

# Rural Life



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[www.secpa.com](http://www.secpa.com)

**WINTER HOURS**  
 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
 Monday – Friday



Kris Barbee

Bill Cochell

Joy Grasmick

Randy Phillips

Paige Horn

Connie Suto

Scott Herman and John Eubank

Rich Wilson

Dustin Wallace

## Twenty Employees Recognized for Service to SECPA

The annual employee Christmas party for Southeast Colorado Power Association was Friday, December 4, in Lamar. About 75 employees, directors, spouses and dates enjoyed a delicious turkey dinner followed by casino games.

SECPA's tradition is to award pins to employees upon completion of one year of service. Every five years thereafter they receive a small diamond in their pin. Nineteen employees and one director were recognized for their years of service to the association. Receiving one-year pins were Clint Arbuthnot, Daryl Bierbaum, Erin Collins, John Eubank, Scott

Herman, Pegi Hueller, Scott Monaco, Heath Piper and Dustin Wallace. Receiving diamonds in their pins were Kris Barbee (five years); Derek Carroll, Paige Horn, Jon Saunders and Jack Wolfe (10 years); Connie Suto and Randy Phillips (15 years); Chris Brening and Bill Cochell (30 years); and Joy Grasmick and Rich Wilson (35 years). These employees and directors represent 214 years of service to the company, tons of knowledge and a wealth of experience.

Southeast Colorado Power would like to express its gratitude for the many years of dedicated service by these employees.

**JACK'S CONSERVATION CORNER**

# R-Values Measure Insulation's Effectiveness

**M**aterials vary enormously in their ability to conduct heat. Those that do not conduct it well are called insulators. R-value is the term used to indicate a material's resistance to heat flow or ability to insulate. The higher the R-value, the better the insulator.

Most insulation materials work by trapping pockets of air, which is an excellent insulator. Fiberglass does this by creating air pockets between spun glass fibers, while foam insulation contains air bubbles. Similarly, double pane windows work by trapping air between the panes.

Among insulating materials, R-values can vary widely. This is the reason it is important to purchase insulation by the R-value and not by the inch. R-values of different materials can be compared, while thickness cannot. For instance, two materials rated R-11 have precisely the same insulating ability while two inches of each may not. Take fiberglass and brick as an example. To achieve R-30 with fiberglass batts requires 8.5 inches, while it would take 60 inches of brick.

**Door insulation**

Standard doors have relatively low R-values compared to the walls that surround them. However, because they are percent-

age-wise a small portion of the total wall area and insulating them can be expensive, they are rarely considered a high insulating priority. Storm doors add between R-1 and R-2 to the existing door's R-value but are not economical unless the doorway is used frequently or is exposed to cold winds.

When purchasing a new door, look for insulated, metal, foam-core replacements. In addition to having attractive wood-grain finishes, metal doors provide better security, seal more tightly using magnetic weather stripping and are more sound-proof than regular wood doors.

Sliding glass doors are another story. These notorious energy wasters have extremely low R-values, typically R-1, plus, they cover a broad expanse of wall area. In some cases, it is possible to add storm doors or even double glaze them, but both options are quite expensive. Short of replacing them for double- or triple-glazed insulated glass doors, you can reduce energy loss by being sure they seal tightly and are well weather-stripped. Also, install heavy insulated drapes over them. Put sand or weights at the bottom so they seal tightly with the floor, and cover the top with a cornice to block air flow.

## COMPARING R-VALUES

**T**he following shows how many inches of a certain type of insulation it takes to achieve a specified R-value.

Material	R-Value per Inch
Vermiculite	2.3
Cellulose	3.1 - 3.7
Glass Fiber Batts	3.2 - 3.6
Rock Wool Batts	3.5
Polystyrene	3.6 - 5.0
Urethane Foam	5.5 - 6.0

In the following chart, you'll see that R-30 requires 14.5 inches of vermiculite, nearly 8.5 inches of fiberglass batt or only 5 inches of urethane foam. Such comparisons are helpful in selecting insulation types because the type you use may be limited by the space available.

R-Values	11	13	19	22	30
<b>Loose fill</b>					
Fiberglass	5.0	5.5	8.5	8.5	13.0
Rock Wool	3.5	4.0	6.0	6.0	9.0
Cellulose	3.0	3.5	5.5	5.5	8.5
Vermiculite	5.0	6.0	10.5	10.5	14.5
<b>Batts and Blankets</b>					
Fiberglass	3.5	4.0	7.0	7.0	8.5
Rock Wool	3.5	4.0	7.0	7.0	8.5
<b>Rigid Board</b>					
Polystyrene	3.0	3.5	3.5	5.5	7.5
Urethane	2.0	2.0	2.0	3.5	5.0
Fiberglass	3.0	3.5	3.5	5.5	7.5

## Measure Your Energy Use

**W**ith all the talk about energy efficiency and conservation, you may be wondering how much energy each of your appliances or plug-in devices uses.

