

## Solar Discussion

Today's consumers want and expect options, including the type of energy powering their homes. Many homeowners are looking for a less expensive form of energy with ongoing savings. Some are looking for a green energy source. These two motives are why many homeowners are exploring rooftop solar panels.

The interest in alternative energy sources is also being fueled by decreasing costs for rooftop solar, the availability of financial incentives, and the proliferation of companies offering solar panel installation.

However, as attractive and popular as rooftop solar may appear, it is important for consumers to fully understand its true costs, the operational reality of this form of energy and actual energy savings. To determine whether rooftop solar is right for their particular situation, homeowners must undertake their due diligence.

### We're here to help.

As your trusted energy advisor, SLVREC can offer a candid assessment of your specific situation. After all, San Luis Valley REC has a different "bottom line" that is not directly tied to the sale of a product or service. We constantly strive to find new ways to help you use energy more efficiently. SLVREC is seeking to keep pace with the changing energy environment and evolving technology. We are exploring more options that will help you manage your energy use such as SmartHub. We take a more holistic, objective view of how to achieve energy savings.

### Is rooftop solar right for you?

To help determine whether rooftop solar is right for you, San Luis Valley REC will look at the:

- overall energy efficiency of the home/building
- orientation of the sun in relation to the home/building
- tree coverage near the home/building
- weather patterns for the region

Unlike a solar company that has one objective — to sell their products and services — we will look at the total energy picture and help you determine the best options for your home. While rooftop solar certainly works for many people, it's not the answer for all.

When helping co-op members determine whether rooftop solar is right for them, we must remember that there are many financial considerations:

- Is there a large up-front payment required or are fees spread out over time?
- Will the homeowner own the panels, or will they be leased?
- Are there any hidden costs — e.g., does the roof need to be replaced before installing the panels?
- Are there ongoing maintenance fees?
- Are there rebates or other financial incentives available?
- Is the estimated energy savings worth the investment?
- Is it more cost effective to invest in other energy saving measures?

Most importantly, we will provide perspective on the total energy puzzle. Taking into account current energy consumption, the home "envelope," age and efficiency of the HVAC system and home site, we can help co-op members determine whether rooftop solar is the best choice given the homeowners' objectives.

When assessing solar options, it is an excellent time to examine other potential energy efficiency improvements for your home. For example, it may make sense to insulate the attic at the same time as installing solar.

SLVREC recognizes that member interest in green energy sources and renewables is at an all-time high, and we stand ready to help our members determine their best options.

### THIS ISSUE

Solar Discussion

Loren Howard

Energy Efficiency

Co-op News

Recipes

MARCH 2019 | VOLUME 46 | ISSUE 3



## LOREN HOWARD

### Co-op Policy Priorities for the New Congress

Every time a new Congress convenes, electric cooperatives have the opportunity to educate new lawmakers on issues that matter most to their members and the communities they serve. The 116th Congress kicked off in January with more than 100 new members in the House and Senate.

Since then, co-ops have been working with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the national service organization that represents more than 900 not-for-profit electric cooperatives, to introduce ourselves to new members on Capitol Hill. Here are several priority issues that we're bringing to lawmakers' attention.

#### Energy Policy and Infrastructure

The potential for energy and infrastructure legislation presents a significant opportunity as electric cooperatives work to meet the growing needs of their local communities. NRECA will work to ensure that any infrastructure package focuses on more than roads and bridges, including opportunities to modernize the electric grid and expand rural broadband access. This is critical to ensuring that rural America is not left behind in the 21st century economy.

#### Environment

NRECA will promote and encourage bipartisan support for renewable energy research and development programs — including programs that focus on finding a viable use for carbon capture, utilization, and storage, which comprise a suite of technologies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from power plants. Cooperatives' use of renewables has increased substantially in recent years, more than doubling since 2010.

#### Broadband

Expanded rural broadband access remains a priority for NRECA. As electric co-ops engage the new Congress, we will work to ensure that all rural broadband discussions include

the electric co-op perspective on the need to expand high-speed internet service in rural areas. According to the Federal Communications Commission, 23 million rural Americans lack access to broadband — millions of them are members of an electric co-op. That's why roughly 100 electric cooperatives are working to close the digital divide by bringing broadband to their communities, and more are exploring the option.

#### Tax Policy

The 2017 tax reform law included a provision that treated federal grants as income. This threatens the tax-exempt status of some electric cooperatives, because many co-ops rely on government grants to maintain and expand their infrastructure and provide services to their local communities. America's electric cooperatives will seek to fix this unintended consequence of the tax law.

#### Grid Resilience

Protecting our nation's vast power grid is a national priority and focus for electric cooperatives. Ensuring appropriate information sharing and preserving existing partnerships and structures are essential to these efforts. We will advocate for resources and technologies that meet the unique cybersecurity and recovery needs of small and medium-sized utilities to help protect our electric systems.

