

ADDING SMALL STONES TO A SCALE

2025 Rate Adjustment

BY RYAN ELARTON GENERAL MANAGER



RYAN ELARTON

With the ever-increasing cost of living, San Isabel Electric — as a not-for-profit utility — also faces rising costs of doing business. Fortunately, most years, these increases are gradual.

Imagine a scale: on one side is the cost of electricity for you, our member-owners; on the other is the co-op’s operational costs. Each year, small stones are added to the co-op’s side as prices for poles, wire, labor — everything — slowly increase.

SIEA has a long, proud history of maintaining steady rates. But over the years and recently, we have had small rate increases. We are very aware of the impact a rate increase has on you, our member-owners. Utilizing cost-saving strategies, we’ve been able to maintain a steady balance for more than a decade. At this point, the scale needs to be rebalanced with our new strategy.

We’ve invested tens of millions of dollars in our distribution system the past several years to reduce outage times and harden our grid from wildfires. Those initial investments get paid for over time and impact our rates. We know from our survey responses that you’ve seen the difference in outage times, and that you want us to continue providing safe, reliable, affordable service.

Going forward, we’re taking a more gradual approach, as we’ve done the past two years: smaller, incremental annual increases, if necessary, to maintain our current level of service. These adjustments cover everything including power supply costs, materials, fire mitigation, labor, and system improvements.

In November 2024, the SIEA board approved a \$5 increase of the residential grid access charge. Effective January 1, 2025, the new access charge will be \$35.






I encourage all members to consider taking a look at SIEA’s Time-of-Day rate. Most of our member-owners pay a flat rate for their residential electricity. However, SIEA offers an alternative rate that could help some members save money by making lifestyle changes, such as switching from propane heat to electric heat or replacing your gas water heater with an electric one.

Our rebate programs can help reduce some of the upfront costs as well, and our Energy Services team is ready to support by connecting you with local contractors, product information, and even financing right on your electric bill at low rates. For more information about qualifying for the time-of-day rate please visit siea.com/ets or siea.com/timeofday.

NEW GRID ACCESS CHARGE

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2025

Look for this change on your bill due February 15, 2025.

								
RESIDENTIAL	SMALL COMMERCIAL		LARGE COMMERCIAL		TIME OF DAY *	PUMPS		
R	C1	C4	C2	C3	TOD RESIDENTIAL	TOD SMALL COMMERCIAL	TOD LARGE COMMERCIAL	P
from \$30 to \$35	from \$36 to \$43	from \$55 to \$62	from \$170 to \$180	No Change	from \$30 to \$35	from \$31 to \$38	from \$150 to \$160	No Change

*Time-of-Day (TOD) rates are available to all members with qualifying electric storage equipment, such as heating, battery storage, all electric homes, or electric vehicle charging. Visit siea.com/timeofday for details.



^ Brendon Beach

THE BRENDON BEACH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

BY TREVOR VIGIL

To San Isabel Electric Association, scholarships are about providing opportunity for young adults who are developing what makes them special. We know firsthand just how many different talents and skills people have to offer and how important it is that those abilities are cultivated. For this reason and more, San Isabel Electric is adding a new scholarship to its list of yearly awards: The Brendon Beach Memorial Scholarship.

The scholarship is named after Brendon Beach, an SIEA lineworker who tragically passed away earlier this year in an off-duty auto accident. This scholarship is being offered with the intention to honor and respect Brendon's legacy.

"We believe we can pay forward his work and time at SIEA through providing opportunities to a new generation of lineworkers," Board President Jacque Sikes said.

Sadie Beach, Brendon's wife, explained that linework was a good outlet and fit for Brendon. "[As a kid] he climbed everything, he was always on top of a mountain ... he could not hold still."

Sadie explained that being a lineworker gave Brendon the opportunity to succeed, even when people in his life did not think he would.

"He was one of those kids that a lot of people would treat like he was trouble. Being able to succeed because he was able to find the career path that worked best for him meant so much to him," she said.

Most people who take up linework enjoy working outdoors, with their hands, thinking on their feet, and helping people. The path to become a journeyman lineman typically requires six months of trade school followed by four years of on-the-job training in an apprenticeship program.

Sadie, the mother of their three young children, explained that Brendon loved working with his hands and solving problems. She recalled, "He would get a call in the middle of the night and enthusiastically say, 'Welp, time to go to work!'"

Sadie has remained part of the SIEA family since Brendon's death, and she is grateful the co-op is honoring her late husband with this scholarship.

SIEA hopes the Brendon Beach Memorial Scholarship will be an opportunity for a local student to find their fit in a career as a lineworker. This scholarship will cover all tuition and fees related to attending a line school — see full details on the application. The scholarship will be awarded to one high school graduate planning on pursuing a career in linework.

Applications for the Brendon Beach Memorial Scholarship are open now at siea.com/scholarships.

