



[Rural Life]

THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY CONTINUES TO SHINE

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

I recently stopped by a neighbor's home for a social visit. Multiple generations of her family have proudly lived in southern Colorado and she has a wealth of knowledge regarding our town's history, land, weather and water, among other interesting topics.

Much of our discussion on this day was around how much technological advancement she personally experienced, from her father's Model T that needed a hand crank to start, to her daughter's exciting new car that doesn't even need a key and can be started from a distance.

Since she knows where I work, she made a point to reminisce about when Southeast Colorado Power Association brought power into the area and what it was like to see the first lightbulb powered in her family home. I listened as she continued explaining how iceboxes gave way to refrigerators, and she no longer needed to dedicate Mondays to hand-washing clothes with her mother once they had a washing machine.

Electricity bridged our original members to the modern world and it continues to keep us connected to the technological necessities and conveniences we enjoy. Think of your televisions, desktop, laptop, tablet, printer, gaming consoles, music and video players, tools, kitchen appliances and personal assistant devices. Whether they get used every day or just occasionally, they

keep working because electricity from SECPA keeps them working.

You use electricity to run all these devices and still keep the lights on, use the stove, heat and cool your home and get hot water from the tap. The good news is, even as we rely more on electricity, it's still a bargain, especially compared to other things we pay for regularly.

Since 2011, medical care, residential rental rates and education increased at rates of 3 percent or more per year. The cost of butter, meat and eggs went up by more than 1 to 2 percent annually, and bread rose risen by more than a half point on average per year. Electricity costs rise around 1 percent per year although SECPA members have not experienced a rate increase since 2015.

Kilowatt-hour use per household dropped by 8 percent between 2010 and 2016, slightly less than the 9 percent decline reported by all electric utilities nationwide. That means we're doing more things with less energy.

When it comes to value, electricity is a clear winner and we're always looking for ways to share with you how to make it even better. That's why SECPA urges energy efficiency, encourages you to look for Energy Star appliances and promotes technology



Jack Johnston

(like smart thermostats and power strips) designed to give members more control over their electricity use.

That's good for families, couples and individuals trying to live within their budgets. And it's going to become even more important as digital devices and internet-connected

technologies become even more important in our lives. The average home now has 10 Wi-Fi connected devices. That number is expected to explode to 50 by 2020, which comes with increased electricity demand. We certainly hope you will be connected to those devices through SECOM, but we know they will be powered by SECPA.

It is clear there has been one constant connecting the past, present and future: electricity. Southeast Colorado Power Association is proud to keep that constant — electricity — flowing.

**OFFICES CLOSED
GOOD FRIDAY
MARCH 30**



YOU'RE INVITED TO SECPA'S ANNUAL MEETING

Southeast Colorado Power Association will hold its annual meeting

**THURSDAY,
APRIL 5, 2018**

Serving Southern Colorado for over 80 years.

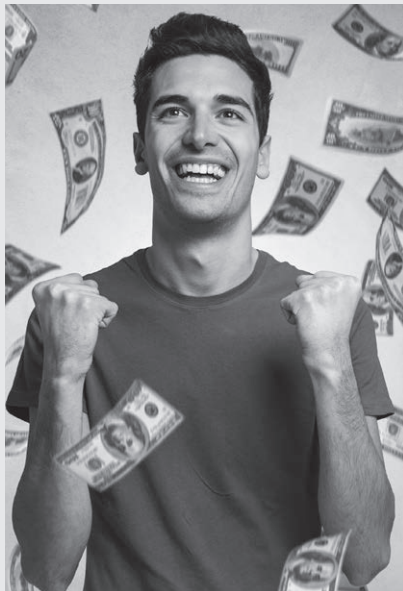
**** Cash prize drawings held throughout the meeting. ****

GRAND PRIZE – VIZIO HDTV

PLEASE JOIN US AT Inspiration Field, 612 Adams, La Junta, CO

BOARD ELECTIONS: Board candidates are featured in this issue of CCL

REGISTRATION 5 p.m. | **DINNER** 6 p.m. | **MEETING** 6:45 p.m.



