

## 2020 Annual Meeting

Virtually held for the first time ever



A virtual business meeting was held on the evening of June 9.

*“I thought the meeting was as successful as it could be under the circumstances, but I will be looking forward to our normal annual meetings.” ~K. Cole Wakasugi*

The annual meeting on June 9 may have had a different look this year compared to previous years in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, but that didn't stop the board from taking care of business.

SLVREC released its 2019 financial results and certified the re-election of two positions on the Board

of Directors during the annual meeting. Unopposed incumbents K. Cole Wakasugi, Costilla County (district 2) and Scott Wolfe, Alamosa County (district 4) will both serve another four-year term. The virtual business meeting was held through Zoom with members having viewing capabilities.

The member appreciation dinner typically held with the annual meeting was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. An open house membership meeting was

held in its place to allow for meeting and prize registration, as well as in-person voting. All social distancing requirements were adhered to. Prize winners were notified the following day (those names can be found online at [slvrec.com/annual-meeting](http://slvrec.com/annual-meeting)).

The virtual meeting began with an invocation by REC's Chief Technology Officer Monroe Johnson,

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An REC member talks with CEO Loren Howard and Board Directors Cole Wakasugi and Scott Wolfe during the open house membership meeting. Photo by Jennifer Alonzo

### THIS ISSUE

2020 Annual Meeting

Conservation Corner

Loren Howard

Meet Your Co-op

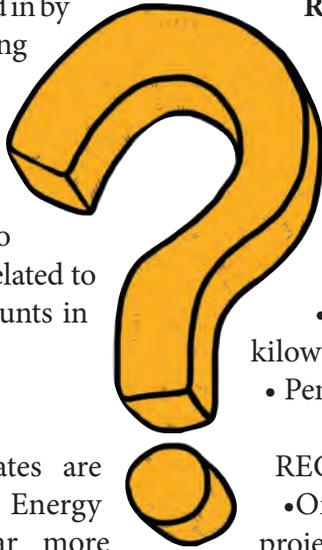
Recipe/Rate education

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## Members' questions answered

Most questions mailed in by members were regarding the following: rates, renewable energy, time of day periods and board elections. REC staff will work to answer any questions related to specific members' accounts in the coming weeks.



### Rates

In general, REC rates are higher than Xcel Energy because REC has far more infrastructure per customer than Xcel. Xcel typically has 30 or 40 meters per mile of installed power line whereas REC has around five meters per mile of line.

Several questions were related to the April 2019 implementation of a three-part rate for residential members. A rate which includes charges to cover both fixed and variable costs is a fairer way to charge for the electric services provided. This new rate design increased monthly charges for some members, such as those with a distributed generation facility (i.e. solar) and seasonal members. While those groups of members saw an increase in their monthly bills, many members— particularly full-time residents— saw a decrease in their monthly bills.

One thing to consider is that even if you don't use any electricity or produce all your own, REC still has all the poles, wires, transformers and electric system in place for your immediate use.

### Renewable energy

*Member owned renewable energy*

- Over 150 individual installations

- 1.4 megawatts total  
*System renewable energy*

- Humphrey's Hydro – 352 kilowatts

- Penitente – 2.75 megawatts  
*Future projects*

REC is currently evaluating:

- One megawatt system solar project
- Community solar project

### Electric Thermal Storage (ETS) heaters and on-peak hours

REC's peak time periods have traditionally followed the peak periods of wholesale electric provider, Tri-State.

In the past, the energy, i.e. kilowatt hours (kwh), was used to differentiate the on-peak and off-peak power costs.

The current time-of-day rates use demand, i.e. kilowatts (kw), to

differentiate these costs.

Utilizing demand coincides with REC's wholesale power provider's billing structure and thus is more reflective of purchased power costs.

### Why are the directors running unopposed?

In early 2019, information on running for the board of director positions was published in the *Newsboy*, on REC's website and on social media as is done every election cycle. The simple answer to the question is that no petitions other than the two candidates on the ballot were received.

### How are scholarships decided on?

The board of directors use a scoring guide to rate each eligible candidate with a grade of 0-3 in each of the following categories: GPA; SAT/ACT score; school/community involvement; achievements and the quality of the candidate's essay.

Other member questions will be addressed in next month's *Newsboy*.

