

## 2018 – The Year in Review

2018 has been another great year, with many exciting advances across both REC and Cielo.

We have had many valued employees transition into exciting new roles within the co-op. Shawn McKibbin stepped seamlessly into the role of REC Operations Superintendent. Jacob Cadwell became one of our valued area servicemen, and Jeff Henderhan joined the substation technician team. Alec Higel and Rusty Witherspoon also joined REC line crew in August of this year.

Cielo has reached 8,800 passings, with installs of about 3,100. We have been able to expand our network through the acquisition and upgrade of Colorado Central Telecoms. This has been an important collaborative effort, specifically for our consumers and members in the Saguache and Crestone areas. We continue our efforts to reach more consumers faster through the deployment of fiber-backed wireless technology using state-of-the-art Radwin jets. The design and deployment of fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) continues throughout the Valley as well. We will see much more availability in the Monte Vista and Alamosa areas in 2019.

2018 also brought FTTH to Sanford and La Jara, providing those areas with reliability and speeds that simply were not available before.

This year provided many unique opportunities to interact with the communities we serve. We were able to participate in the Creede Balloon Festival, The Center Restorative Programs Gala, and La Puente and Valley Wide Health Systems Share the Magic Event. REC and Cielo were also sponsors of the 2nd Annual Economic Summit.

Our servant leadership groups also provided many useful services and donations of time to community projects around the area.

The cooperative understands the importance of being a community partner. We want to help encourage economic development and vitality in the San Luis Valley. We enjoy visiting and serving all members in our service territory.

Thank you for helping us make 2018 another amazing year!



### THIS ISSUE

2018 — The Year in Review

Statement of Ownership

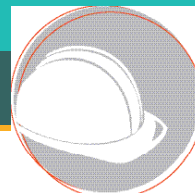
Loren Howard

When a Light Bulb Goes Off

Recipes

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# Statement of Ownership



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d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 16c x 100)	100%	100%

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## LOREN HOWARD

# Solar in Rural Communities

Five years ago, many people in the electric industry viewed solar energy as a kind of “boutique” resource — more an energy accessory than a real power-supply option. But in the last half-decade, as the costs to install solar went down and electric utilities gained experience with this unique energy resource, there has been a dramatic transformation, and solar energy has made the jump to the big leagues.

At local electric cooperatives, members were asking questions about whether this new technology would be suitable, either for their own home or for the cooperative.

Given the high cost to install solar, electric co-ops had questions about the economic feasibility of solar and its effect on the electric system. Even with federal tax incentives, the cost of solar was not competitive with other resources, such as wind and natural gas.

Engineers also had questions: What happens to the system when the sun doesn't shine? Or even more tricky: What happens on those days when multiple clouds sail by, making a strobe light out of the sun?

To answer these questions, co-ops started installing small arrays, analyzing costs and efficiency. Five years ago, compared to other resources, many concluded solar was still simply too expensive.

The cost of panels and equipment was not the only reason solar was expensive. There were also soft costs, like training, business processes and software. There was little standardization among solar projects — every project was unique. Engineers and resource planners, unfamiliar with this technology, needed training, and technical assistance. Financial partners still needed convincing when it came to investing in large-scale solar projects.

As the solar industry started growing, thanks in part to tax credits and other policy incentives, the cost of solar panels and other equipment started declining; the economics started changing.

In 2014, 17 electric co-ops joined with their national trade organization, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), to collaborate on solar installations in 10 states whose combined solar capacity would be 23 megawatts. The goal of the project was to make solar more affordable for electric co-ops by driving down the soft costs.

The project, which received funding from the Department of Energy, aimed to create a network of experts within the cooperative community. By sharing information and expertise, co-op experts could make solar installations easier and less financially risky for other co-ops to follow suit.

Over the course of this project, the cost of solar fell dramatically. For example, one co-op that built a solar installation at the beginning of the project and another one two years later, found the cost was half what it had been two years earlier. In 2013, the cost was \$4.50 per watt of installed solar; in 2016, the cost was \$1.74 per watt.

As more electric co-ops gained experience and shared information about what worked and what didn't, the risks that came with innovation and change also went down. Solar became more doable for cooperatives large and small.

With the decline in costs and the increase in knowledge and understanding, solar has taken off in rural communities. The proof is in the numbers. Today, America's electric co-ops own or purchase more than nine times as much photovoltaic solar power as they did in 2013. And by the end of 2019, the combined solar capacity of America's electric cooperatives is expected to surpass a gigawatt.

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# When a Light Bulb Goes Off

If you're in search of a holiday gift for your favorite energy buff, consider the novel by award-winning screenwriter Graham Moore.

Moore tells the story of the legal, technical, and public relations battle between Thomas Edison and George Westinghouse in the late 1800s that gave us the electric system we use today.

"The Last Days of Night," fiction based on fact, gives an entertaining look at the fight between Westinghouse's system of alternating current (AC) and Edison's plan to use direct current (DC) to power America.

