



The Cooperative Difference

Co-ops are more open, democratic, transparent and inclusive than investor-owned corporations. If you have a doubt about the truth of this statement, consider this scenario: You have a question or comment about a product or service you purchased. Would you rather call a local cooperative to express your concern or would you prefer calling a large corporation?

Unless you enjoy speaking to voice-prompt phone systems, you probably prefer dealing with a local cooperative. The phone number will be easy to find. Just look in your local phone book.

Chances are, you'll speak to a real person right away. Even after hours, many cooperatives, like SLVREC, have an answering system that takes you directly to a person. SLVREC's phones are answered by human beings 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!

If the person you speak to doesn't know you personally—and there is a good chance they will—they “get” what you are saying. That's because they live in the same Valley, they know the issues that are important to people who live here and they understand the challenges and situations unique to our setting.

In a nutshell, that's it; that's the cooperative difference. Co-ops are local people working together to provide services they need. Since 1930, October has been celebrated as co-op month. It's a time to recognize the unique advantage cooperatives offer.

In October, cooperatives all around the country publish articles in their newsletters and in local papers about the seven cooperative principles under which cooperatives operate (see page 5). They tell people about cooperative governance and the role directors play in making co-ops work for the communities they serve (also on page 5).

While these are important remind-

ers and great information to keep in mind as you do business with SLVREC, it's not the only thing SLVREC CEO John Villyard wants members to think about this month.

“The thing I really hope members understand,” he said, “isn't just that we are a local company. We are a part of this Valley. From 1937 on, our history and the history of this Valley are intertwined.

You can't separate the two. The development of our distribution network and the growth of agriculture as the dominant industry in the Valley wasn't simply a cause and effect relationship. The two happened together. They each caused each other. But that's not the whole story. Our relationship to the communities and people we serve, that's really what I want people to see and understand.”

If you were to come into the vault at SLVREC and flip back through the books which hold the board meeting minutes, books which go back to the meetings even prior to incorporation, that story would unfold. And of course, since SLVREC is a cooperative, you *could* step into that vault and look through those books (but not everyone at once please, it would get a little crowded).

In the early days at SLVREC, the time between incorporation in August 1937 and the war, members were few

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Would you rather call a local cooperative with a question or a comment or would you prefer calling a large corporation?

**LOCAL.
TRUSTED.
SERVING
YOU.™**



SLVREC CEO, John Villyard

I hope you will take the time to read our *Newsboy* feature this month. It's all about cooperatives and co-op month. It's important for members to understand what we call "The Cooperative Difference." Why? Because this difference underscores every aspect of our operations.

When you call our office or when you walk through the door, you deal with people who know your community, who know the Valley. That's because we live here too. We care about the Valley in a way that companies who are located on the Front Range, in other states or other countries, will never understand.

We say it over and over, but it bears repeating: We don't operate for a profit. We set our rates to cover costs and to provide operating capital to keep the company financially viable. We retire working capital and return it to members when doing so makes sound financial sense for the health of the cooperative because keeping the cooperative financially strong helps us all.

I think this message is critical. It makes our relationship to you much

different than the relationship you have with companies who operate for a profit. Those companies place their interests first. Their primary reason for being is to return a profit to the company and it's shareholders.

Here, at SLVREC, we place your interests first. Or more accurately, I should say, you place your interests first. It's your company. Without you, there would not be a SLVREC.

You exercise your control through the directors you elect at our Annual Meeting. You exercise your control by attending co-op meetings, by calling your director, by speaking to the staff and by speaking with me.

The board, staff and I work hard to keep you abreast of the issues and challenges your cooperative must address. Lately, there's been quite a few of those! Many of the challenges we face have increased the cost of doing business. Many of the issues we must address are legislative in nature. Over the past few years, we have asked members to voice their concerns about legislative changes. You have done a remarkable job of speaking out.

