

ENERGY WISE

YOUR SAN MIGUEL POWER MEMBER NEWSLETTER



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**JANUARY
2015**



CONTACT INFORMATION

Nucla
170 W. 10th Ave.
P.O. Box 817
Nucla, CO 81424
(970) 864-7311
M - TH, 7:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Toll Free: 1-877-864-7311

Ridgway
720 N. Railroad St.
P.O. Box 1150
Ridgway, CO 81432
(970) 626-5549
T - F, 7:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Toll Free: 1-800-864-7256

www.smpa.com
www.facebook.com/SanMiguel Power

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

Never use an extension cord when plugging in a space heater, as it can cause overheating. Space heaters should be plugged directly into a wall outlet and be the only thing plugged in to the wall outlet.

This institution 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 program.intake@usda.gov.

NOTABLES: Power Line Repair on Red Mountain Postponed

A message from your General Manager, Kevin Ritter

Almost one year ago San Miguel Power lost a 4,000 foot span of our 44kV transmission line on Red Mountain Pass in a rockslide. Unfortunately, that power line will remain out of commission through this winter as well. A variety of factors came into play, but at the forefront of our decision to delay repair work was safety.

The area where our line was damaged is one of the most precarious stretches along the million dollar highway, and for the safety of our crews and contract workers, as well as travelers, we felt it was necessary to close both lanes of traffic. However, our initial Colorado Department of Transportation permit only allowed for single-lane closure. The time table for re-permitting, coupled with winter weather, meant that repair work must be postponed until next spring.

What does that mean for the area? Our system will be operating normally, just as it has been since the line was first damaged. The Red Mountain power line served as a backup feed for the towns of Ridgway and Ouray. The main power supply for that region runs south from Montrose. In the event the main line is affected by an outage, we would be unable to reroute the power supply to the backup line.

This could result in longer outage times for members in the Ridgway and Ouray area. We all know that winter can bring a little higher risk for power outages: snow loading down trees, breaking branches, avalanches, and severe weather. Not to mention, winter outages can be just plain uncomfortable.

Backup lines, like the one on Red Mountain, are one of the most effective ways we improve the strength and reliability of our power system.

Repairs Delayed cont. on page 2



power at altitude

Top: Perched on a rocky cliff, this H structure lost its cross-arms, wires, and other equipment in the slide.

Left: One of the damaged H structures topples down off a sheer rock face onto HWY 550. It will need to be completely replaced this spring.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS NOW AVAILABLE

Applications are now open for San Miguel Power's 2015 scholarships. Applicants must attend school within the co-op's service territory and be a dependent of a San Miguel Power member. They must be graduating in the spring of 2015 and attending a secondary education institution the following school year. Applications are available from all local high school guidance counselors and online at www.smpa.com. Deadline to apply is Feb. 6, 2014.

SMIPA SCHOLARSHIP | \$2,000

SMIPA awards a \$2,000 college scholarship to one graduating senior from each of our six area high schools. Recipients are judged on their academic success, written essay, community involvement, and leadership skills.

TRI-STATE SCHOLARSHIP | \$500

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, SMIPA's wholesale power supplier, allows SMIPA to award two \$500 college scholarships to academically deserving graduating seniors.

BASIN ELECTRIC | \$1,000

Through Tri-State, SMIPA also purchases wholesale power from Basic Electric Power Cooperative. Basin Electric allows SMIPA to select one graduate on its behalf and award a \$1,000 college scholarship.

WES PERRIN MEMORIAL | \$10,000

SMIPA will award one deserving local graduate a \$2,500, four-year renewable scholarship in honor of James "Wes" Perrin. Perrin was a long time SMIPA Board of Director and a passionate advocate for energy efficiency and renewable energy. SMIPA's board established this scholarship in memoriam after Perrin passed away from throat cancer in the spring of 2013. The successful candidate must pursue a degree and career in the energy industry. The scholarship is renewable over the course of four years and will total a maximum of \$10,000.

