

# Building a Better World Cooperatively

By Kevin Brandon CEO

When you open your fridge and look at the milk, odds are good — 85% — that it came from a farmer-owned dairy cooperative. One out of every three Americans has an account at a cooperatively-owned credit union. If you shop at Ace Hardware, that's a co-op, too!

There are plenty of co-ops out there — at least 65,000 in the United States and 3 million across the world. Some co-ops are owned by workers or farmers. Others are owned by businesses who pool resources. You — and everyone else we serve in Southeast Colorado — own Southeast Colorado Power Association (SECPA).

Co-ops make life better for everyone, from local businesses to the people who get electricity from us. But not everyone knows this story. To spread the word, the United Nations declared 2025 the International Year of Cooperatives. As we gear up to celebrate how cooperatives build a better world, I want to share how co-ops strengthen our community.

## WORKING TOGETHER WORKS

Co-ops are special. We're not just a electric company, and you're not just a customer. We're in this together. Our 5,000-plus members — that's you — elect our leaders and help guide our future. It's a community project where everyone has a say. I hope you'll join us at our next member Annual Meeting at the Lamar



Community Building on April 24, 2025. It's the best way to find out what's happening and get involved with your co-op.

## YOUR IDEAS MAKE US BETTER

Life never stands still. Your ideas help us innovate to meet changing local needs. Whether you send us an email or talk to us at a local event, we're all ears. Your thoughts help us grow and serve you better.

## WE'RE HERE TO SERVE YOU

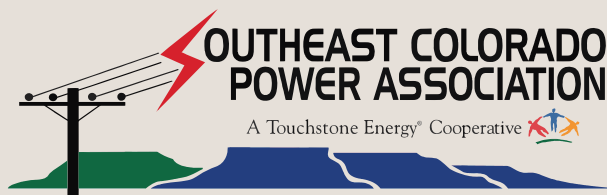
Remember, you're not a number to us. You're a member-owner. That means we work for you, not some far-off shareholders. We're focused on what's best for our community because we live here, too.

## LOCALLY GROWN FOR COMMUNITY GROWTH

We provide electricity, but our co-op is about more than that. We connect people and businesses to possibilities.

As a member of SECPA, you support local jobs, scholarships, and more. We put our money where our heart is — right here at home. We do more than provide a service; we help our neighborhoods thrive.

In 2024, SECPA contributed more than \$30,000 in donations and sponsorships to organizations throughout our territory including College scholarships from your co-op are helping 11 area students attend college



## SECPA MISSION

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.

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[www.secpa.com](http://www.secpa.com)

[facebook.com/secpaonline](https://www.facebook.com/secpaonline)

[@southeastcoloradopower](https://twitter.com/southeastcoloradopower)

## YOUR CO-OP NEWS

right now. In addition to the contributions above, we were able to donate another \$10,000 to local charitable organizations from our annual SECPA/SECOM Charity Classic Golf Tournament; we hosted the 37th annual tournament last July.

When we work together and keep it cooperative, we all win.

**READY TO BUILD A BETTER WORLD WITH CO-OPS?** Cooperation works. It keeps us connected, innovative and focused on what matters — you and our community. Thanks for being part of our SECPA co-op family.

*You're Invited*  
**TO SECPA'S ANNUAL MEETING!**

**THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2025**

Lamar Community Building  
610 S. 6th Street, Lamar, CO

Registration 5 p.m.  
Dinner 6 p.m.  
Meeting 6:45 p.m.

*Dinner • Cash prizes • Community fellowship*

**BOARD DIRECTOR ELECTIONS**  
SECPA Board positions up for election in 2025 are:  
District 1 — Eastern Baca County and District 3 — Kiowa County.

**FIND YOUR NAME AND WIN!**

If you find your name in this issue as follows (WIN\* Your Name, your account number), contact Southeast Colorado Power Association at 719-384-2551 or 800-332-8634 to receive a credit on your next power bill.

*We love our members!*

**Happy Valentine's Day from Southeast Colorado Power.**

# SECPA \$1,000 Scholarships

## Applications due February 10

**S**outheast Colorado Power Association (SECPA) is once again making scholarships available to area high school seniors. **Students' parents must be members of SECPA.**

SECPA is offering ten \$1,000 scholarships, and also administers through Tri-State an additional two \$1,000 scholarships. Eligible applicants must be a high school senior graduating in 2025 who plans to attend a two or four-year college, trade school, or other nontraditional secondary educational institution.

