

## SECPA annual meeting focuses on issues

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The effect of proposed taxes upon energy providers and energy conservation were both hot topics March 27 when members of the Southeast Colorado Power Association gathered at Otero Junior College for their annual meeting.

Approximately 95 members were present at the event, which allows SECPA to update its members on the activities of the previous year.

Featured Speaker Dick Stegemeier, former CEO of the Union Oil Company, gave an overview of the global warming debate and the current division of scientists regarding the effects of man-made carbon dioxide on world-wide weather and some misinformation circulating about the global warming debate. He explained that, with a rapid decline in energy sources including oil, coal and natural gas, we may soon need to be more concerned about not having access to these fuel sources as opposed to their effect on the climate.

CEO Rich Wilson said some elected officials operate on the assumption that there is no price high enough to place on energy to curtail the production of greenhouse gasses; this type of attitude could be devastating to electric coops such as Southeast.

“At the recent annual meeting of Tri-State, we learned that a \$50 per ton tax on carbon dioxide would add over \$1 billion to the operating expenses of Tri-State,” Wilson said. The 44 distribution cooperatives that are part of Tri-State provide power to about one million meters. This taxation would equate to an additional \$80 on each of these bills per month, or nearly \$1,000 extra per customer annually.

Wilson said, when outlined in this way, these figures are shocking. He encourages SECPA members to let elected officials know that this is not acceptable. “We must make our voices heard in this process or decisions will be made that are certainly not in your – or anyone’s – best interest.”

SECPA Board Secretary Mark Grasmick gave an overview of current legislative activity involving rural electrics. SECPA’s representative at the Colorado Rural Electric Association, he recounted efforts to make sure net metering in Colorado is done in a fair way. Grasmick indicated that there have been a number of legislative bills aimed at mandating extra costs on electric bills and that these have been vigorously opposed by CREA.

Also during the annual meeting:

- Two area youth reported on 2007 activities sponsored by Southeast. Kelsey Larsen reported on her trip to Washington, D.C., which was designed to give youth insight into how government and the electric cooperative system work. Shalyn Laird reported on her attendance last summer at the annual Rural Electric Youth Camp in Steamboat Springs. Both girls reported that they returned from their travels with interesting information and new knowledge about the rural electric program.
- Chief Financial Officer Jeff Bailey presented members with a positive financial report for the preceding year, explaining that SECPA met its

financial requirements and had capital expenditures in excess of \$4 million in plant upgrades and additions.

- It was reported that SECOM, Southeast's telecommunications division, had record sales of over \$1.5 million in 2007 and returned a positive cash flow to the electric business.
- Board President, Lawrence Brase gave a report on Western United Electric Supply, a cooperative owned in part by SECPA. Western supplies most of the electric hardware used by SECPA to construct power lines. They returned over \$40,000 in capital credits to Southeast in 2007.
- New Tri-State Generation and Transmission Executive Vice President and General Manager Ken Anderson was introduced. He will replace current General Manager J.M. Shafer this June.

SECPA is a member-owned rural electric cooperative whose service area includes 13,000 square miles in 11 southeastern Colorado counties, equating to 1.8 consumers per mile, a number far below metropolitan areas, which average about 35 consumers per mile.