

ENERGYWISE

YOUR SAN MIGUEL POWER MEMBER NEWSLETTER



CONTACT INFORMATION

Nucla
170 W. 10th Ave.
P.O. Box 817
Nucla, CO 81424
(970) 864-7311
Toll Free: (877) 864-7311

Ridgway
720 N. Railroad St.
P.O. Box 1150
Ridgway, CO 81432
(970) 626-5549
Toll Free: (877) 864-7311

Both Offices Open:
M - TH • 7:00am – 5:30pm

www.smpa.com
www.facebook.com/SanMiguelPower

In the event of a power outage, contact your local SMPA office to reach our 24-hour dispatch.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

energywise@smpa.com
(970) 626-5549 x2120

SAFETY TIPS

RV GENERATOR SAFETY

'Glamping' this summer? Follow these electric generator safety tips to avoid CO poisoning:

- Inspect the exhaust system on the generator before using
- Always make sure the exhaust is directed away from the camping area
- Do not use it at night

San Miguel Power Association is an equal opportunity provider and employer. In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Person with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800)877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call

(866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

FEATURE STORY

A.I. Firewatch System Proves Its Worth

“If there was ever a question, this summer has proven that the investment was well worth it.”

That's the sentiment from Telluride Fire Protection District (TFPD) Chief John Bennett regarding the PANO-AI fire detection system that's currently scanning county, state and federal lands in portions of SMPA's service territory. "So much of wildland fire protection is about early detection," says Chief Bennett "...and that's exactly what the PANO system does."

Back in 2023, SMPA and TFPD took an innovative first step to leverage an emerging technology from worldwide company, PANO-AI and applied it to wildland safety and fire protection. As a result, four 360-degree, high-definition cameras were installed at high-altitude perches at the Raspberry Communications Tower, Telski Lift #9, Grayhead and McKenzie Springs.

The video feed of these cameras is analyzed, in real time, by an Artificially Intelligent (AI) system. When the system detects an anomaly, an on-duty operator is alerted and local fire protection authorities can be notified, based on human discretion. The process is extremely fast and efficient.

"It's a very effective tool," says SMPA Chief Operating Officer (COO), Jeremy Fox. "Most often, when we receive an alert from PANO, it is the very first notification." A notable example was the recent Bucktail fire in Montrose County, near Nucla. "When we received the call on that fire from Norwood, through mutual aid," recalled Chief Bennett, "...our crews were already geared up and ready to deploy." In several other cases, fire crews had been engaging in fire suppression on a scene before the first 9-1-1 call was received.

In addition to the time advantage, the PANO system has demonstrated a better-than-promised range. "We actually received an alert of an event on the Grand Mesa," stated Chief Bennett. The site is located about 40 miles beyond the nameplate range of the camera that saw it.

"I am very proud of our partnership with the TFPD," said SMPA CEO, Brad Zaporski. "This relationship has enabled the deployment of some of the most advanced wildfire protection technology currently available, and which is performing beyond our expectations to protect the communities that we serve."

To enhance public safety, all PANO alerts are shared with an inter-agency dispatch center. San Miguel, and other counties, fire districts, and two power transmission authorities have all been benefitting from the improved vigilance. Currently, the only funding partners are the TFPD & SMPA.

"We are hoping that other local organizations will see the value and pledge support for the program," stated Bennett. "With a discounted price ensured by the 3-year contract, and support from additional partners, we could not only continue the program in its current form; we could expand it with the addition of more cameras."

"It's clear that PANO's mission is well-aligned with that of the Telluride Fire Protection District and of San Miguel Power Association," said Fox. "It's exciting to be part of an advanced solution for wildfire protection, but we need help if the program is to continue protecting our lands into the future."



A 360° High-Definition PANO-AI Camera

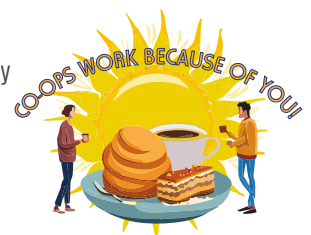


The system flags fire starts across vast distances.

Come On In and See Us!

Did you know that October is National Cooperative month? SMPA likes to celebrate by appreciating the members that make us who we are. That's YOU!

If you come into our front lobby either in Nucla or Ridgway on October 1-3, from 9 AM to 4:30 PM, you'll be treated to breakfast, lunch or snacks all day as well as fresh local hot cider and a cool gift, too! We love our members!