With such a large freshman class of lawmakers, educating them about electric cooperatives and the issues we care about will take time and perseverance. Advocating for the interests of our members and the communities in which they live is at the very heart of our business.

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cole Wakasugi, President  
719-379-2629

Carol Lee Dugan, Vice President  
719-852-5412

Scott Wolfe, Secretary  
719-852-0966

Mike Rierson  
719-754-2588

Kip Nagy  
719-850-0749

Stephen Valdez  
719-588-0430

Keenan Anderson  
719-849-8304

Email: [power@slvrec.com](mailto:power@slvrec.com)

Your email will be forwarded based on the direction you provide in your subject line.

#### CEO

Loren Howard  
719-852-6630

SLVREC Office (toll free)  
800-332-7634

SLVREC Office (local calls)  
719-852-3538

#### PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT

The Newsboy (publication #551-450) is an official publication of the San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.; 3625 US Hwy 160 W, Monte Vista, CO 81144. The Newsboy is published monthly for SLVREC members. Periodical postage paid at Monte Vista, CO 81144.

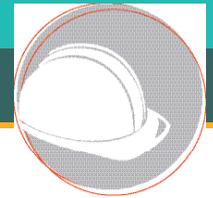
Postmaster, send Form 3579 to NEWSBOY, P.O. Box 3625, Monte Vista, CO 81144-3625.

© 2019 San Luis Valley Rural Electric Cooperative. All rights reserved.

 [www.facebook.com/SLVREC](http://www.facebook.com/SLVREC)

 [www.twitter.com/SLVREC](http://www.twitter.com/SLVREC)

# Energy Efficiency



Winter weather can have a big impact on your energy bills, hitting your pockets a little harder than you would have liked. Now that spring is just around the corner, it's the perfect time to tackle a few DIY efficiency projects for your home. The good news: You don't have to be an energy expert to do this!

There are several easy ways to save energy, but if you're willing to take a hands-on approach, here are three projects you can do now to start saving.

## Make the Most of Your Water Heater.

Let's start with one of the easiest projects: insulating your water heater. Insulating a water heater that's warm to the touch can save 7 to 16 percent annually on your water heating bills. It should also be noted that if your water heater is new, it is likely already insulated. But if your water heater is warm to the touch, it needs additional insulation.

You can purchase a pre-cut jacket or blanket for about \$20. You'll also need two people for this project. Before you start, turn off the water heater. Wrap the blanket around the water heater and tape it to temporarily keep it in place. If necessary, use a marker to note the areas where the controls are so you can cut them out. Once the blanket is positioned correctly tape it permanently in place then turn the water heater back on. If you have an electric water heater, do not set the thermostat above 130 degrees, which can cause overheating.

## Seal Air Leaks with Caulk.

The average American family spends \$2,000 annually on energy bills, but unfortunately, much of that money is wasted through air leaks in the home. Applying caulk around windows, doors, electrical wiring and plumbing can save energy and money. There are many different types of caulking compounds available, but the most popular choice is silicone. Silicone caulk is waterproof, flexible, and won't shrink or crack.

Before applying new caulk, clean and remove any old caulk or paint with a putty knife, screwdriver, brush, or solvent. The area should be dry before you apply the new caulk.

Apply the caulk in one continuous stream, and make sure it sticks to both sides of the crack or seam. Afterwards use a putty knife to smooth out the caulk, then wipe the surface with a dry cloth.

## Weather Strip Exterior Doors.

One of the best ways to seal air leaks is to weather strip exterior doors, which can keep out drafts and help you control energy costs. Weather stripping materials vary, but you can ask your local hardware or home store for assistance if you're unsure about the supplies you need.

When choosing weather stripping materials, make sure it can withstand temperature changes, friction, and the general "wear and tear" for the location of the door. Keep in mind that, you will need separate materials for the door sweep (at the bottom of the door) and the top and sides.

Before applying the new weather stripping, clean the molding with water and soap, then let the area dry completely. Measure each side of the door, then cut the weather stripping to fit each section. Make sure the weather stripping fits snugly against both surfaces so it compresses when the door is closed.

By completing these simple efficiency projects, you can save energy (and money!) while increasing the comfort level of your home. And you can impress your family and friends with your savvy energy-saving skills.



## Meet Your Co-op!

### Meet Russ Witherspoon!

Russ joined San Luis Valley REC in August 2018 after he decided to relocate back to the valley from Castle Rock, Colorado. He spent just over four years in the Sedalia area with Colorado Powerline Inc., where he journeyed out.

