

Good news!

REC receives nearly \$2 million for high-speed Internet access

In late July San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) was announced as the recipient of a \$1,998,448 grant to deploy fiber-to-the-premises services in rural parts of the San Luis Valley.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the Department is investing \$401 million to provide access to high-speed Internet for 31,000 rural residents and businesses in 11 states, part of the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to investing in rural infrastructure and affordable high-speed Internet for all. This announcement includes a group of investments from the ReConnect Program and an award funded through USDA's Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan and Loan Guarantee program.

REC's subsidiary, Cielo, will use the grant to connect 129 residences, eight businesses, one public school and 20 farms to high-speed Internet in unserved and underserved parts of Conejos and Alamosa counties.

"We began providing high-speed fiber optic based broadband internet access to rural areas in the San Luis Valley in 2014," said Loren Howard, CEO of REC/Cielo.



High-speed fiber optic based Internet will be installed to REC members that live in the Zapata area, along with some REC members along Highway 15 in Conejos County, increasing their connectivity exponentially.

"This grant, the second Cielo has received, accelerates Cielo's commitment to bring this crucial utility service to the Valley residents. REC and Cielo are incredibly grateful for this boost in building our fiber network to difficult-to-serve areas."

"Connectivity

See GRANT continued on Page 4

Meet your co-op

Center native joins REC customer service team

Center native Paul Lopez recently joined REC/Cielo as a customer service representative.

Paul previously worked with Valley-Wide Health Systems in the call center, as a pharmacy tech and doing outreach. "I enjoyed my job at Valley-Wide, but with COVID, we saw some schedule changes. We went back to a five-day workweek, rather than four 10-hour days. When the customer service job opened here, I was excited about the four-day week. I like to be able to spend that extra day with my daughter," he said.

While Paul feels he still has a lot to learn in his new position, he has found that customer

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Paul Lopez

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Meet your co-op

Go Green/Conservation/Cielo

Loren Howard

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Recipe/Historical happenings

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Member information



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If you don't have a SmartHub account, you can create one in three easy steps. Below the sign-in boxes, click on "New User." You just need your account number,

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PAUL

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support is a huge part of his duties as well as the importance of attention to detail.

"I am really enjoying the people I work with here. And I have been impressed with Loren's employee interaction; most CEOs don't even know the employees' names, and Loren comes by and chats with us," he commented.

"It has been a little difficult adjusting to my new sleep schedule; getting up so early is tough, but it is starting to get easier," he laughed.

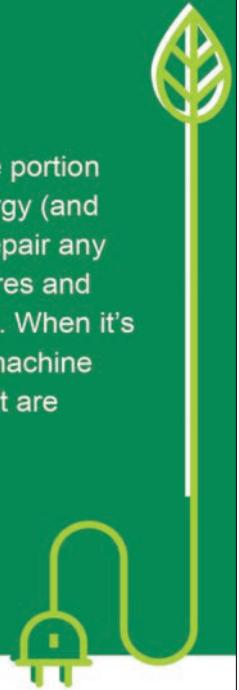
Paul likes spending time with his wife and three-year-old daughter and is looking forward to their trip to Disney World in a few months. He also enjoys basketball, fishing, being outdoors and traveling.

Welcome to the team, Paul!

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Water heating accounts for a large portion of home energy bills. To save energy (and money!) used for water heating, repair any leaky faucets, install low-flow fixtures and insulate accessible hot water lines. When it's time to purchase a new washing machine or dishwasher, look for models that are ENERGY STAR®-certified.

Source: Dept. of Energy



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This is our why...

"I spend my summers in Creede and for the past 15 years I have taught a summer research class online for Western New Mexico University. Initially (before CIELLO) it was sometimes hit or miss with service. I signed up for CIELLO as soon as it was available and couldn't be happier. I am online several hours a day most days of the week responding to students' questions regarding course content, reading their assignments, participating in their discussions about course topics and grading their research proposals. It has been easy and painless."

-Dr. Barbara Taylor, Creede

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REC's Strategic Plan, Part 2 – Reliability

The past 12 months have brought significant concerns in the electric industry about having sufficient generation resources to meet summer demands should a large generation asset have an unplanned outage. This issue—resource adequacy—has garnered much attention this summer and so far, there has not been any large-scale outages. This concern of having enough generation to meet demand and contingencies is just one aspect of reliability.

