

SOUTHEAST COLORADO POWER ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 2024



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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



CO-OPS POWER COMMUNITIES WITH PURPOSE

BY KEVIN BRANDON CEO | KEVINB@SECPA.COM



KEVIN BRANDON

Communities come in all shapes and sizes. Some are based on geographical proximity, some are based on shared interests, or hobbies, and some communities can even be found in virtual spaces like social media groups. Regardless of where or how they are formed, communities can bring people together and create a sense of belonging.

Southeast Colorado Power Association (SECPA) is deeply committed to our members, and we're glad you are part of the electric cooperative community.

This month, more than 30,000 cooperatives across the U.S. are celebrating National Co-op Month. It's a time to reflect on all the aspects that set cooperatives apart from other types of businesses, but more importantly, it's a time to celebrate the power of co-op membership.

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit utilities that are built by the communities they serve. For SECPA, our mission has always been to provide you with reliable power. We care about your quality of life, and because we are locally operated, we're uniquely suited to meet our members' evolving energy needs.

Beyond the business of electricity, our employees and directors are equally invested in our local community. Why? Because we live here, too. That's why we work hard to support local economic development projects, youth programs and scholarships, charitable giving initiatives, and additional programs that make our community a better place to call home.

All co-ops, including SECPA, are guided by seven cooperative principles that embody the values and spirit of the cooperative movement. These seven principles are a

framework to help all co-ops navigate challenges and opportunities while remaining true to our purpose:

- 1. Open and Voluntary Membership:** Co-op membership is open to anyone who can use the co-op's services.
- 2. Democratic Member Control:** Members make decisions that shape the cooperative. Why? Because co-ops are created by the members, for the members.
- 3. Members' Economic Participation:** Members contribute money to the co-op to make sure it runs smoothly now and in the future. At SECPA, this happens through paying your energy bills.
- 4. Autonomy and Independence:** Co-ops are independent and can operate on their own, which ultimately benefits the members.
- 5. Education, Training and Information:** Co-ops continuously focus on education to ensure employees have the training and information they need to make the co-op successful.
- 6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives:** Co-ops share with and learn from other cooperatives. We help each other out in times of need because we want other co-ops to thrive.
- 7. Concern for Community:** All cooperatives work for the greater good of the local communities they serve. Co-ops give back to their communities to help them thrive and grow.

As we celebrate National Co-op Month and the power of membership, we hope you will recognize the many aspects that set electric cooperatives apart. Our mission is reliable power. Our purpose is people — the local communities we're proud to serve.

COUNTY FAIR Highlights

OTERO COUNTY



Otero County Market Sheep. Photo courtesy of Laura Thompson.



Otero County Tiny Tot. Photo courtesy of Laura Thompson.

CROWLEY COUNTY



Crowley County Cowgirls. Photo courtesy of Laura Thompson.

BACA COUNTY



Baca County Swine. Photo courtesy of Kelly Rose.



Baca County Reserve Grand Champion Beef. Photo Courtesy of Kelly Rose.



Baca County Market Lamb. Photo Courtesy of Kelly Rose.



Crowley County Jr. Livestock. Photo courtesy of Laura Thompson.

BENT COUNTY



⬆ Bent County Swine. Photo courtesy of Leeann Ridley.



⬆ Bent County Lambs. Photo courtesy of Leeann Ridley.



⬆ Bent County Beef. Photo courtesy of Leeann Ridley.

KIOWA COUNTY ROYALTY



⬆ Kiowa Royalty. Photo courtesy of Tabatha Ferris.

Congrats
to all on a GREAT Fair Season!

PROWERS COUNTY



⬆ Prowers County 4-H - Photo courtesy of Amber Comer, Prowers 4-H Agent.



ARE YOU THE 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.

SAVE the Date!

Southeast Colorado Power Association will hold its annual meeting on Thursday, April 24, 2025.

****Cash prize drawings given away throughout the meeting.****

Please join us in Lamar. Location to be announced.

BOARD DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

Two SECPA board positions are up for election in 2025:

District 1, Eastern Baca County and

District 3, Kiowa County.

Registration - 5 p.m.

Dinner - 6 p.m.

Meeting - 6:45 p.m.

BEFORE THE LIGHTS CAME ON

BY ANNE BOSWELL COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Think back to when you turned off the power to the house to do some electrical work and repairs. You reached for that light switch to turn it on without thinking about it. The modern convenience of having electricity in our homes is undoubtedly appreciated on a 100-degree day as our air conditioners run to keep us comfortable and, in the winter, when the heater keeps us warm. You only need to go back a couple of generations to find stories of life before the lights came on.

Kiowa County resident Mary Marble is 100 years old and remembers life on the plains before electricity. She recalled how hard it was to heat their home with cow chips or manure. It was during the Great Depression, and few folks had enough money to buy things at the store. Mary mentioned they bought only sugar, kerosene, coffee, and flour. Everything else came from the farm. “We always had something to eat,” she said.

They used everything on their family farm north of Sheridan Lake, Colorado. For example, Mary and her 11 siblings used corn shucks to make a mattress. She says it was a good bed in the winter, but it would be worn down by springtime, and it would be time to make another one for the year ahead. She said it was hard, but they made it all work.

Mary’s stories of their hard work on a farm without electricity are just some of many throughout the United States. She shared many stories of women’s arduous work on the farm. Perhaps this was why women were among the first to want electricity in their homes.

The Rural Electric Administration started during the Great Depression when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt signed

an executive order to create it. REA was needed to bring electricity to rural areas when private companies didn’t see the possibility of making a profit. Some farmers were reluctant as the signup teams went to the country to discuss utility cooperatives, but the wives often drove the decision to hand over the \$5 signup fee.

In *The Next Greatest Thing*, authors Richard A. Pence and Patrick Dahl explain that signup teams got wise and visited when the farmer’s wife was present when making the pitch. The women had heard about a more leisurely life with electric washing machines, irons, and even power tools. (WIN* William A. Harris acct 81658xxxx)



Orville Mousel, his wife Rita, and their dog Snoopy enjoy the comforts of their air-conditioned home outside of Eads.

“We could have a toaster and so many things — electric lights and an electric iron,” Mary said.

When the first phase of construction began, some families were too far from the power lines to be able to hook up. According to one story, a farmer returned to a meeting to plop down his \$5 signup fee proclaiming he had just moved the house closer to the line.

Orville Mousal remembers the time Southeast Colorado Power Association organized the start of the cooperative. The 103-year-old Kiowa County resident

lived on a First View, Colorado, farm near Cheyenne Wells. Before electricity, he used a kerosene lamp and a gas lamp.

“We had electricity put in when I was a junior,” Orville recalled. “We didn’t have it, so we didn’t worry about it.”

There was excitement about the actual “lights on” day when electricity was brought to rural areas —across the United States, folks gathered to flip the switch. In the months after, a radio would deliver market and weather reports, improving life in rural areas. Schools were able to use the radio as a teaching tool. In the same way that radio was a teaching tool, the internet is also proving to be a great teaching resource today.

Jon Saunders is the Chief Business Development Officer at SECOM, a subsidiary of SECPA. He feels that what is happening now with broadband in rural Colorado is very similar to how electricity reached people on farms in the early days of electricity.

“Right now, there’s a big movement and a lot of grant money from federal dollars as well as some state money to build out broadband in these rural areas,” Jon said. “Many Southeast Colorado Power Association members who will get fiber optic internet to their house — it’s the 21st century equivalent of electricity.”

October is National Cooperative Month. If you would like to know more about the Cooperative Principles SECPA and other cooperatives are founded upon, they are available at secpa.com/cooperative-principles.