

# A BALANCED FUEL MIX PROMOTES POWER RELIABILITY

BY REG RUDOLPH GENERAL MANAGER

The energy industry is undergoing a rapid transformation as consumer demand and legislative mandates call for more renewable energy sources, and innovation and technology continue to advance exponentially.

While driving across Colorado, you may have noticed fields of solar panels and wind turbines, along with an increase in solar panels on roofs. You have probably also been following the changes in the transportation sector with most major vehicle companies announcing plans to offer more electric vehicles at more affordable prices.

Consumer interest in renewable energy is strong and growing. In addition, national studies indicate that consumers have an expectation that companies operate in an ethical and responsible manner — including when it comes to the environment.

At San Isabel Electric, we have always put the good of our community first. While our primary function is to provide reliable and affordable energy to our members, we are more than an electricity provider. Because we are a co-op, our mission is to improve the lives of our members and to serve the long-term interests of our community. We feel we're doing both by investing in renewable energy sources.

Green energy is certainly not new. Solar, wind and hydropower have been around for decades. However, the recent innovations and advances in renewable technology have led to sharp decreases in cost, making it more feasible and accessible. In recent years, San Isabel Electric has been able to adjust our fuel mix by utilizing more renewables. Today, over one-third of our fuel mix is comprised of renewable energy sources.

However, to borrow a nautical analogy, it takes a long time to turn the direction of a large ship — and changing the energy mix we use to power homes and businesses does not happen overnight. While renewable energy use is increasing, we will still depend on traditional forms of energy to keep power flowing reliably to your home. After all, solar and wind energy are referred to as “intermittent” power since the sun does not always shine and the wind does not always blow. This fact coupled with the growing demand for renewables creates its own challenges. That's why there is real value in maintaining a balanced mixture of fuel types to ensure reliability and resiliency and meet the growing demand for electricity.



REG RUDOLPH

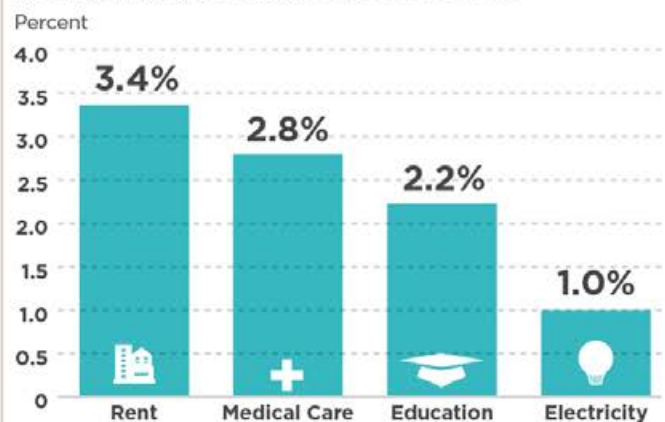
As we have seen in California and Texas, reliability of power supply is not a given. The energy transition is underway and Colorado has decided a decarbonized future is the right direction. San Isabel Electric will continue to take advantage of technological advances and market opportunities as they become available. This means San Isabel Electric can leverage the flexibility of the grid to offer a wider range of renewable power selections as we continue to bring safe, reliable and affordable power to our community.

Albert Einstein once observed that, “Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving.” To meet the growing demand for renewable energy and ensure the reliability of our power supply, we must constantly make operational adjustments as we strive for balance and a brighter future for our members.

## ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2015-2020



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics  
Consumer Price Index



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# MEETING



### ANNUAL MEETING

For the safety of our members and employees due to COVID-19, the format of our annual membership meeting has been changed to an online-only meeting. Visit [slea.com/annualmeeting](http://slea.com/annualmeeting) for more information.

- ✓ **Saturday, September 18 at 1 p.m.**
- ✓ Voting will be conducted via on-site ballot drop-off or by mail-in ballot.



### HOW TO RUN FOR THE BOARD

Candidates must complete the official online petition packet at [slea.com/boardelections](http://slea.com/boardelections). Petitions need to be completed online through Direct Nominations no later than 5 p.m. on Wednesday, August 4, 2021. LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.



