

ENERGY WISE

YOUR SAN MIGUEL POWER MEMBER NEWSLETTER



IN THIS ISSUE:

- A More Stable Future: Power Outages and System Reliability Projects - *Outages Highlight Plans for Grid Improvement*.....1
- Congratulations, Henry Benasutti! - *SMPA youth representative to CREA/CEEI Youth Leadership Camp*.....2
- Mark Your Calendars for 2016 Annual Meeting2

APRIL 2016



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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:
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SAFETY TIP

Always look up before moving equipment and raising long or tall objects. Keep everyone and everything—you, the tools and materials you are handling and the equipment you are operating—at least 10 feet away from all overhead power lines. Higher voltage lines require more distance.

NOTABLES: A More Stable Future: Power Outages and System Reliability Projects

Outages Highlight Plans for Grid Improvement

We often take electricity for granted. It makes our homes comfortable day-in and day-out, and it's at the ready with little more than the flip of a switch. But what goes on behind the scenes once that switch is thrown is far more complex. The power grid, which can be described as the largest, most complex machine ever built, involves an intricate network of power lines crisscrossing neighborhoods and open country, over mountains and through cities, which has evolved over the last century to supply consumers with safe, reliable, and affordable electricity.

San Miguel Power Association (SMPA) has a sizeable distribution system to maintain: our lineworkers stay busy keeping over 1,800 miles of line up and running, but there are times when the power goes out. These outages can either be planned or unplanned. Each has its own characteristics:

Planned Outages and the West End Reliability Project

Have you ever received a notification from the folks here at SMPA informing you of a "planned outage?" You may have wondered, "what is a planned outage?" and "why does my electric utility need to perform one?" Occasionally, the equipment we use to bring power to your home needs to be replaced, repaired or updated. When this happens, as a way to keep our crews and you safe, we plan an interruption to electric service.

We do our best to plan these outages during times when you will be least inconvenienced, so we often perform planned outages during school and business hours. We also try to avoid planning these outages during winter or summer months. We understand these are peak times of the year when you depend on running your heating and cooling units the most.

Springtime, therefore, is a relatively good time to make these system improvements. So, with that in mind, we recently began a major system improvement that we call the West End Reliability Project.

In the summer of 2013, lightning struck the transformer at the Nucla substation, cutting power to the West End for nearly 17 hours. In order to get power flowing to the region again, SMPA crews installed an older transformer that had recently been taken out of service due to its age. Members of the West End are still being served by that old transformer. The power is on, but the solution is not permanent. To improve the situation, SMPA has obtained a new transformer.

While Crews are installing it, they'll also upgrade two circuit breakers and associated protective devices that are also outdated. Collectively, we call these operations the West End Reliability Project, and it will give SMPA the ability to keep power flowing during maintenance

RELIABILITY cont. on page 2



Help us celebrate! • Return this Certificate

NATIONAL LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY APRIL 18

We're proud of the work our linemen (and woman) do to keep our electricity flowing. Check the reverse to see how you can show your pride.

RELIABILITY ...continued from pg. 1

activities and it will minimize the impact of outages by enabling better communication with the Nucla Power Plant.

Last month, members on the West End--particularly Nucla and Naturita--experienced the first of the outages associated with this project. We thank you folks for understanding and ask for continued patience as the project progresses. We'll always publish information about upcoming outages on our website, on Facebook, and with a direct phone call to residents who will be affected. In most cases, you can also hear about it on the radio, or see it in the newspapers and on flyers posted around town.

Unplanned Outages and the Telluride Reliability Project

We are able to give warning for planned outages, but sometimes nature gives us an outage with no warning. Back in February, folks in Telluride and Mountain Village got to experience that in a big way. Just as residents and visitors were enjoying their President's Day weekend, an electric power pole in Illium Valley near an old church camp, was struck by a refrigerator-sized rock that tumbled from the canyon wall, approximately 800 feet above. This cut power to most of the Telluride area, including parts of Mountain Village and outlying communities. Line crews from SMPA and from Tri-State Generation and Transmission (Tri-State) which provides power to SMPA, worked through the night and into the next day to access the site, re-set a new pole and re-install the transmission and distribution lines that were broken. The total restoration time was nearly 24 hours.

This outage highlighted the importance of another SMPA endeavor called the Telluride Reliability Project. For years, SMPA, Tri-State and other entities had been working

on a way to provide backup power to this region while preserving the wild, natural landscape that makes it such a tourist destination. With large transmission lines ruled out, SMPA devised an alternative solution: to back up existing service with additional heavy distribution lines. These lines will strengthen the connection between the Telluride & Sunshine substations allowing their transformers to serve as back-ups for each other. With this system in place, power outages that used to last hours could be over in minutes. Also, the new lines will be primarily buried underground, thereby causing almost no impact to local scenery, but best of all, according to Tri-State policies, a project like this qualifies for assistance, which means that Tri-State will cover half the cost.

The design of this project is complete and now it is in the permitting phase. Because the Telluride Reliability Project does cross property lines and land that is owned and maintained by several entities, many permits will have to be obtained before work can begin. Please keep checking this newsletter, www.smpa.com and www.facebook.com/SanMiguelPower for updates on this project.

Nowadays, we depend very heavily on our appliances and digital devices. As we go through our fast-paced lives, it's easy to forget how many instruments and processes have to be working perfectly in order to power that lifestyle. Whether they are planned or unplanned, power outages are inconvenient. Minimizing the number and duration of outages is a big job, but our engineering and operations teams are up to the challenge. You can help by being prepared, being patient and by communicating with SMPA as well as your neighbors until the power is flowing again. Thank you.

**CONGRATS!**

This summer, Ridgway Secondary School's Henry Benasutti will represent our cooperative at the CREA / CEEI Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Clark, Colorado (near Steamboat Springs). He'll learn about electricity and cooperatives while making new friends, going rafting, and experiencing Northern Colorado in all its glory!

Henry Benasutti's essay focused on cooperative leadership and won him a spot in the all-expenses-paid, week-long leadership camp this summer. Go Henry!



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 program.intake@usda.gov.

Say "Thanks!"

When the power goes out, so do our crews--regardless of the weather or time of day. Help us show our crews how much their communities appreciate them. Jot down a quick note of thanks and send it back with your bill. We'll post them in the Linemen's lunch room, and see if we can't get a smile or two.

