

# Serving You in 2024 — Rate and Program Changes

BY RYAN ELARTON GENERAL MANAGER



RYAN ELARTON

I have some important updates to share with you from our November 2023 San Isabel Electric Board of Directors Meeting, where the Board approved several changes to our rates, programs, and tariffs. These changes are designed to provide the financial resources to ensure reliable electric service while offering programs to reduce power costs for both individual members and the entire cooperative.

Our power supplier, Tri-State Generation & Transmission, is forecasting a 6.8% increase in power costs. Tri-State has held rates steady for several years, but they, like us, are not immune to the ever-increasing cost of materials, supplies, and labor necessary to operate a utility. It's important to note that both Tri-State and San Isabel Electric are not-for-profit cooperatives and must recover costs through the rates we charge our members.

Our Board approved a \$5 increase to the monthly grid access charge for residential accounts, which includes residential net-metering accounts, beginning January 1, 2024. The resulting grid access charge for those accounts will be \$30 per month. The Board's commitment

in 2023 was to not increase the monthly grid access charge beyond \$35 by 2027. Additionally, at San Isabel Electric we've made adjustments internally through our budget process to continue providing you with safe, reliable electricity and to avoid additional increases in 2024.

The graphic below shows the cost of electricity relative to other essential goods since 2017. You'll see that at San Isabel Electric we've kept our costs down relative to other commodities.

We will continue to maintain our lines, respond quickly to outages, invest in equipment and technology to protect the electric grid, and provide you with help to improve your home or business through our Energy Services team.

Looking ahead to 2024, we are rolling out several new or revised programs. Early next year, we will introduce a budget billing option to help members smooth out the cost of electricity throughout the year rather than experiencing higher bills during winter or summer months. We've added more flexibility and cost-saving opportunities if you'd like to add battery energy storage to your home or business. And, we've

updated our renewable energy credits program to make it easy and affordable for those who are interested in renewable energy but hesitant to install a system. If you are interested in renewable energy or energy efficiency we can custom-tailor a program for you. Reach out, and we will be glad to serve you.

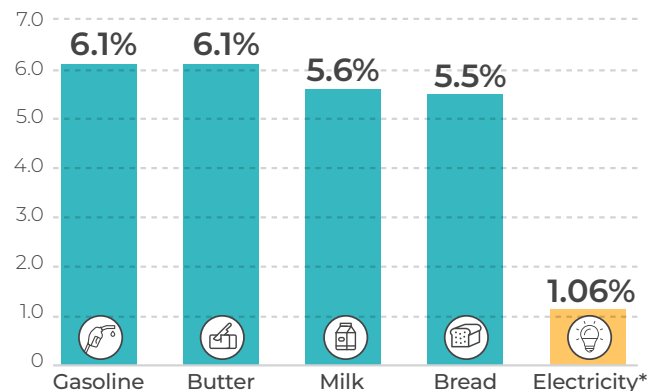
Your feedback is invaluable! Each quarter we survey portions of our membership via email to gather insights about what we are doing well and areas that need improvement. We use this data to inform our decision-making process, and encourage you to participate if you receive the survey. If you prefer to share a comment or suggestion with us by email, in person, or by phone, send us a note at [contactus@siea.com](mailto:contactus@siea.com), come visit us in Trinidad, Walsenburg, or Pueblo West, or give us a call at 800-279-SIEA (7432). Thank you for the opportunity to serve you!

## ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

Although inflation has led to increasing costs in many areas of our lives, the cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common goods. Looking at price increases over the last five years, electricity remains a good value.

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

Average Annual Price Increase 2017-2022  
Percent



\*San Isabel Electric's average cost of electricity will have increased 1.06% throughout an eight-year period, from 2017–2024.

# ELECTRIC HEATING GUIDE

As the push toward decarbonizing electricity ramps up, electric heating is generating quite a buzz. Electric heating units are the most efficient heating systems available today, and they do not produce carbon monoxide like traditional propane, natural gas, or wood-burning home heating systems do.

SIEA offers a range of home heating options to fit any configuration. Our electric heating systems can be used in new construction, replace or upgrade existing systems, and/or provide supplemental heat for hard-to-heat rooms. Whether you want the warm welcome of heated hydronic floors, the consistent comfort of a forced air system tied into your existing ductwork, or the ease and efficiency of a room unit, contact the SIEA Energy Services team to discuss whether electric heating can work for you.