Our state has done a great job of letting legislators know our concerns through the Our Energy, Our Future campaign. Within our state, members of SLVREC have really stepped up to the plate on speaking out. Thank you.

Now, once again, we are asking for your support in helping to defeat Amendments 60, 61 and 101 this

November. We are concerned that if these Amendments were passed, it would make our job more difficult. We already struggle with long response times due to the travel distances within our service territory. Reduced funding for road maintenance and for emergency response agencies would make our job even harder. We are concerned that if implemented, these Amendments would create problems for us and the Valley that we cannot yet foresee.

I have enclosed a letter with more information about these proposals and with a brief description of some of the impacts they could create if passed. I respect your choice to vote as you believe. However, I encourage you to research these proposals thoroughly before you make that choice. I encourage you to remember the old adage, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is too good to be true." I think that applies in this case.

In closing, I just want to thank all of our members for the support you have shown your cooperative through the years. **You** are the cooperative difference.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative  The power of human connections®

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Board of Directors

Mike Rierson, President	719-754-2588
Scott Wolfe, Vice-President	719-852-0966
Cole Wakasugi, Secretary	719-379-2629
Carol Lee Dugan	719-852-5412
Ernie Ford	719-754-2480
Rick Inman	719-658-2455
Eleanor Valdez	719-274-5680

E-mail power@slvrec.com
Your e-mail will be forwarded based upon the direction you provide in your message.

CEO

John Villyard	719-589-5038
SLVREC Office (toll free)	800-332-7634
SLVREC Office (local calls)	719-852-3538

Scheduled Meetings

Board Meeting September 28, 6:00 p.m.
The Board of Directors meet the last Tuesday of each month unless otherwise stated. Members are welcome.



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I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

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Reminder!

October 1 starts the winter season for time of use rates.

On-peak electric rates are higher than off-peak rates. If you have ETS heat, you will minimize your electric bill by shifting as much electric use as possible to off-peak times. Your ETS heater will automatically capture heat during off-peak hours. SLVREC recommends checking your heater now, before you need it, to make sure it's operating correctly. If you have any questions regarding your heater and it's function, contact SLVREC's energy services specialist. For more information on time of use billing rates, please contact customer service. ☺

Time of Use Rates

October thru March: Winter Hours

On Peak—5:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon
 and 4:30 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.
 Off Peak—12:01 p.m. to 4:29 p.m.
 and 10:31 p.m. to 5:29 a.m.

April thru September: Summer Hours

On Peak—4:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
 Off Peak—10:01 p.m. to 3:59 p.m.
 the next day

Simplify Your Life

with our automatic bank drafts!

Sign up for automatic bank draft payment and spend less time paying bills. There are no fees and it's easy to sign up.

With our bank draft, also called an auto-pay program, each month the amount you owe the cooperative will be paid from your bank account on the closest working day to the due date. Your bank lets SLVREC know that funds have been withdrawn from your account. SLVREC's billing department stamps your bill as paid and enters the date the money was transferred from your account. Then, the cooperative mails you your bill so you know exactly when and how much you paid.

Budget billing makes things even simpler. With budget billing, you pay a fixed amount every month. Once a year, your account is credited or billed to reflect the difference between the amount you paid over the year and the amount of electricity you used. To be eligible for budget billing, you must have at least one year of use at your current residence to establish your base-line payment.

Budget billing and automatic bank draft can be combined. Members may also pay their bill online. Visit www.slvrec.com each month to schedule your payment. Call customer service to learn more. ☺

and far between. It was tough getting the business up and running and the cooperative worked with the newly formed Rural Utilities Service to keep things moving forward. Valley residents were skeptical of the newly formed cooperative. Employees spent a large portion of their time recruiting members with promises of a life made easier by the switch from kerosene to light bulbs.

There weren't formal training programs for linemen back then. It was all on the job training. Things were slowly moving forward until December 1941. Then, four days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hitler declared war on the U.S. and everything changed.

