

# ENERGY WISE

YOUR SAN MIGUEL POWER MEMBER NEWSLETTER



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**FEBRUARY  
2015**



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**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

**Ice, wind and heavy snow can slow down restoration efforts during power outages, so have extra blankets and supplies on hand to help weather a prolonged outage safely.**

*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](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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).*

## NOTABLES: Hydropower Making its Mark on San Miguel Power



**Kevin Ritter**  
SMPA General Manager

*A message from your General Manager, Kevin Ritter*

Southwestern Colorado is no stranger to hydropower. In fact, we're home to some of the oldest commercial hydroelectric plants in the world. The Ouray Hydro plant began operating December 6, 1885 and is still producing power today.

This is thanks in large part to Eric Jacobson of Hydrowest, Inc. He purchased the plant in a state of disrepair from Colorado-Ute Electric Association in 1992 for a mere \$10. Jacobson restored the plant within two years and it now produces approximately 4 million kilowatt hours annually. SMPA purchases that energy and funnels it directly to the homes and businesses in Ouray.



**Bridal Veil Falls Hydro: The 500kW hydroelectric plant began operating in 1907 to power mining operations at the Smuggler-Union Silver Mine. Telluride now purchases the renewable energy credits, offsetting the town facilities' energy use.**

*photo by Katie Klingsporn*

Of course, Ouray Hydro isn't the only one to make history. The Ames Hydro Station in Ilium Valley near Telluride is the world's first generation facility to employ alternating current, or AC, technology. Unfortunately, we can't lay claim to that piece of history, as the power generated there is purchased by Xcel Energy, a large investor-owned utility serving much of the metro-Denver area.

But we do purchase power from two other Telluride facilities. The newest addition to our hydropower mix is the 320kW generation station located in Telluride's new Pandora Water Treatment Facility. The plant is almost operational and set to produce approximately 1.5 million kilowatt hours per year.

The water flowing through the Pandora Hydro unit is a triple threat. First stop is Bridal Veil Hydro, just a few hundred yards up the mountain. This facility, another on our world's oldest list, began operating in 1907 and produces approximately 2 million kilowatt hours annually. Next stop is the Pandora Hydro unit for a second round of energy production. Third stop is at the homes and businesses in Telluride for consumption.

But, back to the history-making hydros. The Mayflower Mill Hydro in Silverton was perhaps one of the smallest catalysts to one of the biggest changes in U.S. hydropower policy. The 11kW plant was the first small hydro project in Colorado to be permitted under the Hydropower Regulatory Efficiency Act - a new federal law that exempts hydro

*HYDROPOWER cont. on page 2*

# 2015 ELECTION

## Seeking Candidates for District Two

The district two seat on San Miguel Power's seven-member board will be up for election at this year's Annual Meeting scheduled for June 11, 2015 at the SMPA office in Ridgway, CO. District two is currently represented by Bob Justis who was appointed in May 2013 to serve the remainder of the term after the passing of Wes Perrin.

Members within district two who want to take a more active role in the cooperative are encouraged to seek nomination. Board members represent the needs and interests of all SMPA members. They are an important and necessary piece of the cooperative business model.

District two includes the town of Telluride from Townsend Avenue, east of South Tomboy Street and North Townsend Street, north to Tomboy Road, and east to approximately one half mile from Royer Lane. If you have more than one account with SMPA, please contact our customer service representatives at (970) 626-5549 or (970) 864-7311, and they can tell you in which district you have designated your primary account. You can also locate your district information on your bill in the upper right hand corner.

If you are interested in running for SMPA's board of directors you'll need to complete a nomination petition form and qualifications, which can be picked up at either SMPA office. Petition forms will be available beginning February 12, 2015. You can also contact our Executive Secretary Toni Bertorello at (970) 626-5549 x210 or [toni@smpa.com](mailto:toni@smpa.com). Nomination petitions are due back to SMPA before close of business on April 27, 2015. In order to run for a board position you must be a member of SMPA and a resident of the district in which you are seeking election.

## HYDROPOWER

*Notables continued from page 1*

units smaller than 5 megawatts (MW) from Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) oversight and streamlines the permitting process.

Before this exemption, the Mayflower Mill Hydro project was halted when San Juan County discovered it was subject to the same federal licensing that would be required to build a new Hoover Dam. The mill project became the poster child for passing the Hydropower Efficiency Act and was used as an example of how onerous the federal regulatory process was for small hydro projects. The bi-partisan bill passed unanimously in the House and the Mayflower Mill Hydro became a reality. It officially began producing power in November 2014.



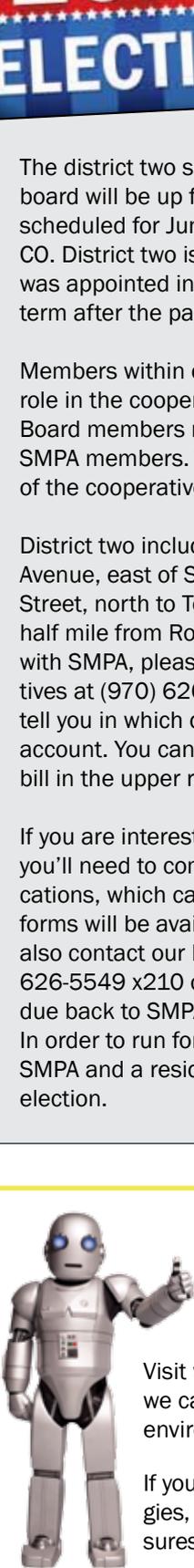
**The first of its kind:** The Mayflower Mill Hydro project was the first in Colorado to be permitted under the Hydropower Regulatory Efficiency Act. This exempted it from burdensome federal oversight and paperwork.

*photo by Kurt Johnson, Telluride Energy*

The single largest renewable energy project in our service territory is Tri-County Water's 8MW Ridgway Reservoir Hydro plant, which began producing power on June 1, 2014. Eight megawatts was beyond the scope of what San Miguel Power could purchase on our own, but we were able to help facilitate an agreement between Tri-County Water and our wholesale power provider, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association. They'll be purchasing the energy produced by the plant between the months of June and September. Although Tri-State purchases the energy, it is consumed by SMPA members.

Ouray County is also home to two micro-hydro units, Coal Creek Hydro and the Ouray Hot Springs Hydro. Coal Creek Hydro is a 90kW unit just south of Ridgway. And as its name implies, the Ouray Hot Springs hydro is a 22kW unit that powers the pool and outbuildings.

So often solar power takes the spotlight, but hydropower has been a constant force in shaping our energy landscape here in Western Colorado. Local hydropower now makes up approximately 2.3% of the power we distribute to our members.



## Now is the time to POWER RESPONSIBLY

Visit [www.smpa.com](http://www.smpa.com) today to find out how we can help you make it easier, cheaper, and environmentally-friendly to power your life.

If you're looking to take advantage of new technologies, Energy Star appliances, conservation measures, or renewable energy, we have options for you.



## SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE NOW!

Applications for San Miguel Power's 2015 academic scholarships are due before close of business (5:30 p.m.) on Friday, February 6, 2015. Late applications will not be considered!

Please note, the application deadline for the Wes Perrin Memorial Scholarship only is extended to February 28, 2015.

Questions? Contact Becky at [becky@smpa.com](mailto:becky@smpa.com) or (970) 626-5549 x212.

## ? reader request

**Have a question about SMPA, the industry, new technologies? Let us know!**

Submit your reader request questions to [energywise@smpa.com](mailto:energywise@smpa.com), and we'll answer it in an upcoming issue.