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## Saving energy, saving money

HASWELL – Southeast Colorado Power Association recently awarded its first renewable generation incentive to Mr. and Mrs. Charles Mitchell of Haswell.

The Mitchells had a gut feeling about a year ago that wind-powered energy might just save them some money while having a positive impact on the environment.

Last spring, Charles Mitchell purchased and installed a 10,000 watt (10 kilowatt) wind turbine with thoughts of offsetting the cost of his farm operation. With the investment of about \$4 per watt installed, the addition of the wind turbine has cut Mitchell's utility bill by about half and has required no ongoing maintenance. More importantly, the energy produced is heating his house. "My wife, Helen, was always cold and it got expensive heating the house," Mitchell said. "I use the turbine to produce electricity to heat the house now and it has been an excellent investment".

Because the Mitchells are a member of Southeast Colorado Power Association, the investment has actually paid off more than they ever expected. They are first SECPA members to take advantage of the company's new renewable generation incentive program, designed for residential members.

The incentive program provides a \$2 per-watt incentive to members for grid-connected solar, wind or biomass power generation. Because Mitchell's wind turbine generates 10 kilowatts of power, he qualified for the maximum incentive of \$2,000.

Representatives from Southeast recently presented Mitchell with his incentive check to thank him for taking an active role in conservation.

According to SECPA Chief Operating Officer Jack Wolfe, the Mitchells' wind turbine generates an average of 700 kilowatt hours each month, which equates to a savings of about 50 percent on each monthly bill. The turbine requires winds of about 7 to 14 miles per hour to start and has a safety feature that shuts it down if the wind is too high. It is completely monitored by Southeast and has an electronic transfer switch in place to protect both the turbine and SECPA's power line employees.



Charles Mitchell leans against the gate at his farm near Haswell. In the background is the wind turbine that Mitchell installed both to conserve energy and to save money.



Southeast Colorado Power Association CEO Rich Wilson, left, presents a check for \$2,000 to Helen and Charles Mitchell of Haswell. The Mitchells are the first SECPA members to take advantage of the company's renewable generation incentive program.

Southeast Colorado Power Association is a member-owned not-for-profit electric cooperative with 5,300 members in 11 counties. The company is mindful of conservation efforts and is developing programs to support renewable energy and other conservation efforts. SECPA Chief Executive Officer Rich Wilson said the renewable generation incentive program was designed as a way to encourage members who might be interested in trying renewable energy to invest in that technology.

In addition to the generation incentive program, SECPA offers other efficiency and conservation programs. For many years, SECPA has offered high efficiency water heater rebates, high efficiency electric motor incentives, time-of-day rates for lower cost, off-peak, energy consumption and home energy audits.

"We believe in taking a proactive role in efficiency and conservation," Wilson said, adding that SECPA has been providing information and help with efficient energy use for more than 30 years.

For more information on Southeast's conservation programs, please visit the Web site at [www.secpa.com](http://www.secpa.com).