

ENERGY WISE

YOUR SAN MIGUEL POWER MEMBER NEWSLETTER



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

In the event of a power outage, contact your local SMPA office. If it is after hours, you will be able to automatically transfer to our 24-hour dispatch.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS

Send your questions or suggestions for the editors of EnergyWise to:
energywise@smpa.com
(970) 626-5549 x212

SAFETY TIP

The kitchen is the heart of the home, especially at Thanksgiving. Kids love to be involved in holiday preparations, but make sure they stay away from hot food and liquids. The steam or splash from vegetables, gravy or coffee could cause serious burns.

San Miguel Power Association is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at intake@usda.gov.

NOTABLES: Red Mountain Rockslide Repair: Giving Thanks

A message from your General Manager, Kevin Ritter



Kevin Ritter
SMPA General Manager

Dear Members,

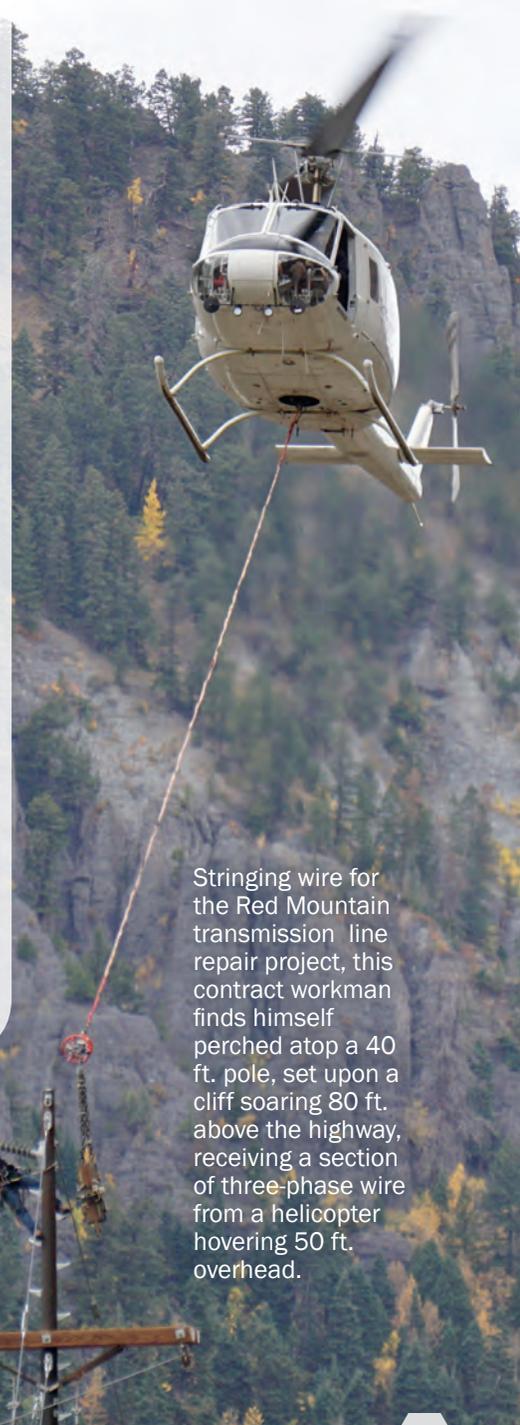
It might be an understatement to say that your electric cooperative has been facing some challenges recently. But if the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday can remind us of anything, it should be that it is during the challenging times that being thankful matters most.

One of our challenges began with a rockslide that took place in mid-January of 2014, over Red Mountain Pass. The event damaged our 44 KV transmission line, causing it to lose power. The line was part of the system that provided backup power to the communities of Ouray, Ridgway, Colona and all of the neighborhoods in between. Power was re-routed, and the communities were re-energized, but without the backup line, they were entirely dependent upon the remaining infrastructure. Any event that could cause a major power outage would likely cause a long one.

Due to the many complexities involved at the time, a repair wasn't immediately feasible. So the Engineers and Operations folks at San Miguel Power Association (SMPA) started making plans. There were matters of weather and logistics to consider, but another vital consideration was the effect that inevitable road closures would have on local business. Working with the affected towns, counties and chambers of commerce, business owners, as well as with the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), we finally came up with a plan to repair the line in the fall of 2015. We truly understand that no time is without problems when the road is closed, but working with everyone, we tried to pick a time that minimized the impacts.

The project required us to replace four two-pole structures encompassing nearly a mile of three phase line with multiple anchors at each

ROCKSLIDE cont. on page 2



Stringing wire for the Red Mountain transmission line repair project, this contract workman finds himself perched atop a 40 ft. pole, set upon a cliff soaring 80 ft. above the highway, receiving a section of three-phase wire from a helicopter hovering 50 ft. overhead.

