

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

BY REG RUDOLPH GENERAL MANAGER

The proliferation of digital communication and social distancing is steadily changing our homes and lifestyles.

This ever-connected, socially distanced world is the modern environment in which the next generation of leaders is growing up. With an increased reliance on digital communication and remote learning, giving youngsters a chance to experience the larger world in-person, rather than through the perspective of a screen, is an important life lesson.

Learning by doing

One of the best ways to learn, is by doing — whether it's learning how to engage in the exchange of verbal and non-verbal thoughts, ideas, feelings and emotions, or its learning technical hard skills. San Isabel Electric's internship programs and youth outreach initiatives help kids develop these skill sets. Internships transform textbook and classroom education into technical hard skills. On the proceeding page, you can read about some of the technical skills our interns have obtained on the job at SIEA.

One of our longest youth outreach traditions as an electric cooperative is Youth Tour. For more than 50 years, electric cooperatives around the country have been sending high school juniors and seniors to Washington, D.C. Participants learn about our nation's great history, leadership skills, gain a better understanding of democracy, and make friendships with people from all around Colorado and the country.



REG RUDOLPH

Investing in the education of our youth is never a bad investment

The financial expense of college and hands-on, real-world training is a very real, very large barrier for most southern Coloradans. Pueblo, Huerfano and Las Animas counties' cost of living, average hourly wages and rates of college degrees are well below state averages. Scholarships are essential to facilitating graduates' future success. San Isabel Electric has been awarding college scholarships to local students for 31 years. We are continually impressed with the accomplishments and contributions these young people are bringing to their communities. They have worked hard to reach this milestone in their life; we hope San Isabel Electric will help further their dreams.

Who benefits?

The goals of SIEA's youth outreach initiatives have one common goal — a goal of inspiring our next generation of leaders to put their new skills to use right here in our community. As business owners, teachers, coaches, tradespeople, artists, and neighbors, sharing a chance to experience independence, courage, commitment and compassion is what youth need to begin their adulthood journey. It's also what southern Colorado needs to retain talent and improve the economy. Jobs and investment follow talent.

It's Scholarship Season!!

**Apply now
through March 1, 2021
at SIEA.COM/SCHOLARSHIPS**



Your local electric cooperative

Electric Co-op Interns Power the Future

Most people only think about electricity when the power goes out, but it takes a lot of people, with a lot of different skillsets, to make sure you have power when you need it. San Isabel Electric's internship program is giving youth valuable on-the-job transferable skills in several occupations.

The goal of the cooperative's internship program is to give youth entry-level experience to help them obtain full-time, gainful employment.

"The board of directors has always supported education and scholarship. Our internship program provides college students with valuable hands-on experience while assisting our staff to better serve the members," San Isabel Electric General Manager and Chief Executive Officer Reg Rudolph said.

Energy services and accounting interns have helped streamline business processes, researching how members can benefit from energy-saving products and develop training materials on new software and processes. This includes digitizing documents for electronic delivery and signature, and filing and organizing paperwork to be easily referenced in the future.

Interns in the engineering department built databases for substation controls. The database has thousands of control points and each one increases San Isabel's sight into the dynamics of the power system. We use this information to increase power quality and efficiency, decrease outage times, and prepare our system for future technologies

Communications interns packed their portfolios with writing, graphic design, pictures and video projects. The hands-on experience in branding, marketing, public relations, strategic internal, external and crisis communications were great additions to their resumes.

"I feel so prepared to enter into the job market when the time comes. While at San Isabel Electric, I learned so many ways to use my creativity in real world aspects and I will never be able to thank them enough for that. My time working at SIEA was the best thing that I've done for my career path," former Youth Outreach Intern Tiffany Pettigrew said. Pettigrew is a junior studying communication at Colorado State University – Pueblo.

"Our interns learn from us and we learn from them. Some of the theories and best practices that I was taught during college are now outdated. The interns bring us up to speed on new ways of learning and upcoming industry trends. It's nice to have some new, youthful wit and good-natured banter around the workplace, too," Communications Manager Paris Elliott said.

In the last two years, SIEA has employed eight college interns. San Isabel Electric currently does not have any internship positions available. When internships are available, information is posted at siae.com/careers.

Internship Benefits

Gain work-related experience

Expand professional network

Explore a career path

Learn practical skills



All-Electric Home Trend Has Multiple Benefits

BY EMMA VALLEJOS

Moving toward full electrification of your household could help you save money, help the environment, and improve your overall quality of life. All of this is made possible through beneficial electrification.

Beneficial electrification is the use of electricity to power devices where doing so satisfies at least one of the following conditions without adversely affecting the other: saves consumers money over time, benefits the environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improves product quality or consumer quality of life, and fosters a more robust and resilient grid.

Simply put, beneficial electrification is the use of electronically powered devices to benefit everyone. Beneficial electrification supports the common good by lowering energy costs without negatively impacting the world around us. There are several ways that beneficial electrification helps to achieve these goals. Here are three:

1. Saves money over time. Studies have shown that the average cost to charge an electric vehicle is equal to about \$1.20 per gallon of gas. So, if you were to purchase an electric vehicle in Colorado, you could save an average of \$2 per equivalent gallon of gas. You can install your own charging station right at your house to increase efficiency and convenience for you. Utilizing other energy efficient resources, such as solar panels, can help pay for the electricity you use to power your vehicle.

