

# The Vital Role of Electric Cooperatives and the Small Business Model

BY RYAN ELARTON GENERAL MANAGER



RYAN ELARTON

Small towns in southern Colorado face unique challenges. Often overshadowed by larger urban areas to the north, our communities rely on the strength and resilience of their local businesses to thrive.

Small businesses foster economic stability, promote community engagement, and provide people with a sense of identity and pride. They're the lifeblood of small-town economies with the power to bring people together and build a strong sense of community. They serve as gathering places where residents can connect, exchange ideas, and build social networks.

To accomplish this, they need a dependable power supply to operate smoothly. Electricity supplied by San Isabel Electric Association, Inc. — their local electric cooperative — powers equipment, provides jobs, delivers your products and services without interruption, and keeps money circulating within the community.

SIEA also offers programs aimed at helping local small businesses. Programs such as rural economic development loans through the USDA and rebates for electric

energy efficiency upgrades are ways we can work with you to achieve remarkable and successful outcomes for your small business. We believe in the people of our communities, and we are ready to assist you. If you have a need or an idea of how we can work together, reach out.

Electric cooperatives have a lot in common with small businesses. We're small when compared to traditional utilities, but not very small compared to local businesses in our communities. We provide affordable electricity to an area that spans nearly 6,600 square miles in seven counties. We have 27 substations and more than 4,600 miles of line to maintain. But, like small businesses, we operate with a small staff — SIEA serves our large area with only 84 hard-working employees. Like small businesses, we also have a local office presence. We're open five days a week in Pueblo West, Trinidad, and Walsenburg.

The last commonality isn't unique to only local or small businesses. It's a challenge the whole world has in common: The cost of everything we need to maintain our system and retain a qualified workforce is continually

increasing. Unfortunately, we anticipate the need for additional small rate increases in the coming years. However, we assure you that these increases will not significantly raise the price of electricity compared to the inflation observed in the goods and services you purchase. We will work hard to maintain the system effectively and keep your rates affordable.

Together, southern Coloradans have fostered an interconnected business ecosystem to help each other be more resilient to the adversities ahead. SIEA has created relationships with local suppliers, service providers, and other small businesses to form a strong network of support. Because of this interdependence, we rely on one another during challenging times.

You, the members we serve, are our focus. Thank you for all you do across our service territory to support local, small businesses in southern Colorado to keep our communities vibrant and strong.

**MAKE YOUR HOME INSTANTLY FEEL 5-10° F COOLER FOR JUST PENNIES AN HOUR!**

## HOW QUIETCOOL WORKS

- 1 Open a few windows anytime it's cooler outside than inside, typically the morning & evening.
- 2 Turn your QuietCool fan on by setting the speed and timer.
- 3 QuietCool pulls in cool, fresh air from outside and expels hot, stale air out attic vents.



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# A N N U A L M E M B E R S H I P MEETING



## ANNUAL MEETING

The San Isabel Electric Association, Inc. Annual Membership Meeting will be held in person at John Mall High School in Walsenburg. Visit [sieweb.com/annualmeeting](https://sieweb.com/annualmeeting) for more information.

- ✓ **Saturday, September 16 at 1 p.m.**  
**Doors will open at 10 a.m.**



## DIRECTOR ELECTION GUIDELINES

Eligible members either completed a petition packet or were nominated by the nominating committee on June 28. Petition packets were due by 5 p.m. on July 18. For more information about how to run for the board, visit [sieweb.com/boardelections](https://sieweb.com/boardelections).



## DIRECTOR ELECTION

SIEA's 2023 Board of Directors Election is uncontested. As a result, the cooperative will not mail director election ballots. These directors will continue to serve another **three-year term**:

- ✓ District 1 Beulah, Wetmore, and Vicinity:  
Debbie Rose
- ✓ District 6 La Veta, Cuchara, and Vicinity:  
Donald Keairns



## MAILING

Annual Meeting information will be mailed to all members beginning August 18. **Please make sure to bring your registration card to the Annual Meeting.**



# ONE MEMBER. ONE VOTE. **YOUR VOICE MATTERS.**



## THINGS TO DO

Doors will open at 10 a.m. Play BINGO, touch and see electric vehicles, and learn about money-saving programs available from SIEA.