Several kinds of energy monitors are on the market to help you as an average consumer monitor your energy use anywhere a power cord and electrical outlet are used. These monitors take the mystery out of the question, "How much power does this appliance use?"

The devices are portable and relatively simple to use. Plug one into an outlet, then plug in the appliance, light or other



device you wish to measure and monitor. An LCD display shows you how many kilowatt-hours of electricity the device or appliance consumes.

The power monitor can help you understand what your individual plug-in conveniences are costing you in electricity.

You can also monitor the energy use in your house with a device called the "whole house power monitor." It hooks to an outdoor utility meter. A signal sends instantaneous kilowatt-hour usage data to an inside display device.

## YOU COULD BE A WINNER

**I**f you find your name in this issue as follows (Win\* your name, account number), please contact Paige Horn at Southeast Colorado Power, 719-384-2551 or 800-332-8634, to receive a credit on your next power bill. Last month's winner was Virgil Lessenden, account #1206040000.

## Mark Your Calendar - Annual Meeting

**SECPA Annual Meeting  
March 25, 2010  
Eads, Colorado**



## Employee Earns Journeyman Status

**M**ark Hall, an employee of Southeast Colorado Power Association, has successfully completed the four-year apprentice lineman program, earning him the position of journeyman lineman. Mark began his apprenticeship in Springfield starting from the ground up and without any prior lineman training. He excelled in his everyday hands-on training and he is extremely happy to have completed the program.



Mark Hall

“We congratulate Mark on becoming a journeyman lineman,” says Jim Shulda, manager of operations. “Linemen play an essential role, and with top-notch training, SECPA can continue to provide its customers with safe, reliable electricity.”

Mark is a native of Springfield where he lives with his wife and two children.

## SECPA Welcomes New Employee

**T**he newest employee at Southeast Colorado Power Association is Garrett Wertz of McClave. Garrett was hired as a first-step apprentice lineman to fill a void in the line crew at Lamar. Prior to coming to work at Southeast on November 2, 2009, he was self-employed. In addition, he previously worked for Scott Wertz Farms, CCA and Guihens in Lamar.



Garrett Wertz

Garrett was raised in the Lamar area where he graduated from McClave High School. He attended a year of college at Lamar Community College. He and his wife, Sharleen, have two children, Madelynn and Tyler. When he is not working, he enjoys all types of sports, hunting, fishing and spending time with his family.

“I’m glad to be here,” Garrett said. And Southeast is happy to have Garrett on board.

## Invest in Safety With Tamper-Resistant Outlets

**H**airpins, the building blocks for many fancy hairdos, are perfect for holding back unruly tresses. But these slender, metal objects are also easy for children to manipulate. As a result, hairpins are the dominant household item improperly stuck into electrical outlets.

Each year, approximately 2,400 children — an average of seven a day — receive emergency room treatment for injuries caused by inserting conductive material into electrical outlets, according to a 10-year report released by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. More than 70 percent of these incidents occur at home, with adult supervision typically present.

Hairpins are involved 32 percent of the time, followed by keys, 17 percent, and fingers, 12 percent. Other common culprits include pins, screws, nails, twist ties and paper clips.

The end result? About 95 percent of the time children receive a burn, according to CPSC. Though ranging in severity, a significant number of serious and fatal burns occur, and even minor injuries can leave emotional trauma. Pediatric burns can be particularly serious, because a child’s skin is thin and offers little resistance to electric flow or heat.

The danger of electrical outlets isn’t new; parents often use plastic outlet caps to cover outlets when child-proofing a home. Unfortunately, the Electrical Safety Foundation, Inc., claims plastic caps are not the safest option since they can easily be removed by a young child. Instead, ESFI suggests installing tamper-resistant outlets.

Although normal looking, these types of outlets include a shutter mechanism to protect against harm if foreign objects are inserted. The spring-loaded system only allows electricity to flow when you apply equal pressure to both sides of the outlet, as happens when you plug in an electrical device. During unused conditions, both shutters are closed.

For co-op consumers with brand-new homes, tamper-resistant outlets may already have been installed; the 2008 National Electrical Code requires them. However, these outlets are cheap — costing as little as \$2 at some retailers — and can easily be incorporated into older homes.

A video from ESFI explaining how these outlets work can be viewed on YouTube at <http://bit.ly/safeoutlet>. To learn more about tamper-resistant outlets, go to [www.childoutletsafety.org](http://www.childoutletsafety.org).