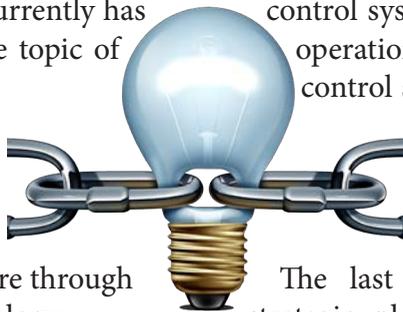
REC's strategic plan currently has three focus areas on the topic of reliability:

- Implement risk mitigation plans for environmental, regulatory and security
- Advance infrastructure through the integration of technology
- Implement an infrastructure monitoring program

Managing risk, whatever the arena, is a constant effort. Many years ago, REC worked to replace transformers and other oil-containing equipment in which the oil had PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls). Cleaning up oil with PCB is a significant task given the hazards of PCB. Cleaning up a mineral oil spill isn't fun but significantly less arduous without PCB issues. A more recent risk mitigation effort has been the substantial efforts made to retrofit power lines with avian protection equipment. This is mostly a regulatory risk given

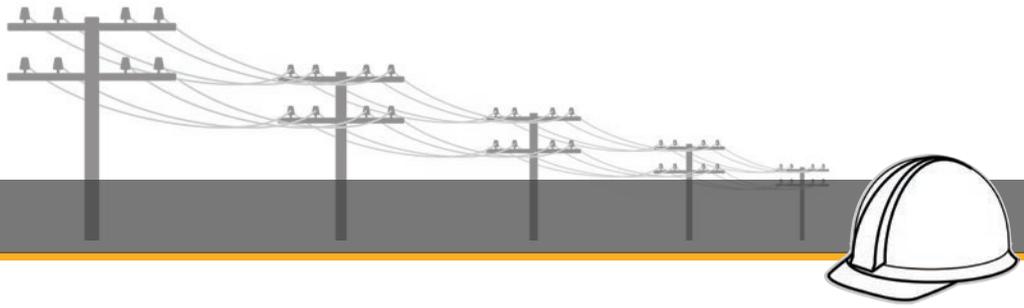
endangered species regulations for raptors can carry significant penalties.

REC's effort to utilize technology to maintain and operate the electric infrastructure has also been ongoing and comprehensive. The advanced metering in place provides more accurate accounting and provides members access to their daily electric usage. Another important technology upgrade in the past several years has been the replacement of REC's SCADA control system which allows remote operation of REC substations. This control system provides for quick actions in resolving power outages and improves security at each substation.



The last actionable task in the strategic plan is to better monitor the infrastructure of REC's electric and broadband systems. Cybersecurity for both REC and Ciello has become a critical task. There are many "bad actors" working to cause disruption or worse—damage—to both the electric infrastructure and the broadband infrastructure. Monitoring systems has been expanded to prevent, detect and stop attacks on all REC and Ciello services.

Reliability of both electric and broadband service is vital to residents and businesses in the Valley. REC and Ciello continue to ensure the services provided are as reliable as possible.



GRANT

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is critical to economic success in rural America,” Vilsack said. “The Internet is vital to our growth and continues to act as a catalyst for our prosperity. From the farm to the school, from households to international markets, connectivity drives positive change in our communities.”

“The investments I am announcing will help 31,000 people and businesses in large and diverse regions across the country access to new and critical opportunities. Under the leadership of President Biden and Vice President Harris, USDA knows rural America is America’s backbone, and prosperity here means prosperity for all.”

“Living in the San Luis Valley, I know the need of reliable Internet access and being able to engage in remote work, telehealth, e-commerce, and online schooling,” said Armando Valdez,

USDA Rural Development Colorado State Director. “Internet service strengthens community prosperity by providing connections to a vast number of resources and potential markets.

“This grant will change lives and provide quality enhancements to our telecommunication infrastructure in a strong rural community in southern Colorado. I am grateful that SLVREC pursued this opportunity. And I am so happy that residents in Conejos and Alamosa counties will be able to tap into these resources and thrive both economically and socially.”

As a provider for the Federal Communications Commission’s Affordable Connectivity Program, Cielo will serve these socially vulnerable areas in Conejos and Alamosa counties. REC members that live in the Zapata area, along

with some REC members along Highway 15 in Conejos County, will experience a lot of benefits from the availability of high-speed fiber broadband service in their areas.

“We are very grateful to have been awarded these funds from the Reconnect3 program,” said Cielo’s Chief Technology Officer Monroe Johnson. “This is the culmination of a lot of hard work on the part of the management team here at the cooperative, and we look forward to working with everyone involved to bring this project to a successful conclusion.”

“Cielo’s mission is to bring the best broadband service available anywhere to the communities we serve, and this is a logical extension to all the work that has been completed in the last several years.”

