



John Villyard, CEO

San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative Earlier this month, Governor-elect John Hickenlooper appointed former Representative John Salazar to serve as Colorado's new agriculture commissioner. This appointment bodes well for our area. Salazar, a sixth-generation farmer/rancher, has deep roots in the Valley. He also has a history of support for rural electric cooperatives and the communities they serve.

Hickenlooper selected TJ Deora as the Director of the Governor's Energy Office (GEO). Deora, who has a strong background in the energy field, most recently led state and regional policy advo-

cacy efforts for Houston-based Horizon Wind Energy's government affairs team. It's too early to tell how Deora's appointment will affect the direction of the GEO takes in the next year.

Similarly, it's too early to tell how the shift in power from Democrat to Republican will change the legislative focus in the House of Representatives in Colorado. However, we are hopeful that we will see a more balanced approach to energy issues.

Gov. Hickenlooper appears to be open to electric co-op concerns. Kent Singer, Colorado Rural Electric Association (CREA) executive director, recently accompanied Hickenlooper on a tour of Craig Station, one of Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association's generating plants. During that tour, the Governor expressed an understanding of the relationship between additional regulations and higher power costs.

The Upcoming Legislative Year: Too Early to Tell

I don't want to give the impression that co-ops are against regulation or oppose the transition to a new energy economy. We strongly believe that it is important to find better ways to serve our members and to protect our communities.

Singer expressed our concerns very eloquently in a recent *Colorado Country Life* article when he said, "Make no mistake, we at CREA and our members have a significant investment in the continued development of the new energy economy because there are many benefits, including jobs, world development and a more diversified power portfolio. ... But we also have a responsibility to our customers to provide reliable and affordable electric service particularly, in light of the tough economic conditions that currently prevail in Colorado. At CREA, we will continue to fight for policies to protect rural electric

members."

CREA needs your help. It's important for each and every Coloradan to speak up to let legislators know that affordable electricity is just as important as making the transition into a new energy economy. Yes, we need jobs. Yes, we need to reduce our dependence upon fossil fuels.

However, just as important, we need to keep electricity affordable for everyone. I encourage you to join CREA and electric cooperatives around the state in fighting for policies that make wise choices; policies that consider economic as well as environmental impacts. Change is needed. Let's make choices that help all of us.

**SAN LUIS VALLEY
RURAL ELECTRIC CO-OP**

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