

## Meet Your Co-op!

### 40 years later, linework is still linework

SLV REC Foreman Ronnie Spencer will hit a huge milestone in November—his 40-year anniversary with REC.

Ronnie began his REC career as an equipment operator in 1980; he also worked as a warehouseman before beginning his apprenticeship in 1988. After journeying out in 1991, he was promoted to his current position—foreman—in 1994.

Ronnie loves his job; he doesn't have one favorite part—“it's all good.” He loves meeting people and being outside.

Through 40 years with the coop, he estimates that he's probably supervised 50 linemen, worked for eight or nine CEOs and observed various generations of “kids” learning the ropes.

The biggest change he has witnessed through his tenure, though, is technology. Computers have changed the process; paperwork is different now. Reports are more detailed, and the information available is very comprehensive.

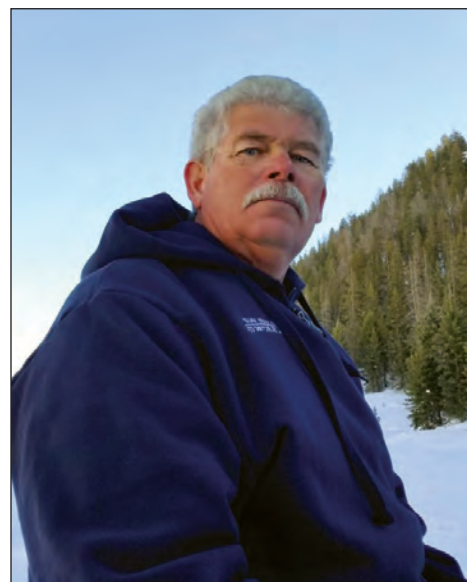
But according to Ronnie, one

thing remains the same, “linework is still linework. You still have to set the pole and hang the wire. The basic part has not changed. Equipment and line trucks have been modernized—line trucks are three times the size they used to be, but the work is the same,” as is his love for the job.

Ronnie's free time is spent with his family, which includes his wife Jackie, son Joshua, daughter-in-law Misty and two grandkids, Courtney and Corey. Weekends are spent in the mountains; he loves fishing, hunting, camping, ATV-ing and mountain biking. He's also got a love for his Harley, photography and enjoys making knives and jewelry.

Ronnie's been fortunate over the past 40 years with no injuries; “there have definitely been mishaps, but I've not been hurt,” he joked.

Those wanting to go into the industry need to think about a few things: “they have to work hard and can't be scared of heights or bad weather,” Ronnie advised. “It's a good



Ronnie Spencer

occupation, although the hours are rough sometimes. You miss a lot. But it's a good career.”

Retirement isn't necessarily in the near future for Ronnie. He still loves the job and doesn't mind getting up in the mornings; until that changes, he'll continue to work and do what he loves.

## Celebrating Earth Day

### You can make a difference

Earth Day is considered one of the world's largest civic events, and on April 22, we can all be part of this global movement to help the environment.

There are many ways we as individuals can help the environment, and some

are easier than you'd think. Here are a few simple actions you can take now to reduce your energy use.

**Audit your light bulbs.** Swapping out any remaining incandescent bulbs with

**See EARTH continued on Page 4**

#### THIS ISSUE

Meet Your Co-op!

Concern for Community

Loren Howard

Planning a yard project?

Recipe/Conservation

# Concern for Community



## K-8 students receive hands-on experience in Sanford

SLV REC  
lineman Gabe  
Gutierrez  
talks with a  
young student  
at Sanford  
Schools  
Career Fair in  
February.  
Far right: A  
student gets  
“hands-on”  
experience  
while trying on  
a lineman’s  
pair of gloves.



Photos by Jennifer Alonzo

## 2020 REC Scholarship winners announced

For the past several years, the San Luis Valley REC has made secondary education a priority when giving back to the Valley. With just over \$180,000 given in the past five years, the REC annually awards several scholarships to local students.

The board of directors have announced the 2020 scholarship recipients:

*SLV REC Adams State University  
Four-Year Scholarship:*

Alyssa Mortensen, Sangre de Cristo

*Electric Lineworker Scholarship:*

Isaias Minchaca, Sierra Grande

*Robert Wolfe Scholarship:*

Grace Whitehorn, Creede

*SLVREC Past Director Scholarship:*

William Perez, Del Norte

*SLVREC Past Retired*

*GM Ray Villyard &*

*CEO John Villyard Scholarship:*

Ariel Caldon, Sanford

*SLV REC Scholarships:*

Makenzie Rogers, Sangre de Cristo;

Kelsey Poe, Sangre de Cristo;

Lexi Metz, Sangre de Cristo;

Ryan Holland, Sargent

*Tri-State G&T Scholarships:*

Clay Kimberling, Sargent;

Dynae Johnson, Centauri

*Board of Directors Scholarship:*

Garrett Valdez, Centauri

*REC Dependent Scholarship:*

Caden Alonzo, Alamosa

Congratulations to SLV REC's 2020 scholarship winners!

