Press Release

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SLVREC Board Election Results

Monte Vista—Elections were held for directors from Conejos and Saguache County at San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting Tuesday night. In an extremely close election, challenger Ernie Ford edged out incumbent John Tembrock as director for Saghache County. Eleanor Valdez, incumbent, who ran unopposed as director for Conejos County, will continue to serve on the cooperative's board.

SLVREC CEO John Villyard said, "This is the closest election results we have seen in recent history. I commend both candidates for well-run campaigns and for their willingness to step up to serve their communities. I was very encouraged by the excellent response from our members both in numbers of votes received and in the number of members who made time to attend the meeting. Thank you. Your participation makes our cooperative a success."

During the meeting, Villyard reported that in a recent telephone survey, SLVREC members gave their cooperative a 94 percent satisfaction rating, the highest in the state. Villyard then introduced Mac McLennan, Tri State Generation & Transmission Association vice president of external affairs.

Mac McLennan kicked off his comments by pointing out that for every dollar SLVREC takes in, 60 cents goes directly to Tri-State to pay power bills. McLennan told members that Tri-State works hard to keep their costs down; but, the pressure to increase electric rates will continue in upcoming years. He discussed two challenges that he described as "most relevant" at this time: addressing carbon dioxide emissions and the need for new generation and transmission facilities.

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In reference to the first issue, McLennan said that if carbon dioxide emissions were taxed at a rate of $10 per ton, Tri-State's total costs will increase by $150 million. "That equates to a 15 percent rate increase for every increment of $10 in tax."

To counteract this potential impact upon rate payers, McLennan encouraged increasing energy efficiency. To this end, Tri-State has been working to expand programs that help members make the switch to more energy-efficient appliances and practices. He said, "We're looking how to help SLVREC help you."

He also emphasized the importance of developing new technologies designed to lower carbon emissions from existing facilities and to create new ways of generating power that significantly reduce—or perhaps eliminate—carbon emissions.

Regarding the need for new infrastructure, McLennan said, "This will be the more difficult challenge. We can make a lot of strides with energy conservation; but, at the end of the day, we have to build new infrastructure. A lot of our plants were built in the 60s and 70s. Like a tractor or pickup from the same era, they still run, but they are starting to require more upkeep."

Tri-State has been working on developing new solar and wind facilities. The generation cooperative recently announced construction plans for a 30 megawatt solar facility. However, McLennan pointed out that wind and solar only provide power when the wind blows and the sun shines.

"We need to keep the power on all the time," he said. To this end, Tri-State will continue to look at clean coal technologies, natural gas generation facilities and the development of nuclear power facilities.

Tri-State Generation & Transmission provides electric power to 44 distribution cooperatives in a 250,000 square-mile service territory across Colorado, Nebraska, New Mexico and Wyoming. Serving more than 1.4 million consumers, Tri-State was founded in 1952 by its member systems to provide a reliable, cost-based supply of electricity. Headquartered in Westminster, Colo., Tri-State's power is generated through a combination of owned baseload and peaking power plants that use coal and natural gas as their primary fuels, supplemented by purchased power, federal hydroelectricity allocations and renewable resource technologies.

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