

SOUTHEAST COLORADO POWER ASSOCIATION

MARCH 2023



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facebook.com/secpaonline

Our primary mission is to provide high-quality, reliable electric service at a reasonable cost to our members, improve their quality of life through new technologies and services, be a visible and active member of the community and serve our members with respect, courtesy and responsiveness.

SOUTHEAST COLORADO
POWER ASSOCIATION IS
AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER

OFFICES CLOSED

Thursday, April 6
in observance of
Good Friday



THINKING OF GOING SOLAR?

BY KEVIN BRANDON CEO
KEVINB@SECPA.COM

YOUR CO-OP NEWS ■■



KEVIN BRANDON

Seems like every week we receive a new batch of net-metering interconnection applications, so I thought this would be a good time to talk about some facts — and also some myths — I hear from consumers regarding installing solar panels on or at your home or business.

There is no shortage of solar salespeople knocking on doors and making calls right now, and while most of them are reputable businesses, we have heard some stories of unscrupulous salespeople making false claims and promises. It's always best to ask questions up front and be informed, rather than being locked into a long-term contract or loan under false pretenses. Remember, installing a solar system is a big investment usually financed over many years. You want a solar contractor that will still be around to service and support your system in the future if needed.

First, I would like to go over some of the basics of solar and net-metering in general. Residential installations are limited to 10 kilowatts (kW) in size and non-residential installations are limited to 25kW. Requests for systems larger than these limits will be considered by Southeast Colorado Power Association (SECPA) on a case-by-case basis. Net-metering is designed to offset some or all of your usage at a particular location. Locations cannot be combined or aggregated; each solar installation is allowed to offset the usage at that meter only. Any electricity produced and consumed on-site is replacing energy that would have otherwise been provided by SECPA, and therefore you are receiving full retail credit for that energy. Any excess energy that flows back onto SECPA's system is

recorded and placed in a kilowatt-hour (kWh) "bank". This banked energy can be used in subsequent months to offset energy purchased from SECPA. Any kWhs left in your bank at the end of a 12-month period is credited back to the consumer at SECPA's wholesale avoided energy cost, so it is important to size your system properly with the goal of offsetting your usage without a lot of excess capacity.

One common myth I see all the time on Facebook is, "Your power company will pay you to install solar." While some power providers may offer rebates, I am not aware of any that are paying consumers to install solar. Aside from possible rebates, which SECPA does not currently offer for solar installations, the biggest financial incentives available for installing solar are in the form of state and federal tax credits. Please consult with your tax professional if you have questions regarding these tax credits.

Another myth I hear frequently is "We will get rid of your power bill." While I can't speak for every power company out there, as long as you wish to stay interconnected to SECPA's grid, you will continue to receive a bill every month for at least the monthly access charge, even if your system produces all your electricity needs. Currently this charge is around \$30 for a residential service. The reason for this charge is for every member to pay their fair share of the expenses required just to maintain the lines and infrastructure needed to provide electric service.

One final myth is that if you install solar you will not have to deal with power outages, at least while the sun is shining.

This is simply not true unless you spend the extra money to install a battery system and or a generator along with the solar system. Without batteries or a generator, an interconnected solar system will not generate when the power is out. Also, if you do choose to add batteries or a generator, you **MUST** be sure to install an automatic transfer switch for the safety of the SECPA linemen as well as your equipment.

Here at SECPA, we are not opposed to solar, we just want you, our members, to know all the facts before making a long-term commitment. I have personally seen several proposals that were given to our members, and in all cases the projected savings assumed an annual increase in utility power costs of around 4%. I am proud to say that SECPA has had no rate increases since 2015, making these projections skewed. With the ever-rising costs of wages, materials, fuel, wholesale power costs and pretty much everything else we need to run the business, there will be a need to raise rates at some point. But be assured that SECPA will keep those increases as low as possible.



Remember, as a cooperative, SECPA's rates are not designed to generate a profit, but just to recover the costs and expenses of operating the business.

If you are considering going solar, please reach out to us at 719-384-2551 or email renewables@secpa.com and we will be more than happy to answer any questions you might have and we can tell you about the experiences we've had with different solar contractors. If you ultimately

decide that solar is the way to go for you, check out our website at www.secpa.com/renewableenergy for the requirements and necessary interconnection application forms. SECPA does not charge any application fees, and we keep the application process simple with minimal requirements.

As I mentioned above, please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any questions. And speaking of going green, happy Saint Patrick's Day everyone!

