



A Vision for  
Outdoor Fun  
in Naturita



SMPA Fiber  
Saves the Day



The new buzzword:  
Beneficial  
Electrification

MARCH 2021

# ENERGYWISE



Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives  
The power of human connections®

YOUR SAN MIGUEL POWER MEMBER NEWSLETTER



## CONTACT INFORMATION

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Nucla, CO 81424  
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P.O. Box 1150  
Ridgway, CO 81432  
(970) 626-5549  
Toll Free: (877) 864-7311

**Both Offices Open by Appointment:**  
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)  
(970) 626-5549 x212

## SAFETY TIPS

### SMART WAYS TO KEEP ELECTRIC APPLIANCES AWAY FROM WATER:

- Make sure all outlets near sinks or a tub are Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI)
- If you notice water in your basement or some other room of your home, it's a good idea to unplug everything in the room.
- Never put a plugged-in electrical appliance or electronic device near a bathtub.

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Person with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800)877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call

(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).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

## A Vision of Outdoor Fun: Naturita Town Park to Break Ground this Summer

When a kid soars through the air on a zip line, or clambers up a spider web-like structure made of colorful ropes, she doesn't ask how those cool structures got there. She just has fun getting exercise and developing her balance and coordination. That's the vision that sustains the grown-ups who seek to build a safe, modern play park.

In the Town of Naturita, a group of such visionaries has waged a three-year campaign to upgrade the Town Park with not only play structures, but ball fields, batting cages, picnic areas, a performance stage with the San Miguel river as a backdrop, and a Community Center, complete with a Town Heritage Museum.

In 2018, the town won a \$10,000 Sharing Success Grant from San Miguel Power (SMPA) and cooperative partners CoBank and Basin Electric. The amount was to help unlock a \$350,000 grant from Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO). Unfortunately, when the GOCO awards were made in early 2019, Naturita was not awarded a grant.

Not to be discouraged, the town asked SMPA to hold the funds for an additional year so that they could apply for the GOCO grant again in 2019. Their next GOCO application was successful and, in the summer of 2020, they were awarded \$350,000 for Phase 1 of the Park Renovation.

Since that time, the town has been working with engineers and designers to:

- 1: RELOCATE** the playground area to a different location in the park;
- 2: PURCHASE** playground equipment;
- 3: DESIGN** new drainage systems to protect the improvements from monsoon rains and flashfloods;
- 4: DESIGN** better river access to the San Miguel River in the form of terraces and more friendly access points.

The Town of Naturita also used the time to leverage their GOCO and partner funds for more funding. "We used our Sharing Success Grant to turn \$10,000 into \$350,000, and hopefully that GOCO grant will rally an additional \$400,000," said Sara Bachman, Sharing Success applicant on behalf of the Town.

"If we are successful with all of our pending applications, and taking into consideration Naturita's cash, our partners' cash, and our in-kind contributions, we may be able to leverage our \$10,000 grant to fund nearly a million dollar project!"

*SMPA wishes the town luck and looks forward to bringing our kids to the Naturita Park to play!*





## SMPA Fiber Saves the Day

At approximately 4:30 AM on Friday, February 5th 2021, the lights went out in Ouray. A private contractor working to remove snow on Main Street hit an overhead power line, knocking out electricity and internet service to 457 consumers. SMPA crews were dispatched and made repairs to the power lines, but the internet damage was a different matter.

“When the power went out in Ouray, it caused damage to network equipment in town,” said Doug Seecat, founder and owner of Clearnetworx, which provides fiber, phone and wireless communications services in Ouray. “One of the pieces of equipment was a switch at the school that serves the main internet providers in town.” Fortunately, San Miguel Power Association (SMPA) recently made an agreement with Region 10 designating SMPA fiber optic lines as a diverse high-speed internet pathway between Ridgway and Ouray. Clearnetworx was able to utilize this backup route to keep the internet active in town during the outage. This allowed essential internet services to remain up during the weekend and following week while primary network equipment was repaired. This connection brings much more everyday bandwidth for home school and people working from home and, in times like this, it’s the major internet pathway serving Ouray.



*SMPA understands the importance of fiber and has been very understanding of the resources it has to help the community. We are very thankful for the support and information SMPA has provided us and local providers.*

—DOUG SEECAT, FOUNDER/OWNER CLEARNETWORX

## Community Climate Action Education Series: Networking & Momentum for Environmental Action

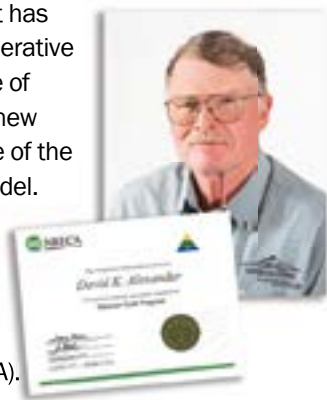
‘Beneficial Electrification’ means replacing fossil-fuel burning vehicles and appliances with those that use electricity—an increasingly clean source of energy. It was a main topic in a presentation to the Community Climate Action Education Series by SMPA Member Services Manager, Wiley Freeman, last month. Thanks to all who attended and to the Wilkinson Library for hosting.



## SMPA Director, Alexander Earns Credential in Today’s Electric Utility Competencies

An ever-changing business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative directors, requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and a solid knowledge of the cooperative principles and business model.

Congratulations to Dave Alexander, SMPA’s District #3 Director for attaining this knowledge by earning the Director Gold Credential from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).



## Notice of Right to Nominate Directors



San Miguel Power Association, Inc. (Cooperative) will hold its Annual Election of Directors to be concluded on Thursday, June 10, 2021. Two directors will be elected; one from Board District #5 which includes part of San Miguel County, including Mountain Village and Ophir and one from Board District #7 which includes parts of Hinsdale, Montrose, Ouray, San Juan and San Miguel Counties including Ouray and Silverton.

Nominations may be made only by petition, which must be signed by fifteen (15) or more members certified from the district in which the election is being held.

For your complete Notice of Right to Nominate Directors, please visit [www.smpa.com/content/elections](http://www.smpa.com/content/elections).

### Petitions DUE April 26th

To those interested in running for a seat on our Board of Directors: Get your Petition Packet by emailing [alex@smpa.com](mailto:alex@smpa.com) this month. Completed packets are DUE April 26. Helpful Hint: Get more than the minimum 15 signatures and bring in your packet early, so we can verify them.

### Ballot Addressing

Ballots are mailed to your member mailing address. This may differ from your billing address. Please call us to ensure your membership contact information is up-to-date.

## 2021 SMPA Scholarships Last Chance!

This year’s deadline for completed SMPA/Tri-State and Vocational scholarship applications is March 15. The following scholarships are available for the 2021 School Year:

- \$2,000 SMPA Scholarship
- \$2,000 SMPA Vocational Scholarship
- \$500 Tri-State Scholarship
- \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship

Learn more and apply at [www.smpa.com/content/scholarships](http://www.smpa.com/content/scholarships)

# SMPA POWER PLAY

## This Month’s Puzzle: TAME TENT OL CHAPS

Hint: Phone or internet lines that share space on power poles.

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

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