

SOUTHEAST COLORADO POWER ASSOCIATION

DECEMBER 2023



MAILING ADDRESS

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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



RELIABLE POWER FOR TODAY — AND TOMORROW

BY KEVIN BRANDON CEO | KEVINB@SECPA.COM



KEVIN BRANDON

Reframing in a new year sparks a sense of renewed hope and optimism about the future. As the CEO of Southeast Colorado Power Association (SECPA), for me, it's a time to reflect on where we are and where we're going. At the heart of this reflection, I think about ways we can better serve you, the members of the cooperative.

Our team at SECPA is always looking ahead, exploring ways to innovate and use new technologies to improve our services. As our nation increasingly relies on electricity to power the economy, keeping the lights on has never been more important. We're committed to powering — and empowering — our community at a cost local families and businesses can afford.

So how are we working to ensure reliable and affordable power while adapting to a changing energy landscape and our community's evolving needs?

One critical component of reliable power is the mix of energy resources used to generate the electricity that keeps the lights on across SECPA's territory. You may not realize it, but SECPA doesn't generate electricity. Instead, we purchase it from our energy provider, Tri-State Generation and Transmission, and from there, we distribute it to homes and businesses throughout our community. Our current energy resource mix consists of wind, solar, natural gas, and coal.

We're increasingly using more electricity generated from renewable energy sources, but we still depend on a diverse energy mix to ensure reliable power that's

available to our members whenever they need it.

In addition to managing a reliable energy mix, SECPA is using technology to enhance our local grid, limit service disruptions, and improve outage response times.

Advanced metering technology, also known as AMI, enables two-way communication between the co-op and consumers. In the event of a power outage, AMI helps pinpoint the exact location of the outage and can even analyze damaged or tampered meters. AMI helps SECPA save money with real-time data and ultimately improves power reliability for our entire community.

Proactive tree trimming is another way we limit service disruptions. Scheduled trimming keeps power lines clear from overgrown limbs that are likely to fall.

One of the best methods for improving our services to you is monitoring trends and leading practices from other electric co-ops in Colorado and across the country. Learning from other co-ops is one of the many benefits of the cooperative business model because for us, it's about cooperation, not competition.

As we turn our focus to 2024, SECPA will continue working to provide the reliable, affordable electricity you expect and deserve — for today and tomorrow.

From all of us here at SECPA and SECOM, Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays! We wish everyone a safe and blessed holiday season with family and friends!

Save the date!

SECPA's Annual Meeting

Southeast Colorado Power Association will hold its Annual Meeting on Thursday, April 25, 2024.

*Please join us at Inspiration Field,
612 Adams, La Junta, Colorado 81050*

Cash prizes are given away throughout the meeting!

BOARD DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

The following board positions are up for election:

- District 2 – Bent County
- District 5 – Otero County
- District 6 – Prowers County

5 p.m. – Registration

6 p.m. – Dinner

6:45 p.m. – Meeting

ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS & SENIORS



Win a Trip to Washington, D.C., or a week at Leadership Camp at Glen Eden Resort!

Each year, Southeast Colorado Power Association (SECPA) sponsors two students to attend the Washington D.C. Youth Tour held June 17-23, 2024. High school students who are 16 by June 1 AND WHOSE FAMILIES ARE SECPA MEMBERS are eligible to apply to go on the trip. Youth 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 student's expenses — including airfare, lodging, meals and all tour admission fees — are paid for by SECPA. Activities during the trip include tours of the U.S. Capitol, the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, war memorials, Arlington National Cemetery, the National Archives, the White House and several Smithsonian Museums. A Potomac River dinner and dance cruise, visits with Colorado's U.S. senators and representatives, and the chance to connect with students nationwide are also part of the experience.

If you're not chosen to attend the Washington, D.C., trip, you may be the recipient of a trip to Leadership Camp held at Glen Eden Resort, located just outside of Steamboat Springs. At this camp, held July 13-18, 2024, students from Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Wyoming gather at a beautiful resort on the Elk River and spend the week at an outstanding leadership camp. Students participate in activities to improve leadership skills. There is also time for swim parties, barbecues, whitewater rafting, and dancing. Many of the attendees call this camp a "life-changing experience."