It became difficult to source construction supplies. It became even more difficult to find workers. During the war, the cooperative used German war prisoners for hole digging, tree cutting and setting of poles. Then, the only two linemen, Art Wolfe and Charlie Frownfleter, would come along and do the rest. Progress was very slow.

It took a few years after the war for things to speed up. The cooperative's first manager, Willard Johnson said, "It probably took 10 to 15 years before the Valley people finally learned that SLVREC was a going, growing thing and that it could pay its own way.

By the early 50s, SLVREC began moving forward as it never had before. For two decades, SLVREC expanded its distribution network, bringing power for the first time to more and more areas of the Valley. The cooperative focused on expanding its service territory to meet the demand for new service.

Fourth generation farmer, Larry Coombs from Conejos County said. "I was in high school. I can remember running home every day with the other kids and checking to see if we had lights yet."

Things changed again in 1973 with the OAPEC (Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries) oil embargo. The nation's economy slowed. For almost two decades, the Valley's population remained at just under 40,000. It wasn't until the late 80s and early 90s that growth began again. The cooperative struggled through these difficult years.

Then, the Valley and SLVREC entered a period of new-found prosperity. Cooperative programs reflected that change. In 1987, SLVREC offered its first college scholarship.

In an October 1987 board meeting, Manager Garcher said, "We have approximately \$78,000 in

unclaimed capital credits, which we will put out on interest. Monies derived from the interest on the money will be used for scholarships."

The interest, approximately \$1,600 per year, was set aside for tuition and books for a four-year scholarship to Adams State College. Three candidates applied and Stephanie Quintana was selected. Four years later, after Quintana graduated, a second recipient was selected, Michelle Claunch.

By 1993, some of the cooperatives with whom SLVREC worked, were also offering scholarships to their co-op's members. In that year, at the Annual Meeting, SLVREC awarded five scholarships: one ASC 4-year recipient (Mercedes Pinto), a \$1,000 Basin scholarship, a \$500 Tri-State scholarship, and two Special Director's Tri-State \$250 scholarships.

SLVREC has continued to support education in our communities and the scholarship program has grown. In 2010, SLVREC awarded 11 scholarships: one full electric lineman scholarship, one full 4-year scholarship to Adams State College, three \$1,000 scholarships and six \$500 scholarships.

Today, the cooperative has an active program of support for various community causes. So far this year, the cooperative has contributed to high school events, local hospitals, community events such as Stampede, and others.

Just a few weeks ago, SLVREC employees came in on a Saturday to help generate mailing labels for the Greater South Fork Community Foundation. Manager of Member Services and Human Resources, Heather Sanchez explained, "We can't release our mailing list for privacy reasons, but we had a better address list for South Fork than anyone else. I contributed my time, the Community Foundation paid for the postage and supplies, and we helped them mail out a survey so they can better help their community. It's what we do, help our members when they need us."

Villyard said, "We're here for the community. We do what we can, from high voltage safety presentations to making our community room open to groups who need a place to meet. We try not to take sides. However, we will speak out when we believe doing so will help our members—when our members *tell us* we can help by speaking out. I can't say it enough. We really care about the Valley because it's our Valley too."

That's the cooperative difference. ☺

"I can remember running home every day with the other kids and checking to see if we had lights yet."

~ Larry Coombs

Seven cooperative principles

Voluntary & Open Membership. Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all people able to use its services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination. Anyone who is eligible to be a member should, and is, able to become a member.

Democratic Member Control. Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members—those who buy the goods or use the services of the cooperative—who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. All members get an equal say. For example, when voting for directors, each member number may only vote one time. Members who hold multiple accounts under the same member number still only may vote one time.

Members' Economic Participation. Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. Members benefit in proportion to the business they conduct with the cooperative rather than on the capital invested.

Autonomy & Independence. Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If a co-op enters into agreements with other organizations or raises capital from external sources, it does so under terms that ensure democratic control by members and maintain the cooperative's autonomy.