TSGT Rate Proposal Approved by FERC, SMPA to Review Rate Design

A new wholesale rate design, submitted by SMPA's wholesale power provider, Tri-State Generation and Transmission (Tri-State) has been accepted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The wholesale rate is effective Aug. 1, 2024.

"We had actually expected this 6.2% rate increase from Tri-State about six months ago," said SMPA Chief Executive Officer, Brad Zaporski. "Our Board of Directors approved a plan to defer revenue in order to ensure our ability to pay, while avoiding rate shock to our members." With this plan already under way, SMPA will meet its obligations this year.

The increase does stand as a tangible reminder that the cost of electrical capacity are going up. A non-profit electric cooperative, like SMPA has only two ways to generate revenue to cover expenses, the money can be borrowed or revenue can be recovered through retail electricity rates.

As SMPA undergoes its annual budgeting process, there is a possibility that the staff will recommend a rate increase for 2025 to help cover the increased wholesale rate from Tri-State. If this happens, the board can direct staff to reduce expenses—potentially reducing member services, use more deferred revenue to soften the impact, or they can approve a rate increase—typically, realized as an increase to the fixed base charge on the monthly electric bill ...or they can employ some combination of all three methods.

To learn more about this topic, watch for updates in this newsletter. Also, you may have an opportunity to ask about it directly. See our "Power Hours" ad to find out when we'll be visiting your area. Also, don't forget that you can provide feedback at comments@smpa.com.



The Heat Beneath Our Feet Could Western Slope Geothermal Help Colorado Reach Renewable Energy Goals?

Of all the energy sources we consider "renewable," one that can also be called "steady" is geothermal energy. Geothermal electric production converts heat below the earth's surface into clean, round-the-clock power through wells drilled deep underground. "There's enormous potential [for geothermal electricity], largely because of our seismology," said Colorado Governor, Jared Polis. "We happen to have great subsurface heat in Colorado."

The Western Slope is a large part of that equation. With natural hot springs in Ouray, Orvis, Rico, Dunton and Log Hill, the San Miguel Power's service territory could be considered a hot bed (pun intended) of geothermal potential!

Challenges to geothermal energy development include the high upfront costs of exploration, drilling risks, and the need for technological advancements to tap into deep geothermal resources efficiently. Despite these challenges, there is growing interest from both public and private sectors, fueled by the potential for clean energy and economic benefits such as job creation and energy independence.

Local organizations looking to realize that potential include the Good Shepherd Ranch, LLC which is an extended family of entrepreneurs, engineers and ranchers, with a vision of creating sustainable development solutions on their unique 960-acre property in the midst of SMPA territory. "There are several recent breakthroughs in technological barriers that place geothermal energy on the cusp of mass commercialization," says Wendy Fenner, PE and President of ZGEO Energy who has studied the geothermal potential of the region and is ready to start drilling on Good Shepherd Ranch.

Another entity working toward the utilization of local geothermal resources is the Rico Geothermal Coalition, a partnership of Rico residents and industry partner, Teverra. The coalition was recently awarded grant funding through the Colorado Geothermal Grant Program for a Community District Heating/Thermal Energy Network Grant.

Colorado's Renewable Energy Standard and incentives for clean energy projects provide a favorable environment for geothermal development. Technology and workflow advances adapted from



Photo courtesy of Rico Geothermal Coalition

oil and gas have also expanded the industry's ability to precisely direct fluid flow below ground, and advanced 3-D subsurface modeling, has changed the design processes of projects, drilling wells, and managing reservoirs Harvesting technologies like conventional steam, binary, combined cycle, and integrated two-level power plants are all options to consider as research continues.

While geothermal energy exploration on Colorado's Western Slope remains in the exploratory phase, it's exciting to think that such a steady, abundant, emissions-free energy source is within reach as our state marches toward its 2040 goal of 100% renewable energy.



Power Hours is Back!

Sometimes the best way to get answers is to ask 'em directly. See when & where we'll meet near you at www.smpa.com/2024-power-hours



We have received reports of recent scam activity.

If you receive a call from the "power company," and you suspect it is not us, hang up and call our main line (970) 864-7311 to verify your account status.

The most recent report recounts a scammer offering a "senior discount" for power. Don't be fooled.

SMPA POWER PLAY

THIS MONTH'S PUZZLE:
I LET DEER NOT YAC
Hint...Beat the heat.

Last Month's Answer: ELECTRIC THERMAL STORAGE

SUBMIT YOUR ANSWER
and be entered into a drawing
for a fun prize to:

EnergyWise
PO Box 1150
Ridgway, CO 81432