

SANGRE DE CRISTO ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

The Outlet

OCTOBER 2021



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Your community electric service provider.



BRIGHT FUTURES WEB CONFERENCE



Look for 2022 scholarship and youth tour opportunities on SDCEA's website, myelectric.coop/community

Congratulations to Alexandria Ley of Custer County for participating in the Bright Futures web conference. She was one of 13 students representing electric cooperatives from across Colorado.

Students had the opportunity to hear from Sen. Dennis Hisey and Rep. Dylan Roberts, plus a brilliant cast of leadership speakers. Each student received a \$500 scholarship for participating in the event.



▲ Alexandria Ley, sponsored by SDCEA joins others from across Colorado on a leadership web conference sponsored by Colorado's electric cooperatives.



Colorado Energy Office Executive Director Travels through Colorado, Visits SDCEA

SDCEA was honored to accommodate Colorado Energy Office Executive Director Will Toor (right) when he stopped by the office in Buena Vista while traveling through the state in late August. Toor used an SDCEA conference room to give a presentation to and meet virtually with the CREA Board of Directors. During the visit, SDCEA CEO Paul Erickson (left) visited with Toor about the challenges electric cooperatives face in the new energy economy.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT PERSONNEL CHANGES

If you've ever called or dropped by SDCEA with a question, you likely spoke with someone in our finance department. This frontline, multi-talented group is SDCEA's hub. The department answers general questions about the cooperative, sets up new accounts, helps resolve account issues, takes outage calls and so much more.

Several employees recently were promoted or were hired to new positions in the department. They'll join anchors Carrie Morgan, Consumer Specialist Lead, and Consumer Service Specialist Vicki Smethers.

Beni Norton was recently hired as a **Consumer Service Specialist I** and works at the busy front desk at the SDCEA office



in Buena Vista. Norton helps answer questions about the cooperative, processes all mail and cash payments, directs inquiries to respective departments and helps consumers with their account inquiries.

Norton, husband Brad and sons Rylan and Cody moved to Buena Vista from Arizona, so the family is enjoying getting to know their neighbors and the area. Son Rylan graduated from Buena Vista High School last spring and will attend lineworker's school soon. "I'm excited to be here and really love working in this environment," Norton said.

Jenny Nall was promoted to **Consumer Specialist II**. Nall works on consumer account management, transferring services, answering billing questions and concerns, processing auto payments, and issuing rebates to consumer accounts. Nall,



husband Travis and daughter Jamie live in Buena Vista. Nall is a new grandparent, as her oldest daughter and son-in-law have a 1-year-old son.

Simone Phillips has been named **Accounting Specialist** at SDCEA. In her role, she will act as SDCEA's plant accountant, process the co-ops accounts payable, and pay state, county and city sales tax. Phillips holds two bachelors degrees — one in accounting and one in business management from Colorado State University Pueblo. Phillips grew up in Buena Vista and married high school sweetheart Jesse in December.



Mallie Miles has been named **Accounting Lead** at SDCEA. Miles acts as the lead accountant at SDCEA and is in charge of payroll, SDCEA's bank account reconciliation, general ledger reconcilia-



tion, capital credit allocations and retirements, and the accounting and tracking for SDCEA's non-plant assets.

Miles has been an SDCEA employee for six years, is a native of Buena Vista and graduated with a degree in finance from the University of Denver and a Master of Science in Accounting from Regis University.



Sarah Crites was recently named to lead the finance department at SDCEA.

As the Manager of Finance, Crites is responsible for monitoring and organizing the financial information for the SDCEA Board of Directors to make informed decisions about the financial management of the electric cooperative.

Crites began her career at SDCEA in 2003, working at SDCEA's front desk. She has held the positions of Customer Service Specialist I, Accounting Specialist, and Accounting Lead.

"I am excited and grateful for this leadership opportunity at SDCEA. When I began working at SDCEA I never dreamed my career would go in this direction," Crites said.

After working at the front desk for several years, Crites found she appreciated the cooperative business model and wanted to learn how to advance her career. Crites asked her supervisor at that time, Eldon Huschka, what she could do to grow in her profession.

"Eldon suggested I take the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) accounting course, and I did. From that point on I continued learning about cooperative accounting, finance, and billing services through on-the-job training, classes and workshops." In 2020, Crites earned her Master of Business Administration degree.