Education, Training & Information. Cooperatives provide education and training for members, elected representatives, managers and employees. Members also inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperatives. SLVREC promotes higher education in the community through scholarships. Electric safety training programs are available for everyone, from grade schoolers through emergency responders.

Cooperation among Cooperatives. Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

Concern for Community. While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of communities through policies and programs accepted by the members. Commitment to community is ingrained in the cooperative structure.

If you are interested in learning more about cooperatives and the cooperative business model, visit cooperationworks.coop, coopmonth.coop, go.coop, or ncba.coop. For information specifically about electric cooperatives, visit National Rural Electric Cooperative Association at nreca.org. ☞

The role of SLVREC's directors

Members control how their cooperative is run by electing fellow members to serve on the cooperative's board of directors. SLVREC's board has seven directors, one from each of the counties the cooperative serves and one member-at-large. Directors are elected for a term of four years. Normally, two board positions come up for election every year. Elections are held at the cooperative's Annual Meeting. Every fourth year, only one position becomes vacant. Article III, Section 3, of SLVREC's bylaws outlines the election schedule.

Article III, Section 4, outlines the procedures by which candidates are nominated for open director positions. In brief, a written petition signed by 15 or more SLVREC members must be submitted to the co-op's secretary no less than 45 days before the annual meeting. The cooperative's bylaws are available on the company web site under the "About Us" tab.

The Board's duties fall into 5 key areas:

Define the co-op's mission and set long-term objectives. Directors choose which products and services the cooperative will offer to members based upon the likelihood that those services will position the cooperative for long-term health and vitality.

Represent members and serve as trustees for their interests. The Board's decisions reflect the direction the membership chooses. Board members represent member-owners by talking with fellow member-owners and asking them about their needs and perceptions.

Select and appraise the cooperative's CEO. Board members are not expected to be utility experts. They rely on the expertise of the CEO and his staff to provide the information they need to make good decisions. To accomplish this, the board and the CEO must build a strong working relationship.

Determine policy. Policies are statements that express the Board's philosophy and shape the decisions the board makes. Policies may include everything from service rules and regulations to legally-related topics. SLVREC's policy books provide guidance in all aspects of the cooperative's operation.

Evaluate the cooperative's performance. The board approves the cooperative's annual budget and multi-year work plans. They review monthly financial reports and keep a close eye on the financial viability of the organization. They also evaluate the cooperative's performance in terms of customer service through feedback from other member-owners. Based upon this feedback, they adjust policy and direction to better serve members. ☞

Is there really a cooperative advantage?

Most Americans think so. A survey completed a few years ago by The Opinion Research Corporation, showed co-ops do have an edge on investor-owned companies in the minds of most Americans:

- ▶ 81 percent agreed that co-ops can be counted on to meet their customers needs, compared to 65 percent for investor-owned corporations.
- ▶ 78 percent agreed that co-ops are committed to and involved in their communities, compared to 53 percent for investor-owned corporations.
- ▶ 68 percent agreed that co-ops are ethically governed, compared to just 45 percent for investor-owned corporations.

Furthermore, Americans trust cooperatives because of the way they are structured. Survey respondents said they found businesses more trustworthy when they:

- ▶ are locally-owned and controlled (62 percent of respondents agreed).
- ▶ allow customers/members to democratically elect the board of directors (55 percent agreed).
- ▶ have consumers/members on the board of directors (68 percent agreed).

GEO solar grant opportunity

Did you know that under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the Governor's Energy Office (GEO) offers funding opportunities for certain types of energy work? Those opportunities are posted on the GEO web site, www.rechargecolorado.com. Follow the quick link on the right side of their web site home page to see the current list of available funding opportunities.

In September, GEO announced a grant for the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) or solar hot water systems (solar thermal) to non-profit organizations that provide Colorado's most vulnerable populations with emergency, health, job training and critical family services.