*Electrical Safety Foundation, Inc., U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission*

### ENERGY EFFICIENCY

**F**ederal tax credits are available for home energy efficiency improvements, including windows, doors, water heaters and heating, ventilating and air-conditioning equipment for existing homes. For details, visit [www.energystar.gov/tax\\_credits](http://www.energystar.gov/tax_credits).

## What Does Being a Co-op Member Mean for You?

**Q** When I signed up for electricity at the co-op, they said I wasn't a customer but a member. What does being a member mean?

**A** When you requested electric service from this local co-op, you signed a membership agreement. When anyone agrees to receive products and services from any cooperative, they automatically become a co-op member with a variety of benefits.

A cooperative is a consumer-owned organization dedicated to providing its members with specific products and services, usually not available from outside organizations at competitive rates. There are many types of member- and consumer-owned cooperatives in the nation, including health organizations, farms, agricultural products, credit unions — and electric cooperatives.

In the corporate world, stockholders throughout the globe can invest in profit-oriented companies. Stockholders receive dividends when the company they own makes a profit and distributes earnings. According to the cooperative business model, the company ownership and earnings belong to the customers. As a consumer-owned organization, the co-op's focus is on providing great service to its member-owners. If you have a question or concern, staff members are there to help.

As not-for-profit organizations, cooperatives provide services at cost, without seeking a profit. Any surplus revenue above expenses (which we call margins) is allocated back to the members and returned on a schedule established by your local board of directors.

At the annual meeting, you learn how the electric utility you own is doing financially and vote for a representative on the co-op's board. And if you have some great ideas, you can always run for the board. That's your privilege.

As the commercial says, "membership has its privileges." We encourage you to enjoy the benefits of being a co-op member.

### PETITIONS FOR DIRECTOR NOMINATIONS AVAILABLE

**P**etitions for nomination of directors for District 1, eastern Baca County; District 3, Kiowa County; and District 7, Crowley and El Paso counties are available at all offices of Southeast Colorado Power Association or online at [www.secpa.com](http://www.secpa.com).

The nominee must be a member and a bona fide resident of the district in which he or she is being nominated. At least 15 valid signatures of members within that district are required. Petitions must be returned no later than 5 p.m., February 8, 2010, to any Southeast Colorado Power Association office or sent to P.O. Box 521, La Junta, CO 81050-0521.

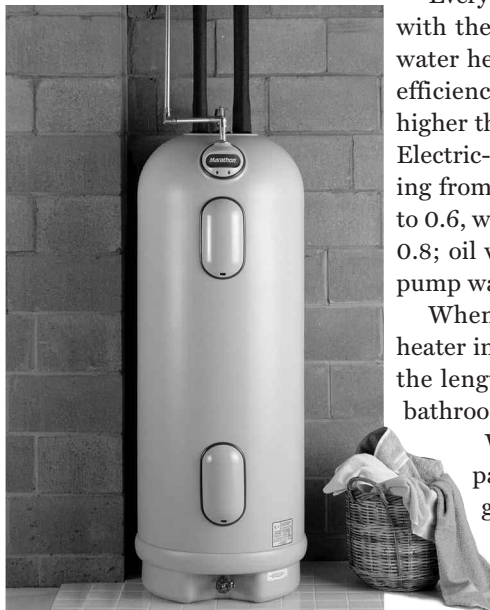
Incumbent directors are Bill Wright, District 1; Brad Buck, District 3; and Shad Sullivan, District 7. (WIN \*Lyle Nichols\*, Ordway, account #1403120000)

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## Select an Energy-Efficient Water Heater and Save

**A**lthough many consumers buy water heaters based only on the size of the storage tank, the first-hour rating, provided on the Energy Guide label, is actually more important. The FHR is a measure of how much hot water the heater will deliver during a busy hour. A larger tank doesn't necessarily mean a higher FHR. When you buy a water heater, estimate your household's peak-hour demand and look for a unit with an FHR in that range.

For energy efficiency as well as safety, when buying gas- or oil-fired water heaters look for units with sealed combustion or power venting to avoid back-drafting of combustion gases into the home.



Everything else being equal, select a water heater with the highest energy factor, the measure of a water heater's efficiency. EF is based on recovery efficiency, standby losses and cycling losses. The higher the EF, the more efficient the water heater. Electric-resistance water heaters have an EF ranging from 0.86 to 0.95; gas water heaters from 0.5 to 0.6, with a few high-efficiency models at around 0.8; oil water heaters from 0.7 to 0.85; and heat-pump water heaters from 1.5 to 2.0.

Whenever possible, try to install your water heater in a conditioned area. Also try to minimize the length of the pipes that must be run to your bathroom and kitchen.

Warranties on water heaters vary, so compare the warranties and make sure you are getting the best water heater for your money.