

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

WINTER DRIVING TIPS:

- Increase following distance on icy roads.
- Watch shady spots and bridges; they take longer to melt.
- Be sure your car is visible to others when stopped.

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 Balm for Fear

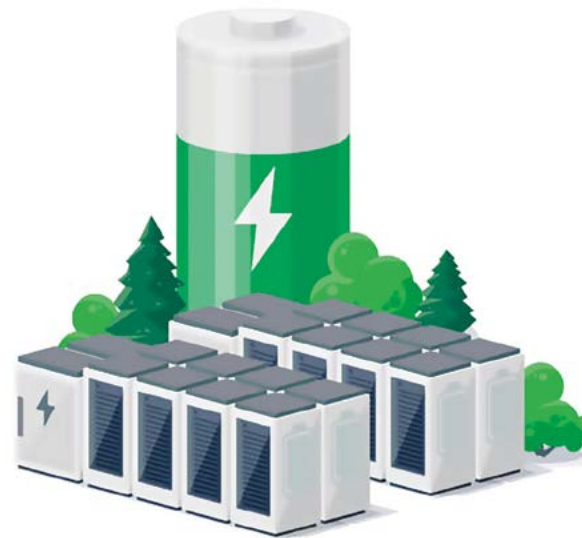
“Some people do well with uncertainty,” noted Kendra Held, Climate Action Coordinator for the regional sustainability non-profit, EcoAction Partners. “I am not one of them... I am a planner. When I think about natural disasters like wildfires or blizzards that knock out power, I feel fear.” It’s a feeling that is shared by many who live, work and play in the San Juan Mountains and the Western Slope of Colorado. Whether it’s the news of wildfires in California, or recent memory of local fatalities due to avalanches, there are plenty of sobering reminders of Mother Nature’s power and fury.

Yet we do live and thrive here. The communities within the San Miguel Power Association service territory are vibrant centers of recreation, tourism, and culture. A population that flourishes in such a rugged climate does so because of its resilience.

It’s comforting to know that a multi-agency committee (MAC) group made up of representatives from local government, fire districts, public health and healthcare, volunteer organizations, community foundations, and private utilities meets quarterly to prepare for the hazards that pose a risk to our area through planning, training, and resource allocation. In 2025, the MAC group will be involved in the Colorado Emergency Preparedness Assessment, a re-write of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, the San Miguel County Emergency Operations Plan update, and community HazMat planning and awareness, among many other things.

“When I see how the members of our communities connect with each other to become better prepared,” says Held, “it’s like a balm for the fear.”

Among the dangers that threaten our lifestyle, there is the ever-present possibility of losing electrical power. Weather events, constant erosion, and naturally occurring incidents are some of the most common causes of power outages in our region. This fact has driven SMPA to search for ways to help improve the resiliency of its communities’ electrical infrastructure.



Recently, SMPA has managed to secure funding for feasibility and planning for microgrid projects in Ophir, Rico, Ridgway and for communications backup at both SMPA facilities in Ridgway and Nucla. As a result, additional construction grants in Ridgway and Rico have been obtained for large battery systems. The SMPA communications feasibility projects have led to construction grants for battery backup in Ridgway as well as a solar and battery system in Nucla. And additional funds have been made available for a new battery system at Ridgway’s Space-to-Create building and for additional carport-mounted solar arrays at the SMPA facility in Ridgway. These funds, granted by the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), through their Microgrids for Community Resiliency (MCR) program, come to a total of \$4.5 million, which is nearly half of the total awarded throughout the state.

Additionally, the Silverton GOLD (Goal of Less Dependency) resiliency team, in which SMPA is a partner, has advanced to Phase 2 of the U. S. Department of Energy’s Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED) New Era Grant process. Thus far, the team has accessed \$83,000 for energy storage system, solar array and microgrid design feasibility. The data and planning from these phases will inform a future construction grant application. Feasibility work is also being done for behind-the-meter microgrids at Silverton anchor institutions like the Town Hall and Fire Department.

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Rebates are Back!

SMPA currently pays rebates for consumer equipment that can help with home and business energy efficiency, and peak reduction.

