

## An Olde Country Store Goes Modern

Curt Ward has a philosophy about life: “We don’t get through life by ourselves. There’s always someone who helps you realize your vision.”

His vision—the vision to someday own a country store—took root when he was a teenager. Curt said, “My grandfather took me up into the mountains in Southern California. This was a major event for me, not something that ‘just happened.’ We went to Arrowhead Lake and on that trip, we stopped in a little mountain town. There, we went into a country store and I found the atmosphere to be warm and very friendly. Everything about it was gentle; it had a good feel. I remember noticing how different it felt to be in that store. I liked it.”

A few years later, Curt had a dream that he had become the owner of a small store in the mountains. He associated the same good feelings he had experienced on the trip he took with his Grandfather with the store in his dream. And although he didn’t consciously seek such an opportunity in his life, the idea

of running a small country store in a mountain town was firmly planted.

Meanwhile, years later, Curt, who lived in Los Angeles, married Bernadette. They started a family and decided they wanted to move away from Los Angeles to raise their four children. An opportunity arose. A priest who Bernadette had known since she was 13 years old, asked if she and Curt would want to serve as caretakers for a monastery in Sedona, Arizona, while the monks traveled to Nova Scotia to found a new monastery.

Curt said, “The opportunity came and we took it. I sold the business I had in Los Angeles and we put our house up for sale.” The house sold, and to avoid capital gains, the Ward’s used the proceeds to purchase 10 acres of land near Sedona. “Given the rate of growth that took place while we were there, this was not a bad decision,” Curt joked.

While living near Sedona, the Ward’s took care of the monastery’s retreat center, Bernadette published the

monastery’s quarterly magazine, and the children thrived in the beautiful setting. Curt said, “We settled in and did what we could. I had a background in cabinet making so I went

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Above: On November 5, 2007, the newly rebuilt Crestone Store opened its doors. One corner of the store is devoted to a cafe where baked goods, sandwiches, soups and other savory treats are offered. Right: Curt Ward in the office of the new “Curt’s Olde Country Store & Cafe.” A wall of the office displays pictures of Curt and Bernadette’s four children and their families.





SLVREC CEO, John Villyard

Colorado Rural Electric Association, CREA, helps electric cooperatives work together for the good of our members. By uniting our efforts through CREA, cooperatives are more effective in helping to promote member interests to legislators and other organizations.

Today, this unified effort is critical; Docket 09I-041E, currently before the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) suggests a desire by the PUC to bring Tri-State under their control. This poses a serious concern.

Why? First, cooperatives have not been under PUC control because cooperatives are already governed by locally-elected directors. Members directly control the actions of the cooperative. An additional layer of oversight is not needed. Even Tri-State is managed by a board of 44 directors, each who represents a cooperative Tri-State serves.

In part, the PUC's mission is to provide safe, reliable and quality services to utility customers on just and reasonable terms. Cooperative directors are elected to achieve these ends.

In our opinion, a seven-member—or a 44-member—locally-elected board can achieve this better than a board of three distant commissioners.

Second, the Governor appoints the three Commissioners and they are confirmed by the Senate. The statutory authority requires no more than two commissioners be from the same political party. There is no provision to ensure that no more than two commissioners come from an urban background.

The lifestyle in rural areas differs. Rural Coloradans see the world differently. Cooperatives have always advocated local control. People who live and work in the communities they care for make better decisions for those communities than people who live and work far away.

Specifically, through Tri-State, SLVREC and other Colorado co-ops actively promote energy efficiency, renewable energy and the development of new technologies—areas the PUC has suggested would be improved if the status quo were changed. Under local control, we can shape programs in these areas to best meet our member needs. We have done that; we will continue.

Third, we fear the PUC's efforts to control Tri-State suggest a change in attitude toward cooperatives in general. We are concerned this is the first step toward PUC control of all Colorado electric cooperatives.

Fourth, we don't believe the PUC should have control over Tri-State because Tri-State operates in a four-

state region. How can one state lay claim to the actions of a cooperative who serves members in four states? Would this not fracture Tri-State's board on some issues and increase Tri-State's costs?

Other utilities the PUC oversees, such as Xcel Energy, operate in multiple states. However, unlike Tri-State, Xcel has a distinct and separate Colorado division under their vertical organization structure.

Speak up. It worked in the 80s when Colorado co-ops were successful in removing themselves from PUC control. We've been self-regulated ever since.

