

# **2026 San Miguel Power Association (SMPA) Board Election**

## **Val Szwarc Candidate Biography Answers – District #6**

- 1) Please give a brief description of your background. Please highlight the traits, skills or experiences that you feel qualify you to be a San Miguel Power Association (SMPA) Board Representative.**

I am retired from an engineering and scientific research career, and I am very active in the local Ridgway and Ouray County Community, including Ouray County Planning Commission, Dark Sky initiatives, and a number of non-profit boards all with governance and leadership responsibilities.

And I believe my experience and education (MS Engineering University of Pennsylvania, Executive MBA, University of Colorado, BS Meteorology Penn State, and Cooperative Credentialed Director certification from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association) provides a unique combination of skills to understand the technical as well as governance issues of a small rural electric COOP and to provide meaningful oversight to SMPA as it strives to provides its members with safe, reliable, cost-effective, and environmentally responsible electric service.

- 2) The mission of San Miguel Power Association (SMPA) is “to provide our members with safe, reliable, cost-effective, and environmentally responsible electrical service, while demonstrating both cooperative responsibility and support for the communities we serve.” Please share your opinion on what is the best way to fulfill this mission over the next four years.**

I plan to continue to be a strong advocate for my district 6 membership and to continue advocating for the cost-effective integration of renewables, grid resiliency technologies such as community microgrids, and residential technologies to help mitigate the impacts of TOU rates on SMPA member-consumers. I will also advocate for expanded use of balanced incentives and on bill payment programs to make residential technologies affordable to my district 6 membership as well as all SMPA members.

- 3) Today’s electric power industry is subject to many technological, environmental and political pressures. Describe your vision for San Miguel Power Association (SMPA) within this context.**

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In this environment of a warming and drying climate, especially in western Colorado, I will be leveraging my experience and training (BS Meteorology Penn State) as a former NOAA and National Renewable Energy Lab/DOE Climate Scientist and Meteorologist to continue advocating for the incorporation of seasonal climate outlooks as provided by the National Climatic Center as strategic improvements to SMPA's revenue budgeting process.

### **4) Please share any other thoughts, facts or ideas you'd like voters to consider while casting their ballot**

As Director to Colorado Rural Electric Association, I will advocate at the State level for legislation that promotes more renewable integration and carbon reduction initiatives within the Generation, Transmission, and Distribution components of the Colorado electrical grid.