

SOUTHEAST COLORADO POWER ASSOCIATION

MAY 2022

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Our primary mission is to provide high-quality, reliable electric service at a reasonable cost to our members, improve their quality of life through new technologies and services, be a visible and active member of the community and serve our members with respect, courtesy and responsiveness.

**SOUTHEAST COLORADO
POWER ASSOCIATION IS
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER**



HAPPY TO BE HERE

BY KEVIN BRANDON CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
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KEVIN BRANDON

As I am writing this column, it is my first full day after being selected as Chief Executive Officer by the Southeast Colorado Power Association (SECPA) Board of Directors. I can't tell you how honored I am to have been chosen for this position. SECPA is a cooperative, so I don't work for just the company; I work for you, the members of SECPA. I take that job very seriously.

This morning, I sent an email to all our employees, and I told them I was reminded of how excited I was 21 years ago when I came to work for SECPA as a network engineer for the SECOM division of the company. I was excited to be a part of bringing a new fiber optic network to southeastern Colorado that would forever change the lives of the people here. I also imagined how exciting it must have been back in 1937, when the founding members of SECPA were able to flip the switch, lighting the first light bulb in the area.

The common theme here is that since 1937, SECPA has existed to enhance and enrich the lives of its members through new technology. As I relayed to our employees in that email this morning, I am as excited today as I was 21 years ago to be leading these two great companies into the future and bringing our members and customers the latest technology while fulfilling our core missions of providing reliable and affordable electricity and communications services.

Once again, I am honored and humbled to have been chosen for this position, and I thank the board for placing their trust in me.

Please continue reading for important electrical safety tips as we recognize Electrical Safety Month.

PRIORITIZE SAFETY YEAR-ROUND

At SECPA, we recognize Electrical Safety Month every May, but we also know the importance of practicing safety year-round. From our co-op crews to you, the members we serve, we recognize that everyone has a part to play in prioritizing safety.

According to Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the United States are critically injured or electrocuted every year as a result of electrical fires and accidents in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. Electricity is a necessity — it powers our daily lives. But we know first-hand how dangerous electricity can be because we work with it 365 days a year.

To me, safety is more than a catchphrase. As CEO, it is my responsibility to keep our electric co-op employees safe. Additionally, we want to help keep you and all members of our community safe. That is why you'll see SECPA hosting safety demonstrations at community events and in schools throughout the year — to demonstrate the dangers of electricity. We discuss emergency scenarios, such as what to do in a car accident involving a utility pole and downed power lines. We caution students on the dangers of pad-mounted transformers and overloading circuits with too many electronic devices.

Electricity is an integral part of modern life. Given the prevalence of electrical devices, tools and appliances, I want to pass along a few practical electrical safety tips.

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Frayed wires pose a serious safety hazard. Power cords can become damaged or frayed from age, heavy use or excessive current flow through the wiring. If cords become frayed or cut, replace them, as they could cause a shock when handled.

Avoid overloading circuits. Circuits can handle only a limited amount of electricity. Overload happens when you draw more electricity than a circuit can safely handle — by having too many devices running on one circuit.

Consider an electrical inspection for your home. Contact a qualified electrician if your home is more than 40 years old or you need to install multiple large appliances that consume large amounts of electricity.

Use extension cords properly. Never plug an extension cord into another extension cord. If you “daisy chain” them together, it

could lead to overheating, creating a potential fire hazard. Do not exceed the wattage of the cord. Doing so also creates a risk of overloading the cord and creating a fire hazard. Extension cords should not be used as permanent solutions. If you need additional outlets, contact a licensed electrician to help.

Find a comprehensive list of electrical safety tips on page 9 and talk with your kids about playing it safe and smart around electricity. Help them be aware of overhead power lines near where they play outdoors. Our top priority is providing an uninterrupted energy supply 24/7, 365 days per year. But equally important is keeping our community safe around electricity.

Contact SECPA if you want us to provide a safety demonstration at your school or upcoming community event. WIN* MARKI LAUGHLIN acct 203970003

NOTICE: 2022 Capital Credit Retirement

The SECPA Board of Directors approved a general retirement of capital credits totaling \$418,454; this retirement amounts to 100% of the capital credits allocated to members in 1967, 1968 and 1969.

The checks were mailed in late April; if you were a member in 1967, 1968 or 1969 you should have received your check.

