

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

A local viewpoint

BY REG RUDOLPH GENERAL MANAGER



REG RUDOLPH

With the recent state and federal elections behind us, newly elected politicians are starting their task of setting the laws for the citizens. Although politicians get a bad rap, public service is still one of the greatest examples of our democracy.

I recently tried to understand how to interpret the message the electorate is sending. A friend, being a math and science teacher much wiser than I, simply stated politicians reflect the will of the people. Our democracy is shown in the mood of the country, and the voters set the tone and direction.

At San Isabel Electric Association, we are not immune to politics. At the state and federal levels, our cooperative is front and center in the debate. Power supply and climate change issues are a top-of-mind political item. Nearly two-thirds of every dollar you pay to San Isabel Electric Association goes toward power supply.

San Isabel Electric is governed by a board of directors. Like our local, state and federally elected public servants, our board directors are also elected by those they serve. Our directors are active in listening to all members' opinions and attempt to balance the needs and desires of the majority. However, in many cases we face laws and mandates that drive decisions.

In a constant effort to bring more value to our membership, we survey our membership quarterly. This feedback is very important, not just to our directors but also to the employees executing the strategy. We recently added a couple of survey questions to learn about the members' desires on renewable energy.

- Ideally, what percentage of SIEA's energy do you think should come from renewable energy sources?
- How much more would you be willing to pay for SIEA to meet your renewable energy needs?

The results are easy to interpret. Most of our members want more renewable energy, but few are willing to pay any more for it. Because we are a cooperative, our goal is to find ways to add more renewables to our portfolio, without adding costs to the rate base. As the saying goes, "If it was that simple, everyone would be doing it." The board of directors hears the membership's desires on renewables, but they also hear the membership's overriding desires to be fiscally responsible.

As the political season — especially in Denver — starts to fire up, San Isabel Electric and our statewide association, the Colorado Rural Electric Association, will carry these messages to our political leaders. We may want to be critical of politicians, but they reflect the will of the people. We need to make sure our voice is heard loud and clear. That's what democracy is.

Four in 10 members want at least 50 percent of SIEA's energy to come from renewable sources; few are willing to pay more than an extra 10 percent.

Ideally, what percentage of SIEA's energy do you think should come from renewable energy sources?	
None	3%
1% to 25%	11%
26% to 50%	20%
51% to 75%	21%
76% to 100%	21%
Don't know/No opinion	24%

How much more per month would you be willing to pay in order for SIEA to meet your renewable energy goals?	
None	37%
1% to 10%	26%
11% to 20%	12%
21% to 30%	4%
31% to 40%	1%
41% to 50%	1%
51% to 60%	0%
61% to 70%	0%
71% to 80%	0%
81% to 90%	0%
91% to 100%	0%
Don't know	17%

Survey results show members' opinions and desires on renewable energy. Members want more renewable sources while keeping costs down.



San Isabel Offers Scholarships

Five scholarship opportunities for members

San Isabel Electric Association has awarded more than \$250,000 to students, educational institutions and programs in the last five years. Shown at right are photos of previous scholarship recipients. >

Electric cooperatives are made up of local people helping each other. We don't just serve communities. We are part of the communities we serve.

San Isabel Electric has an inherent interest in community development and concern for members. One important way SIEA helps communities and members is by offering college scholarships and learning opportunities for local students. "We are continually impressed with the accomplishments and contributions young people are bringing to our communities," said SIEA General Manager Reg Rudolph. "They've worked hard to reach this milestone in their life; we hope San Isabel Electric can help facilitate their future success with a scholarship to further their dreams. Hopefully, we see them back in southern Colorado in the future."

San Isabel Electric has awarded scholarships since 2000. SIEA is proud to contribute and support the education and training for the next generation of membership. In the past five years alone, San Isabel Electric contributed more than \$250,000 to students, educational institutions and programs. This year, SIEA is offering five different scholarship opportunities for members and their dependents.