We'll post more information on our web site about this issue—including a mailing address and sample letters for comments to the PUC. We should have that posted by the time you receive this *Newsboy*.

I encourage you to submit comments to the PUC regarding Docket 09I-041E (include this number in your letter). Initial comments are due by April 6, 2009. Do it right away while the idea is fresh in your mind.



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Your e-mail will be forwarded based upon the direction you provide in your message.

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**Scheduled Meetings**

Board Meeting April 28, 9:30 a.m.

The Board of Directors meet the last Tuesday of each month unless otherwise stated. Members are welcome.

**Statement of Publisher**

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## John Tembrock Accepts Position as Director for Saguache County

At the March board meeting, SLVREC's board of directors selected John Tembrock to fill a vacancy on the board created by the resignation of Rick McCormick. Tembrock will serve as director for District 3, Saguache County until the seat comes up for reelection this June. Then, at the Annual Meeting, members will have an opportunity to vote on a director for Saguache County.

Tembrock, who holds a BS in Electrical Engineering from the University of Denver, has attended several board meetings as a guest.

Carol Lee Dugan, president of SLVREC's board said, "We are pleased to have John Tembrock join our board. With his background as an electrical engineer and his understanding of our industry he offers a new perspective on energy

issues. We look forward to working with him."

Tembrock has been encouraged to seek a position on the cooperative's board by the Crestone Sustainability Initiative (CSI). In 2007, those attending the "Community Sustainability 2020" conference, identified an energy outcome goal of having someone from the Crestone community serve on SLVREC's board. Tembrock offered to work toward that goal. Tembrock will be a likely candidate for the open position this June.

Tembrock and his wife, Amanda Woodward, moved to Crestone in 2003. The Tembrocks were one of the first families in Crestone to have a solar grid-tied home in the Baca. Tembrock has a keen interest in renewable energy ☺

## McKibbon Accepts Serviceman Job

Shawn McKibbon, journeyman lineman, was selected to serve as one of the cooperative's area servicemen in early March. McKibbon will cover the central portion of the cooperative's service territory.

McKibbon said, "I appreciate the opportunity to have this job. I enjoy working with people and I look forward to the challenges this job will offer."

McKibbon hired on at SLVREC in October 2001. Prior to SLVREC, he worked as a journeyman lineman at Southeast Colorado Power Association in La Junta. He has over a decade of experience as a journeyman lineman.

SLVREC has four area servicemen. Lee Stehwen covers areas west, Ruben Heredia covers areas south and Charlie Booth handles the northeast portion of the coop-

eratives service territory. Servicemen are critical in helping SLVREC achieve its mission of providing excellent service to members.

Servicemen are responsible for a variety of tasks; but, if you have a problem with your electric service, it is likely that a serviceman will respond to your call. All SLVREC's servicemen are experienced linemen. A large portion of their job includes troubleshooting problems and working with members.

To ensure the best possible customer service, if you experience a problem with your electrical service, call SLVREC at 719-852-3538 or 800-332-7634 to report the situation. The dispatcher will ensure your call is routed to the appropriate serviceman or lineman on call. Phones are staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. ☺

## Ballot Packets to be Mailed Soon

SLVREC will mail ballot packets for the upcoming election and annual meeting later this month. Members should receive a ballot packet no later than the first week in May. Additional information about elections, including profiles for candidates running for open board seats, will appear in the *May Newsboy* and in ballot packets.

This year, elections will be held for District 3, Saguache County and District 5, Conejoes County. Bylaw changes have also been proposed and will be voted upon by members attending the meeting.

All SLVREC members are encouraged to attend the Annual Meeting. The meeting will be held on June 9 at Ski Hi Park in Monte Vista. Dinner will be served and a number of door prizes will be awarded. ☺



Shawn McKibbon, along with other SLVREC linemen recently completed maintenance upgrades in Crestone. Servicemen frequently work alongside other SLVREC crews to make repairs, switch out equipment and perform maintenance.

to work for a cabinet maker. It was a great place for our four children. It was challenging financially; but, so what? We got to share in the spiritual life of the monastery. It was a very rich time for us.”

Eventually though, the monks felt the growth around Sedona was too much. They wanted to relocate to a less developed area. When Hannah Strong and her husband, Maurice, offered the monastery land near Crestone, the monks seized the offer. The Strongs provided land to many different spiritual traditions: the Carmelite Monastery is one of several religious orders who settled in the area in the early 80s.

