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In the event of a power outage,
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Charging Ahead with the E-V-olution

A DECADE AGO, IF YOU WENT SHOPPING FOR AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE, YOU'D BE HARD PRESSED TO FIND MANY OPTIONS OUTSIDE OF GOLF CARTS. TODAY, MAJOR AUTOMAKERS HAVE MORE THAN FIFTEEN HIGHWAY-CAPABLE ALL-ELECTRIC VEHICLES AVAILABLE TO AMERICAN CONSUMERS, AND INDUSTRY INSIDERS PROJECT THAT NUMBER COULD BALLOON TO 75 MODELS IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS (BLOOMBERG, 2017).

All across the country, businesses and communities are adding electric vehicle (EV) charging stations to meet the demand of EV drivers. The majority of these consumers also have charging stations at home. "It's like starting out with a full tank of gas every morning," noted one local EV owner.

The addition of these charging stations to local power grids has electric companies like San Miguel Power Association (SMPA) recognizing a challenge, but also a tremendous opportunity. "It has to do with batteries," says SMPA Member Services Manager, Wiley Freeman. "What makes



an EV different from any other large household appliance, is that it is battery powered, which means that the consumer has a choice of when they draw the power that will run it."

Why should that make such a difference? Well, every month, your electric cooperative writes a check for the power it purchases from its wholesaler. That power bill has two components: the first pays for the energy; the second pays for all the infrastructure necessary to deliver that

energy. The second component is calculated based on the "peak," or the single largest power draw for that month. That's where the opportunity lies. "If our EV drivers can charge their vehicles at times of the day when the rest of the grid is drawing relatively low power," says Freeman, "we can reduce that peak, and save money."

Officials at the San Miguel Authority for Regional Transport (SMART) are already aware of the opportunity. As the public transit organization considers purchasing a fleet of electric vehicles to help meet San Miguel County's transportation needs, it is already looking to design a charging system that would maximize off-peak charging.

Likewise, SMPA wants to enable individual members and organizations like SMART to realize carbon reduction goals by building an EV charging system that is efficient and cost-effective. To that end, SMPA offers rebates to consumers who purchase electric vehicles, as well as to businesses and organizations that install public charging stations. Moreover, SMPA has participated in the installation of some of the early charging stations throughout the territory.

“ A lot of thought must go into designing a program that will shape consumer use to maximize savings, but meeting our members' needs is what SMPA strives for. This EV challenge just gives us one more way to do that. ”

—WILEY FREEMAN, SMPA MEMBER SERVICES MANAGER



The Town of Ridgway's Lu Hauger accepts over \$1000 from SMPA's Member Services Manager, Wiley Freeman and SMPA Key Accounts Executive, Paul Hora at last month's Ridgway Town Council Meeting. To support SMPA's members' growing demand for EV, SMPA covered costs of signage and 20% of the total charging station installation cost, which enabled the other 80% to be covered by a state of Colorado grant.

Telluride/Mountain Village Reliability Comes to Life

Last month, safely buried beneath the snow and soil of Telluride's Galloping Goose trail, something very good happened. An underground power cable surged to life. The event occurred without fanfare, but it signified a new era of power reliability for the mountain towns of Telluride and Mountain Village.

To realize the full value of this silent milestone, one must look back to President's Day weekend, 2016 when a massive boulder came tumbling down a cliff, smashing into a power pole and knocking out power to Telluride and parts of Mountain Village. Because this line was the sole feed for these areas, visitors, residents and businesses had to wait through the night while SMPA and Tri-State line crews plowed through the snow, cleared wreckage, constructed and set a new pole, and finally re-strung and re-energized the lines. When the work was finally done, these mountain towns had been in the dark for nearly 23 hours.

Although much praise was given to the deserving line crews who performed exceptionally under very difficult conditions, many in the community began to ask the question, "Why is there no backup line?" This brought renewed interest to a project proposed by SMPA, years earlier. This project, now dubbed the "Telluride/Mountain Village Reliability Project" proposed to bury a heavy distribution power line connecting the Telluride and Sunshine substations. This would allow one substation to serve as a backup for the other in case of an interruption. "If this line had been in place when the boulder fell," said SMPA Planning Supervisor, Jeremy Fox, "that

outage would have been finished in 1-2 hours rather than going into the following day."

So last spring, with newly acquired permits in hand, SMPA, went to work building the line. The work was difficult, expensive and it required multiple road and trail closures. A special thanks goes out to the San Miguel County staff for their input on the permit and development process as well as the residents of Lawson Hill and Illium Valley for enduring the noise and dust as heavy work crews made progress. Thanks also goes to trail-goers and everyone else who was impacted by the work.

SMPA's wholesale power provider, Tri-State was another major player in this project. With power reliability being fundamental not only to the mission of SMPA, but to Tri-State as well, Tri-State stepped up to pay half of the project cost.

Of course the scars of the work are still evident, but with ongoing re-vegetation efforts, the land will heal, and the end result will be a more robust, secure and invisible power supply system for these mountain towns. As Fox puts it, "Telluride and Mountain Village should have the same power reliability enjoyed by the other communities on our system."

Now that the system is in place, we can look forward to much faster restoration times if other issues arise.



From time to time, the SMPA Board of Directors publishes resolutions to establish the cooperative's direction and inform members and interested parties. Last month, the Board published a resolution which announces a decision related to one of the seven strategic objectives that the board has developed as part of their strategic planning. The resolution establishes the cooperative's current approach to expanding renewables as they relate to power supply while securing current projects surrounding power reliability, communications and rate stability. Information about strategic planning may be found on the SMPA website: www.smpa.com.

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SMPA
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Congratulations to last month's winner: Rob Datsko Last month's Scramble Answer: Kilowatt-hours

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