



The Results are In:  
SMPA Board  
Directors announced



Phase 1 Highway  
550 Work  
Concludes



Reduce Your  
Risk to Wildfire

JULY 2022

# ENERGYWISE



Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives  
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YOUR SAN MIGUEL POWER MEMBER NEWSLETTER



## CONTACT INFORMATION

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Nucla, CO 81424  
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P.O. Box 1150  
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Toll Free: (877) 864-7311

**Both Offices Open:**  
M - TH, 7:00a.m. - 5:30p.m.

[www.smpa.com](http://www.smpa.com)  
[www.facebook.com/SanMiguelPower](https://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](mailto:energywise@smpa.com)  
(970) 626-5549 x212

## SAFETY TIPS

### FOREST FIRE PREVENTION TIPS

- Obey local laws regarding open fires, including campfires.
- Keep all flammable objects away from fire.
- Have firefighting tools nearby and handy.

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(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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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

## Work Above Highway 550 Concludes

It was 2 PM on a Tuesday when he made the call. "...too windy to fly," said Vegetation Management Engineer, Hans Hartman. With only five days scheduled to remove felled timber from the SMPA Right-of-Way above Highway 550 on Red Mountain Pass ...and now two of them ruined by wind gusts too strong to use the contracted helicopter, time was getting tight.

On Wednesday, the wind relented. The helicopter and work crews didn't waste time praising the heavens. They just got busy. Colorado law mandates that traffic must be stopped whenever any helicopter operations cross a highway, so every minute that they worked, was a minute lost for the traveling public, as well as tourism-dependent businesses in communities on either side of the work zone. Fortunately, the weather was finally cooperating. Two sunny days later, the tree removal was complete.

SMPA thanks its contractor, VM West, for efficient and safe clearing of trees near the Red Mountain power line. We also thank the communities in and around Red Mountain. We realize that this project created an inconvenience to many, but we are proud that our cooperation has greatly reduced the risk of wildfire to you, your homes and your communities. Additional work to access roads may continue this fall, however traffic will not be impacted by these actions.

A planned Phase 2 of the Red Mountain Electrical Reliability and Broadband Improvement Project is currently under evaluation. This phase would encompass the rebuilding sections of a power line that was first constructed in 1928, and the installation of modern fiber optics to improve communications. Read future issues of EnergyWise for updates.



## Power Reliability in the West End

Efforts to make the electric grid in the West End more resilient go back to 2013 when Stage 1 of a three-stage conductor upgrade project was completed. This section of line stretched from Norwood to Redvale.

In 2015, the West End Reliability Project was officially announced. At this time, a lightning-damaged transformer was replaced at the Nucla substation along with associated protective devices. This gave SMPA the ability to keep power flowing during maintenance activities and it minimized the impact of outages by enabling better communication with the Nucla Power Plant.

Work to increase the capacity of power lines continued in 2019. New conductor was installed from West Naturita and East along the river valley. Our current goal is to connect this section to the spans that were completed in 2013 in order to create a complete high-capacity connection between the Nucla and Norwood substations. With this completed upgrade, these two substations will be able to serve as backup for each other. This could greatly reduce the amount of outage time members would experience in case of a substation failure.



*Ultimately, this project is about giving our members a more flexible and resilient system.*

# Strategic Objective: Wildfire Mitigation

After helping fellow Colorado cooperative, Mountain Parks Electric re-build after the devastation of the East Troublesome Fire in 2020, SMPA took the opportunity to use the experience to help prevent the worst of this scenario from impacting our membership.