But the book is also about the process of invention and how ideas become reality. Each chapter starts with a quotation from a noted inventor. As we prepare for a new year with new possibilities, let's take a look at some of the creative quotes shared in "The Last Days of Night:"

- "I have not failed. I've just found ten thousand ways that don't work." — Thomas Edison
- "... half of what separates the successful entrepreneurs

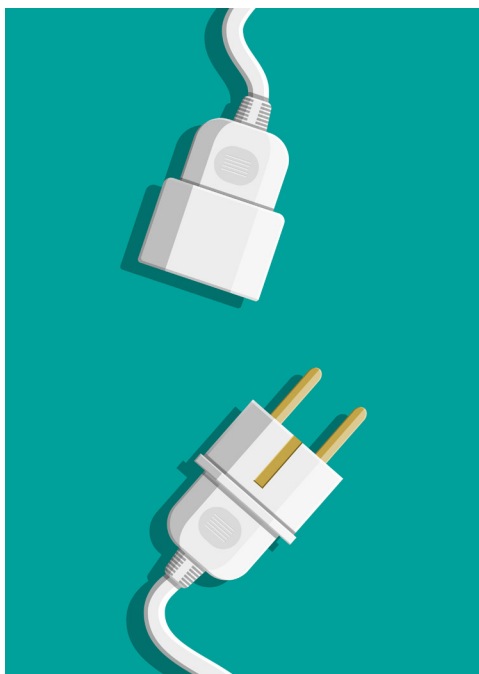
from the unsuccessful ones is pure perseverance."

— Steve Jobs

- "High achievement always takes place in the framework of high expectation." — Charles F. Kettering, inventor of the electrical starter
- "Headlines, in a way, are what mislead you, because bad news is a headline and gradual improvement is not." — Bill Gates
- "You have to learn the rules of the game. And then you have to play better than anyone else." — Albert Einstein
- "We often miss opportunity because it's dressed in overalls and looks like work." — Thomas Edison
- "Technology is nothing. What's important is that you have a faith in people, that they're basically good and smart, and if you give them tools, they'll do wonderful things with them." — Steve Jobs

We hope you enjoy these inspiring quotes. Moore's "The Last Days of Night" is available for purchase through most major book retailers. It's a great gift idea for any energy buff—or any creative genius, for that matter.

## Energy Efficiency



### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Heading out of town for the holidays? Remember to unplug electronics that draw a phantom energy load. Some gadgets, like TVs, gaming consoles, chargers and DVD players use energy when plugged into an outlet, even when they're not in use.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)





## RECIPES OF THE MONTH

### INGREDIENTS

3 1/2 small apples  
1 2/3 cups cake flour  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
pinch salt  
1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened  
1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar  
3 large eggs, beaten  
1 1/2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
3 tablespoons whole milk  
Powdered sugar for dusting

### Sunken German Apple Cake

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Slice each apple in half lengthwise and scoop out the core and seeds from both apple halves using a melon baller or measuring spoon. Lay each apple, cut side down, and thinly slice each apple half, leaving the halves intact. Set aside.
3. Pour flour, baking powder and salt into a mixing bowl and whisk together.
4. In another mixing bowl combine butter and sugar and beat together with an electric hand mixer until light and fluffy.
5. Scrape down sides of the bowl and add eggs, lemon juice and vanilla and continue to mix together.
6. Scrape down sides of the bowl again and add flour mixture to butter mixture and stir together until just combined and no lumps remain. Fold in milk until just combined.
7. Lightly grease a 9 inch cake pan (or spring form pan) and pour the cake batter into the pan, evening out the surface with an offset spatula or the back of a spoon.
8. Carefully place each apple half, cut side down, around the edge of the cake, about 1/2 inch apart, creating a ring. Place the final apple half in the center of the cake.
9. Place cake pan onto a baking sheet and bake for 40 to 45 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean when inserted into the center area of the cake.
10. Remove from the oven and allow cake to cool, about 30 minutes. Remove cake from the pan and transfer to a platter or cake stand.
11. Lightly dust with powdered sugar, slice and serve.

### INGREDIENTS

1-2 long sweet potatoes (about 2 inches thick), peeled  
4 large parsnips, ends trimmed and peeled  
5 medium beets, peeled  
2 1/4 cups heavy cream, divided (whole milk is fine, but mixture won't thicken as much or be as creamy)  
4 ounces grated Parmesan, divided  
1 tablespoon fresh minced thyme, divided, plus more for garnish  
1 garlic clove, minced  
2 ounces shredded Gruyere  
salt and pepper to taste

### Cheesy Root Vegetable Gratin

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Slice sweet potato, parsnips and beets into very thin rounds (using a mandoline is easiest) and transfer each vegetable to its own bowl.
3. Pour 2/3 cup cream over each bowl of vegetables and top each with 1/2 ounce grated Parmesan and 1 teaspoon minced thyme. Season each bowl generously with salt and pepper and toss together until all vegetable slices are well coated.
4. Pour remaining cream into the bottom of a 2 quart (oval) baking dish and sprinkle with 1/2 ounce of Parmesan and minced garlic.
5. Grab a stack of sweet potatoes and line them standing up on a bias, at the top of the baking dish.
6. Follow the sweet potato with a row of parsnips, followed by a row of beets.
7. Repeat with the remaining sweet potatoes, parsnips and beets, creating 6 rows of root vegetables.
8. Season top of gratin with salt, pepper and sprinkle of remaining ounce of Parmesan.
9. Cover with foil and bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until vegetables are soft.
10. Remove from oven, uncover gratin and top with shredded Gruyere.
11. Set oven to broil and broil gratin for 3 to 5 minutes or until browned and bubbling on top.
12. Finish with a sprinkle of fresh thyme leaves. Serve.





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## POWERING A VITAL VALLEY

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December 2018

*We will be closed  
December 24 & 25  
for the Christmas Holiday.*

Photo Credit: Patrick Jaramillo



## POWERING OUR COMMUNITY

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Monday through Thursday.  
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[www.energyoutreach.org](http://www.energyoutreach.org)

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### SCHEDULED MEETINGS

Board Meeting: December TBD 2018 @ 9:30 a.m.  
The REC Board of Directors meets the last Tuesday of each  
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This institution is an equal opportunity employer.