For more information and to apply, visit our website at secpa.com/youth-programs or contact Debbie Howard at 719-383-1314.

Applications must be received by December 30, 2023. Mail to ATTN: Debbie Howard, SECPA, PO Box 521, La Junta, CO 81050.




Merry Christmas

AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

SECPA offices will be closed
Monday and Tuesday, December 25-26
and Monday, January 1, 2024.



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 Lillian Laney.

Speaking “Dog,” Achieving Fluency

Education is key in training

BY ANNE BOSWELL COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR | ANNEB@SECPA.COM

Otero County resident Brandie Jackson's truck pounds the pavement and dirt roads of rural Colorado turning over miles on her mission. She scours animal shelters across southeast Colorado looking for the diamond in the rough to take, train, and place in a forever home.

Jackson, who is a Southeast Colorado Power Association member, retired from a career in corrections to correct dog behavior (and human behavior). She was adamant about solving a problem she'd noticed over and over: People needed education on how to better communicate with their dogs. She explained that this was her reason for opening a dog training center in Swink, and Pawsitive K9 Solutions was born. Jackson and co-owner Donna Darnell offer classes for dogs and their humans. Together, Jackson and Darnell have nearly 50 years of dog training experience. She and Darnell wanted to offer something important to the community, including education about dogs and how to have a nice family dog.

“I think we can all agree that everybody would just like to have a well-behaved dog,” Jackson says. The goal of training a dog is to educate the owner about the dog's behavior and how to react to that behavior.

“How do I get the behaviors I'm wanting [from the dog]? It boils down how we teach people to speak ‘dog’ better,” Jackson says. She laughs when she says that she is really training the dog's human. “I could take a dog home and train it, but if the human isn't able to continue the same interaction with the dog and follow through, the training doesn't work,” she shares. “The owner has to be a part of it and really understand why they're doing what they're doing. And so we work a lot with dog communication and leadership and what it means to be a good leader.”

After a few years of training dogs and humans at the training center, Jackson has taken her expertise and experience to southeast Colorado dog shelters to look for dogs who would adapt well to this sort of training. Jackson says the Pawsitive Pathways program takes on qualifying shelter dogs to turn them into great family pets. It's her philosophy that a well-trained and well-behaved pooch is much more likely to be adopted into a forever home.

Pawsitive Pathways is now a nonprofit organization and Jackson hopes that will help her save more dogs in her community. Pawsitive Pathways recently placed its 43rd dog into a home.



▲ Brandie Jackson rewards Pickles with a snack.

At a tour of the training center, Jackson brings in a program participant pup, a pit bull mix named Pickles. According to the information given to Jackson at the time she took him into the program, he was likely dumped on a rural county road.

While some people are afraid of the pit bull breed, Jackson says they can be great dogs. More than half of the dogs in the Pawsitive Pathways program have been pit bulls, pit bull cross-breeds, or terrier-type

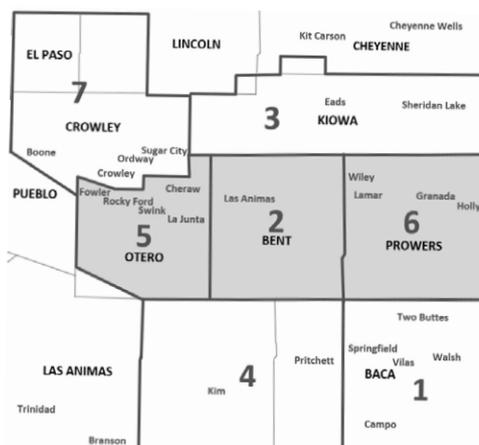
ACCEPTING PETITIONS FOR SOUTHEAST COLORADO POWER ASSOCIATION (SECPA) BOARD DIRECTOR POSITIONS

SECPA Board positions up for election in 2024 are District 2 - Bent County; District 5 - Otero County; and District 6 - Prowers County. See map.

Director elections are for three-year terms, beginning April 2024 and ending March 2027 for District seats 2 & 6. District 5 seat will complete remainder of term ending March 2026.

Petitions must be signed by 15 bona-fide members in the nominee's district and must be returned no later than 5:00 p.m. January 8, 2024. Petitions are available in all SECPA offices, at <https://secpa.com/Director-Petition>, or by emailing request to debbieh@secpa.com.