In October 1983, Curt, Bernadette and their four children moved to Crestone too. “I helped build the monastery. My wages were paid by a benefactor for two years,” Curt said. As those two years came to a close, the Ward’s needed a new income source. Coincidentally, Crestone’s little convenience store was for sale.

“I looked for a way to purchase it and the same benefactor who had paid my wages at the monastery came to my aid,” Curt said. “We don’t do anything on our own. I had a benefactor helping me through the hard bumps and the support of a community who needed a store. All I had to do was say ‘Yes.’”

That doesn’t mean Curt and Bernadette didn’t work hard. Grocery stores are often supplied by cooperative distributors. Joining a grocery cooperative costs a bundle. For example, at the time the Wards purchased the grocery, to buy a membership with a major grocery distributor cost about \$35,000.

Instead, each week the Wards drove to Cub Foods in Colorado Springs, loaded their Suburban to the rafters, marked up what they

purchased and sold it in the little Crestone store. Little by little, they built the business.

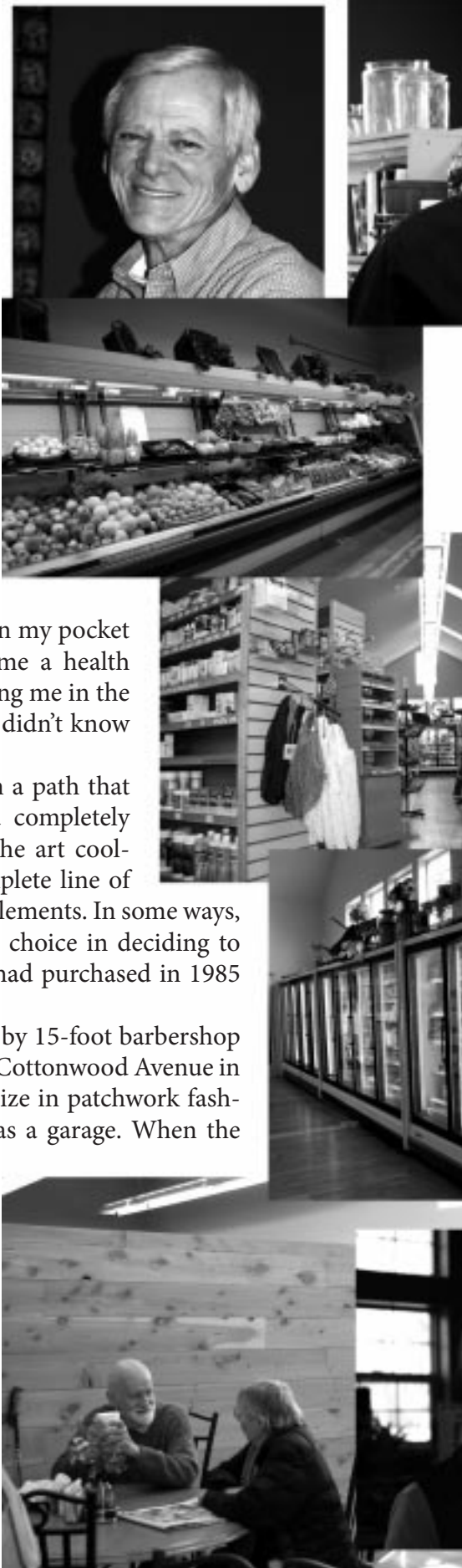
Then, Curt learned of Rainbow. Rainbow initially ran their own natural food stores in Denver and Colorado Springs; but, over time, they sold off their stores and switched to natural foods distribution instead. Curt said, “Many customers had asked me to stock health food items—things like tofu.” At that time, Curt wasn’t sure exactly what a person would do with tofu, but if his customers wanted it, he decided he better carry it.

“I called Rainbow in Denver and asked, what is the minimum order? They said, \$200. The minimum order at Affiliated Grocers at that time was \$5,000, and I didn’t have the \$35,000 in my pocket to buy in. So, guess what? We became a health food store. I guess someone was heading me in the direction where I wanted to go. I just didn’t know it,” Curt said with a laugh.

That decision led the Wards down a path that culminated in the construction of a completely brand new store filled with state-of-the art coolers, a cafe, spacious aisles, and a complete line of wholesome foods and nutritional supplements. In some ways, the Wards felt they didn’t have much choice in deciding to build a new store. The building they had purchased in 1985 had reached the end of its useful life.

The structure, originally a 15-foot by 15-foot barbershop located on Alder Street, was moved to Cottonwood Avenue in the 40s. Four additions increased its size in patchwork fashion. For a time, the building served as a garage. When the Wards purchased the store, it still had garage doors on the front.