Submission deadlines for such grants are typically very short. In late September, the GEO web site stated that no grant opportunities were anticipated in October; however, grant status and availability changes quickly.

Sign up for GEO's mailing list to be notified in advance of GEO opportunities as they are announced. To sign up for E-newsletters and press releases, click on the "Subscribe to Email list" link located in the blue box at the bottom of each page. You will then have an option to choose the information you wish to receive from GEO. ☺

Jones makes community presentations

Brad Jones, public affairs manager for Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association, SLVREC's power provider, has been on a mission. "I've been making a lot of trips to the San Luis Valley lately," he said.

Jones has been talking with community groups about the proposed transmission line project. On September 14, he presented information to the Upper Rio Grande Economic Development Council (URGEDC) about the project.

He offered a history of the process Tri-State has completed over the past 12 years to arrive at the project purpose and need. He gave examples of the challenges Tri-State faces with the current transmission network.

"Even if a simple problem occurs along one of the lines serving the Valley," he said, "it may not be simple for us to solve. First, we

mobilize crews, then we get switching orders in place to make repairs. Eight years ago, a tree fell into one of our transmission lines. That event created an 8-hour outage for many Valley residents."

Jones also talked about Xcel Energy's involvement and the concurrent processes that must be completed before the line can be approved.

One process involves the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). Jones said, "We applied to the PUC for a CPCN (Certificate for Public Convenience and Necessity). This process asks, 'Is this project needed and in the best interests of Colorado consumers?' The second process is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS identifies environmental impacts and what needs to be done to mitigate any that are found."

Jones cautioned that the proj-

ect will take time and encouraged interested members to sign up to be placed on the project mailing list at www.socotransmission.com. ☺



Brad Jones, public affairs manager for Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association, has been traveling to our part of the state frequently over the past few months as he meets with various groups to answer transmission development questions. "My reason to breathe," he said, "is to help combat some of the misinformation being offered about this project." He encouraged people to learn more by signing up for the project newsletter at www.socotransmission.com.

The following recipes are from "Recipes from the Upper Rio Grande," a cookbook produced by the Ladies Aid Society of Creede. Copies of the book are available for purchase at SLVREC's office and from the Ladies Aid Society. Books can also be ordered by mail. Send \$15 plus \$3 for shipping and handling per copy to the Ladies Aid Society, Creede Community Church, 420 S. Main, Creede, CO 81130.

Peanut Butter Dip for Apples

from Karen Tempfel

- 12 oz. chunky peanut butter
- ½ cup evaporated milk
- 1 cup brown sugar
- ¼ cup butter

Mix together and heat gently in the microwave, stirring a few times. Serve with apple slices, celery sticks, whatever. Great for kids or adults.

Blue Cheese Bites

from Leslie Dustin

- 1 8-oz pkg. refrigerated biscuits
- ¼ cup butter

3 Tbsp. crumbled blue cheese
Preheat oven to 400 °F. Cut refrigerated biscuits into quarters. Arrange in two 8-inch round baking dishes. Melt together butter and blue cheese. Pour mixture over biscuit pieces, coating well. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes or until golden. Makes 40.

High-Altitude Banana Bread

from Margaret Lamb

- ½ cup shortening
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 ½ cup bananas, mashed
- 2 cups sifted cake flour
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. double-acting baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¼ cup pecans or walnuts, chopped

Cream together shortening and

sugar until fluffy. Blend in eggs and bananas. Sift together, flour, soda, baking powder and salt. Blend dry ingredients into banana mixture, mixing with a few quick strokes. Add nuts. Put batter in a loaf pan which has been oiled and floured. Bake in preheated 350 °F oven for 40 minutes, or until wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Let cool in pan. Refrigerate at least a day before slicing.

