

Meet your co-op

Retiring and riding off into the sunset

SLV REC Foreman Ronnie Spencer is hanging up his hardhat after approximately 40 years with REC. To make the best of his retirement plan, he's decided to retire in early May, ending his 27-year stint as foreman.

The Valley native and Monte Vista graduate began his REC career as an equipment operator in 1980, then worked as a warehouseman before starting his apprenticeship in 1988. After journeying out in 1991, Ronnie was promoted to his current position—foreman—in 1994.

Ronnie loves his job and takes a lot of pride in it. "When I journeyed out, that was one of the greatest memories. It only took me three years to do it; I was proud of that!" He's also happy to say that he's never been late for work. "I get up at 4 a.m. and am usually the first one there."

Through 40 years with the co-op, he's worked with many linemen, eight or nine CEOs and observed various generations of "kids" learning the ropes. The biggest change he has witnessed through his tenure is technology. Computers have changed the process; paperwork is different now. Reports are more detailed, and the information available is very comprehensive.

Looking back on the years that have "gone by so fast," Ronnie will always remember his foreman, Dale Clark,

and Jimmy Clare helped him a lot along the way; Martin Christensen, Kelly Mortensen and Lee Stehwien were all big influences on his line career.

"There are so many that helped me through the years—too many to name, but I want to thank them all. They are special to me."

Ronnie said, "I am going to miss all the people I've worked with; the guys have changed through the years, but I've always enjoyed working with them."

Offering advice to the



Upon retirement Ronnie Spencer looks forward to riding his Harley.

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Arguello finds great opportunity at REC



Tomas Arguello

San Luis Valley native Tomas Arguello joined San Luis Valley REC late last year as the system operator. He comes to REC from Espinoza Consulting Services, where he was a GIS specialist.

Tomas is learning the major functions of his position, which include radio communication with the crews and servicemen, operating the system management software programs and remote equipment operation through SCADA.

He's finding the most challenging part of the position is learning about the electrical infrastructure, both software-based and physical structures and devices.

Tomas is enjoying the four-

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Concern for community



Scholarship winners announced

For the past several years, San Luis Valley REC has made secondary education a priority when giving back to the Valley. With more than \$180,000 given in the past five years, REC annually awards several scholarships to local students.

The board of directors have announced the 2021 scholarship recipients:

SLV REC Adams State University Four-Year Scholarship: Desiray Tolsma, Alamosa

Electric Lineworker Scholarship: Abel Ojeda Jr., Sierra Grande

Robert Wolfe Scholarship: Gabriel Heersink, Alamosa

SLVREC Past Director Scholarship: Aidan McComas, Del Norte HS

SLVREC Past Retired GM Ray Villyard & CEO John Villyard Scholarship: Alyssa Bagwell, Centauri

Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship: Lindsey Gammill, Creede

SLV REC Scholarships: Eric Lorenz, Del Norte; Sara Nehring, Monte Vista; Chloe McComas, Del Norte; Caleb Riggenbach, Monte Vista

Tri-State G&T Scholarships: Logan Cestone, Del Norte; Soren Bailey, Del Norte

REC Dependent Scholarship: Ryker Alonzo, Alamosa

Congratulations

ARGUELLO

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day work weeks and learning new software programs, as well as the people who work here and the culture of niceness.

His hobbies include hunting, fishing, mountain biking, camping, carpentry, skiing, sports, cooking (just to name a few) and spending time with his lovely girlfriend of two years.

An interesting tidbit about Tomas: He was raised in San Luis, where his family was one of the 12 settling families of the San Luis Valley in the mid-16th century.

In closing, Tomas commented, "I would recommend people of the STEM field to look into the utility industry because you would be a direct fit! Also, I would add that it is great opportunity to work here at SLV REC."

ciello
Proudly serving our neighbors...

"As a retired snowbird, I have three seasonal homes in three states, which gives me lots of experience with multiple Internet service providers. I signed up for Cielo the first day it was available in my area of South Fork, about five years ago. My experience with Cielo has been excellent.

The installation, the billings & automated payments and the occasional customer service calls have all been handled fast & friendly. My five years with Cielo have shown their reliability to be far above any of the other Internet services I use or have used. Any technology company has occasional weather or equipment issues. So far Cielo has handled them quickly with minimal downtime at my place in South Fork."

—Jim Painter, South Fork

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Cielo, Powered by REC, is proud to feature testimonials from our satisfied customers in upcoming issues of the Newsboy. Send your testimonials to jalonzo@slvrec.com to be featured.

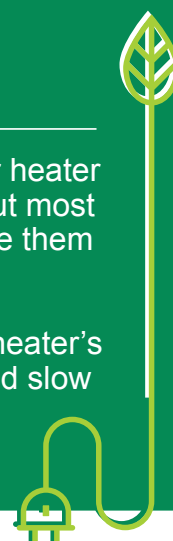
Conservation corner

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Some manufacturers set water heater thermostats at 140 degrees, but most households usually only require them to be set at 120 degrees.