PAPERLESS

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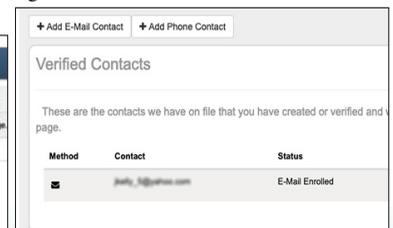
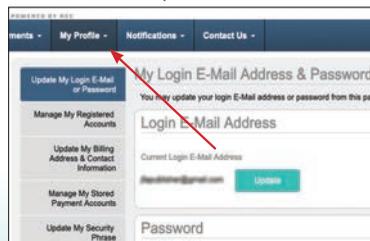
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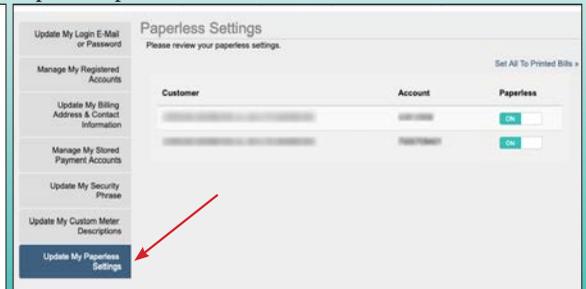
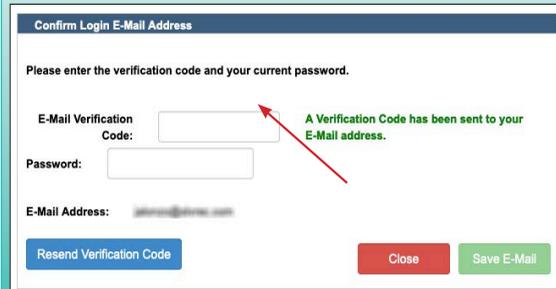
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Recipe of the month

INGREDIENTS

- 1 package yellow cake mix (regular size)
- 2 T. butter
- 4 medium tart apples, peeled and finely chopped (about 4 cups)
- 3/4 c. packed brown sugar
- 1 T. cornstarch
- 1 T. water

FROSTING:

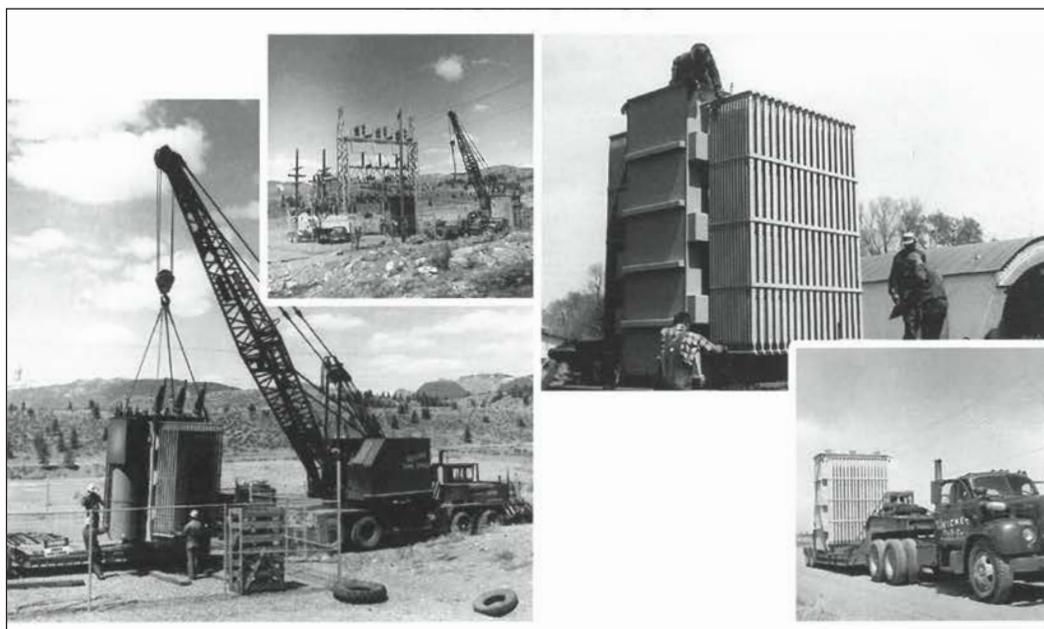
- 1 c. butter, softened
- 3 c. confectioners' sugar
- 2 T. heavy whipping cream
- 1 t. vanilla extract
- 1-1/2 t. ground cinnamon
- Thinly sliced apples, optional

APPLE PIE CUPCAKES WITH CINNAMON BUTTERCREAM

1. Prepare and bake cake mix according to package directions for 24 cupcakes; cool completely.
2. In a large skillet, heat butter over medium heat. Add apples and brown sugar; cook and stir until apples are tender, 10-12 minutes. In a small bowl, mix cornstarch and water until smooth; stir into pan. Bring to a boil; cook and stir until thickened, 1-2 minutes. Remove from heat; cool completely.
3. Using a paring knife, cut a 1-in.-wide cone-shaped piece from top of each cupcake; discard removed portion. Fill cavity with apple mixture.
4. In a large bowl, combine the 5 frosting ingredients; beat until smooth. Frost cupcakes. If desired, top with apple slices to serve.

Recipe by Taste of Home, www.tasteofhome.com

Historical happenings



Creede substation updated

Every year, SLVREC repairs or replaces system components to keep up with increasing demand and to improve service. Some projects are more extensive than others. In 1969 the old transformer was pulled out of the Creede substation and replaced with a larger, more modern transformer.

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SCHEDULED MEETINGS
Board Meeting: Tuesday, September 27, time TBA
The REC Board of Directors meets the last Tuesday of each month unless otherwise stated. Members are welcome; advance notice required.

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