## ELECTRIC THERMAL STORAGE HEATING SYSTEMS

Electric thermal storage (ETS) heating systems are the ideal choice for the economical and ecological homeowner. ETS heating systems convert electricity to heat. Specially designed ceramic bricks store vast amounts of heat for extended periods of time, which is then released into a home to maintain consistent comfort.

### ETS systems can use off-peak electricity to save you money

ETS owners get the privilege of taking advantage of SIEA's off-peak electricity rates (nearly half the regular rate) for all their household electricity needs during off-peak hours. This is because ETS heaters convert electricity to heat when demand on the electrical grid is low, such as in the middle of the night. Because ETS systems store a lot of heat for a long time, you get on-peak performance for an off-peak price.

This capability can save you between 40% and 70% on your heating bill. Only ETS owners, electric vehicle owners, or owners of a battery-storage device are eligible for off-peak rates.

### ETS is Safer and Greener

ETS heaters are never hot to the touch, making them a much safer room-heating solution than space heaters. The Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that portable heaters, including electric space heaters, were involved in an average of 1,700 fires per year, resulting in an average of 70 deaths and 160 injuries annually from 2017 to 2019.

ETS heating systems also lower the strain on the electrical grid by storing electricity as heat and utilizing it when your home needs it. ETS systems can store variable solar and wind power, reducing carbon emissions by up to 50 tons compared to a propane furnace.

### Simple to use and service

It is common for ETS heating systems to operate for several decades of worry-free comfort. San Isabel Electric is now offering a low-cost lifetime repair contract for new and previously installed heating systems. The contracts start at \$250 and range in price based on the age of your unit and model number. If something does come up, you can call us — not a call center — and our service technicians will provide hands-on service to get your unit running at peak performance.

## COVE HEATING

Cove heating units take full advantage of electricity's efficiency. Cove heating units are mounted near the ceiling so that the radiant panels direct heat downward across the room without being blocked by furniture and other objects. Radiant heat warms the space directly, creating conditions similar to that of the sun. Cove heating can be regulated by a wall-mounted thermostat, and each room can be controlled independently, letting you maintain multiple temperature settings throughout your home or office. Because radiant heat warms inanimate objects in its path, walls, floors and even furniture absorb heat and provide a "heat reserve" that helps keep the room warm. In addition, a small amount of heat generated by the cove heater element is not radiated but warms the surrounding air and wall and ceiling

surfaces, initiating a convection-type flow of heated air which further adds to the warmth of the room.



## AIR-SOURCE HEAT PUMPS

Air-source heat pumps are an ideal low-carbon HVAC option that provide all-in-one, highly efficient heating and cooling for residences. While most buildings have a furnace and separate air conditioning system to stay comfortable year-round, those with heat pumps generally only need one system.

Heat pumps have been used for decades, but today's units operate at previously unmatched levels of efficiency with tough and reliable compressors. Heat pumps cool your house by removing heat energy from the home and pumping it outdoors. To heat your home, a heat pump absorbs heat energy from outside air — even in extremely cold temperatures — and transfers it inside the home. This is more efficient than burning fuels to create heat (as a furnace does) and is ideally paired with a photovoltaic solar system.

Southern Colorado's moderate climate is perfect for heat pump use, as our temperatures do not often fall below subfreezing. Today's heat pumps can provide comfort in all climate zones.

Members can call and request a free energy audit that incorporates past energy usage and get recommendations for projects that will have the greatest impact based on their budget and lifestyle. Call 800-279-SIEA and ask for Energy Services, email [energyservices@siea.com](mailto:energyservices@siea.com), or visit [siea.com/empower/#products](http://siea.com/empower/#products) to learn more about our products and services.

# THE STORY BEHIND THE SWITCH

Coming to your community soon!

Electricity is a marvel of modern life — it powers our world. Yet, for many, what's behind the plug is still a mysterious force, especially for youngsters.

While captivating, the high-voltage electricity that powers everything in our daily lives is also extremely dangerous. You can't see it or hear it, yet it travels at the speed of light — 186,000 miles per second. To put that in perspective, that's seven times around the earth in one second! And even the ordinary 110 volts of electricity in household outlets is enough to kill a person.