ON THE JOB: Watch for Overhead Power Lines

A hefty percentage of fatal electrical injuries occur in the construction industry. If you work in the construction industry, learn how to work safely near power lines with these simple steps:

1. Locate all overhead power lines.
2. Keep yourself and equipment 10 feet away from all overhead power lines.
3. Do not touch anything that is in contact with the power line. *WIN Lois Brite, acct 204790001
4. Beware of fencing near power lines.
5. Carry ladders and other equipment horizontally.
6. Lower equipment apparatus before driving.
7. Never spray water near power lines.
8. Stay at least 35 feet away from fallen power lines.



SAVE THE DATE

YOU'RE INVITED TO
SECPA'S ANNUAL MEETING

Southeast Colorado Power Association
will hold its annual meeting on

Thursday, April 27, 2023

Please join us at
the Eads Community Building
Eads, Colorado
81036

CASH PRIZES
GIVEN AWAY THROUGHOUT THE MEETING

Registration	5:00 PM
Dinner	6:00 PM
Meeting	6:45 PM

Personal invitations will be sent to members in April.

**Go Green and Save Green
on St. Patrick's Day**

**5 simple tips to save energy – and money – on
St. Patrick's Day:**

- Replace incandescent lightbulbs with LEDs
- Install a programmable smart thermostat
- Wash only full loads in the dishwasher
- Line-dry a few loads of laundry during the week
- Seal your windows to prevent air-leaks



YOU COULD BE A WINNER THIS MONTH

If you find your name in this issue as follows (WIN* your name, your account number), please contact Southeast Colorado Power Association at 719-384-2551 or 800-332-8634 to receive a credit on your next power bill.

Last month's winner was Tess Gadash.

**PREPARE FOR SPRING
SNOWSTORMS**

**Don't Forget to
Ready Your Car**



Snow season isn't over yet! March can serve up some heavy snowstorms in Colorado. Stay prepared, especially on the road. According to the National Safety Council, every vehicle should have an emergency supply kit on board.

Emergency supply kits should include:

ROADSIDE TOOLS & VEHICLE EQUIPMENT

- Snowbrush 
- Shovel 
- Windshield washer fluid
- Reflective triangles 
- Jumper cables 
- Properly inflated spare tire
- Wheel wrench & tripod jack
- Fire extinguisher 
- Cat litter for traction 
- Reflective vest
- Brightly colored cloth

PERSONAL CARE

- Warm clothing 
- Drinking water 
- Blankets 
- Nonperishable foods 

Be wise!

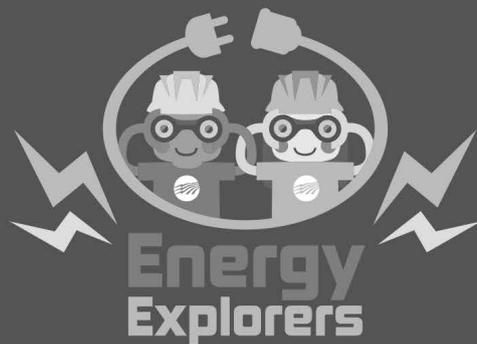
Get fast,
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(800)657-7149



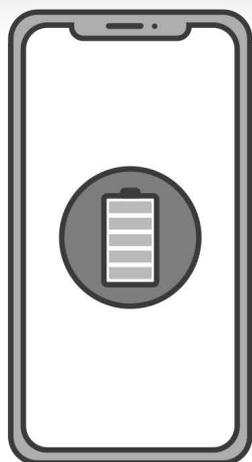
ELECTRONICS EFFICIENCY WORD SEARCH



Did you know there are ways you can reduce your electronics energy use?

Read the energy-saving tips below, then find and circle the bolded words in the puzzle.

B J C M G S N A M O R S W U L
 R A F O D V T L L P D I O S W
 E B T E M V C E U X S Y W D G
 C B P T D P O W E R S T R I P
 H Y G M E T U A U Y H Z P U Z
 A R P Q E R U T L R N Z N U Y
 R F I H L V I C E Q V P C E S
 G T D F F W K E M R L B N H O
 E B H W C F Q W S U K Y N Z M
 A Q I L I F K N G L O I K B A
 B S R E G R A H C E N O H P C
 L N O Y O V I M A I V I R X T
 E V S U A I L K O L U Y N F C
 Y H V K S L F G T R I P B T G
 P O W E R M A N A G E M E N T



- Use a **power strip** with an on/off switch when powering multiple electronics to easily manage energy use.
- For devices that require **batteries**, use **rechargeable** ones, which are more cost-effective and environmentally friendly.
- **Unplug** electronic products that consume energy even when they're not in use, like **phone chargers**.
- Use the sleep or **power management** mode on your **computer** to save on energy costs.