SAN ISABEL ELECTRIC SCHOLARSHIP AND POWERED-UP SCHOLARSHIP

We will award 22 \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors planning to attend accredited colleges and universities. Two students from each of the area high schools in the San Isabel Electric service territory will be selected to receive a scholarship. The 22 recipients of the San Isabel Electric scholarship will have the opportunity to compete for the \$5,000 Powered-Up scholarship.

This scholarship is only available to recipients of the San Isabel Electric scholarship and the recipients must also meet additional requirements to be eligible. We will also donate \$500 to the high school attended by the recipient of the Powered-Up scholarship. The students' parent or legal guardian must be current members of San Isabel Electric.

AT-LARGE SCHOLARSHIP

San Isabel Electric will award two \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors planning to attend accredited colleges and universities whose parent or legal guardian is a current member of San Isabel Electric. The students do not have to attend high school in San Isabel Electric service territory, but they must reside in the state of Colorado.

VOCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

We will award two \$1,000 scholarships to high school seniors planning to attend an occupational training program of two years or less at an accredited vocational school, technical school, community college or junior college. The students' parent or legal guardian must be a current member of San Isabel Electric.

CONTINUING EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

San Isabel Electric will also award one \$1,000 scholarship to an adult who has been out of high school for a minimum of two years and is planning to attend an accredited college, university, vocational or technical school, community college or junior college. The adult must be a current member of San Isabel Electric.

The deadline for scholarship applications to be received is Thursday, February 28, 2019, at 5 p.m.

An additional scholarship that is available for our members and their dependents is sponsored through Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

BASIN ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Basin Electric Power Cooperative (BEPC) Scholarship Program will award 141 scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each to member-cooperative consumers' dependents. One San Isabel Electric member or

dependent will be awarded a scholarship. The scholarships must be used for educational costs, and the student must enter college as a full-time student in the fall of the school year for which the scholarship is given. Checks will be made payable jointly to the student and the school and will be distributed to the school by BEPC in August. The students' parent or legal guardian must be a current member of San Isabel Electric. BEPC scholarships will be awarded without regard to other awards, loans or financial assistance the applicant may obtain.

The deadline for the BEPC scholarship applications to be received is Thursday, February 14, 2019, at 5 p.m.

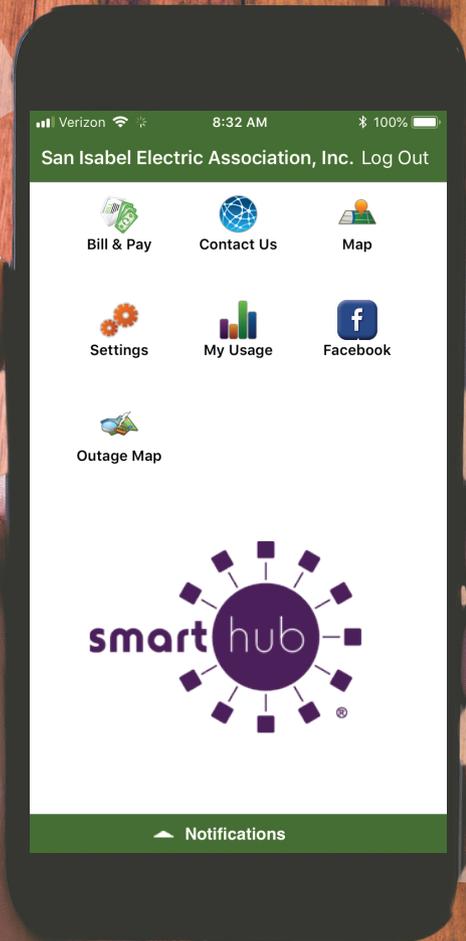
For additional information on eligibility and applications for each scholarship offered, visit www.siea.com/scholarships. All completed applications can be emailed to scholarships@siea.com or mailed in a sealed envelope to San Isabel Electric, Attention: Scholarships, 781 E. Industrial Blvd., Pueblo West, CO 81007. Please email all questions to scholarships@siea.com or call Bonnie Myers, assistant to the general manager, at 719-647-6210.



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TM

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