Curt said, “It was constructed out of whatever was available. They mostly used salvaged lumber with a minimal foundation. When we tore it down, we found a grease pit under one part. The building was literally disintegrating around us. There was a stream underneath and the ground was saturated with water. The timbers used as floor supports were rotting away. When you walked in,





everything leaned to the right.”

Construction on the new store began next door to the old store. The store remained open during construction. The buildings fitted so tightly together that crews had to come back to redo a portion of the roof on the new building later; there just wasn't room to finish it until the old building was demolished.

The new store has an open, homey feel. Delicious smells of savory foods permeate the air. Neighbors stop to chat with neighbors as they shop. Some enjoy a cup of coffee and relax at the tables.

In spite of being spacious, clean, well-lit and energy efficient, Curt does have a few reservations about the new store. “It's more complicated,” he said. “I spend more time in my office. I used to always be out working in the store and talking to my customers. I have extraordinarily gifted employees—all are very talented, hard working and they care about the store. But, I miss being out there and talking with people.”

To remedy that, he spends a portion of each day on the store floor. It gives him a chance to hear his customer's feedback, to listen to their needs and to create that small mountain town country store feeling he dreamt about so many years ago.

He said, “I want to know my customers. We're a service industry. That's what it's all about. It's never about the money. It's how well you take care of each other.”

The mom and pop store that Curt and Bernadette purchased 22 years ago has a shiny new exterior. But underneath, the values of service and the willingness to serve the community in which they live have not changed. Come by and see for yourself! ☺

From top down: Curt Ward (left). Chef Jon (right) in the cafe. The produce section features many organic choices. Well-stocked aisles offer shoppers many natural food choices. Customers who frequented the old store will find the new freezers to be a welcome change over the old store's motley collection! Crestone residents relax in the cafe (left). Cashier Michelle greets customers with a friendly smile.



## Don't Give Up!

Are you one of the 20 percent who has stuck to their New Year's resolutions to improve your health or fitness? Don't despair if you aren't. It's not too late. Spring can be the perfect time to make your resolutions “stick.”

If you haven't done such a great job of upholding your lofty resolutions, ask yourself “Why?” Is this something you *really* want to achieve? Examine your motivation and your desire to change. There's no point to set a goal you know in your heart you really don't want.

If you are sure you want to achieve your goal, then ask yourself, “Is it realistic?” In other words, did you define your goal in achievable steps? It's easy to get overwhelmed and loose interest when you don't have measurable success points along the way.

Focus on the behavioral change needed to accomplish the result you want. For example, if your goal was to lose 15 pounds by summer, ask yourself what behaviors can you change to reach that goal? Pick one and work on it. Perhaps ‘no more candy’ would be a good start. Do that one thing. Add a different behavior when you've mastered the first one. Habits and behaviors that are changed gradually have a greater chance of success. It takes about 21 days to create a habit and six months for it to actually become a part of your daily life.

Reward—but don't sabotage—yourself when you've made progress toward incorporating a new, positive habit in your life. Pick rewards that support your goal and the new behavior. Adding more exercise to your life? Buy new workout shoes as a reward. Met a weight loss goal? How about treating yourself to a massage to pamper that new body you're working on?

Make your new behaviors non-negotiable. Don't give yourself the opportunity to reconsider what you've already decided to do. If you do, the whim of the moment can lay asunder the best laid and most logically thought-out plans.

If making positive health changes was a goal for you, plan on attending a Health Fair. A Health Fair can be a great way to help choose realistic goals and to set a good baseline by which to measure your success. ☺

### 2009 9-Health Fair Dates & Locations

March 28	Del Norte Elementary Mini Gym	7:00 - 11:00
April 3	Alamosa County Nursing Service	7:00 - 11:00
April 18	Saguache - Mtn Valley High School	7:00 - 12:00
April 24 & 25	Monte Vista - Ski-Hi Park	7:00 - 11:00
April 25	Creede High School	7:00 - 12:00
April 25	La Jara - Conejos County Hospital	7:00 - 12:00
April 25	Salida - Salida Middle School	6:30 - 12:00

## Energy Makeover Winner

The winner of the energy makeover valued at \$1,000 has been selected and the winner has been notified. An upcoming issue of the *Newsboy* will feature information on the winning household and the energy updates they decided to make based upon the energy audit.

