

ENERGYWISE

YOUR SAN MIGUEL POWER MEMBER NEWSLETTER



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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

SPRINGTIME ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- Always unplug power tools when they aren't being used.
- Keep all electrical items away from water--even wet grass.
- Call 811 so that underground utility lines can be identified and properly marked before digging.

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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.asc.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

Taking a Tip from Nature...

As the winter nights diminish and make way to stretching daylight hours, the symphony of birdsong intensifies. For those of us with our eyes to the trees, a color change is eminent. The emergence of green signals the arrival of high water, spring winds (perhaps carrying some Utah dust), and more sunshine. To the trees, these changes are significant, marking the start of the crucial season for capturing sunlight energy.

Most trees dedicate only one side of their leaves to photosynthesis, positioning them like solar panels towards the sun. The other side, typically less green, handles respiration and transpiration. As you might recall from science class, leaves orchestrate a fascinating quantum mechanical process, converting sunlight, CO2, and H2O into sugars that fuel the tree's energy needs or are transformed into complex molecules like proteins, cellulose, and lignans.

In our backyard mountains, the aspen (also known as the quaking aspen) takes a unique approach, using both sides of its leaves for photosynthesis. Aspen leaves can actually pivot on their stems allowing them to "quake" in even the gentlest of breezes, offering both sides to energy-rich sunlight.

While some, especially those with deeper scientific knowledge, might contest the exact details presented here, the concept of tree leaves harvesting sunlight energy from both sides is not lost in the design of solar photovoltaic panels. Indeed, some of our mountain communities have deployed biomimicry, the practice of learning from nature, in our sunny backyards using what are known as bi-facial solar modules. These modules boast solar cells designed to capture photons from both the top and bottom, maximizing their sun-harvesting potential. In a 250-kilowatt solar array near the Telluride airport, for example, the backs of the bi-facial modules can collect reflected light bouncing off the snow-covered ground below—a significant advantage in winter.

As we step into spring, the lessons learned from leaves and solar panels resonate. Just as nature has optimized its strategies for capturing sunlight, we too can find inspiration in its ingenuity. Whether it's through biomimicry in solar technology or simply appreciating the silent symphony of photosynthesis unfolding around us, spring reminds us of the interconnectedness of life and the power of harnessing renewable energy. So, take a moment to look up at the vibrant green emerging in the trees, a testament to the sun's enduring power and a reminder of the potential for sustainable solutions right at our fingertips.



You Can Make Your Earth Day Pledge with Help from SMPA!

Learn about our Renewable Energy Rebates for:

- Solar Photovoltaic Residential
- Solar Photovoltaic Commercial
- Small Wind Residential

Visit www.smpa.com/content/renewable-rebates



FERC-Established Contract-Termination Calculation Provides Critical Information

The energy that you purchase from SMPA is generated and transmitted over long distances by wholesale power provider, Tri-State Generation and Transmission (Tri-State), who has recently announced an over 6% increase in rates. Keeping an eye on the cost of wholesale power is part of our Board's strategic plan. Specifically, the Board has set a strategic objective, "to determine if our existing power supply contract best achieves SMPA's mission while providing the financial and contractual flexibility necessary to meet our members' needs."

Last month, a major component of that objective was solidified. Ultimately, the Board will have to compare the cost of staying with Tri-State against the cost of leaving. The Contract Termination Payment (CTP) calculation is the direct payment that SMPA would have to pay Tri-State in order to exit its Wholesale Electric Service Contract (WESC) before its expiration in 2050.

Until recently, different calculation methods were being used to arrive at different CTP, or exit payment amounts. Tri-State's method did not match those of inquiring member systems, including SMPA, United Power, in Brighton, Mountain Parks in Granby and the Northwest Rural Public Power District of Hay Springs, Nebraska. "Now that FERC has determined the method that shall be used by all participants, we can move forward with knowledge of what it will cost to exit our contract early," said SMPA Chief Financial Officer, Lance Lehigh. "The up-to-date CTP for SMPA was announced by Tri-State to be \$52,179,000."

Of course, buying out of the Tri-State contract would only be one of SMPA's concerns, in deciding if exiting our contract is in the best interests of our members. "We would also need to replace the power, and work with Tri-State to move it over their transmission infrastructure to meet us at our substations," stated Lehigh. With the CTP as a known factor, our board and staff can focus on analyzing these other variables in order to make a fully-informed comparison.

For at least the past seven years, the SMPA Board of Directors has been actively engaged in this investigation, and it remains committed to its strategic objective of determining the best way forward for the members of SMPA. "The journey is long," remarked Lehigh. "...but last month's announcement was a significant milestone."



Save the Date: Thursday, June 6th

85th San Miguel Power
Annual Meeting
of Mememrs

Energizing
our Future

- ▶ **In Person:**
SMPA Nucla Office
170 West 10th Ave.
- ▶ **4:30 PM:**
Food, Demos, Voting
- ▶ **5:30 PM:**
Annual Meeting

- ▶ **Virtual:**
Zoom[®] Registration
online at:
[www.smpa.com/
content/annual-
meeting-election](http://www.smpa.com/content/annual-meeting-election)
- ▶ **5:30 PM:**
Annual Meeting



SMPA is an equal-opportunity provider and employer.

- SMPA Updates
- Tech Demonstrations
- Prizes / Gifts
- Bill Credits
- Questions / Answers
- Board Election Results

Prospective Candidates for the District #1 & #4 Board Election:


REMINDER: Your Nomination Packets are due to SMPA on Thursday, April 4th.

For questions or to receive a Nomination Packet, please email alex@smpa.com.



YOU'VE GOT FRIENDS
IN HIGH PLACES.

#ThankALineworker

 **GIVE BLOOD |**

vitalant.org

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17 • 1:30 A.M. - 3:00 P.M.
170 W. 10TH AVE., NUCLA

SMPA POWER PLAY

THIS MONTH'S PUZZLE:
GET CAT TRICS BIE JOVE
Hint...because we said we would.

Last Month's Answer: MICROGRIDS
Last Month's Winner: Carey Skoumal

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

EnergyWise
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Ridgway, CO 81432