Return petitions to Debbie Howard at any SECPA Office; or mail to SECPA, ATTN: Debbie Howard, PO Box 521, La Junta, CO 81050; or email to debbieh@secpa.com.



To be eligible to be a Director:

- 1 A person must be a SECPA member and bona fide resident of the district he or she is to represent,
- 2 Directors cannot be employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or business selling electric energy or supplies to SECPA.
- 3 Directors cannot be an employee or have been an employee of SECPA or its subsidiary within the preceding five (5) years.

breed, Jackson reports. "I've been training a lot with this breed," Jackson says. "There are many factors that go into a dog's behavior, such as genetics and how the puppy is raised and socialized," she continues, "but bad media on pit bulls hasn't helped [with the breed's reputation]."

Jackson wants to help get dogs sitting in shelters trained and into the right homes. She scouts out potential program participants across southeast Colorado shelters, but has traveled as far north as Yuma County. (WIN* Blake Gale 1922390002)

When looking for a "diamond in the rough," Jackson explains it's a process that includes evaluating each dog carefully because the program is a pack program where six dogs are in the same training at one time. They play together, walk together, and train together.

Once selected for the program, a dog will stay anywhere from two months to four months. During the training time, the dog's photo and training videos are shared in hopes of finding it a forever home. And while the dog is waiting, he or she lives with a trainer to experience a home environment.

"Dogs struggle to thrive in a shelter environment," Jackson says. "But if we bring them into a home environment where we have a certified trainer who is practicing good leadership and communication, then the dogs

understand what it's like: 'Oh yeah, I don't jump on the counters, I don't eat from the table.'"

Field trips are a part of the dogs training, too. Trainers learn everything about the dog in order to find them the best family and make sure they will be a good fit for an interested family.

When a match is identified through this process, Jackson hops into her truck and hand delivers the pooch to its new family.

"I have driven literally hundreds of miles across Colorado," Jackson says. She admits it's worth it because she gets to know the family, and the family gets in-home training when they welcome their new friend.

Pawsitive Pathways new status of being a 501(c)(3) nonprofit will help them do more work like this and will allow them to apply for various grants to help with funding training programs. Additionally, individuals and businesses can sponsor a dog and cover the costs of training, food, supplies, and vet bills. Jackson is quick to recognize and thank the many people who have helped her fulfill her mission: Peak View Animal Hospital in Fowler provide discounts on spays, neuters, and vaccines; La Junta veterinarian Dr. Jayne Aldrich and retired vet Dell Davis have helped with medical care for the dogs; and attorney Nathan Shultz helped get Jackson get the 501(c)(3) nonprofit status approved.

This time of year, Jackson cautions that giving a puppy at Christmas should also come with the gift of training. Too many dogs end up surrendered to shelters when "the cute" wears off. Those are sometimes the dogs Jackson encounters when searching shelters for program participants.

Looking ahead to 2024, Jackson says she wants to expand the program to include virtual training sessions for people and their dogs who can't meet during normal training hours.

"I want to keep getting education out there, and to help people and their pets — whether it's shelter dogs that are picked up on a back country road or people who are coming in and calling me seeking to train their family dog," she says.

Jackson shares that many people want to help with the mission of Pawsitive Pathways, but they don't have money to donate to the nonprofit program. She encourages people can to help as they can and by sharing the dog training videos Pawsitive Pathways posts on its social media channels. "Just share it, because that's how all of our dogs have been placed so far: friends of friends of friends."

Trainers Brandie Jackson and Donna Darnell are also 4-H dog leaders and rely on the help of their daughters at the center and with the organization.

For information about the training center and Pawsitive Pathways, visit pawsitivek9solutionsco.com.



Reliable streaming for holiday video calls

SECPA \$1,000 Scholarships

Southeast 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 two additional \$1,000 scholarships. Eligible applicants must be a high school senior graduating in 2024 who plans to attend a two- or four-year college, or trade or other non-traditional secondary educational institution.

Students interested in applying for a scholarship are asked to submit the completed SECPA application form (available on the SECPA website at 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 12, 2024.

For additional information, please visit the website at secpa.com or contact Debbie Howard at 719-383-1314.

