

# Power Lines



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## PVREA Board Adopts Standards

BY BRAD GASKILL, GENERAL MANAGER

At its June 27 regular monthly meeting, the Poudre Valley Rural Electric Association, Inc., Board of Directors adopted five new rate-making standards that PVREA was required to consider under the Energy Policy Act of 2005. The standards were approved by the board following review, discussion and deliberation of verbal and written testimony the board had received from staff and interested consumers during a June 1 public hearing at PVREA's headquarters. The five standards considered and adopted cover:



**Brad Gaskill,**  
general manager

- **Smart Metering** — These are time-based rate schedules under which the rate charged varies during different time periods based on the cost of wholesale power purchases.
- **Interconnection** — These include interconnection services for consumer-owned, on-site generation facilities.
- **Net Metering** — This includes net metering services to any electric consumer served by the association for the purpose of offsetting electric energy provided by the association to the consumer during the applicable billing period.
- **Fuel Source Diversity** — This is a plan to minimize dependence on one fuel source and to ensure that the electric energy the association sells to consumers is generated using a diverse range of fuels and technologies, including renewable technologies.
- **Fossil Fuel Generation Efficiency** — This directs the development and implementation of a 10-year plan to increase efficiency in the association's fossil fuel generation.

Although the board officially adopted these five standards through the approval of a resolution on June 27, the fact is PVREA implemented the provisions of each of these standards in its business practices several years ago. I want to briefly discuss the first three standards: smart metering,

interconnection and net metering. The association is directly responsible for meeting the requirements of these standards. The requirements of the last two standards, fuel source diversity and fossil fuel generation efficiency, are fulfilled on behalf of the association by Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc., PVREA's wholesale power supplier.

As for smart metering, we have offered a time-of-use rate to our residential, small commercial and large power class of customers since March 1, 1996. TOU rates enable our consumers to manage energy use and cost by making small lifestyle changes like doing the laundry and washing dishes during off-peak (low-cost) periods of time.

Since January 2002 we have had the ability to purchase 5 percent of our total load requirements from sources outside our all requirements contract with Tri-State. This allowed us to meet the provisions of the interconnection standard by allowing customer-generators (C-G) to interconnect small distributed generation or renewable energy-qualifying-facilities (QFs) projects to our distribution system by following certain safety and code guidelines.

Since January 2003, the association has offered members a net metering rate for QFs limited to not more than 25 kilowatts of generating capacity. Under this rate a C-G can

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### NEXT BOARD MEETING

August 28



# Claim Your Unclaimed Capital Credits Now

**P**oudre Valley Rural Electric Association is trying to locate former customers who received service from the cooperative during 1995 and 1996 in order to reissue unclaimed capital credit checks that were issued and returned during 2006. These returned refund checks and checks not issued due to invalid forwarding address total \$205,758.75.

Poudre Valley REA, being a nonprofit organization, allocates to its members any margin (profit) that is made each year in the form of capital credits. Poudre Valley REA uses these margins for its day-to-day operations until the board of directors authorizes that these capital credits be paid back to consumers. During this retention period, many consumers have

moved out of the association's service area or may have passed away.

Each year Poudre Valley REA mails refund checks to consumers and former customers. However, for those former consumers who have not maintained a current mailing address with the cooperative, or whose heirs may not be aware that they can claim these payments, the checks are returned to PVREA.

Poudre Valley REA is publishing a list of names and amounts of unclaimed capital credit checks that were returned during the year 2006 and also capital credit checks not issued to consumers due to an invalid forwarding address. Watch for this list coming soon in your local community newspapers.

If you were a consumer of Poudre Valley REA during 1995 and 1996 and your name appears on the unclaimed capital credit checklist (refunded in 2006), you may be entitled to these funds. If your name or the name of someone you know is on this list, please contact or have them contact Poudre Valley REA, PO Box 272550, Fort Collins, CO 80527-2550 for information on how to claim these funds. Documents verifying entitlement of these funds may be required.

Information about unclaimed capital credits can also be found at [www.pvrea.com](http://www.pvrea.com) or by calling 970-226-1234 or toll free 800-432-1012. (Win\* Ray Avedon)

## BOARD ADOPTS STANDARDS

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install and interconnect to the co-op's distribution system a small solar, wind, biomass or hydropower facility to generate energy for his or her use and feed back any excess energy onto the grid. The association purchases any energy put back on the grid at a rate equal to the average cost of power purchased from Tri-State during the preceding calendar year.