"SDCEA is a fantastic place to work, with amazing employees. Most days I go home saying, 'I love my job.' I'm looking forward to leading the SDCEA finance team. They are a great, skilled, knowledgeable group."

Crites is married to Scott and they have two daughters, Payton and Reese.



Scholarship & Youth Tour opportunities

SDCEA SCHOLARSHIP & YOUTH TOUR OPPORTUNITIES ARE OPEN FOR APPLICATIONS!

APPLICATION DEADLINES

Washington D.C. Youth Tour

Friday, January 14, 2022
5 p.m.

Scholarship Application

Friday, January 21, 2022
5 p.m.

For more information and directions on how to apply for these opportunities, visit myelectric.coop and click on the **Community** tab and choose "Youth Programs" from the dropdown menu.

Call 719-395-2412 or toll-free 1-844-395-2412;
or email communications@myelectric.coop.



Sangre de Cristo Electric Association
Your Community Electric Cooperative

**HAVE A
QUESTION**
about something
to do with SDCEA?



Give our office a call at 719-395-2412 or toll-free 844-395-2412. Our business office in Buena Vista is open 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday through Friday, closed on major holidays. Or, send an email with your question to info@myelectric.coop.

AWESOME SUMMER ADVENTURES AWAIT!

Attention high school students
aged 16-19 as of June 1, 2022:

After a two-year absence due to the COVID-19 pandemic, SDCEA is pleased to announce we are taking applications for the 2022 Washington D.C. Youth Tour!

TO APPLY: Applicants must submit the online form to apply for the program. Visit myelectric.coop for the online application.

Applicants must also submit a one-page essay about why you'd be a good candidate to represent SDCEA on the Youth Tour and what you hope to gain from the experience.

Deadline to apply for Youth Tour is January 14, 2022. Please note: the Youth Tour is subject to change or cancellation.

Apply for SDCEA Scholarships Today

In 2022, SDCEA will award one four-year scholarship at \$2,000 per year (which is available to a graduating high school senior only) 12 \$2,000 one-time scholarships. Industry associates may fund additional scholarships.

Scholarships may be used by any full-time student at any accredited two or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school and at any level of the student's education.

To be eligible for these scholarships, the applicant must be an SDCEA member or a dependent of a member. Anyone with an active electric account in his or her name is considered a member. For scholarship purposes, the member must be a person, not a business or organization.

Scholarship applicants will be judged on grade point average, ACT/SAT tests, activities, goals, and need.

Past recipients are eligible to apply again. **Application deadline is January 21, 2022**

Applications will only be accepted through our online portal at myelectric.coop.



▲ Crews from SDCEA and Altitude Energy worked on securing poles along the cliffs above Cascade Falls in Chaffee County after the poles were set by a helicopter.

48 CHALK CREEK ELECTRIC POLES SET WITH HELICOPTER

Residents and visitors to Chalk Creek had something besides the stunning scenery and historic structures to pull over and check out at the end of August. As part of a 10-mile reconstruction project of the main electric line in Chalk Creek, 48 electric poles were set in the area in one day by helicopter.

The helicopter was used to set the poles in terrain where a truck cannot access a pole site. Prior to placement of the poles by helicopter, 6 foot or deeper holes were dug by hand. That involved climbing hills or hiking into a location with needed tools, then hand-digging the holes with shovels, post hole diggers, spoons and

buckets — no easy task in central Colorado's terrain.

Once placed, crews then repeated their trek to the pole with equipment and backfilled the hole, tamped the soil down and climbed the pole to run line and install equipment on the pole to run electricity through new lines on the new pole.

View videos of some of this spring and summer's pole sets on SDCEA's system on our website, myelectric.coop, under the Current News and Hot Topics section on the landing page.



▲ After a ground crew secured the pole to be lifted by a cable, a helicopter lifted the pole for placement.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT MONTHLY UPDATE

SDCEA contractor Integrity Tree Services is expected to work this month along Fremont County Road 12, north of Cotopaxi. Work is also planned for along Verdemont Road in Custer County, along CO 69 and along CR 1A in advance of a project to rebuild this section of line.

All electric services from the Howard Substation are scheduled for vegetation management. Crews will move to other areas served by the Howard Substation as time and weather permit this fall.

For your safety and the safety of crews working in the area, please use caution near worksites or whenever you see one of SDCEA's crews or contract crews.