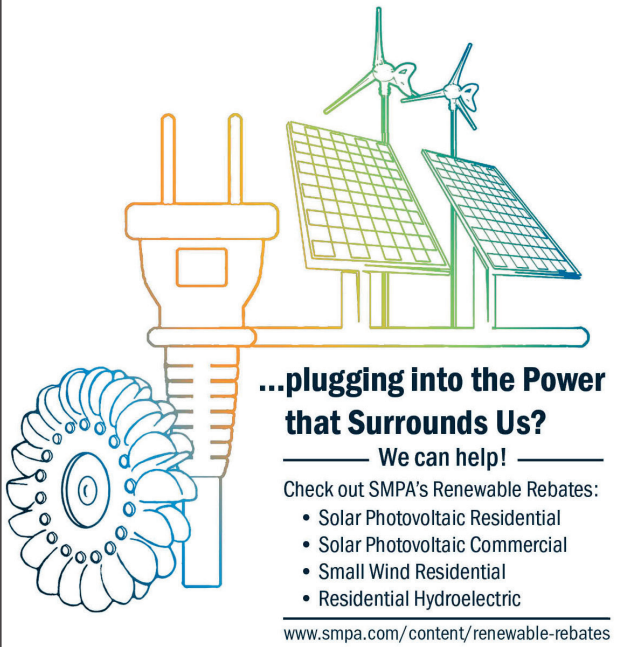
With further knowledge on how to pro-actively formulate a more comprehensive Wildfire Mitigation plan, we have conducted analysis of fire risk throughout our service territory. We started by overlaying several mapping layers in our GIS system to better identify the highest risk areas, and best deploy our limited resources.

In addition, we completed a full analysis of our system settings and protocols for different levels of fire danger. We have also completed a comprehensive Vegetation and Right-of-way management study, which we are now deploying in a strategic manner to best reduce the risk of vegetation around power lines.

You can learn more about our fire prevention measures on the new Wildfire Mitigation page on the new SMPA website.

[www.smpa.com/wildfire-mitigation](http://www.smpa.com/wildfire-mitigation)

At SMPA, we change our system settings on high fire danger days which could result in more frequent outages. Yet this has allowed us to prevent cutting off power completely to certain areas of our system as wildfire danger and drought conditions have continued to worsen.



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[www.smpa.com/content/renewable-rebates](http://www.smpa.com/content/renewable-rebates)



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[smpa.com/content/smarthub-web-instructions#GoPaperless](http://smpa.com/content/smarthub-web-instructions#GoPaperless)

## New Features! Improved Forms! Deep Info.! It's the New Website!

Starting July, 2022. Certain legacy links may need to be updated. Call (970) 209-5593 with questions or suggestions. [www.smpa.com](http://www.smpa.com)

## 2022 Annual Meeting

For the first time ever, SMPA held an online virtual Annual Meeting via the Zoom conference platform. The meeting featured:

- Scholarship Announcements
- Board President's Report
- CEO/General Manager's Report

- Informative Custom Videos
- Board Secretary / Treasurer's Report
- Interactive Question and Answer Period

The meeting was attended by over 100 participants. Thanks to the Board and Staff for helping to build this online experience.

## District #3 Board Election

On Thursday, June 9th, San Miguel Power Association (SMPA) held its Board of Directors election. The seats for Board Districts 3 & 6 were up for election. Concluding the June 9th Annual Meeting, SMPA's independent Election Monitor reported the following results:

In District 6, which covers part of Ouray County, including Ridgway and much of Log Hill Mesa, incumbent Director Debbie Cokes ran unopposed and was deemed reelected per SMPA Bylaws.

In the election for District 3, covering parts of Montrose, San Miguel, Ouray, Dolores and San Juan Counties including Dunton, Norwood, Placerville, Trout Lake, Rico and Sawpit, 289 validated ballots were received. 143 votes were for challenger, Allyn Svoboda and 146 votes were for incumbent, Dave Alexander. Director Dave Alexander was declared the winner and will resume his directorship for another four-year term.



Dave Alexander



Debbie Cokes

# SMPA POWER PLAY

**This Month's Puzzle: IF I GO PELT MI LAND WIT RAIN**  
**Hint: Helps prevent forest fires.**

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

**EnergyWise**  
**PO Box 1150**  
**Ridgway, CO 81432**