PLUG INTO SAFETY



Overloaded electrical outlets? It's time to call an electrician and install new outlets.

SQUASH SCAMMERS

If you suspect someone is trying to scam you, and they're claiming to be from Southeast Colorado Power Association, hang up, delete the email or shut the door. Common tactics a scammer will use are threatening to disconnect your power if they are not paid immediately, or requiring payment using gift cards.

Call us at 719-384-2551. This number can also be found on your monthly bill or on our website at www.secpa.com. Do not call the phone number that the scammer provides. If you ever feel you are in physical danger, call 911 immediately.



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 Ed Bignell.

*Hands full.
Days full.
Hearts full.*

HIGH-SPEED INTERNET FIBER OR WIRELESS
Call 800.657.7149 for full details!
FREE INSTALLATION FOR ALL SECPA CUSTOMERS



*Service availability and internet speed will depend on location. Offer is good through 5/31/2022. Additional terms and conditions apply. Contact us for complete details.

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MAY IS ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH

Electricity lights homes and businesses, provides warmth and keeps appliances and equipment running smoothly. During Electrical Safety Month, Southeast Colorado Power Association provides these electrical safety tips to avoid hazards both inside and outdoors.

STAYING SAFE ON THE ROAD

Downed power lines can happen because of wind, storms, animals or an auto accident/collision.

1. If you see a downed power line, call 911 to report it and stay in your car. You cannot tell by looking or listening if the power line is de-energized. Wait in your vehicle until a SECPA crew member says it is safe to get out.
2. Do not drive over a downed power line. Even if the line is de-energized, doing so could cause a domino effect and bring down other lines, poles and equipment.
3. The only time you should exit is if your vehicle or cab is on fire. If this is the case, make a solid jump from the car or cab without touching it, landing with both feet together. Then, hop away with your feet together as far as you can.

STAYING SAFE OUTSIDE

When working outside, be aware of overhead and underground power lines.

1. Keep at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines. Keep any items you are carrying or using, such as long poles or other extended equipment, 10 feet away from power lines at all times. Carry an extension ladder or other far-reaching tools or equipment horizontally.
2. Make sure that all outside outlets are protected by a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).
3. Before digging, call 811. Buried lines such as electric, gas, water, sewer and other lines bring services indoors. Besides the dangers of coming in contact with a gas or electric line, any fines due to damage are the responsibility of the homeowner or landowner. Privately owned lines and systems, such as sprinklers, will not be marked by the free service.
4. When you see lightning, take shelter inside or in a hard-topped vehicle for protection. Stay away from high places and do not take shelter under an isolated tree. Stay away from items that conduct electricity, such as metal fences. If you are swimming or in a hot tub, get out. Water is an electrical conductor that is dangerous during a storm.

Electrical Safety Myths
Don't always believe what you hear

MYTH VS FACT

MYTH
Power lines that are coated are always insulated.

FACT
The coating could be for weatherproofing only. All power lines can be deadly.

Learn more at: [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org)

STAYING SAFE INSIDE

With so many people working from home, the workplace and where you live can be one and the same. This means more devices are plugged into outlets or circuits that may not be able to handle the load.

1. Have a qualified electrician check for hazards if you notice the following: dimming lights; a sizzling or buzzing sound; the smell of warm plastic; a switch plate that feels warm or looks scorched; sparks when plugging in or unplugging items; or circuits that trip often.
2. When working with electrical equipment inside the house or a workshop, be aware that electrical equipment can spark when flammable vapors, gases or dust are present.
3. During storms, lightning can enter homes through corded phones, televisions, radios or computers. Lightning can also travel through plumbing, so do not take a bath or shower or wash dishes when you see lightning. If possible, unplug appliances and electronics before the storm, including cellphones that are charging. Surges caused by lightning can damage electronics and appliances.

For more information on electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org).

SPOT THE ELECTRICAL HAZARD



After you complete this activity, color the items with crayons or colored pencils.

When combined, electricity and common items that seem harmless can create dangerous situations. Look at the items grouped below, then circle the two items that (when combined) create an electrical hazard. Check your work in the answer key.

1			
	toaster	fork	bagel
2			
	hairdryer	electrical outlet	running water
3			
	drone	power lines	picnic
4			
	swimming pool	floatie	extension cord

Answer Key: 1) fork & toaster 2) hairdryer & water or outlet & water 3) drone & power lines 4) extension cord & pool