Often, the purchase of appliances for which we have rebates is an investment which pays off in savings over time. Plus, technologies, identified by power-providers as worthy of attaching a rebate, tend to be on the cutting edge of the industry with regard to energy efficiency and beneficial electrification. If you are in the market, or have purchased one of the below in the last 60 days... or know someone who has, be sure we receive an application. It can mean money back now, and on an ongoing basis through savings.

- Heat Pumps
- Appliances & Appliance Recycling
- Induction Cooktops
- Whole House Fans
- Smart Thermostats
- Water Heating
- Outdoor Electric Power Equipment
- Electric Vehicle Charging Equip.
- Home Batteries
- Electric Commuter Bicycles
- Timers
- Variable Speed Drive Retrofit
- Residential and Commercial Audits



SMPA also provides education on these technologies as well as rebates and promotion of tools that improve energy-efficiency and beneficial electrification.

See www.smpa.com/energy#berebates.

Congratulations to Three Winners of the Sharing Success Economic Development Grants from SMPA and CoBank:



Ouray Ice Park –
UIAA Youth World Championship Event: \$5,000



Rico Trails Alliance –
Infrastructure development, and Outreach Support Mountain Bike Trail System: \$10,000



West End Economic Development –
Grant for Facade Improvements: \$6,000

Board District #5 & #7 Elections Announced

Two positions on SMPA's Board will be up for election this year. If you live near Silverton, Ouray, Ophir, or Mountain Village, you may be eligible to run.

ELECTION SCHEDULE

- February, 2025:**
This notice mailed to members in District #5 and District #7.
- March, 2025:**
Nomination packets available for pick up at SMPA Offices. Email alex@smpa.com for digital.
- April 3, 2025:**
Nomination Packets (*Petitions with 15 or more valid member signatures*) DUE. Completed petitions to be posted on www.smpa.com the following week
- April 21, 2025:**
Date of Record: (*New Election District Members or those who switch their primary account to an election District after this date will not be eligible to vote in 2025.*)
Paperless voting email campaign allowing members to "turn off" their paper ballot, if they wish.
- Mid-May, 2025:**
Where the election is contested, ballots are mailed to members and online voting opens.
- June 4, 2025:**
Mail-in & e-ballot deadline. Online voting closes. Mail-in ballots must be RECEIVED by close of business.
- June 5, 2025: ELECTION AND ANNUAL MEETING**
Ridgway, Colorado. An in-person / virtual event. See www.smpa.com to register. (Election results announced.)

MEMBER DIVIDENDS

As a cooperative, San Miguel Power Association (SMPA) is owned by its members, and member dividends, also known as "capital credits", reflect each member's ownership in the cooperative. From time to time, allocations for a given year or combination of years are cashed out as "Member Dividends" and returned to the members, which can include individuals and organizations alike.

This year, the co-op sent out nearly \$1 million in unclaimed Member Dividend checks to members who received electric service during 1995. One such member was the Norwood School. "Norwood Public Schools greatly appreciate the Dividend Check from San Miguel Power," stated Todd Bissell, Interim Superintendent of Norwood Public Schools. "Staff will be able to use the money to buy classroom materials that will enhance and enrich the educational opportunities for the students at NPS. Thanks again for the Dividend Check."



Scholarship Deadlines are Fast Approaching...

Students can access funding for college or vocational training through SMPA Scholarships. Check out the opportunities at www.smpa.com/content/scholarships. **Deadline: March 10th. Apply today!**

A Balm for Fear continued: These electrical resiliency projects, along with all of the other disaster recovery plans and preparations being made by local emergency planning teams hold the promise of greater resiliency for our local communities. This means that, in an emergency, power, heat and light can be restored quickly and for durations that allow storms to pass and repairs to be made. It means safety and security for the citizens and neighbors that make these Western Slope communities so inviting. Held sums it up with these words: "When we are connected, we are more prepared. It means that together, we are resilient."



THIS MONTH'S PUZZLE:
Y IF ILL BE STANDING IN A PAN
Hint... Don't start without 'em.

Last Month's Answer: OFF-PEAK POWER

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

EnergyWise
PO Box 1150
Ridgway, CO 81432



vitalant.org

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19
11:30 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.
170 W. 10TH AVE., NUCLA