Rockslide *...continued from pg. 1*

location. All of this was set in solid rock perched on a cliff about 80 feet above U. S. Highway 550. To ensure a safe environment, traffic along Red Mountain Pass highway would have to be stopped during the working hours. In order to minimize the road closure time, the highest level of efficiency and coordination was required. We hired leading electrical contractor, Wasatch Electric to do the construction, and we were continually impressed with their capabilities and professionalism. Also, we coordinated with CDOT who was making crib wall improvements at the rockslide site. There were times when our crews were, literally, working right on top of each other. We are truly thankful to have been able to count on these organizations as team members in the overall restoration project.

The next part of our challenge occurred when our crews discovered that the transmission line had been vandalized by wire thieves taking advantage of the line's de-energized state. They had cut down poles and stolen several spans of copper wire, presumably to sell for a profit. With fall already in full swing, and winter fast approaching, our operations department did not have time to dwell on the loss. Police reports were filed, new equipment was secured, and our crews went right to work rebuilding the missing infrastructure.

Meanwhile, on the mountain pass, repairs were going as scheduled when another problem was discovered. At site #2, (the one directly visible as you drive along the highway) workers found a significant opening in the rock creating a possible slab-off hazard. It was determined that re-installing the "H-shaped" two pole structure as planned, would not be safe. So again, it was time for the engineering department to swing into action. They quickly re-designed the structure as a "T-shaped" single-pole configuration



These linemen commuted to their work site via a 135 ft boom lift.

that would take its strength from the newer metal pole material that would be used. Work crews moved on to other pole sites while these new plans were drawn up. Then, they returned as soon as the plans were finalized. The whole event required no more time than was originally allotted.

The next phase of the repair involved the use of a helicopter to bring the several thousand pounds of poles and wires to the work sites. Expert piloting and surgical precision were required to put these assets in place safely. Again, our gratitude goes to the pilot, and the technicians who completed these tasks safely and efficiently. Their efforts continue a tradition of boldness and bravery that has come to define the communities of this rugged country.



On-site construction crewmen relayed observations to engineering staff to bypass an unexpected rock slab hazard.

With the line reconstruction apparently complete, SMPA and CDOT were proud to officially open the highway one day early. But the challenge wasn't over yet. As our operations crews set up to re-energize the line, they discovered that the wire thieves had struck again. This time, they had chosen a more remote section of the line and cut down two more structures. They also harvested more than 3,000 feet of copper wire even as the reconstruction project was under way further north. As the last leaves were falling to the ground, our operations crews, again, gathered their materials and went to work.

Finally, on Friday, October 16th, our work crews re-energized the line. It will once again supply backup power to our communities in the event of an interruption of the primary power supply this winter, and into the foreseeable future.

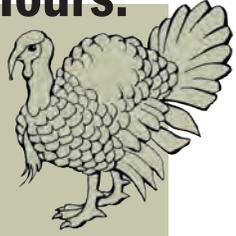
A story like this includes several chances for us to dwell upon our misfortunes, but it can also serve as a reminder of how well we can work together, how adaptable we are and how much bravery there can be in the simple act of answering a call for aid, and doing one's job. With a renewed sense of humility, I'd like to speak for our cooperative when I say, "thank you" to all the heroes of this project. And "thanks" to you members who endured as we strove to get it done. There is great strength in our community, and that is enough to overcome any challenge.

Since this will be my last opportunity to speak as the General Manager of your cooperative, I would like to wish you all a wonderful Thanksgiving, this year and into the future. Take the time to spend with your family and be thankful together; look for the blessings we all receive.

Thanksgiving Hours:

Nucla: Closed Wednesday, Nov 25 & Thursday, Nov 26 (always closed Fridays)

Ridgway: Closed Thursday, Nov 26 & Friday, Nov 27 (always closed Mondays)



Hey Juniors, Apply Now!

Interested in learning about leadership? Check out these two fantastic opportunities!

NRECA YOUTH TOUR (JUNE 9 - 16)

This is your chance to spend an educational and fun week in our nation's capitol, learning about government, electric cooperatives and leadership.



CREA/CEEI YOUTH CAMP (JULY 17 - 22)

Sometimes the best way to learn about cooperatives is to form one. You'll do that, plus you'll meet new friends, go rafting, and experience northern Colorado in all its glory.



Submit one application for either or both events. Find Application at: www.smpa.com → Community Programs → Youth Programs
Deadline: December 11, 2016

LEADING THE WAY!



Wiley Freeman, our Energy Services Executive answers a solar energy question at the National Rural Electric Association's Western Regional Meeting.



Don't Forget!
Holiday Card Coloring Contest entries due Monday, Nov. 30!