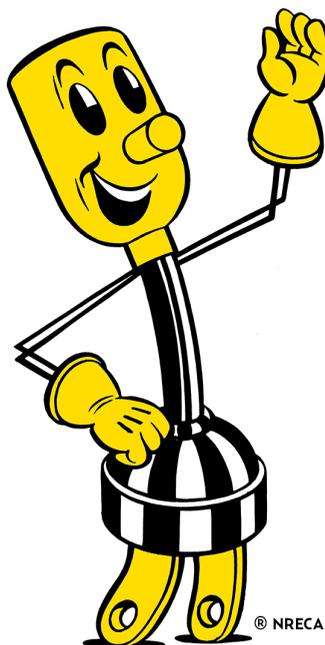
Russ is originally from the San Luis Valley, so the move back afforded him the opportunity to be closer to his family.

His experience with REC has been all he had hoped it would be. Russ was familiar with many of the line crew — the transition was a perfect fit.

Russ hopes to bring his good work ethic and positive attitude to all those around him.



## Annual Meeting Reminder

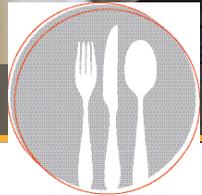


### Annual Meeting Agenda

- 5:30 p.m. Registration Opens
- 6:45 p.m. Presenting of Colors
- 6:50 p.m. Invocation
- 6:55 p.m. Determination of Quorum
- 7:00 p.m. Start of Business Meeting

The meeting will be held at Adams State University  
in the Student Union Building  
in the Banquet Rooms.  
June 11, 2019

The 2019 Board Petition Packet is available  
under the Annual Meeting tab at [www.slvrec.com](http://www.slvrec.com)



# RECIPES OF THE MONTH

## INGREDIENTS

- 5 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
- 2 large eggs
- 1 (14-oz.) can creamed corn
- 3/4 cup fine-grind cornmeal
- 6 Tbsp. sour cream
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 cup coarsely grated Fontina cheese

## Cheesy Corn Spoon Bread

Preheat oven to 350°F. Melt butter with garlic in an 8-inch cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until garlic is fragrant and starting to brown, about 4 minutes. Pour into a large bowl, leaving 1 Tbsp. butter in skillet; Set skillet aside.

Add eggs, corn, cornmeal, sour cream, baking powder, pepper, and salt to garlic butter and whisk to combine, then mix in Fontina. Scrape into reserved skillet and bake spoon bread until top is golden brown and center is just barely set, 25 - 30 minutes. Let cool 10 minutes before serving.

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 3 to 3 1/2-lb chicken, including neck (discard giblets), skin removed
- 2 large carrots, halved
- 2 stalks celery, halved, plus celery leaves, for serving
- 1 onion, quartered
- 1 clove garlic, smashed
- 1 bay leaf
- 4 sprigs parsley
- Kosher salt
- 1 1/2 c. egg noodles
- Chopped dill, for serving

## Instant Pot Chicken Soup

Place chicken in pot of electric pressure cooker; add carrots, celery, onion, garlic, bay leaf, parsley, 3/4 teaspoon salt and 6 cups water. Lock lid and cook on High pressure (12.0) for 15 minutes. Use quick-release method to release pressure, then open lid. Transfer chicken to bowl, and carrots and celery to cutting board; let cool.

Strain broth in pot through fine-mesh sieve, discarding any remaining solids; transfer back to pot, press Sauté and bring mixture to a simmer. Add noodles and cook until tender, 5 to 6 minutes. Press Cancel.

Meanwhile, cut carrots and celery into small chunks and shred chicken into large pieces, discarding skin and bones. Stir into broth and serve soup sprinkled with dill and celery leaves if desired.

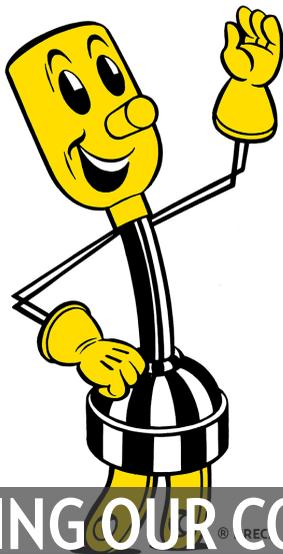
Periodical Postage  
Paid at Monte Vista, CO



**POWERING A VITAL VALLEY**

P.O. Box 3625  
Monte Vista, CO 81144

March 2019



**POWERING OUR COMMUNITY**

SLVREC's office is open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Monday through Thursday.  
The office is closed Friday through Sunday.

**ENERGY ASSISTANCE**

866-HEAT HELP (866-432-8435)  
[www.energyoutreach.org](http://www.energyoutreach.org)

Your Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup>  
Cooperative 

**SCHEDULED MEETINGS**

Board Meeting: March 26, 2019 @ 9:30 a.m.  
The REC Board of Directors meets the last Tuesday of each  
month unless otherwise stated. Members are welcome.

This institution is an equal opportunity employer.