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 is Charley Montanez, Acct#1308620000

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT BYLAWS REVISION

Per *BYLAWS OF SOUTHEAST COLORADO POWER ASSOCIATION Article XI, Section 5 – Bylaws Changes*, the Board of Directors will be implementing the following revisions effective March 1, 2018:

ARTICLE III MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

SECTION 5 – Voting, Paragraph 4

[CURRENT] Mail voting shall be on ballots provided by the Cooperative. Mail ballots shall be voted by the member, placed in a special envelope for the purpose, so as to conceal the marking on the ballot, deposited in a return envelope, which must be signed by the voting member and mailed back to the Association. Envelopes containing mail ballots shall remain sealed and uncounted until the meeting held for the purpose of electing the Board of Directors. A member present at a meeting of the members may revoke a mail vote theretofore executed by such member and such member shall be entitled to vote at such meeting in the same manner and with the same effect as if such member had not voted by mail. Mail ballots must be returned to Southeast by the close of business two (2) days prior to the date of the meeting of the members in order to be considered valid.

[REVISED] Mail voting shall be on ballots provided by the Cooperative. Mail ballots shall be voted by the member, placed in a special envelope for the purpose of concealing the marking on the ballot, deposited in a return envelope, which must be signed by the voting member and mailed back to the Association. Envelopes containing mail ballots shall be counted prior to the annual meeting, and stored in a manner that protects their privacy. Mail ballots must be returned to Southeast by the close of business two (2) days prior to the date of the meeting of the members in order to be considered valid after which time a revote is not permitted.

RATIONALE: This change is being made to comply with Colorado law **C.R.S. 40-9.5-110 (2)**.

The Board of Directors welcomes any questions or comments regarding these revisions by emailing bylawsrevision@secpa.com, visiting www.secpa.com/bylawsrevision or calling 719-383-1341.



(800) 657-7149

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MEET THE CANDIDATES FOR SECPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



DISTRICT 2: KIM SIEFKAS

Kim has farmed in Bent County for 44 years. He and his wife, Donna, have four children.

Kim graduated from the University of Northern Colorado (earth science and biology) and Otero Junior College (farm and ranch business).

He is a former board member for the Arkansas Valley Cooperative Association, Las Animas school board, Fort Lyon Canal, Bent County Farm Service Agency and several church boards.

Kim has received awards and recognition as Bent County Friend of 4-H, Bent County Farm Family of the Year and Colorado Family & Community Education (formerly Extension Homemakers) Family of the Year.

Kim said, "Local representation is very important to our members as board decisions directly affect them. Knowing what our members need and will need to maintain an economic living in our service area is critical. We also need to look into the future and see what services we can provide to current or new businesses and members wanting to locate in our area. To know where we have been, where we are and where we want to be are necessary for making any decisions."

Other than being a member of Southeast Colorado Power Association and consumer of electricity, Kim does not have a lot of knowledge about the operations of SECPA. He recognizes that his willingness to ask questions, use common sense and be ready to learn are important to being a board director. Kim looks forward to the opportunity to serve members of SECPA.



DISTRICT 2: LAWRENCE BRASE (Incumbent)

Lawrence Brase was born and raised near Lamar, graduating from Lamar High School, Lamar Junior College and Colorado State University with a bachelor's degree in agriculture. He also graduated from the Colorado School of Banking while working for Farmers State Bank in Calhan.

Lawrence and wife, Tressa, reside west of Wiley and have two grown daughters, Taya Jagers, a second grade teacher in McClave, and Kimber Lockstone, a homemaker in Wichita Falls, Texas. They have four grandchildren.

Lawrence owns and operates Brase Insurance Agency in Lamar and has been in the insurance business for 29 years. Prior to the insurance business, he spent four years in grain merchandising, 15 years in commercial banking and two years teaching agriculture education.

He has been active in local community activities: Wiley Lions Club, as a 48-year member and past president; Wiley United Methodist Church; Prowers County Development, Inc. (now known as Prowers Economic Prosperity) as a board member and treasurer for 17 years; Southeast Colorado Power Association for 21 years; Colorado FFA Foundation for eight years, as well as other community organizations.