2025 SCHOLARSHIPS APPLY NOW

Apply for a \$1,000 scholarship at
siea.com/scholarships

REQUIREMENTS

Two Letters of Recommendation

Reach out to teachers, counselors, and principals well in advance, give them time to respond to your request.

Copy of Transcript

Contact your school counselor and request a copy of your most recent transcript.

Essay

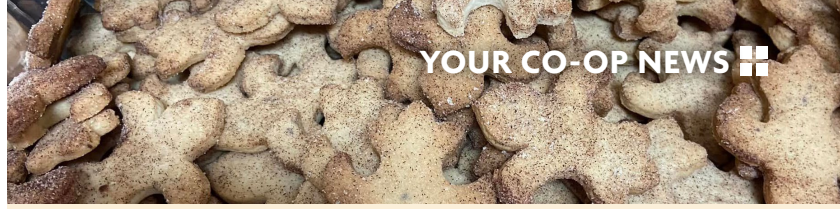
Tell us why you deserve this scholarship! Explain your career path and list your achievements. (school involvement, volunteer work, etc.)

ELIGIBILITY

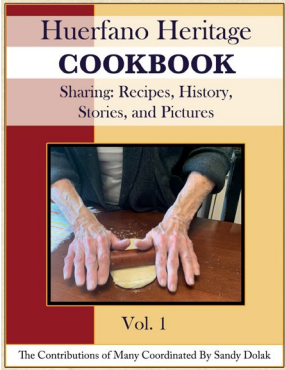
- Parent(s) or guardian(s) must buy electricity from San Isabel Electric
- Must have a 2.0 GPA
- Must be enrolling in higher education in the '25-'26 academic year
- Visit siea.com for full eligibility requirements

Applications Due
**FEBRUARY
15TH**

 San Isabel Electric 719-647-6230
communications@siea.com



BISCOCHITOS



In the holiday spirit, here is a biscochito recipe from the Huajatolla Heritage Foundation's *Huerfano Heritage Cookbook*, a project San Isabel Electric Association and power supplier Basin Electric Power Cooperative donated a combined \$2,000 towards.

The cookbook is a mouthwatering collection of recipes and stories to delight the senses. It's available at Charlie's Market in La Veta, Local Roots, First Choice, Miner's Museum and Walsenburg Mercantile in Walsenburg, El Pueblo Museum in Pueblo, Fort Garland Museum in Fort Garland, the NarrowGauge bookstore in Alamosa, and the Thrift Store in San Luis. Copies can also be ordered by messaging Sandy Dolak, the author, directly at sandy@dolak.biz. The cookbook can be ordered from Amazon, but the Heritage Foundation and the community receive more of the revenue if purchased directly from a local retailer or Sandy.

Biscochitos

By Maria de la Luz Martinez, as shared by her great-great grandson Ken Gardner

This recipe was the first-place winner at GSHA conference Biscochito Contest in Pueblo in 2018 and is included in the cookbook.

Ingredients

- 1 lb.** pure lard (do not use Crisco or other shortenings)
- 1 cup** sugar
- 2** eggs
- 6 cups** flour
- 3 tsp** baking powder
- 1 tsp** salt
- 2 tsp** anise
- 1 small (juice) glass** of wine, brandy, or whiskey
- 1 small glass** of water or as needed
- Cinnamon-sugar for dusting

Instructions

1. Cream sugar and lard.
2. Add eggs.
3. Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt.
4. And add the sugar, lard, and egg mixture.
5. Knead until well mixed.
6. Add whiskey and water to hold.
7. Roll out the dough 1/4" thick, cut into shapes*, and sprinkle with cinnamon-sugar.
8. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 min.

*Traditionally, biscochitos are cut with a knife in either a rectangular or diamond shape. Ends are split and turned back, mimicking the fleur-de-lis shape.

DONATION IMPACT REPORT

OCTOBER 2024



The following donations were approved during the October board meeting. All donations were matched by Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

PUEBLO COUNTY			
Pueblo West Dance Team	UDA Nationals	\$500	Pueblo County
HUERFANO COUNTY			
Huerfano Community Bible Church	Fall Carnival at Huerfano Community Bible Church	\$500	Huerfano County
MyPack Incorporated	Foster Kid Backpacks	\$1,000	Huerfano County
LAS ANIMAS COUNTY			
Primero School District Re-2	Fall Fun Night Trunk or Treat	\$100	Las Animas County
Fishers Peak Fire Department	Fishers Peak Fire Department Annual Fundraising	\$1,000	Las Animas County

San Isabel Electric operates under seven cooperative principles which includes practicing a Concern for Community. Each board member lives in the community they serve, and we all work together to help our communities thrive.

Each month, the Board of Directors donates to community projects to help keep our communities strong and growing. All philanthropic funding comes from unclaimed capital credits not from member rates and electric bills. Our process for using unclaimed capital credits follows state law for unclaimed property. Unclaimed capital credits cannot be used for system improvements, maintenance, payroll or other overhead costs.