2. Help the environment by producing fewer greenhouse gases. Greenhouse gases include gasoline, diesel, fuel, oil and propane. These gases are used to fuel many of the items we use daily, but while using products that are fueled by greenhouse gases, we are negatively impacting the environment. Electric devices can replenish energy in a clean and sustainable way. This has not always been the case, but in the last several years electric companies have changed their procedures to allow for a steady decline of greenhouse emissions from their facilities. This is possible due to increased efficiency of electric devices and the integration of renewable energy sources such as solar panels and wind turbines.

3. Improve overall quality of life, for everyone. Individuals are increasingly deciding to convert to electric devices, making not only their energy more affordable but also positively impacting the environment that will sustain future generations.

Beneficial electrification has the potential to positively affect all of us and not everyone needs to go fully electric to reap the benefits. The idea is that together we can impact the environment, improve overall quality of life, and decrease energy costs by increasingly eliminating fossil fueled devices from our households.

San Isabel Electric members and non-members can start making the switch today with Empower. Empower offers products such as heat pumps, electric vehicle charging stations, and electric thermal storage units. Rebates are also available for electric power equipment such as lawnmowers, snowblowers and yard trimmers, all of which support beneficial electrification. Empower also offers competitive pricing and financing plans, making these enhancements affordable for anyone. Contact Empower by phone at 719-647-6250 or by email at empower@siea.com.

SAVE MONEY

Electricity is becoming cleaner every day and can save consumers money on their energy costs over time.



Did you know...

Replacing your HVAC system with an electric heat pump can **save you nearly \$1,000 per year** on your heating and cooling bills.¹



Did you know...

The average cost of **charging an electric car** is equivalent to **\$1.20 per gallon of gasoline**.²



Did you know...

Owning an electric vehicle can **save you over \$800** in annual maintenance.³

1. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jeffmcmahon/2018/06/10/if-youre-heating-with-propane-or-oil-study-says-go-electric/#z06fbzb77a7>
2. <https://www.energy.gov/maps/egallon>
3. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-11-29/electric-vehicles-drivers-save-a-lot-on-gas-money>



Happy New Year
2021

Parker-Fitzgerald Cuchara Mountain Park Welcomes New Residents

BY EMMA VALLEJOS

The Parker-Fitzgerald Cuchara Mountain Park anxiously awaits the arrival of new residents that will hopefully attract more visitors and educational opportunities. The excitement even fueled the development of housing specially designed for the new inhabitants. The structure, featured in the middle of the park, stands 14 feet above the ground, the perfect height for the new community members to land after traveling hundreds of miles. This summer, Mexican free-tailed bats will fly from sunset through the black of night to occupy their new bat house.

David Vogel, known to Cuchara residents as “The Bat Man”, has always been interested in animals and nature. He especially enjoys researching, learning, and observing the 16-19 species of bats that reside in the area. Bats play a significant role in maintaining a healthy ecosystem in Cuchara and around the world. They can consume between half and 110% of their body weight in insects per day. Many of these insects are those that damage trees. They also help control the large populations of moths and mosquitoes that Coloradans are so familiar with.

Of the several species of bats that reside in Colorado, Vogel is determined to attract a colony of Mexican free-tailed bats to the area. According to Vogel, they have been spotted at the Cuchara Mountain Park. The bats spend the winter months in central and southern Mexico, and from June through September they roost in the San Luis Valley and as far north as Grand Junction. It is believed that the potential exists to attract a large colony to roost in the Cuchara Mountain Park bat house during the summer months.

When Vogel approached the Cuchara community with details of his proposed project, the community instantly took interest. With generous donations from area residents and support from local organizations, including San Isabel Electric, funds for the house were quickly raised.

In October of 2020, the construction of the bat house was completed.



SIEA workers dig holes that hold the stands supporting the bat house in the Parker-Fitzgerald Cuchara Mountain Park.



Mexican free-tailed bats emerge from their cave at the Orient Land Trust in the San Luis Valley.

The hope is that bats will begin to occupy their new roost in the spring of 2021. The community has big plans for the house.

“Now that the big bat house is in place and ready to welcome bats next year, we look forward to providing educational opportunities for area residents, students and visitors. We also plan to participate in ongoing bat research projects, centered around our big bat house bat colony. Bats have only been seriously studied since about the 1970s, and there is still much to learn about them,” said Vogel.

Immediate plans include working with area youth to research bats and prepare interpretive signage about the new residents. This opportunity will be made available by in-kind donations from the Cuchara Foundation to the new Cuchara Mountain Park Resilient Communities Grant funded by Greater Outdoors Colorado (GOCO). You can follow the big bat house project by visiting the Cuchara Foundation’s Facebook page.



The new 1200-pound bat house, located in the Parker-Fitzgerald Cuchara Mountain Park, is ready to welcome its new residents, hundreds of Mexican free-tailed bats, this summer.