

# HELICOPTER TAKES FLIGHT TO SET POLES IN REMOTE CANYON

A helicopter set 47 electric poles in a remote canyon in just one day as part of a 6-mile reconstruction project of the main electric line that runs through San Isabel Electric's territory.

The helicopter was used to set the poles in an area of Burro Canyon in the end of August. Burro Canyon is located just north of Highway 12, about 10 miles west of Trinidad. Very few of the old pole sites were accessible by truck. When the poles were originally set in this area, burros were used to carry the poles and equipment.

Crews from Ward Electric and San Isabel Electric used side-by-side UTVs to bring in hand tools before the project began. Then they dug holes for the new poles 6 feet or deeper using backhoes and rock hammers — no easy task in 90-degree weather!

The helicopter had to make 57 trips because 10 of the pole structures were too heavy to haul in one piece. Once the helicopter placed the poles, crews then repeated their trek to the new poles with equipment, backfilled the holes, tamped the soil down, climbed the new poles to run line and install equipment on the new poles to run electricity through new lines on the new pole.

Since 2017, San Isabel Electric has completed a major rebuild on the entire

length of our 89.4-mile main line that runs from the Pueblo West area to Trinidad, providing service to most of San Isabel Electric's members. Construction on the last 7-mile line between Starkville and Burro Canyon is expected to be complete in early 2023. This upgrade project, in addition to several other rebuild and upgrade projects has decreased the time it takes to restore outages.

Next time you take a drive or hike in the mountain regions of San Isabel country, look at the rocky, steep, secluded locations of our electrical equipment. Most of the equipment in our territory is in remote, rural areas that are difficult to access by truck on a nice day and even more so in the dark or inclement weather.

The grid access charge you see on your monthly bill helps pay for system improvements like the upgrade of our main line. For under \$1 per day, members have access to a billion-dollar electrical grid, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, when the sun isn't shining and when the wind isn't blowing. And because we are an electric cooperative, we are a not-for-profit company. Any money that is left over at the end of the year is allocated to the members in the form of capital credits. Capital credit checks are typically mailed every September.



At the end of August, a helicopter was used to set poles in Burro Canyon, which is located just north of Highway 12, about 10 miles west of Trinidad.

## \$1.5 MILLION RETURNED TO SIEA MEMBERS

The San Isabel Electric Board of Directors authorized the retirement of nearly \$1.5 million in capital credits at their August meeting. More than 22,000 checks were mailed to current and former members in early September.

We have two general categories of capital credits. "San Isabel" capital credits come from the operating margins of the electric utility, and "Power Supplier" capital credits come from the operating margins of our cooperative power supplier, Tri-State Generation and Transmission.

This capital credit retirement covers all or part of the San Isabel margins from 1991 and 2021, and all or part of the power supplier margins from 1978-1983 and 2021. Since 2014, the SIEA board of directors has retired over \$ 7.7 million in capital credits, in addition to the two special retirement opportunities made available to members in 2014 and 2019. **Allocating and retiring capital credits are core principles of our cooperative business model.**

**On-peak**  
7–10am  
4–11pm



**Off-peak**  
11pm–7am  
10am–4pm

## Beat the Peak!

Members with an electric thermal storage (ETS) heater, EV or battery storage unit –

**DON'T FORGET:**

- 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. is now off-peak, in addition to 11 p.m. to 7 a.m.
- Winter off-peak hours went into effect September 1.
- Members signed up for the Time-of-Day Rate pay just \$.062 per kWh after the first 1,000 kWh.
- Visit [siea.com/TimeofDay](http://siea.com/TimeofDay) for more info.

# ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

About 1,200 San Isabel Electric members and their guests attended the co-op's 84th annual meeting on Saturday, September 17. This was our first in-person meeting since 2019.

Our annual meeting is a community gathering where neighbors can meet new neighbors or catch up with old acquaintances. It also gives members a

chance to meet SIEA board members and employees face to face. As our lives get busier with the "errands of life" and more of our interactions with others are online (via shopping and social media), we must renew the value of face-to-face human connections.