San Isabel Electric's *Story Behind the Switch* program unravels some of the secrets of electricity. The traveling 45–60-minute presentation program goes beyond textbooks to give elementary students a deep understanding of the importance of electrical safety and teaches the responsible use of electricity by making it an exciting adventure. Through engaging activities, students are introduced to various concepts, including the diverse sources of energy, the journey of electricity from power plants to homes, electric utility career paths, and the concepts of circuits, conductors and insulators. They're taught life-savings skills they can practice at home with their families, such as what to do in an auto accident with electric equipment, downed power line safety, and lightning safety tips.



## INSULATION: Lower utility bills no matter what the forecast says

Insulation is the MVP of home improvements. It provides resistance to heat flow and lowers your heating and cooling costs. It'll slash your energy bills, keep you comfortable year-round, and add years to the life of your heating and cooling systems. The up-front cost is low and installation is simple.

Did you know SIEA can help you find an insulation contractor and we offer 0% financing for insulation projects? Restrictions apply. We even offer rebates on certain insulation projects.

Call 800-279-SIEA or email [energyservices@siea.com](mailto:energyservices@siea.com) to learn how we can help.

“There are a lot of ‘aha’ moments in the class,” SIEA Communications Manager Paris Daugherty said. “One is how electricity will travel through your body to get to the ground.” This is demonstrated to the students by way of a Van de Graaff generator, a device with a large metal ball on top that builds up static electricity. One student places his or her hand on the ball while standing on a non-conductive plastic step stool, and then is instructed to lightly “fist-bump” another student. That results in both students receiving a mild shock, much like touching something after rubbing one's feet on carpeting.



San Isabel Electric's *Story Behind the Switch* program goes beyond textbooks to give elementary students an understanding of the importance of electrical safety and teaches the responsible use of electricity by making it an exciting adventure.

The hands-on program garners praise from the students, school administration, and faculty. “Many times, students aren't taught about topics like this unless we're able to bring something like this program in,” Beulah School of Natural Sciences teacher Lori Lara said. “It's a great opportunity for the kids to see things that they haven't seen before, and experience new things that deal with electricity.”

The best part? It is absolutely zero cost to schools. In 2023, the program was presented to nearly 700 students. We at the co-op want to present the program annually to every third-grade class whose school is a member of SIEA. The program is also available on request for non-school youth groups.

Interested in hosting a session for your school or youth group? Visit [siea.com/storybehindtheswitch](http://siea.com/storybehindtheswitch), email [communications@siea.com](mailto:communications@siea.com), or call 800-279-SIEA (7432) and ask for the Communications Department.





THURSDAY  
**February 15**

## Apply For a \$1,000 Scholarship

Applications are due February 15

San Isabel Electric typically awards more than \$30,000 in scholarship funds every year to local students. Most scholarship awards are for \$1,000. The co-op also invites the top-scoring applicants to compete for an additional \$4,000 scholarship, called the Powered-Up Scholarship. SIEA donates \$500 to the high school of the Powered-Up Scholarship recipient.

December is a great time to get a head start on your application. Contact teachers, advisors, and others whom you plan to ask for a

letter of recommendation. SIEA requires two letters of recommendation to apply. Now is a good time to start planning.

Students or their parent or guardian must buy electricity from SIEA to qualify for a scholarship. Applications, information about application requirements, and complete eligibility criteria are available online at [siea.com/scholarships](http://siea.com/scholarships). Scholarship applications are due by February 15 at 5 p.m.



## DONATION IMPACT REPORT

### December 2023

San Isabel Electric operates under seven cooperative principles, which includes practicing a Concern for Community. Each board member lives in the community he or she serves, and we all work together to help our communities thrive.

Each month, the board of directors donates to community projects to help keep our communities strong and growing. All philanthropic giving funds come from unclaimed capital credits, not from member rates and electric bills. Our process for using unclaimed capital credits follows state law for unclaimed property. Unclaimed capital credits cannot be used for system improvements, maintenance, payroll, or other overhead costs.

For more information about capital credits and unclaimed capital credits, visit [siea.com/capitalcredits](http://siea.com/capitalcredits).

The following donations were approved on October 20. All donations were matched by Basin Electric Power Cooperative, a cooperative power supplier.

**\$1,200**

Assistance League of Pueblo, Operation School Bell

**\$500**

Pueblo West Parks & Recreation, Halloween Bash

**\$750**

First National Bank in Trinidad – Senior Santa Gift Tree

**\$750**

First National Bank in Trinidad – Huerfano County Branch, North Pole Gift Tree