Community Programs

- Safety Programs
- Youth Programs
- Other Programs
- Donation Requests
- Scholarships
- Rural Electric Youth Training
- Leadership Camp
- Knowledge Bowl
- Holiday Card Coloring Contest
- Youth Career Opportunities

Find the applications at www.smpa.com under Community Programs!

Tree Trimming 101

SMIPA contracts with Asplundh Tree Expert Co., to trim trees encroaching on our power lines in order to maintain a reliable electric system and keep our workers and consumers safe. What's to know beyond that? Turns out, quite a bit.

How do we decide what trees get trimmed? Trees that are planted in our power line rights-of-way and directly under the lines are the easy ones to spot. These trees pose an obvious hazard. They are growing directly into the power lines and will eventually cause blinks or outages. But trees don't have to be in the rights-of-way to be considered hazards. Trees planted outside of our rights-of-way that are growing toward the power lines and even dead trees that can fall into our lines are also targeted in our trimming program. The ultimate goal is to provide a buffer, in this case air space, between our power lines and the trees or vegetation. This keeps our consumers and workers safe and serves as outage prevention.

What if you have a problem tree on your property? Asplundh will trim trees they have identified as hazards even when the trees are located on private property. They will make every effort to connect with the property owner prior to trimming the tree. In general, Asplundh will try to make contact at least two days in advance to explain what they need to do and why. Property owners will be asked to sign an agreement that describes what work needs to be done. If no one is home, Asplundh will leave a door hanger with the same information, which the property owner can sign or choose to contact Asplundh directly with questions. We want to make sure our members are aware of any trimming activities that need to take place on their property.

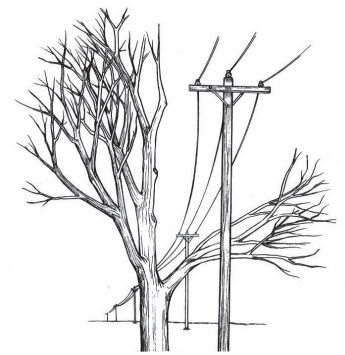
As a property owner you may notice a tree on your property that is growing into the power lines before Asplundh has a chance to identify it. Never trim the tree yourself. Always contact San Miguel Power, and we will coordinate with Asplundh.

How far back do we trim the trees? This is one of the major changes you might notice as our tree trimming program evolves. Our goal is to trim trees on a three-year cycle, meaning that once Asplundh trims a problem tree it shouldn't need to be trimmed for three years. That trim distance can vary dramatically from species to species and depending on the proximity to a water source. In short, you may notice that some trees are trimmed more drastically than in the past. This three-year cycle will help us maintain a regular trimming rotation in addition to visually identifying problem trees.

Why do the trimmed trees look so funny now?

Another big change is the method by which we trim trees. In years past, trees that were growing up into the power lines were simply rounded over or topped off. This method has proven to be harmful to trees and ineffective in the long term. Topped off trees responded with fast growing offshoots directly back up into the power lines.

In contrast, the new method, developed by the National Arborist Association, works to redirect a tree's growth pattern. Aptly termed directional pruning, it encourages growth away from power lines. Trees under power lines that have large Vs in them are directionally pruned. And while it may look a little funny, it's a win-win situation. The tree remains healthy and intact and the risk of that tree impacting our power lines is reduced.



An example of directional pruning. It leaves trees healthy and directs future growth away from the power lines.

REPAIRS DELAYED

Notables continued from page 1

During outages these backup lines, or redundant feeds, allow us to switch members over to the alternate power source and get as many members back online as quickly as possible. With the repairs postponed, that backup option isn't available for the Ridgway and Ouray area. It doesn't mean you'll be going without power, but it could mean that outages might last longer.

What's the bottom line? Power outages could be more inconvenient for our members in the Ouray and Ridgway region. But please, take to heart; our crews will always work to safely restore power as quickly as they can.