## Lineworker Appreciation Day 4.13.20

### THANK YOU!

*It takes a great team to power a community!*



***We're happy you're part of ours...***

Baldo Aguilera, Jordan Barbosa, Charlie Booth,  
Ryan Christensen, Troy Golden, Gabe Gutierrez,  
Jeff Henderhan, Ruben Heredia, Alec Higel, Shan Hunter,  
Jed Larsen, Randy Magnuson, Marvin Martinez, Kevin McCarroll,  
Shawn McKibbin, Ben Osburn, Ronnie Spencer, Kurt Taffin,  
Rudy Vialpando, Wade Warman & Russell Witherspoon





## Loren Howard

### Doing our part

This is the first column I have written where I hope by the time you read it, you will say “Well, that is old news.”

For more than 80 years, REC has worked diligently to provide electricity to much of the San Luis Valley and in the past five years through Cielo, broadband Internet and phone services. It is March 19, 2020 as I write this column and the COVID-19 crisis is consuming life everywhere—the Valley, the state of Colorado, the United States and the world. Many are afraid to go about their usual activities and many are being forced to stop their daily routines. Schools are shut down; businesses are closed; meetings are being limited and the list goes on.

More than ever the services REC and Cielo provide to its members and customers are crucial to surviving in a very restricted world. The loss of either electricity or information connectivity would add extreme challenges to the already difficult conditions.

Everyone at REC and Cielo is working diligently and proactively making every

effort to ensure the electricity stays on and phone and Internet access stay up. Operating systems are being inspected; materials are being inventoried, and employees are being cautious and working safely as always as the focus of business and service continuity is even more important than ever.

REC and Cielo have always worked with members and customers who have difficulty paying their monthly bills. The effort to help everyone through this difficult time is being expanded even as state and federal orders for utility continuity are being considered. Customer service for both REC and Cielo can provide bill assistance for those impacted by the loss of employment or business shutdown as a result of local, state and federal work, travel and gathering restrictions and shutdowns.

I truly hope when you read this you can say, “well, that is the past,” but however long it takes and whatever it takes for REC and Cielo to do its part to get Valley residents through this crisis will be done.

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

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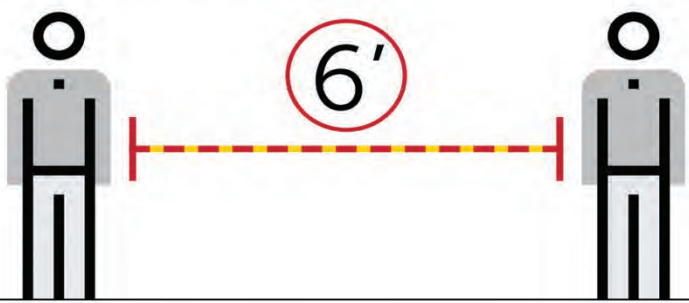
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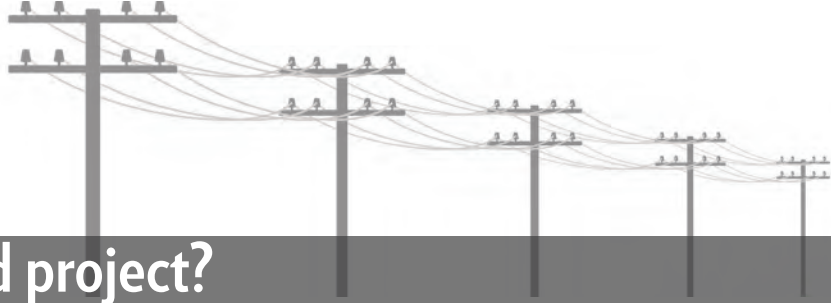


**Six Feet Away**

COVID-19 is primarily spread through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

People who have sustained contact within 6 feet of an infected individual are most at risk of transmission.





# Planning a yard project?

## Don't just dig in

April is National Safe Digging Month. It reminds us all that as we begin beautifying our yards, we shouldn't just dig in. According to 811, the "Call Before You Dig" national hotline, an underground utility is damaged **every nine minutes** because someone didn't call before digging.

Whether it is a do-it-yourself project or you are hiring a professional, call 811 or your state's utility locating service two to three days prior to starting any digging project to request that all underground utilities be marked. (Call-to-completion time varies from state to state.) The service is free.