While rural Americans probably do a better job of staying connected to our neighbors (in part because we have to), it is

not something we should take for granted. The simple act of smiling, saying hello and shaking someone's hand truly lifts the spirits of both parties.

If you have not attended the annual meeting in the past or if it has been a few years, we urge you to take the time to be with your fellow co-op members next September.

## MEET YOUR NEW DIRECTORS

Doris Morgan petitioned to represent Pueblo West Proper for a three-year term, Dennis A. Maroney was nominated to represent Rye, Colorado City and vicinity for a three-year term, and Don Tokar was nominated to represent Aguilar, Trinidad West and vicinity for a two-year term. All three candidates ran unopposed for the Board of Directors, so a vote from the membership was not held.



▲ Doris Morgan  
Pueblo West Proper



▲ Dennis Maroney  
Rye, Colorado City and vicinity



▲ Don Tokar  
Aguilar, Trinidad West and vicinity

## GRAND PRIZE: FREE ELECTRICITY FOR ONE YEAR



▲ Congratulations! Neil Elliot wins this year's annual meeting grand prize, a year of free electricity, up to a \$1,500 value. The grand prize winner was drawn randomly at the end of the meeting.

## B AS IN BINGO!



▲ Liz Shill, Weston, wins a BINGO prize. More than 65 prizes were purchased from businesses in SIEA's territory to be given away as door prizes and BINGO prizes.

## FREE FOOD



▲ It wouldn't be an annual meeting without free donuts, coffee, snow cones, popcorn, cotton candy and lunch! Megan and Rorke from Walsenburg enjoy popcorn and a snowcone.

**INTEREST-FREE FINANCING FOR ENERGY-EFFICIENCY PROJECTS**



▲ Belinda and Robert McCook (center), Hatchet Ranch, explore the Empower booth at the annual meeting.

Hundreds of people visited with Energy Services employees at the annual meeting. Belinda and Robert McCook, Hatchet Ranch, pictured above, spoke with SIEA's Energy Services Manager Jack Snell, about the water heater display. The display was one of several interactive energy-efficiency displays at the Empower booth. Through San Isabel Electric's Empower program, 0% interest financing for up to 12 months is available to members for specific home energy efficiency upgrades. The offer is available to help members make the home energy efficiency upgrades they need now, like replacing an old water heater, adding electric heat, adding insulation and more. To learn more, visit [siea.com/zerofor12](http://siea.com/zerofor12) or call 719-647-6250.

**EV EXPERIENCE**



▲ Annual meeting attendee John Schaefer checks out the Tesla.

This Tesla was one of five electric vehicles on display at the annual meeting. Experts from Tri-State Generation and Transmission and SIEA were on site to answer questions related to costs, mileage, charging and more.

**STORY BEHIND THE SWITCH**



▲ Arbor Cluff, Beulah, learns about the Van de Graaff generator.

Kids and adults of all ages enjoyed the hair-raising, interactive Story Behind the Switch booth. Story Behind the Switch is a youth outreach program available to elementary schools. The program teaches students about where electricity comes from and provides tips for staying safe around electric equipment. Elementary school teachers or administrators can sign up for the program by emailing [communications@siea.com](mailto:communications@siea.com).

**NOTICE OF RATE HEARING**

The San Isabel Electric Association, Inc. Board of Directors is hosting a rate hearing to discuss with our membership electric service rates for 2023. Details of the meeting are as follows:

**Thursday, November 3, 6 P.M.**  
**Huerfano County Community Center**  
**928 Russell St.**  
**Walsenburg, CO 81089**

Any member may appear personally at the hearing. Any member who cannot appear personally but who wishes to comment in writing on electric service rates for 2023 can file written comments by mailing them to: San Isabel Electric Association, Inc., Attn: General Manager, 781 E. Industrial Blvd., Pueblo West, CO 81007, or by emailing [contactus@siea.com](mailto:contactus@siea.com).

**PURPOSE FOR ADJUSTMENT**

SIEA is experiencing increasingly higher costs of materials, supplies, labor and equipment necessary to provide reliable electricity for our members.