The winning household was randomly drawn from among all members who purchase green power. Green power blocks, primarily generated from wind, are sold at a premium of 80 cents per 100 kWh block. Members who purchase green power blocks offset the production of conventionally-generated power with power produced from renewable resources.

Earlier this year, SLVREC offered to select one green power purchaser as a recipient of the energy makeover which included an energy audit and home modifications or repairs as needed to improve energy efficiency (up to a total value of \$1,000). The response to the drawing was favorable: 123 members either made one-time donations or elected to purchase one or more green power blocks for the upcoming year.

Given the positive response, it is likely the cooperative will consider another incentive for members who participate in the green power program. To sign up for green power or to learn more about the green power program, contact customer service. ☺

## Fifth TreeLine USA Award

SLVREC has been recognized as a TreeLine USA utility for the fifth year running. The award is given to utilities who demonstrate practices that protect and enhance America's urban forests. To be eligible for the award, the utility must promote trees, tree growth and tree care.

John Rosenow, chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation, said, "One of the greatest objectives of TreeLine USA, and a major contribution of the program, is replacing the outdated line-clearance practice of topping trees with natural pruning. Natural pruning trains trees to grow around wires and retain more of their natural form. This results in healthier trees and reduced clearance costs for utility companies, since natural pruning has to be done less frequently than topping."

Additionally, SLVREC trains employees who dig and trench how to protect tree root zones; the cooperative plants trees in local communities; and the cooperative offers a "trade-a-tree" program to members who have trees that must be removed. SLVREC recognizes that trees are a valuable resource to be protected. ☺

## Solar Program Rebates Revised

Last year, San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative partnered with the Governor's Energy Office (GEO) to offer incentives for certain solar installations. Under the partnership, homeowners who install a solar electric or a solar domestic hot water system are eligible to receive rebates on their installation costs. The cooperative pays for half of the rebate; the GEO kicks in the other half.

In February, the program was renewed and rebates were increased. Under the 2009 program, photovoltaic (PV) electric systems may be eligible for a rebate of up to \$9,000. Rebates are based upon system wattage and other requirements. Only residential, grid-tied, net metered systems are eligible. An energy audit must be performed prior to system installation. Consequently, members are advised to contact the cooperative to complete a pre-application for the rebate prior to installing a solar system to ensure that all program requirements will be met.

Through the program, members may also receive a rebate on certain solar domestic hot water installations. This program offers SLVREC members a cost-effective way to incorporate renewable energy into their home. On the average, in Colorado homes, water heating accounts

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***The solar domestic hot water program offers SLVREC members a cost-effective way to incorporate renewable energy into their home***

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for 15 percent of the annual energy consumed by that home. By using solar energy to heat or preheat water, water heating costs may be significantly decreased.

The solar hot water incentive program offers rebates of up to \$3,000 per system. As with the solar electric program, SLVREC provides half the rebate and GEO provides the other half. Also like the solar electric program, the installed system must meet specific requirements to be eligible. Members are advised to contact the cooperative first, to ensure the system they are looking at meets eligibility requirements.

To learn more about either program, contact the cooperative's energy services specialist at 719-852-3538 or 800-332-7634. Information about the program and program rebate applications are available online at [www.slvrec.com](http://www.slvrec.com). To access the information, click on the Green Power button and following the link to the Solar Power Grant Program. ☺

## Asparagus Medley

- 1 pound asparagus
- 3 cups broccoli florets
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium red bell pepper, cut into ¼-inch strips
- 1 ¼ cups sliced zucchini
- 3 cups cooked rice
- 1 cup diced tomatoes
- ¾ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. ground turmeric
- 2 15-oz cans garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained

Snap off the tough ends of asparagus and cut the remaining stems into 2-inch pieces. Steam asparagus and broccoli until tender. Remove from heat.

Heat olive oil in large pot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add garlic and onion cook about 3 minutes. Add asparagus, broccoli, bell pepper, and zucchini and cook, stirring occasionally, for another 4 minutes. Stir in rice, tomatoes, salt, turmeric and garbanzos. Cook about 5 minutes, stirring frequently, until hot. Serve.

## Tomato-Mint Quinoa Salad

- 2 ½ cups water
- 1 ¼ cups quinoa
- ½ cup raisins
- 1 pinch salt
- 2 medium tomatoes, diced
- 1 medium onion, minced
- 10 radishes, quartered
- ½ cucumber, diced
- 2 Tbsp. sliced almonds, toasted
- ¼ cup chopped fresh mint
- 2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- ¼ cup lime juice
- 2 Tbsp. sesame oil
- salt to taste

Bring water to boil in a small saucepan. Pour in quinoa, raisins, and a pinch of salt. Cover, and let sim-

mer for 12 to 15 minutes, then remove from heat, and allow to cool to room temperature.