Albuquerque Corn Salad

from Barbara Taylor

- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- ⅔ cup jicama, chopped
- 1 Tbsp. minced jalapeño pepper, fresh or from a jar
- 2 cups fresh corn kernels (about 4 ears)
- 1 ¾ cup green onions, thinly sliced (about 8 onions)
- ⅔ cup red bell pepper, chopped
- ½ tsp. ground cumin or oregano
- ¼ tsp. salt

Heat oil in large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Add jicama and jalapeño to pan. Sauté for 2 minutes, stirring frequently. Makes 4 servings about ½ cup each.

Bluegrass Green Beans

from Nancy Blackford

- 1 lb. fresh green beans, rinsed and snapped
- ⅓ cup cashews, coarsely chopped
- ¼ cup butter
- 3 Tbsp. honey

Cook green beans in boiling water until tender, but crisp. Drain and cover to keep warm. In large skillet, sauté cashews in butter over low heat for 5 minutes, or until lightly browned. Add honey and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Pour sauce over green beans and toss to coat thoroughly. Serve immediately.

Almond Chicken

from Nell Wyley

- 1 ½ lbs. chicken breasts
- 1 tsp. ginger
- 2 Tbsp. honey
- 1 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 3 Tbsp. soy sauce
- 12 oz. Chinese pea pods
- ¼ cup oil
- 1 cup natural whole almonds
- 3 Tbsp. water
- ⅓ cup sherry

Skin, bone and cut up chicken breasts into ½-inch cubes. In a bowl, mix ginger, honey and cornstarch. Blend in water, soy sauce and sherry. In a wok, heat oil over medium heat. Add almonds; stir and cook for about 3 minutes. Add chicken; cook just until meat turns white. Pour in sherry mixture and cook until sauce thickens. Add pea pods and stir-fry until hot and glazed. Serve over rice.

Five Minute Chocolate "Coffee Mug" Cake

from Sarah Garrett

- 1 coffee mug
- 4 Tbsp. flour (NOT self-rising)
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 2 Tbsp. baking cocoa
- 1 egg
- 3 Tbsp. milk
- 3 Tbsp. oil
- 3 Tbsp. chocolate chips, optional small splash of vanilla

Add dry ingredients to mug and mix well. Add egg and mix thoroughly. Pour in milk and oil; mix well. Add chocolate chips, if using, and vanilla; mix again. Put mug in microwave for 3 minutes. (I use a 1000-watt microwave. Adjust time if your wattage is different.) The cake will rise over the top of the mug, but don't be alarmed. Allow to cool a little, then tip out onto plate if desired.

Note: I would suggest that you use the chocolate chips ... if you are going to splurge, go all the way!

Conservation Corner

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**LOCAL
TRUSTED.
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YOU.™**

October 2010

Don't miss the 2 for 2 CFL exchange!

Have you gotten around to grabbing the incandescent bulbs from two light fixtures in your house to bring into SLVREC for the 2 for 2 CFL exchange*? If you haven't, we've got a handy reminder. Just clip and save the "Round Tuit" below to remind yourself that now is the time to get around to it!

Why? Swapping out incandescent bulbs from your highest use fixtures is the easiest way to save on your electric bill. If you replace the 60-watt standard bulbs in two of the fixtures that your family uses for an average of 4 hours per day, you will reduce your electric bill by about \$1.35 per month.

Now that you've gotten a "Round Tuit,"** perhaps you might want to purchase a few more CFLs too. Modern CFLs are available for a wider variety of lighting types than ever before. You can purchase CFLs that mimic natural daylight, are designed for outdoor flood lights and for other specialized applications. The more bulbs you swap, the greater your savings. Why not start saving today?

* Only one 2 for 2 exchange per household please. The cooperative will swap two 40 to 100 watts incandescent bulbs for two 60-watt equivalent CFL bulbs. There's no cost to you. You need not be a member of the cooperative to participate.

** This device may also come in handy with children who need to get a "Round Tuit" for homework, room cleaning and other chores.



**Round
Tuit**