In seeking re-election to the board position in District 2, Bent Coun-

ty, Lawrence said, "I would like to continue my service to the members of SECPA as a director. I have grown in my knowledge of the electrical business and broadband. I feel that one day people in southeastern Colorado will look at the improvements to their lives and businesses, which were brought about with the introduction of broadband to the area by SECOM, a wholly-owned subsidiary of SECPA, to be as great as the delivery of electricity was in 1937. This service allows area businesses to remain competitive by using the internet supplied by SECOM."

The growth opportunities in southeastern Colorado will rely heavily upon the strength of SECPA and SECOM to provide safe and reliable electricity and internet connectivity, allowing commerce to be conducted across the world from businesses or homes. Changes are happening rapidly with the computer and internet leading the way.

The electrical industry is seeing many changes in how electricity is being produced, stored and delivered. Our imagination is the only limitation of future discoveries and improvements.

The board of directors for SECPA and SECOM must continue to direct the growth of these two vital industries for our area to grow and remain viable. "I would like to return as a board member to help direct these fine organizations," Lawrence said.



DISTRICT 6: WILLIAM (BILL) GRASMICK (Incumbent)

Bill has owned and operated a diversified farming operation and is presently involved in irrigation and business development of agriculture real estate.

He was born in La Junta but has lived most of his life in Prowers County. Bill has a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in business administration.

He and his wife, Lauren, reside in Lamar. They

have two grown daughters.

Bill has been a member of many community organizations, as well as served on various local, state and national agriculture boards.

Upon seeking re-election to the board, Bill said, "I look forward to continuing to serve on the SECPA board as our association continues to provide affordable, reliable power to our members. Serving as a board director and working with SECPA staff is a very rewarding experience."

2018 FARM BILL UPDATE

BY DAN RIEDINGER

Every five years, the U.S. Congress considers the Farm Bill, a bill that has huge implications for America's electric cooperatives, including Southeast Colorado Power. The bill sets food and agriculture policy for the entire nation, affecting everything from what crops are grown to funding for food nutrition programs. The Farm Bill is due to be reauthorized by the federal government this year.

The Farm Bill is about much more than agriculture policy. It promotes rural economic development and allows co-ops to finance basic electrification activities, deploy high-speed communications and enhance smart grid technologies. Through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, our national service organization, America's electric cooperatives are working to ensure lawmakers in Washington, D.C., know what our priorities are for the 2018 Farm Bill. Here are a few.

Rural broadband

Increasing high-speed internet access in rural communities is a priority for many co-ops. Broadband access isn't a luxury. It's a necessity. But 34 million Americans in mostly rural areas lack access to high-speed internet. Co-ops asked Congress to use the Farm Bill to provide significant funding for broadband loans and grants to all viable internet providers, including cooperatives.

Economic development

Co-ops aren't just electricity providers. They are engines of economic development, powering and empowering the communities they serve. The Farm Bill's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program is an important source of financing for economic development projects in rural communities. Over the last two decades, electric cooperatives



partnered with community stakeholders on hundreds of projects to renovate hospitals, build libraries and expand businesses. Co-ops are asking Congress to ensure ample funding for this program in the next Farm Bill and beyond.

Innovation

Not-for-profit electric co-ops are natural incubators of innovation because they are driven solely by the needs of members like you. The U.S. Department of Agriculture runs a number of programs that help fund innovative projects, including the Rural Energy for America Program and Rural Energy Savings Program. Co-ops use these programs to save members money by financing investments in energy efficiency, constructing new renewable energy resources and deploying electric grid modernization technologies. REAP and RESP help ensure that co-ops are poised to meet the evolving needs of their members. [WIN* Robert Schwindt Acct# 1901770200]

USDA Rural Development

The health of our nation is dependent on a healthy rural America. Rural America grows most of the food, generates much of the power and manufactures many of the goods consumed by the nation. The USDA's Rural Development office operates many different programs that provide fundamental assistance to those rural communities. Co-ops are asking Congress to maintain strong rural development in the Farm Bill to reaffirm the importance of these programs.

We look forward to working with Congress and other stakeholders to pass a Farm Bill that promotes economic growth in rural America and allows co-ops to continue meeting the needs of their members.

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