Students interested in applying for the scholarships are asked to submit the completed SECPA application form — available online at [secpa.com/scholarships](http://secpa.com/scholarships) — with a school transcript, letter of recommendation, and a short essay on the benefits of cooperative membership.

**Applications for SECPA scholarships are due no later than February 10, 2025.** For additional information, please visit the SECPA website or contact Debbie Howard at 719-383-1314.

## SECPA Lineman Promotes the Trade

**A** big thank you to **Southeast Colorado Power Association Journeyman Lineman Patrick Wyckoff** for talking with the Career Math Trade School Class about the avenues available for becoming a lineman and the schooling involved in pursuing the career.

Wyckoff is a graduate of Cheraw High School and explained how he uses math as a lineman. (WIN\* Larry W. Barnes 2195xxxxxx)

This year marks the first year of offering a Career/Trade School Math class at Cheraw School District. The focus is to support students who are considering careers in trade schools, the workforce, or the military.

Unlike traditional math classes, this course is designed to provide students with a solid foundation in the practical mathematics needed for various trades and careers. Part of the curriculum includes preparing students for the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, an essential assessment for those interested in military careers.



**SECPA Journeyman Lineman Patrick Wyckoff (left) speaks to a class about his career. Photo courtesy of Ms. Madison Pryor (Instructor for Career Math/Trade School Math) and Mrs. Quick (K-12 Academic Counselor).**

# New Tools to Extinguish EV Fires

By Anne Boswell SECPA Communications Coordinator

**S**outheast Colorado firefighters now have a tool to help them extinguish electric vehicle fires. La Junta Fire Chief Brad Davidson explains that the LJFD recently purchased an electric vehicle fire blanket thanks to a generous donation from the La Junta Elks Club. He said this special firefighting blanket is essential because he has recently seen the number of electric vehicles in the area increase.

“There’s such a high hazard to this: you can’t just put a battery fire out. There’s a special technique and you have to have a ton of water. When I talk a ton of water, I’m talking thousands and thousands of gallons of water,” Davidson shares.

According to Davidson’s experience, a typical vehicle fire takes around 1,000 gallons of water to extinguish, but an electric vehicle fire can take up to 30,000 to 60,000 gallons of water to extinguish. Davidson notes that his truck can only carry 1,000 gallons of water, with their Tinder truck transporting 2,000 gallons.

That’s why the EV fire blanket is an important tool for firefighting.

Here’s how the EV firefighting blanket works: Firefighters drag the blanket over the fire, which suffocates it. The blanket is kept on the vehicle for a certain amount of time so the car can cool down and the fire can be put out. Davidson says firefighters use thermal imaging equipment to monitor the fire and when it’s cool enough for other firefighting measures.

The EV fire blanket is a one-time-use tool if the La Junta Fire Department must use it. “These blankets are not cheap,” Davidson says.

Chief Davidson reports that the LJFD was able to purchase a second EV fire blanket with the help of two local businesses: Davis Auto and Peacock Funeral Home. This allows the fire department to have blankets on two trucks, allowing quicker deployment should they need them.

EV fires can happen following a car accident if the batteries are pierced at any time, Davidson notes. “Electric vehicle fires in my mind are a lot scarier right now than many other fires, because of the unknown.”

The La Junta Fire Department has been training on electric vehicle fires because there are a lot of skills to learn and maintain. Chief Davidson says that removing someone from an EV can be challenging. “The way the high-voltage lines run through the vehicle if we cut the wrong way of trying to extricate someone out without making sure batteries are disconnected the right way, those lines are still powered. If our tools go through it, we have we have a chance for electrocution or causing more problems.”

Davidson’s crew has received extensive training through the state of Colorado’s online courses and is working with a local car dealership to provide even more training to first responders. This will help firefighters know how to safely extricate someone trapped in an EV.



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you have a home office, look for opportunities to save energy in your workspace. Use ENERGY STAR®-rated equipment, which consumes up to 50% less energy than standard models. Set equipment like printers and scanners to automatically switch to sleep or energy-saver mode when not in use. In addition to saving energy, the equipment will stay cooler, which will help extend its life.

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



LOVE IS CONNECTIVITY

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