Consider lowering your water heater's temperature to save energy and slow mineral buildup in the heater and pipes.

Source: www.energy.gov



By Loren Howard

What happened in Texas?

Certainly, the cold weather last month that covered most of the East and the associated electric power issues caught the attention of the media and electric consumers which is almost everybody. As a result, REC has received questions like “Could the San Luis Valley and thus REC have blackouts like Texas?” or “Could REC members get electric bills in the thousands like what happened in Texas?”



First, let us review the electric power grid in the United States. As we all know, the emphasis on electric generation in the past decade or two has been focused on renewable generation resources like wind and solar. Integrating solar and wind, uncontrollable generation, has its challenges, many of which have been successfully managed, but are real issues. Let me be clear, I believe renewable generation provides a great source of kilowatt-hours but is limited in its capacity availability. In other words, relying on solar and wind as the primary generation source to run the electric grid is fraught with trouble – i.e., Texas. If we all continue to want reliable electricity to our homes and businesses, controllable generation sufficient to cover demand is required. The stability of the electric power grid is not a trivial matter. The frequency, 60 cycles per second (AC power), of the grid is closely regulated and at 59.85 hertz, generation is responding to bring the grid frequency back to 60. Control of system voltage is also closely regulated. The point is that maintaining the electric grid stability and thus reliable power requires complex interaction of generation.

The troubles that happened in Texas in late February was the result of several consequences of the cold weather. The cold weather and associated freezing rain shut down about 16,000 megawatts of renewable generation in Texas which is mostly wind. In

the south, industrial plants, which includes electric generation and natural gas production facilities, often are out in the open since weather seldom freezes for a long time. With the extended and rather cold weather, about 30,000 megawatts of thermal (mostly natural gas) went offline due to equipment freezing. Now, add to that increased demand from electric consumers because of the cold weather and you have perfect conditions for electric system blackouts. Rather than have the entire grid go down, electric grid operators institute rolling blackouts to maintain grid stability.

The second question above regarding the extremely high bills some Texas consumers received revolves around the fact that in Texas, not only is electricity deregulated in the wholesale markets, but also in the retail markets. What does that mean? Well, most electric consumers in Texas can buy electricity from a variety of providers – that is choice, not a requirement. One such provider offers electricity with the following terms: \$10 per month, the local distribution provider charges (typically a fixed charge) and the current hourly grid price per kilowatt-hour. Now, when the hourly grid price is in the pennies per kilowatt-hour, signing up for your electricity supply from a power marketer is a great bargain, but when the hourly grid price is in the dollars per kilowatt-hours, you end up with a monthly electric bill in the hundreds or thousands of dollars. Remember, almost every Texas electric consumer can *choose*, and I repeat, *choose* their electricity provider. Can electric bills happen like that to REC members? No. REC electric prices are set annually as are Tri-State electric prices to REC and neither has what is generally termed a ‘power cost adjustment factor.’ REC member bills vary based on the amount of electricity used, not on monthly prices changes.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Carol Lee Dugan, President
719-852-3931

Keenan Anderson, Vice President
719-849-8304

Stephen Valdez, Secretary
719-588-0430

Scott Wolfe
719-852-0966

Cole Wakasugi
719-937-9514

Kip Nagy
719-850-0749

Wade Lockhart
719-588-9246

Email: power@slvrec.com

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

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 members. Periodical postage paid at Monte Vista, CO 81144.

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

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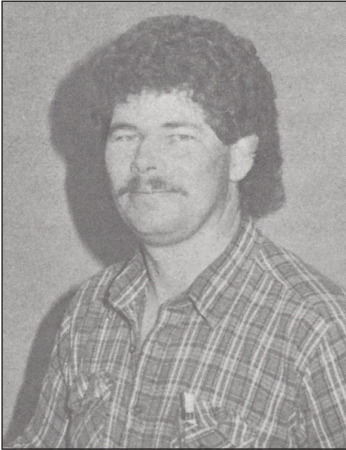


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HOW DO WE SET ELECTRICITY RATES?

SPENCER

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Ronnie Spencer, 1988

next foreman, Ronnie states, “Be yourself; trying to be someone else doesn’t work. And you have to be tough; you can’t be wishy-washy.”

Ronnie’s plans for retirement include remodeling his house, hunting, fishing, camping and spending time with his family— his wife Jacque, who has been there for him through the years, as well as his son Joshua, daughter-in-law Misty and two grandkids, Courtney and Cory. But what he’s really looking forward to is having more time to ride his Harley; like the ending to a good story, he plans to end his career riding off into the sunset.

Ronnie’s final words on retirement: “**Thank you all so much!**”

SLV REC balances electricity rates based on cost of service while keeping our members and communities a priority. As a not-for-profit company, SLV REC does not answer to remote shareholders and is not driven by a profit motive. Revenues are invested back into the company and communities, and any profits are returned to members as capital credits.

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ADD UP ALL THE COSTS. SLV REC conducts a cost-of-service study to determine the revenue requirement — how much revenue is required to maintain financial stability. The costs are separated into three areas: power supply/transmission, distribution and member.

