

This institution is an equal opportunity employer.

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