



A Piece of Local History



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Who Won with Totally Green?

NOVEMBER 2019

# ENERGYWISE



Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives  
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## YOUR SAN MIGUEL POWER MEMBER NEWSLETTER



SAN MIGUEL POWER ASSOCIATION



### CONTACT INFORMATION

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**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)  
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## SAFETY TIPS

### NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL CHILD SAFETY MONTH

- Install child safety electrical socket covers to keep wandering fingers out of harm's way.
- Never leave your child alone in the kitchen with the stove or oven on, and use back burners with the handles turned in.
- Keep a list on the kitchen fridge that has numbers for poison control, the fire and police department, the local ER, and your child's pediatrician's numbers all in one place.

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(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.intakeusda.gov](mailto:program.intakeusda.gov).

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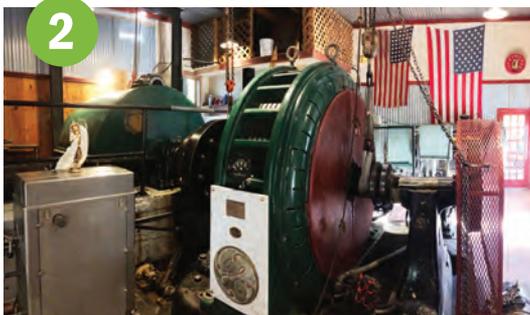
## Touring the Historic Ouray Hydroelectric Power Plant: A Photo Essay

Tucked away from Highway 550 and rising above the Uncompahgre river in Ouray, sits a regional and national treasure that most Ouray visitors miss entirely. Built in the 1890s, the Ouray Hydroelectric Power Plant has been called the pioneer electric plant of the American West. Thanks to the determination of visionary owner, Eric R. Jacobson, and plant engineer, Chris Dobbins, this forerunner of the national electric grid and of our modern lifestyle is, amazingly, still producing power today.

Understandably, when I was invited to tag along as Mr. Jacobson gave a facility tour to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) inspectors as part of their triennial review, I eagerly accepted. Although it's impossible to transcribe the wonder of this first-hand look at an Industrial Age engineering feat against the backdrop of the stunning and perilous San Juans, I offer these few highlights as a representation of the experience.



Our tour began at the plant itself. A well-kept, but humble structure, the plant hardly draws attention from the outside. It's Victorian style fits in with other buildings in town. If it were not affixed to an electrical substation, one might easily mistake it for a residence rather than the oldest operating hydroelectric power plant in the United States. A more hidden give-away is the sign on the north side of the building that reads "Ouray Electric Power and Light" — the original name of the company that incorporated in 1885 to supply DC power to the Beaumont Hotel.



Stepping inside, one is awash in information. From the dual American flags that adorn the sheetrock and corrugated metal back wall, to the playful figurine of a golden Hindu goddess gracing a stark metal box in the foreground, to the generator itself, a bold green and red machine that, despite its modest size, fully occupies its space at the center of the room, this view tells a thousand stories.



A glance behind reveals the switchgear and control panels which would feel quite at home in a Star Wars movie if they weren't shrinking under a metal bookshelf that barely contains hundreds of tattered technical manuals and logbooks. Squeezing past a black metal spiral staircase, one might be surprised to find two other hydroelectric generators sharing a separate area. Humming along with the pulse of the river outside, they seem to compete for attention against their brother in the front room.



Back outside, our tour progresses up the mountain following the penstock that feeds the plant. New meanings attend a sight I've seen from the Box Canyon turn-off many times. Creeping along a deep gorge, the black penstock criss-crosses smaller pipes that serve water to the town and to Ice Climbing Festival-goers in the Winter months.



Continuing to follow the penstock, our journey takes us past “the schoolroom,” — a sheer cliff face that serves as a training area for new ice climbers during that season. A man in his element, Mr Jacobson nonchalantly points out recent repairs to the penstock and its anchored support which doubles as my walkway along the opposite cliff face. (I may have missed some details of his exposition, opting to concentrate on my grip of the handrails.)



Arrived at last! The beginning of the water’s 440 foot decent into Ouray is a dam that is nearly 120 years old. Originally called “one of the most gigantic undertakings in the story of the San Juan,” this dam spans 300 feet across the gorge and prompts only guesses as to how workmen, using mules and wielding 1900s technology managed its construction. Still in good repair and operating, the dam is a testament to the determination of that bygone age.

*My most sincere thanks go to Mr. Jacobson and Mr. Dobbins for opening a window to the past and sharing this historic and unique power delivery system. Due to their efforts, this facility is not just a part of history; it is part of our present effort to utilize local, emissions-free sources of electricity to protect our environment while bettering our lives within it.*



**Have a Great Thanksgiving Break!**

SMPA Offices will be closed November 27 - 29  
We'll see you on Monday, December 2.  
Remember, basic services are always available on SmartHub  
[smpa.smarthub.coop](http://smpa.smarthub.coop)

**Congratulations: John Cheroske!**

Congratulations to John Cheroske of Placerville for winning the SOL Paddle Board in the Totally Green drawing. John went Totally Green in order to ensure that all the electricity his home uses comes from renewable sources. Thanks to John and to all SMPA members who have made the choice to go Totally Green. You Rock!

Learn more about Totally Green at [smpa.com](http://smpa.com)>>Renewable Energy



San Miguel Power CEO, Brad Zaporski (Left) and Board President, Rube Felicelli (Right) present the SOL Paddle Board to Totally Green Participant, John Cheroske (center).



**Best. News. Ever.**

Up to \$27,000 in Scholarships are Available from San Miguel Power.  
Apply at [smpa.com](http://smpa.com)>>Community Programs>>Youth Programs

**DEADLINE: JANUARY 27, 2020**



**SMPA POWER PLAY**

**This Month’s Puzzle: ALL ROTE E CANONICAL EDICT**

Hint: This code sets the minimum requirements for safe electrical installations in a single, standardized source.

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

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

**SCAM ALERT!**

If you get a call from someone threatening to turn off your power, hang up.  
View your account status at [smpa.smarthub.coop](http://smpa.smarthub.coop)