## Conservation Corner

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Spending more time at home? Try an online energy audit to assess the overall efficiency of your home.

Visit [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov), then enter "home energy yardstick" in the search box to get started!





## Loren Howard

### Potpourri

These past months have been most unusual, to say the least. I thought a recap of the past and a look forward is in order.

Starting with all the virus closures and restrictions, the plan is to open the REC front office no later than July 13 to members and the general public. New barriers will be in place at the counter in the front office to protect staff and visitors. If you find it necessary to wear a mask, please don't hesitate to do so. In addition, there may be restrictions on the number of people in the lobby at one time, but that will be assessed as needed.

In April and May, Ciello and REC personnel made great efforts to get students in the Valley connected so they could continue with online schooling as was needed with the restrictions on large group gatherings. As I previously wrote and as we are all experiencing, having a fast and reliable connection to the 'Net is more important than ever for work, school and just staying connected

to friends and family. With more than 5,000 subscribers currently on the Ciello network, upgrades are happening continually which can cause some service interruptions.

Renewable energy is more and more prevalent both as applications for member owned systems continue to come in and grid tied systems are developed. Currently, there are approximately 150 member systems totaling 1.4 megawatts on the REC electric system. Tri-State expects to add more than 1,000 megawatts of wind and solar by 2024. Current Colorado renewable energy requirements for cooperatives is at least 10 percent of kilowatt hours must come from renewable energy, and one percent of residential usage from member owned systems. Tri-State's current energy mix is over 20 percent renewable, and member owned systems on REC's lines will likely produce 2,500,000 kilowatt hours

in 2020, easily meeting the one percent goal.

In the past year, REC electric line crews have spent considerable time and money on updating power lines in areas with active bird populations. This work is continuing this year in an effort to make power lines more "avian friendly."

Also, with the West Fork Fire seven years ago and the Spring Fire almost two years ago, work to reduce fire danger is very active this year. Tree trimming is ongoing which helps keep trees from falling into REC's power lines. Another practice is to put circuit reclosers into "one-shot," meaning that if there is a fault, the recloser will not attempt to restore power if the fault clears itself. The downside of putting reclosers in "one-shot" is that outages can be longer than might be necessary as linemen need to patrol the affected power line to ensure there is no fire danger. This summer is very dry and no one wants a fire.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

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# Meet Your Co-op

## Telecom tech steps into new role

Network Specialist Ernesto Villalba joined SLV REC a little over five years ago as a telecommunications technician for Cielo.

Prior to coming here, he worked with the phone company for 16 years. “I started with US West in 1999 as an installation and maintenance tech. In my time there I worked on phone, internet and central office duties. Also, I installed fiber optic services,” said Ernesto.

“That experience assisted me with my duties at the REC which included coordinating, planning, scheduling, and installing new Cielo services,” he continued.

In the fall of 2019, Ernesto stepped into the role of network specialist for Cielo. His key functions include installation and maintenance of Calix equipment; installation and maintenance of fixed wireless towers as well as working with Network Engineer Swapnil Modak on the Cisco

core equipment and deployment of new equipment in Cielo’s access network.

The latest project includes configuration and deployment of equipment for the various VoIP (Voice over IP) services.

Since transitioning into his job as network specialist, Ernesto has learned a lot about networking principles and time management. “Challenges in my new position are trying to stay on top of various projects. There are so many components in maintaining a network for an ISP (Internet Service Provider). I have also learned that teamwork is essential in being successful,” he said.



**Network Specialist Ernesto Villalba**

His favorite part of working for REC is the camaraderie with all of his coworkers, especially his fellow telecom techs and the network engineer.

Ernesto’s family includes his beautiful wife, two boys—ages nine and 14— and his three-year-old daughter.

In closing he said, “I foresee us growing to be the largest

local communications provider in the San Luis Valley with the most advanced state of the art network. Cielo’s innovation will keep our community up to date in the world of communications. Cielo will excel in quality of service along with superior customer service for years to come.”

## ANNUAL

continued from page 1

followed by an introduction of the board and staff by Vice President Keenan Anderson. REC Attorney Gregg Kampf announced the determination of a quorum with 70 members registered during the open house membership meeting. Minutes from the 2019 annual meeting were approved and the 2020 scholarship recipients were recognized.