### OPEN DIRECTOR SEATS

Three director seats are open for election. The Nominating Committee met July 1 and nominated:

- ✓ District 3 Gardner, Trinidad East, & Vicinity: Edward "Ray" Garcia
- ✓ District 5 Town of Walsenburg & Vicinity: Jacque Sikes
- ✓ District 7 Aguilar, Trinidad West, & Vicinity: Joseph Costa



### BALLOTS

Ballot mailing will begin August 20. Mail-in ballots must be received by Thursday, September 16. Ballots can also be dropped off the day of the annual meeting at the Pueblo West headquarter office, located at 781 E. Industrial Blvd., Pueblo West, CO 81007.



# ONE MEMBER. ONE VOTE. YOUR VOICE MATTERS.



## GET A \$20 BILL CREDIT

Members that pre-register to attend the annual meeting will receive a \$20 bill credit. You must pre-register to receive the bill credit.



## HOW TO PRE-REGISTER

Pre-register by phone or online.

To pre-register by phone, call 800-279-SIEA.

To pre-register online go to [siea.com/annualmeeting](http://siea.com/annualmeeting).

Registration is open:

- ✓ **September 13 - 17, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.**
- ✓ **September 18, 10 a.m. - Noon**

After registering, members will be emailed a link with information about how to join the meeting.



## HOW TO WATCH

Follow the instructions in the registration confirmation email. You must pre-register to participate in the live virtual annual meeting. Members are encouraged to submit any questions they may have through the chat feature during the annual meeting. Answers to questions and a recording of the meeting will be available at [siea.com/annualmeeting](http://siea.com/annualmeeting).



## PRIZES

The grand prize giveaway is a Black and Decker electric lawnmower. Two \$50 giftcards will also be given away.

The winners will be drawn randomly from the members attending at least half of the annual meeting and will be notified the following week. Attend the annual meeting to hear a big announcement about a Home Energy Efficiency Prize. More details to come.



# We Have the Wind, so Why Aren't the Turbines Turning?

In May, we received the email below from a *Colorado Country Life* reader:



*"As many of your customers often travel past those four generators north of Walsenburg, some information would be well-received, I think.*

*With all the talk about green energy, it is a real bafflement that these units spend considerable time being only selectively used. If none are in motion, then we know the wind is not. But occasionally only one is operating. More commonly only two are operating. We celebrate when three are twirling around. To see all four in action is akin to hitting the jackpot. If they are as unneeded as this seems to indicate, why are there four? There must be a story here."*

We agree. There is a story here. A story of uncontrollable challenges.

For individuals who frequent the drive between Walsenburg and Colorado City, Colorado, you have probably noticed that the wind seemingly never stops blowing in the area. For this reason, in 2014 an independent company installed four large wind turbines along the east side of Interstate 25 to create energy from the wind.

There are a lot of variables that come into play when producing wind energy. Some include wind speed and direction, weather and temperature. Any of these factors can disturb the operation of a wind turbine.

Wind energy remains the least expensive renewable energy source. As the sole beneficiary of the energy produced by the wind

farm, San Isabel Electric purchases energy from the wind farm for a lower cost than purchasing from other sources. Purchasing less expensive energy allows SIEA to keep rates stable for members.

San Isabel Electric entered into a power purchase agreement with the original developer to take all the wind production from the wind project. During the early years of the PPA, San Isabel Electric received the expected output. However, as time progressed production slowly tapered off and, in the last year, has dramatically decreased.

The goal of the PPA was to get as much wind energy from the project as possible. The current owner of the project has failed to perform required maintenance to assure production is maximized. San Isabel Electric does not have an ownership interest in the project, and subsequently does not have financial risk because of the lack of production. However, San Isabel Electric is not getting the benefit of the lower cost energy.

San Isabel Electric is working directly with the current owner to return the wind project to expected production. The *Colorado Country Life* reader asked the same question San Isabel Electric asked the wind project owner: Why aren't the wind turbines turning when the wind blows?

Renewable energy production is a complicated endeavor, and San Isabel Electric supports the development of affordable and reliable resources while striving to balance the interests of all the members, without sacrificing cost or reliability. It is the goal to get all four turbines producing energy. That would be a jackpot for everyone.



August 2021  
**Energy Efficiency**  
Tip of the Month

When shopping for new lightbulbs, know the difference between lumens and watts. Lumens measure the amount of light produced by the bulb. Watts measure energy consumption. Energy-saving LEDs come in a variety of colors and brightness levels and last 15-25 times longer than incandescent bulbs.

*Source: energy.gov*