Effective January 2007, the board of directors modified the net metering rate to allow a C-G with a QF up to 10-kW of capacity to sell back to the association any excess energy produced on the grid at their retail rate. The association also offers net metering opportunities to C-Gs that are greater than 25-kW but less than or equal to 100-kW on an individual contract basis. Any interconnection of C-Gs in excess of 100-kW is the responsibility of Tri-State.

If you are interested in more information about our TOU rates or net metering interconnection opportunities, I encourage you to contact our engineering department by calling 970-226-1234 or toll free at 800-432-1012 or by sending an email to [pvrea@pvrea.com](mailto:pvrea@pvrea.com).

I look forward to visiting with you again.



## Now Is a Good Time to Buy Renewable Energy

**T**here's been tremendous public interest in purchasing renewable energy, or Green Power. This is a good thing because that means people care about our nation's limited energy resources and about environmental issues also. Now more than ever, people are concerned about where our economic future is headed.

Because of the rising cost of running power plants and the tremendous amount of load demand on electric energy caused by a growing population in the area, Tri-State Generation and Transmission has agreed to purchase for resale limited amounts of renewable energy — Green Power — from wind, solar or small-scale low-head hydropower facilities.

By signing up for Green Power, consumers are agreeing to support a cleaner, less environmentally intrusive, alternative form of energy. Purchasing one 100-kilowatt-hour block of Green Power each month for one year has the same environmental effect as not driving a car 2,400 miles or planting a half acre of trees.

Buying a block of energy has never been more affordable. PVREA's board members approved a reduction for buying green power — from \$2.75 to \$1.25 a block, for up to three blocks. That's a savings of \$1.50 a block. This charge of \$1.25 a block would be added to your monthly bill.

Green Power is something the board members feel strongly about. The board believes that by lowering the cost of buying renewable energy, people will respond in a positive way toward a brighter, more energy-efficient future. Green Power is a great program geared toward a great future. For more information, call 970-226-1234 and ask for billing to help set you up.



# Understand Your Electric Meter (and Costs)

BY DANNY MARTINEZ, MEMBER SERVICES REPRESENTATIVE

**A**s sure as the sun rises, Poudre Valley Rural Electric Association receives questions every summer from consumers about their meters and their bills.

This summer the question is, "The weather has been so mild that there is no way our bill could be that high." Last summer the inquiry was, "I know it's been hot, but my bill is still too high."

No matter what the weather is like, we still get questions. If you think your bill is too high and there must be something wrong with your meter, keep reading.

A meter is only a measuring device. You are billed for the electricity your household consumes each month, like you pay for the gasoline you pump into your car. You pay only for the gas that actually goes into your car. You are billed only for the exact amount of energy used to power your home.

Your electric meter registers only the electricity your appliances are drawing into your home. As an experiment, find your meter and flip the breaker off beneath it. The disk inside the meter that drives the gears that turn the numbers will stop. In effect, you are turning "off" your whole house. If there is nothing drawing power into your home, you are not being billed for any electric use. As soon as you flip the breaker back on, the disk will again begin to turn in proportion to how much electricity your appliances need at that moment. The faster the disk spins inside the meter, the faster you accumulate kilowatt-hours.

As another experiment, try to notice the difference between how fast the disk spins when your dryer is on and when it is off. With most residential meters, the disk has to turn 138-8/9 times to register one kilowatt-hour (which costs roughly 8 cents). With the dryer on, you will see that it won't take long to accumulate one kilowatt-hour.

Any appliance that heats costs more to operate, be it a dryer, electric water heater, stock tank heater or hair dryer. Your electric meter records electric con-

sumption 24 hours a day, every day. Many appliances run regardless of whether or not you are home. Your refrigerator, water bed heater, clocks, water heater and heating system all run while you are away. Occupancy generally accounts for only a 10- to -20 percent increase in your electric consumption.

Often consumers believe that their meter must not be working correctly and request that the meter be tested. The odds of you winning the Colorado Lottery jackpot are better than your meter being too fast. For the most part, meters either work or they don't. If they are calibrated correctly, they are registering kilowatt-hours correctly. At Poudre Valley REA, we test every residential meter every eight years. We do not install any meter that is not calibrated to within one-quarter (.25) of 1 percent of perfect (100 percent).

One interesting phenomenon is that many people believe their bill is the

"fault" of the electric company. To use the car analogy again, would you blame the gas station if your car didn't get 40 mpg? Doesn't make sense, does it? Your bill is your own. Until you get a handle on any malfunctioning appliance and take stock of how much electricity your appliances use, your bill and your meter will always be a mystery.