Chief Executive Officer Loren Howard presented the executive report discussing some of the larger projects both the electric and

broadband systems have done this past year. These include the move of three additional substations to the SCADA system, rebuild of five miles of power line for better avian protection, completion of the tri-annual Rural Electric Safety Accreditation Program and the continued replacement of underground power lines in the Baca.

Major telecom projects in 2019 included the completion of the Spring Creek and west side of Monte

Vista buildouts, upgrade of wireless connectivity to fiber in Center and a preliminary fiber design for the town of Saguache.

In addition, Loren reviewed Tri-State’s Responsible Energy Plan, highlighting the plans to reduce emissions and increase clean energy. Also discussed was the member rate complaint and subsequent settlement agreement. He closed the executive report by answering members’ mailed-in questions. See questions/answers on Page 2.



## Recipe of the month

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. penne
- 1 T. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 t. Italian seasoning
- 1 t. garlic powder
- Kosher salt
- 2 c. chopped romaine lettuce
- 1 c. halved grape tomatoes
- 1/2 c. freshly grated parmesan
- 1/2 c. croutons
- 2/3 c. Caesar dressing
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 1 T. freshly chopped parsley
- Freshly ground black pepper

### CHICKEN CAESAR PASTA SALAD

1. In a large pot of salted boiling water, cook penne according to package directions until al dente. Drain and transfer to large bowl.
2. Meanwhile, in a large skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Season chicken with Italian seasoning, garlic powder, and salt. Cook until golden and cooked through, 8 minutes per side. Let rest 10 minutes, then cut into 1" pieces.
3. Add romaine, tomatoes, parmesan, croutons and chicken to pasta bowl.
4. In a medium bowl, whisk together Caesar dressing, lemon juice, and parsley and season with salt and pepper. Pour over penne mixture and toss to combine.

Recipe by Delish, [www.delish.com](http://www.delish.com)

# #POWERON

## Rate education

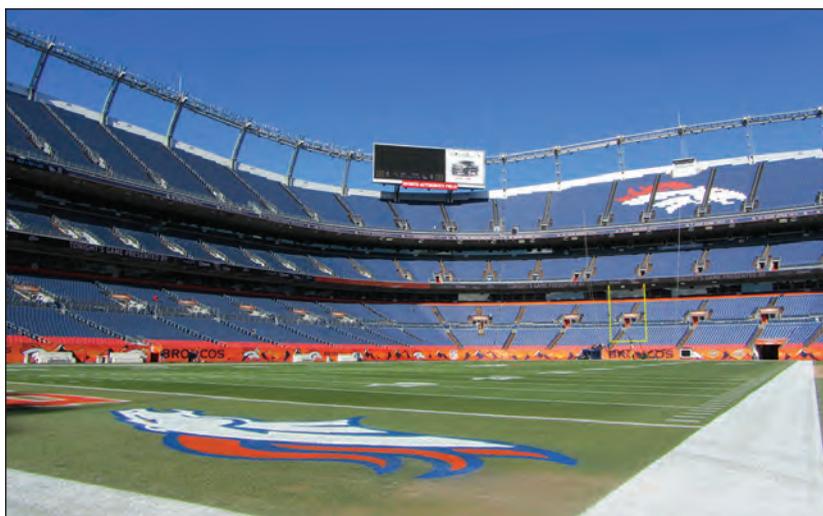
### Electrical demand is like sports fans

Sports stadiums are built to hold thousands of fans for a few hours. The rest of the year, they are largely vacant. However, the seats, restrooms, concession stands and parking spots remain.

In this comparison, the people in the stadium are like the demand or kW.

The electric grid is like a stadium because SLV REC has to build the system to accommodate the maximum amount of electricity needed, even if the customer doesn't use the maximum capacity all day, every day of the year.

You could compare this sports stadium analogy to a grain drying service. It has to be built to serve a substantial load, but it is only used a few weeks each year.



A grain dryer service may have a high demand for three weeks of the year and a demand of zero during the rest of the year.



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July 2020



*Photo by Blain Decker*



## POWERING OUR COMMUNITY

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

**ENERGY ASSISTANCE**

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

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**SCHEDULED MEETINGS**

Board Meeting: Tuesday, July 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.



*Photo by Caden Alonzo*