



[Rural Life]

LIVES ON THE LINE

BY JACK JOHNSTON || CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER || JACKJ@SECPA.COM

Every year, we take the time to thank our extraordinary lineworkers who dedicate themselves to keeping the power on in our local communities. Southeast Colorado Power Association's lineworkers maintain over 5,700 miles of energized lines within more than 13,000 square miles — the largest geographic service territory of any electric utility in Colorado.

We depend on our entire staff to keep SECPA running smoothly, but on April 10, we honor all lineworkers who often find themselves in dangerous and challenging situations, so our lives may be a little bit brighter and safer every day. These brave men and women repair damaged lines and maintain critical infrastructure for

our communities. Without their hard work and commitment to the job, our co-op would not thrive. No matter the time — day or night, weekday or weekend — if the lights go out, so do they.

Perhaps you've seen them raising their bucket trucks in howling winds and torrential rains, or in freezing, icy conditions. They work around the clock near high-voltage power lines until electricity is restored to every member in our co-op community.

In addition to aiding members in our local service territory, lineworkers are always willing and eager to volunteer



Jack Johnston

when a neighboring community, county or state is in need after a major outage occurs. It is a simple cooperative principle SECPA proudly lives by.

Our lineworkers are brave, committed and critical to our success. Each year, we celebrate them on National Lineman Appreciation Day, because without them our world would be dark — literally.

Please join us in thanking the many lineworkers — both locally and around the world — who light our lives. Remember, your power works because they do. If desired, you can use #ThankALineman on social media to show your support.

SECPA/SECOM DONATION

Each year, SECPA and SECOM assist area groups with an annual donation. Four local groups recently received \$500 each.

Jack Johnston, CEO, announced that the four receiving donations are Lamar Area Hospice, Toys for Tots and Sheridan Lake and Towner fire departments. "We strive to give donations to different organizations every year, but some are repeats because of the local impact they have on the community," he explained. "They all make significant contributions to citizens' lives, and SECPA and SECOM are happy to be able to support them in this way."



Left to right, back row: SECPA employees Jim Perkins, Garret Wertz, Telly Stanger, Keenan Davis, Jack Johnston, Justin Bruna, Bill Cochell, Chad Lockhart, Rob Thayer and Mike Trumble; front row: Vern Harris, Sheridan Lake Fire Department; Deb Pelley, Lamar Area Hospice; and Darlene Lopez, Toys for Tots.



WASHINGTON, D.C., YOUTH TOUR WINNER

Chelsea Alton, a sophomore at Walsh High School, was chosen by Southeast Colorado Power Association to attend the Washington, D.C., Youth Tour in June. To be considered for this honor, Chelsea completed the application and composed an essay answering the following prompt: *You are in charge of the energy efficiency program at your school. Describe ways you would recommend for your school to use electricity more efficiently.*

The tour is organized by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Colorado Rural Electric Association and Colorado Electric Educational Institute. The tour is June 8-15, 2017. High school students who are 16 by June 1 and whose families are SECPA members are eligible

to go on the trip. The tour provides students with an eight-day adventure that offers in-depth exposure to the electric cooperative network while exploring our nation's capital. The selected youth's expenses, including airfare, lodging, meals and all tour admission fees, are paid by SECPA. Activities during the trip include tours of the U.S. Capitol, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, war memorials (Vietnam, Iwo Jima), Arlington National Cemetery, National Archives, White House and Smithsonian museums; a Potomac



Chelsea Alton

River dinner and dance cruise; visits with Colorado's U.S. senators and representatives; an NRECA Town Hall Meeting; and the chance to connect with students nationwide.

Chelsea is the daughter of Bret and Janiese Alton. Chelsea's mother attended a Washington, D.C., Youth Tour when she was in high school and said that it was the trip of a lifetime. She is so excited that her daughter will get to experience this incredible trip.

Source: *The Plainsman Herald*

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES' POLICY PRIORITIES BY DAN RIEDINGER

As a member of Southeast Colorado Power Association, you know that providing you with safe, affordable and reliable electricity is our top priority 365 days a year. Our employees are dedicated to this mission, whether they work on a line crew or spend most of their time behind a desk. But it might surprise you to know just how much the work we perform in the communities we serve can be greatly affected by what lawmakers and regulators are doing in Washington, D.C. That's why co-ops all across the country join together in making sure our leaders in Washington know what's important to co-ops and their members.

We do this, in part, through our membership in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national service organization that represents the interests of the nation's more than 900 electric cooperatives on Capitol Hill and before federal agencies. Here are some of the policy priorities for NRECA and America's electric co-ops in the next couple of years.

