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San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative

PCs, cell phones, televisions, center pivot irrigation—today's modern life requires electricity. Many of us take electricity for granted. We don't realize how much we depend on it in our daily lives until there is a power outage.

Fortunately, most outages occur at the distribution level. When the lights do go out, SLVREC usually can reroute the path of power distribution around the problem. This helps reduce outage times and allows repairs to be completed in a timely fashion.

However, outages in our bulk power delivery network

are not easy to address. Unfortunately, the entire Valley relies on three separate transmission lines that follow similar routes over Poncha Pass and into the Valley. These three lines keep our lights on. Tri-State, SLVREC's power supplier, and Xcel Energy both use these lines.

Now, imagine a forest fire or other disaster in the area. All of the power into the Valley could be lost. Currently, there is no option for rerouting power should this occur and power can't be restored until the problem is repaired; which could take days.

Not having power at home would be an inconvenience. However, for some, extended outages are life-threatening. For me, and for other farmers in the Valley, an extended outage would be catastrophic. With the Valley's economy deeply rooted in agriculture, the effects could be immense.

Farmers depend upon elec-

Farmers Need Reliable Power

tricity to grow our crops. But more than that, we depend upon electricity year round to store and pack them as well. From our sprinklers, to the ventilation system; everything runs on electricity.

A new transmission route following a completely different path into the Valley would provide reliable power and protect our economy. It would bring the reliable power this Valley needs and has lived without for too long. It could attract new business to diversify the economic base here. Having increased transmission capacity to and from the Valley also gives us another 'crop' to export—solar power.

The existing transmission lines have reached their limits. We need a new transmission line to handle additional capacity created by the Valley's growth, to increase opportunities for renewable energy and to provide a loop feed for power coming in and out of

the Valley. In simple terms, this new line could help facilitate renewable energy development while providing more reliable power.

SLVREC and Tri-State have discussed the new transmission line for some time. Two years ago, Tri-State started work on the first phase of the project. Next week brings an opportunity for the Valley to learn more about the project and to comment on the proposed corridors during a series of public meetings. Details are at www.socotransmission.com.

We need dependable power to keep the Valley's farmers growing. We can't control Mother Nature, but if we had another transmission line into the Valley, it would provide us with the reliable power we need for years to come.

**SAN LUIS VALLEY
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