You may think it won't hurt anything to dig in an unmarked

yard when landscaping, installing a fence, deck or mailbox, or even "just" planting a small flower bed or bush, but damaging an underground cable can have serious consequences.

Hitting a line could result in serious injuries and disrupted service for you and your neighbors. It could also make a dent in your wallet for repair fees or other fines.

The 811 hotline points out that there is more than one football field's length of buried utilities for every man, woman, and child in the U.S. Before digging:

- **Notify** your state's one-call center by calling 811 or making an online request 2-3 days before work begins.
- **Wait** the required amount of



time for affected utility operators to respond to your request.

- **Confirm** that all affected utility operators have responded to your request and marked underground utilities.
  - **Dig carefully** around the marks
- See DIG continued on Page 5**

## EARTH

continued from page 1

LED bulbs can make a big difference in home efficiency, and it's one of the easiest ways to reduce your energy bill.

**Maintain your HVAC system.** Replace your home air filters to allow your HVAC system to run more efficiently. Air filters prevent dust and allergens from clogging your HVAC system. Changing the filters makes your unit run more efficiently – keeping your home cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.

**Examine your smart or programmable thermostat.** Make sure it is programmed for the current season and family schedule. This is one of the best tools at your fingertips, however, you can only achieve these efficiencies and savings if it is programmed properly and adjusted periodically to keep pace with

changes in household routines.

**Seal window and doors.** Seal leaks with weather stripping and caulk to keep cool air indoors during warm months and prevent cold air from penetrating the indoors during colder months. Sealing gaps around piping, dryer vents, fans and outlets also helps to seal the envelope and increase efficiency.

While these suggestions may not be glamorous actions worthy of a press release or event, they do make a difference. And we're always here to help if you want more information on how you can save energy.

Stop by our office or give us a call.

As we celebrate Earth Day this April, let's continue to work together and make a positive impact on our local community – and our beautiful planet.





## Recipe of the Month

### INGREDIENTS

- 1-1/2 c. cubed cooked chicken breast
- 1-1/2 c. picante sauce, divided
- 1/2 c. shredded reduced-fat cheddar cheese
- 2/3 c. chopped green onions, divided
- 1 t. ground cumin
- 1 t. dried oregano
- 6 flour tortillas (8 inches), warmed
- 1 T. butter, melted
- Sour cream, optional

### BAKED CHICKEN CHIMICHANGAS

Preheat oven to 375°. In a small bowl, combine chicken, 3/4 cup picante sauce, cheese, 1/4 cup onions, cumin and oregano. Spoon 1/2 cup mixture down the center of each tortilla. Fold sides and ends over filling and roll up. Place seam side down in a 15x10x1" baking pan coated with cooking spray. Brush with butter.

Bake, uncovered, 20-25 minutes or until heated through. If desired, broil for one minute or until browned.

Top with remaining picante sauce, onions and if desired, sour cream.

*Recipe and photo by Taste of Home*

## Conservation Corner

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

This spring, consider using a rain barrel to save energy. Rain barrels capture rainwater from a roof that can be used later for watering your lawn, garden or indoor plants.



### DIG

continued from page 4

with care.

Remember that **privately owned underground lines** will NOT be marked by location flaggers. Examples of private lines/equipment include well and septic, underground sprinkler systems, invisible fencing, gas or electric lines that serve a detached building, as well as any lines (electric, water, sewer) from the meter to your home.

For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA JUNE 9, 2020

ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY,  
STUDENT UNION BUILDING BANQUET ROOMS

5:30 P.M.

REGISTRATION OPENS

6:45 P.M.

PRESENTING OF COLORS

7:00 P.M.

INVOCATION

6:55 P.M.

DETERMINATION OF FORUM

7 P.M.

START OF BUSINESS MEETING

THE 2020 BOARD PETITION PACKET IS  
AVAILABLE ONLINE AT  
[WWW.SLVREC.COM](http://WWW.SLVREC.COM),  
UNDER THE ANNUAL MEETING TAB

ALL MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO  
VOTE FOR ALL CANDIDATES  
EACH MEMBERSHIP = ONE VOTE

PENDING COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS





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April 2020



**POWERING OUR COMMUNITY**

SLVREC's office is typically open from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday. The office is currently closed to the public through at least April 1 due to the COVID-19 pandemic; see updates online at slvrec.com.

**ENERGY ASSISTANCE**  
866-HEAT HELP (866-432-8435)  
www.energyoureach.org

Your Touchstone Energy®  
Cooperative 

**SCHEDULED MEETINGS**  
Board Meeting: Tuesday, April 28, 9:30 a.m.  
The REC Board of Directors meets the last Tuesday of each month unless otherwise stated. Members are welcome; advance notice is required.

This institution is an equal opportunity employer.