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DIVIDE REVENUE REQUIREMENTS by member class — commercial, industrial, residential. The cost-of-service study identifies how and when each class uses energy and how the utility incurs costs from each class. The study identifies the amount to recover through customer, demand and energy charges for each member class, and how costs vary by time of day or season. This amount is then compared with the rates for each class.

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FACTOR a rate adjustment strategy into a financial plan. The plan takes input from management and the Board of Directors and lays out a strategy for how rates should be implemented in the future. The plan ensures adequate revenues are recovered for each class and explains how each rate component (customer, energy, demand) should vary over time.

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BALANCE the recommended rates with the governing body’s input and community objectives. REC’s managers present the rate study to the Board of Directors. The Board decides whether the proposed rate structure meets the needs of the community and the utility’s revenue requirements.

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FINAL RATE. The newly set rates go into effect on members’ monthly bills.



Recipe of the month

INGREDIENTS

6 oz. uncooked whole wheat linguine
 1 lb. fresh asparagus, *trimmed and cut into 1/2-inch pieces*
 2 T. olive oil
 1 medium onion, chopped
 1-1/2 lbs. uncooked shrimp (26-30 per pound), *peeled and deveined*
 4 garlic cloves, minced
 1/4 c. reduced-sodium chicken broth
 4 wedges The Laughing Cow garlic and herb Swiss cheese
 2 T. lemon juice
 1/4 t. salt
 1/4 t. pepper
 1/4 c. grated parmesan cheese

ASPARAGUS SHRIMP LINGUINE

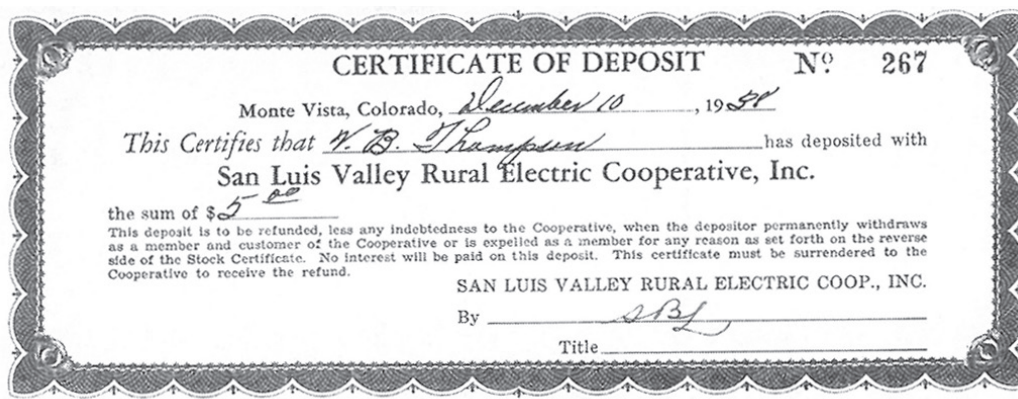
1. In a large saucepan, cook linguine according to package directions, adding asparagus during the last 3 minutes of cooking.

2. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion; cook and stir 6-8 minutes or until tender. Add shrimp and garlic; cook 2-4 minutes longer or until shrimp turn pink. Stir in broth; cook over medium heat 1-2 minutes or until liquid is almost evaporated. Add Swiss cheese, lemon juice, salt and pepper; stir until cheese is melted.

3. Drain linguine and asparagus, reserving 1/4 cup pasta water. Stir linguine and asparagus into shrimp mixture, adding enough reserved pasta water to moisten pasta. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese.

Recipe by www.tasteofhome.com

Historical happenings



Courtesy Photos

When Maxine Estes was cleaning out her lock box in 2002, she found the original certificate issued to her father, V. B. Thompson when he signed up for electricity with the San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc. in 1938. (*Newsboy*, July 2002)

May 1938: Big day approaching

By May 20, 1938, there were 131 homes wired with the remainder of 300 to be wired and officially inspected. Light fixtures hung with bulbs in place long before the energizing set for June 25. San Luis Valley REC is the second oldest cooperative in Colorado; the first organized was Grand Valley Rural Power Lines, with offices in Grand Junction.

(San Luis Valley Historian, Volume XXVI #3, 1994)



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Thanks for being a part of our team!



Directors Cole Wakasugi, Scott Wolfe, Wade Lockhart and Keenan Anderson

POWERING OUR COMMUNITY

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

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SCHEDULED MEETINGS

Board Meeting: Tuesday, April 27, 9:30 a.m.
The REC Board of Directors meets the last Tuesday of each month unless otherwise stated. Members are welcome; advance notice required.

This institution is an equal opportunity employer.

Annual Meeting update

SLVREC's annual meeting will be held on **Tuesday, June 8, 2021 at 7 p.m.** Location will be announced at a later date, due to COVID restrictions. Petition packets can be downloaded online at slvrec.com/annual-meeting.

Ballots will be mailed by May 6.

EACH MEMBERSHIP = ONE VOTE

Photo by Tyler Cerny