# THEN & NOW EXHIBIT SHOWCASES CO-OP HISTORY

A history exhibit that tells the story of how electricity has helped southern Colorado grow and thrive was created for San Isabel Electric's annual meeting.

The exhibit uses text and pictures of artifacts to walk through what life was like in the early- and mid-20th century, when communities were learning how to use electricity for the first time, to the present day, when communities are now learning how to use electricity more efficiently.

The exhibit bases were built out of wood and held boards of different sizes. One of the installations was built from old cross-arms from our 69-kilovolt line.

The co-op hopes to take the exhibit on the road and loan it to local museums for members to enjoy.

## LINEWORKER GEAR

**1875-1900**

Electrification begins



Illustrations showing the evolution of lineworker gear from the 1900s through present day are featured in the lineworker gear portion of the exhibit.

Since electrification began in 1895, lineworker gear has changed but not the challenges of the job. Before hard hats, lineworkers wore fedoras. Before bucket trucks and power tools, lineworkers climbed every pole and used homemade hand tools.

As daily demands and common voltages grew in the electric industry, job site dangers did as well. In the industry's infancy, employers expected workers to take risks. As a result, about one in three linemen — called “boomers” back then — died on the job, noted Alan Drew, in an article from *RE Magazine*.

Like most electrical utilities, the work environment at San Isabel Electric Association has become safer and less strenuous throughout the years. Linework is not for the weak, but the use of bucket trucks, digger derricks, and better tools has

helped to make the job less physical and easier on the body. The introduction of rubber goods (gloves and cover-ups) and insulated fiberglass sticks has aided in the protection of workers from high-voltage lines. These advancements have improved the safety record for electrical utilities. The development of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, along with putting more importance on having clear and concise safety manuals, rules and procedures have assisted the electrical utility industry in becoming a safer environment.



This picture of SIEA's board of directors in the early 1990s was included in the exhibit, along with a few group photos of past directors and individual photos of the current board of directors. Like all electric cooperatives, SIEA is locally owned and operated.

## WHO WE ARE

Our co-op is well suited to meet the needs of our members because we are locally governed. Each member has a voice and a vote in how the co-op is run, and each voice and vote are equal. SIEA's leadership team and employees live right here in the community. Our board members, who set the long-term priorities for the co-op, also live locally on co-op lines. These board members are elected by neighbors just like you. We know our members have a valuable perspective, and that's why we are continually seeking your input, and encourage you to weigh in on important co-op issues and participate in co-op elections.

Our close connection to community ensures we get a first-hand perspective on members' priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions to better serve the membership.

## HISTORICAL TIMELINE

The exhibit also included a chronological timeline of SIEA's history to show how the co-op expanded from Beulah in 1938, to serving 25,000 members in 6,600 square



The original cooperative members paid \$5 to create the cooperative and bring electricity to the Beulah Valley.

miles of southern Colorado today.

SIEA was founded in 1938 by a small group of rural neighbors in Beulah, Colorado. They too wanted the electricity that was illuminating the cities they visited. So, they pooled money to bring electricity to the area and the association was born. Today, just like our founders did in 1938, SIEA is investigating cutting-edge technology and helping members to make responsible energy decisions. We strive to provide our members with a quality of service that exceeds their expectations. And our commitment to community and charitable donations are a testament to our deep investment in the communities we serve.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Energy efficiency as we know it began in the 1970s and was known primarily as “conservation.” As a result of the Arab Oil Embargo, Congress created the Department of Energy to broaden energy resources and promote the idea of conserving energy by reducing daily usage. Examples of this include setting your thermostat to a lower temperature in the winter and higher in the summer, turning the lights off when you leave a room, and washing your clothes in cold water.

Energy efficiency can be accomplished in a number of different ways. One of the most obvious is *conservation*; that is, simply using energy resources more carefully. For example, people might be encouraged to turn out lights in their home, to set their thermostats at lower temperatures, and to use bicycles rather than automobiles for transportation. Energy efficiency in today's world also means more complex and sophisticated approaches to the way in which energy is used in industrial, commercial, and residential settings.