Members of all ages can learn where electricity and renewables come from at the Story Behind the Switch booth. Donuts, cotton candy, popcorn, and lunch will be served before the business meeting begins at 1 p.m.



## DOOR PRIZES

Attend the annual meeting in person for a chance to win BINGO prizes and door prizes.

We have twenty \$50 bills to give away and there will be a drawing for one grand prize. Each member will receive an attendance gift including a locally-handcrafted mug.





# Attention High School Juniors and Seniors: Want a Summer 2024 Trip — All Expenses Paid?

San Isabel Electric Association, Inc. is now accepting applications for week-long, all-expense paid leadership trips in the summer of 2024. There are two separate experiences available to apply for.

The trips are sponsored by SIEA and organized by the Colorado Rural Electric Association, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, and the Colorado Electric Educational Institute.

Visit [siea.com/youthleadership](http://siea.com/youthleadership) to learn more and to apply before the application deadline.

*How does this schedule sound for summer?*

## Youth Camp Schedule\*

### DAY 1

Arrive at camp; break into small groups; meet your fellow campers; learn about cooperative governance; elect a board member for your group; and hear an amazing leadership speaker.

### DAY 2

Enjoy another look at leadership; ride a gondola to the top of Mount Werner; play volleyball, swim, and watch a high-voltage display.

### DAY 3

Run for an ambassador position; tour the Craig Power Plant and a solar farm; watch as your hair stands on end—really—during the Story Behind the Switch presentation; and show us your talent.

### DAY 4

Float down the Colorado River and dance under the mountain stars.

### DAY 5

Learn about birds of prey with HawkQuest; practice managing conflict and setting goals; build an electric system; and celebrate at the banquet.

### DAY 6

Say goodbye to your new friends. Cherish all your amazing camp memories.

\*These itineraries are examples of activities included in the experiences. Schedules are tentative and are subject to change.

*Or how about this?*

## Youth Tour Schedule\*

### DAY 1 & 2

Meet in Denver to start the week together. Tour a co-op and learn about electricity; tour the Colorado State Capitol; and have dinner with a state legislator.

### DAY 3

Fly to Washington, D.C.; tour the Vietnam, Korean, and Lincoln Memorials; meet students from other states; and learn about cooperatives.

### DAY 4

Participate in a congressional simulation; tour Mount Vernon; visit Ford's Theater; tour the Martin Luther King, Jefferson, and FDR Memorials; attend Youth Day with more than 1,500 students from across the country.

### DAY 5

Visit with U.S. Senators and Representatives; tour the U.S. Capitol; see a play or musical.

### DAY 6

Visit the Library of Congress; view the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution; visit the Navy Memorial; visit a Smithsonian museum.

### DAY 7

Visit the Iwo Jima Memorial; visit the Holocaust Museum; tour the Air Force and 9/11 Memorials; visit Arlington National Cemetery; attend a dinner, dance, and career fair with students from across the country.

### DAY 8

Say goodbye to Washington, D.C., and your new friends, and say hello to life-long memories.

Getting to meet our senators and tour the Capitol building is a dream come true. It's an opportunity that I don't think I would've had without this program. — Bryan Williams, 2023 Youth Tour participant from Hoehne.



Hailey Maurer (right) enjoys sightseeing with new friends during the Washington DC Youth Tour.



I am so grateful that I was able to attend Youth Tour. I learned so much about how both the government and co-ops work directly with the community. I had unforgettable experiences visiting different museums and memorials, as well as meeting some amazing people. It was the trip of a lifetime. — Hailey Maurer, 2023 Youth Tour Participant from Pueblo West.