STRENGTHENING RURAL AMERICA

Electric cooperatives built and improved the infrastructure to bring electricity to people living in rural America who were left in the dark and left behind. Today, co-ops provide power to 42 million Americans in 47 states. We know that growing a vibrant rural economy is essential to America's success and prosperity, and we count on the federal government to help.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has

long been a partner in helping co-ops fund a wide variety of activities, including electric infrastructure improvements and expansion of rural economic opportunities. Co-ops will work to further strengthen our relationship with the USDA in 2017 and beyond.

Co-ops also are keenly aware that tens of millions of rural Americans continue to live without access to high-speed internet service. Bridging the digital divide continues to be a critical economic development issue for rural America, and it's a big priority for co-ops in Washington this year.

A little further down the road, in 2018, Congress is scheduled to produce a new Farm Bill. Co-ops will track this closely to ensure that updates of our nation's agricultural and rural policies also strengthen rural America.

AVOIDING REGULATORY OVERREACH

Electric cooperatives strongly advocate for public policies that are driven by consumers' interests and needs — not a "Washington knows best" mentality. Overreaching federal regulations have a significant negative impact on rural America, so co-ops are asking Washington policy-makers to revisit a number of federal rules that hurt rural communities and threaten the co-ops' mission to provide affordable and reliable electricity.

We're also looking ahead to future rules and actions under major environmental laws, such as the Endangered Species Act and Clean Air Act, to ensure that they carefully balance the nation's environmental and eco-

nomical goals without imposing undue burdens on rural America.

IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE

One of the themes that ran through last year's presidential campaign is the need to improve the nation's infrastructure. Electric co-ops have been in the infrastructure development and improvement business for decades and hope to work with leaders in Washington to continue this important progress.

Co-ops continuously improve the cyber and physical security of our systems and are leaders in developing and using smart grid technologies. Here again, a strong public-private partnership remains essential, particularly in the area of cyber security. Electric cooperatives also support a wide range of research activities to help improve our nation's future energy infrastructure. The U.S. Department of Energy and other agencies remain key partners in advancing this research as well.

These are just a handful of examples of co-ops' major policy priorities over the next couple years. It is by no means an exhaustive list. But hopefully it demonstrates that America's electric cooperatives are working just as hard in Washington as we are here at home to keep the electricity flowing and improve the quality of life for our members. [WIN Richard Elliott, Acct# 503740000]

Dan Riedinger writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

SOUTHEAST COLORADO POWER LINEMEN



SECPA linemen include (in no particular order) Bill Cochell, Raymond Aguilar, Ryan Bair, Clint Arbuthnot, Kris Barbee, Jacob Barnes, Bruce Barnhart, Casey Briscoe, Jerid Bruna, Justin Bruna, James Cline, Kennan Davis, Troy Eberhardt, Mark Hall, Philip Hinds, Joel Johnson, Anthony Lobato, Jason Lucius, Kyle

Maier, Dave Malott, Buddy Myers, Jace Noe, Jim Perkins Heath Piper, Matt Rogers, Joe Self, Louis Serra, Mike Trumble, Taylor Wallace, Garrett Wertz, Kent Homsher.



**THANK YOU
FOR POWERING
OUR LIVES.**

**NATIONAL
LINEMAN
APPRECIATION
DAY**

APRIL 10, 2017

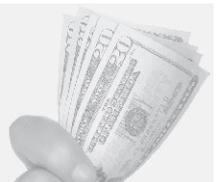
#ThankALineman

You Could Be A Winner This Month

If you find your name in this issue as follows (WIN* your name, your account number), please contact Southeast Colorado Power Association at 719-384-2551 or 800-332-8634

to receive a credit on your next power bill.

Last month's winner was Ernest Wait, Acct.# 2302750000





TIPS FOR HIRING HEROES



Electric cooperatives are proud to support veterans and those currently serving in uniform. One of the best ways to honor veterans is to ensure they can pursue rewarding careers when their military service has ended. Here are a few simple ways any business can attract qualified veteran applicants.

USE YOUR WORDS

If you'd like veterans to apply for an open position, say so in your ad. Not sure how to phrase it? Check with your state's office of veteran's services for language that complies with state and federal law.



TAKE AN EXTRA MOMENT



It can be hard for a civilian to make sense of military lingo in a veteran's résumé...especially when you have dozens of applications to review. Rather than giving up and moving on to the next applicant, take a few extra moments to evaluate the veteran's skills and think creatively about how they could apply to the position.

BUILD LOCAL CONNECTIONS

Networking and word-of-mouth are critical to the success of any business. Just as you might be a member of the local chamber of commerce or other business groups, build relationships with local veteran groups such as the VFW or American Legion.



PUBLICLY SHOW SUPPORT



Participate in local events that honor veterans, such as parades, welcome home celebrations and fundraisers. Remember that support doesn't have to be expensive or time-consuming. Little things like flying an American flag or allowing veteran's groups to post flyers at your business send a message about your support of veterans.

ASK FOR HELP

State and federal job centers offer many free resources to help employers hire qualified veterans. Contact your local center to see how they can help you fill your next vacancy.