Unfortunately, electricity is one of the few things we buy after we use it. However, you can use your meter to control your consumption and track consumption patterns. Your meter is your friend. Take daily and weekly meter readings to establish your own patterns. Check the meter disk speed to help identify problem circuits and appliances. And finally, please call Poudre Valley REA at 970-226-1234 if you have questions about rates, high bills or meters before you have a problem.

Save \$1000\*

\*average rebate for dual fuel heating/cooling systems purchased by Poudre Valley REA customers.

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# Learn About Thunder, Lightning

**T**hunder is the sound produced by the rapidly expanding gases along a lightning discharge channel where air is instantaneously heated to temperatures near 10,000 degrees Celsius. In the immediate vicinity of a lightning strike, thunder is heard as a sharp and loud crackling sound. Thunder is seldom heard at distances more than 15 miles from the lightning discharge. The rumbling sound often heard is caused by echoing and the varying arrival times of the sound waves that originate from different parts of the lightning channel.

As a thunderstorm grows, intense electrical fields develop within it: a large positive charge in the frozen upper part of the cloud and two other charge regions in the lower part of the cloud (one positive, one negative). A thunderstorm also affects the electrical charge of the ground below it. A storm causes a positive charge on the ground that follows the thundercloud like a shadow, concentrating on elevated objects, such as trees and buildings.

Lightning is usually initiated within the thunderstorm cloud when a faint, negatively charged channel called the "step leader" emerges from the base of the cloud in a series of steps, each lasting about one microsecond in duration and extending 150 to 300 feet in length. In

total the step leader reaches the ground in about one one-hundredth of a second. As it approaches the ground, streamers of positive charge rush upward from objects on the ground, and thus the lightning channel is opened and the negative charge starts flowing to the ground, and a return stroke propagates up the channel as a bright luminous pulse.

The cloud-to-ground flashes usually transport negative charge from the cloud to the ground. However, a small fraction of lightning flashes have step leaders that are positively charged. These positive strokes are solitary strokes with now subsequent leaders and can be recognized by the upward orientation of the branching patterns of the step leaders. Positive strokes generate higher and more continuous currents and thus cause greater damage to power lines and have a greater potential to start forest fires.

The distance to a lightning flash in miles can be determined by dividing the seconds that elapsed between the lightning strike and the thunder by five. For example, if it takes 10 seconds for you to hear the thunder after a lightning strike, then the distance it occurred from you is 2 miles (10 seconds divided by five equals 2 miles).



Terry Willis

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

**F**eatured in this month's spotlight is Terry Willis, Poudre Valley REA's senior engineering representative. Terry started with Poudre Valley REA in March 1974 as a warehouseman, and over the course of the last 33 years, he has worked in a variety of positions.

For the last 22 years he has served as the senior engineering representative. Terry's primary job is to supervise the field engineers and mapping personnel who are a part of the engineering department. Some of the varied duties of his job are approving work orders for line construction, verifying material lists needed for work orders, maintaining and updating the computerized staking program, and approving designs and contracts for large developments. It is also his responsibility to coordinate engineering projects with the operations department.

Terry and his wife, Janelle, live in the Windsor area. Their son, Jon, is a sophomore majoring in agriculture at Northeastern Junior College in Sterling.

In his spare time Terry enjoys woodworking and helping Janelle with their alpacas, Basil and Maple.



Gabriel Olsen



Lisa Wright



Tony Francone

# Welcome to New Employees

**G**abriel Olsen began full-time employment on May 21 as a plant maintenance helper. Before joining PVREA, Gabriel worked for Corp Plumbing. He and his wife, Laura, have a 6-year-old son, Trey. Gabriel's hobbies are any sports. He loves to stay active.

Lisa Wright began work on May 29 as a controller in accounting. Previously she worked for Estes Park Medical Center. Lisa lives in Loveland with her husband, Craig.

Tony Francone started work on June 1 as a lineman for Poudre Valley REA. Tony came to PVREA from Carbon Power and Light in Saratoga, Wyoming, where he was employed as a lineman. Tony and his wife, Rachel, have two children, Adrianna, 5, and Brooklynn, 3.

Welcome to Poudre Valley REA.

## ARE YOU A WINNER?

If you see your account name in the Poudre Valley insert, you have until the last day of the month that the magazine is dated to claim your reward by calling PVREA at 970-226-1234. More than ever, it pays to keep informed about your electric utility.