Toss together the tomatoes, onion, radish, cucumber, and almonds in a large bowl. Stir in the cooled quinoa, then season with mint, parsley, cumin, lime juice, sesame oil, and salt. Chill 1 to 2 hours before serving.

*Quinoa is available at most natural food stores. Quinoa is high in protein and contains all nine essential amino acids. It is especially rich in lysine and is a very good source of manganese.*

## Almond Strawberry Salad

- 3 cups fresh baby spinach
- ½ cup sliced fresh strawberries
- ¼ cup sliced honey-roasted almonds
- 1 Tbsp. cider vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. honey
- 1 ½ tsp. sugar

In a large bowl, combine the spinach, strawberries and almonds. In a jar with a tight-fitting lid, combine the vinegar, honey and sugar; shake well. Drizzle over salad and toss to coat. Serve immediately.

## Garden Potatoes

- 4 large potatoes
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 (10-oz.) package chopped frozen broccoli, thawed
- ½ cup ranch-style salad dressing
- 1 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 tsp. dried parsley
- salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 425 °F. Pierce the skin of the potatoes with a fork. Bake potatoes for 50 minutes. Slice off potato tops, scoop out the bulk of the interior of

the potato being careful to leave the potato skins intact. In a medium bowl, mash the removed potato interior.

Heat a small skillet over medium heat, stir in butter. Saute onions in the skillet until tender, about 5 minutes. Combine onions, broccoli, and ranch dressing with the mashed potato. Brush the outside of the potato skins with oil. Spoon potato mixture into the skins. Arrange stuffed potatoes on a cookie sheet. Bake potatoes for 15 minutes or until heated through. Season with salt, pepper, and parsley.

## Cheese & Green Bean Casserole

- 1 lg. pkg. frozen French-cut green beans
- 1 (10.75-oz.) can condensed cream of mushroom soup
- 1 ½ cups shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1 can sliced water chestnuts, drained
- ½ cup sliced fresh mushrooms
- 1 Tbsp. fresh minced garlic
- 1 Tbsp. garlic and herb seasoning blend
- salt and ground black pepper to taste
- 1 (6-oz.) can French fried onions

Preheat oven to 350 °F. Grease an 8 by 8-inch baking dish. Mix the green beans with the mushroom soup, cheddar cheese, water chestnuts, mushrooms, garlic, and garlic and herb seasoning blend. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Spoon the bean mixture into the prepared baking dish.

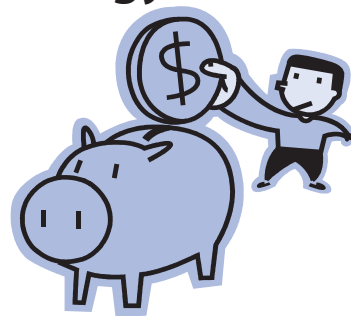
Bake in preheated oven until bubbly, about 30 minutes. Remove from oven, and sprinkle the top with French fried onions. Return to oven, and bake until onions are golden brown, about 5 minutes more.

## Conservation Corner

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### **Energy Efficiency Credit Rebates Available**



San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative's energy efficiency credit program now offers rebates on new EnergyStar® clothes washers (\$40 rebate) and EnergyStar® dishwashers (\$30 rebate). The rebate for EnergyStar® refrigerators will remain the same; however, SLVREC's power provider, Tri-State Generation & Transmission has added yet another incentive to members who properly dispose of an older refrigerator or freezer in conjunction with the purchase of

a new one. Now, all together, members can earn up to \$180 in total rebates on certain refrigerators or freezers.

Information on EnergyStar® appliances can be obtained on the EnergyStar® website at [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov). Members should contact the cooperative before making a purchase to ensure they qualify for the maximum rebate.

Additionally, the EEC program offers rebates to irrigators and commercial electric motor users who upgrade to premium efficiency motors. The rebate on the installation of new premium efficiency motors is \$14 per horsepower (hp) for motors up to 200 hp and \$10 for motors between 201 and 500 hp.

In addition to the items listed above, the program also includes many other items such as hot water heaters, LED light strands, heat pumps, electric thermal storage heaters and more. For more information on the program, contact SLVREC. 