For more information about capital credits and unclaimed capital credit, visit siea.com/capitalcredits.

THE ENERGY GAP

GEOTHERMAL'S ROLE IN ACHIEVING 100% CARBON-FREE ENERGY

BY RYAN ELARTON GENERAL MANAGER

Geothermal energy harnesses the earth's internal heat, a renewable source continuously generated within the planet. This renewable energy resource could have a role in Colorado's transition to 100% carbon-free energy if significant high-temperature resources are discovered.

Traditional geothermal reservoirs for production of electricity — naturally occurring areas of hydrothermal (hot-water) resources — are found deep underground. Geothermal energy taps into the earth's internal heat through deep wells that produce steam to drive electricity-generating turbines. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, nearly half of Colorado has geothermal resources of at least 200°F, but there has been little exploration of those resources.

Reliability and on-demand power

To help us with this article, we consulted a neighbor: Sangre de Cristo Electric Association's Senior Business Development and Key Accounts Advisor Mike Allen.

Private investors are seeking funding for a test drilling project in SDECA's area near Mount Princeton Hot Springs to evaluate the economic feasibility and associated impacts and risks of developing a geothermal power plant.

Geothermal power plants provide consistent baseload power, crucial for a carbon-free energy grid. Baseload power is the minimum amount of power needed to meet the power demands of the households and businesses connected to the grid at one time. Similar to natural gas plants, geothermal plants can complement wind and solar, filling the gaps when these renewables aren't producing energy.

The extra reliability that geothermal provides requires highly skilled plant operators to keep the plant running round the

clock. "[If] you want reliability, you need people," Allen said.

Unlike natural gas, geothermal operates optimally at a steady pace rather than on demand. Although geothermal plants take more time to reach full capacity, they outpace coal and gas power plants. The only generation source that has a higher capacity factor is nuclear.

Affordability

The costs of developing geothermal resources remain uncertain, especially in unexplored regions like ours. Exploration alone can cost

resource is found, secondary economic benefits may emerge, including thermal-network heating, agriculture, and recreational hot springs developments.

Allen noted it is not known if the development of geothermal electricity near a developed recreational hot spring could degrade the water temperature and quality of hot springs. That is one of the impacts that would need to be studied at the proposed test site which is within a few miles of Mt. Princeton Hot Springs.

Safety and the environment

If properly sited, designed, operated, and monitored, geothermal plants pose minimal environmental risks. However, federal, state, and local authorities have the power to reject development applications or shut down plants if environmental concerns can't be addressed or regulations are violated.

"The footprint of fuel resources and the footprint of land are good metrics for measuring how clean the energy is," Allen explained.

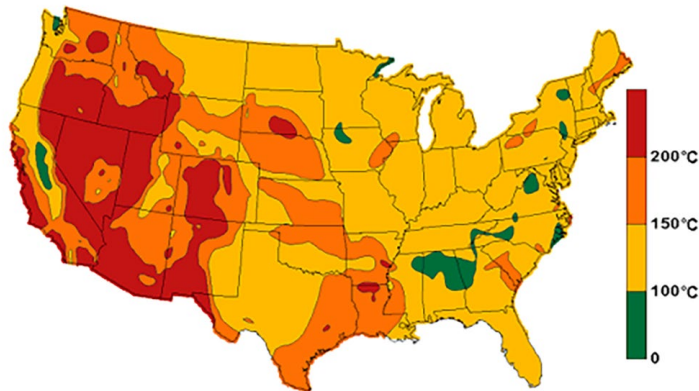
"Every single power generation source has a footprint somewhere."

Geothermal's small footprint makes it one of the cleanest energy sources available. With fewer land requirements than wind and solar, minimal seismic risk, and minimal impacts on water, geothermal ranks close to nuclear in terms of efficient land use for high production of reliable energy and produces no carbon emissions.

Geothermal beyond electricity

In addition to electricity, shallow geothermal resources provide heating and cooling for buildings through ground-source heat pumps. The EPA calls geothermal heat pumps the most energy-efficient and environmentally clean systems for building temperature control. San Isabel Electric offers rebates for both ground-source and air-source heat pumps; details are available at siea.com/rebates.

Geothermal resources of the United States



Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy (public domain)

\$5 to \$10 million, with a five- to seven-year timeline to reach operational status. This high upfront investment makes geothermal a risky endeavor, as exploratory drilling could reveal unviable resources. However, federal and state grants and tax incentives help reduce these risks, encouraging exploration.

Once operational, geothermal power's wholesale cost is comparable to the traditional baseload energy sources of coal and natural gas. While geothermal energy is costlier than wind or solar, it offers added reliability as a baseload power source that wind and solar cannot provide.

Job creation and economic impact

Constructing a typical small-scale geothermal power plant would infuse a local economy with temporary jobs during the build phase, and about a dozen full-time permanent jobs. If a significant geothermal