

Energy

WISE



YOUR ELECTRIC CO-OP MEMBER NEWSLETTER | JULY 2014 | ISSUE #0059

In This Issue

Notables: SMPA, Revising our General Rules and Regulations Policy 1

Fraud Alert..... 1

Participation in SMPA's Community Solar Array Strong..... 2

Give Trees A Chance 2

Notables: SMPA, Revising our General Rules and Regulations Policy



Kevin Ritter
SMPA General Manager

We are currently in the process of taking a very close look at one of our foundational governing policies. This policy acts as the basis for how we interact with our members and is called our General Rules and Regulations Policy. It covers a lot of ground, from how we set people up for electrical service, to meter reading, to how we deal with people who have been unable to pay their bills on time, to service extensions, to where our electrical meters must be located on your home or business; this is a policy that guides how we run our business.

Our current policy had become dated and still contained a lot of language from several years ago. As SMPA grows and the technological and regulatory environment continues to change around us, our policies must continue to be updated to reflect the most current state of our industry and membership.

Virtually all the sections in the policy are proposed to be changed or updated in one way or another. However there were a few sections that will change significantly. Many of the notable changes are as follows; We updated our meter testing schedule to reflect the most current industry practices that are applicable to our new Advance Metering Infrastructure. Along with this we have reaffirmed that SMPA personnel must have adequate access to the SMPA meter and equipment that is located on the members home or business. We plan to take a look at the location of all of the meters on our system. Over the years many of these meters have become enclosed as people added additions to their homes, or ended up behind locked gates or fences. Member's pets can also become an issue as the pets are not as happy to see SMPA employees as they are to see their owner when they return home.

As a result, we may have to ask some of our members to relocate their meter to a place that does provide us with safe access. This is a necessary measure that will facilitate our ability to provide safe, reliable electricity. While we are now able to read the meter remotely, we must still be able to access it in cases of emergency such as a fire or outage, routine maintenance, situations when we are not able to get a remote reading, and others.

We have also revised our policy in regards to customer deposits for our very large accounts. These deposits will no longer be refundable, until the account is closed. This was done to avoid a large user of energy having the ability to leave the cooperative with a substantial bad debt, should they have to close down suddenly or unexpectedly. Because we bill for energy already used, a member such as this can incur three months worth of unpaid electrical bills before we would be able to stop providing service. Holding the deposits will allow us to avoid putting the rest of the membership at risk of having to cover these three months worth of bad debt, which could be substantial for some of our larger accounts.

For all of our members we have proposed to change the late fee. This fee used to be 1.5% of the late amount, yet this was far out of line with what the standard late fees are in our industry. Nor is it much of an incentive to pay the bill on time. Now, the fee for late payment of a bill will be \$10 or 1.5% of the late amount, whichever is higher.

(Continued on Reverse)

ELECTRICAL SAFETY 101

Help us save the tree's. Do not plant trees directly under power lines. As these trees grow they can become a safety concern and/or lead to outages. Many times the tree's that are planted too close to power lines must be removed or drastically trimmed away. Please reference the info graphic on back for details on how to plant trees near a power line.

Contact Us:

Nucla
170 W. 10th Ave
P.O. Box 817
Nucla, CO 81424
(970) 864-7311
Monday - Thursday; 7:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Toll Free: 1-877-864-7311

Ridgway

720 N. Railroad St.
P.O. Box 1150
Ridgway, CO 81432
(970) 626-5549
Tuesday - Friday; 7:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Toll Free: 1-800-864-7256

www.smpa.com

In the case of a power outage, contact your local SMPA office. If it is after hours, you can automatically transfer to our 24-hour dispatch.

Questions or comments?

Contact:
Becky Mashburn
Communications Executive
(970) 626-5549 ext. 212
energywise@smpa.com



SAN MIGUEL POWER ASSOCIATION
Member Energy Cooperative
This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

FRAUD ALERT!

ATTENTION: We have reports of a phone scam in our service territory. This scam has been reported by other co-ops around the state. The scammer will contact you claiming to be your electrical utility and then attempt to make collections for a past due amount. The caller will attempt to be intimidating and forceful. If you receive a call like this please hang up and call the SMPA office yourself to deal with the matter, then dial the SMPA offices at 970-626-5549 and report to us what took place.

Participation in SMPA's Community Solar Array Strong

Since December, 2012, when the newly built SMPA Community Solar Array began converting sunlight energy into valuable electricity, over 170 member accounts have signed up to reap the benefits of owning panels in this array.

Nearly 2,500 individual solar panels have been purchased by SMPA members so far. These members know the value of the electricity the panels produce. Not only does panel ownership help offset electricity costs on your bill, but the panels produce clean, local, renewable energy.

Recently, Alpine Bank purchased 175 panels in the array to save money on powering their three branch locations within SMPA's service territory as well as support local power generation. Alpine Bank's commitment to the environment and strong commitment to a healthy bottom line made the panel purchase a natural fit.

Wishing to further the Town of Telluride's goals for carbon footprint reduction, the Town authorized, in March, the purchase of panels for residential units constructed by the Town or the Telluride Housing Authority over the last 25 years. In all, 464 panels are being allocated to around 213 residential units under this first-of-its-kind solar program. "Owning panels in the community solar array is a great way for the residents of Telluride to support renewables," says Lance McDonald, with the Town of Telluride. "This program is significant, resulting in approximately 20% percent of the Town's population offsetting about 20-25% of their electric use with locally generated solar power," McDonald adds.

Many individual members and even some construction companies are capturing the sun's energy through panel ownership. Due to our region's exceptionally good solar resource the solar array is not only producing at expected levels but is beating this by more than 8%. "We have always identified the Paradox valley as one of the best solar resources in the state of CO", said manager of Member Services Brad Zaporski. That is good news for members who own panels. If you have not yet signed up to participate in the community solar array there is good news for you too; panels are still available for new community solar participants. Go to www.smpasolar.com or call 888.208.5858 to find out more and participate in the single largest community owned solar farm in the nation.



Notables:

(Continued from Previous)

We have also revised our member complaint process. It is important to us that our membership feels they have a fair and adequate way to voice their opinions and complaints. The new process proposes the member complaint to be appealed to the Board of Directors.

All of the changes that were made to our General Rules and Regulations Policy were done to improve the customer service that we offer to our members and for the benefit of the Cooperative as a whole. It is a monumental task and the SMPA staff has done an outstanding job dealing with all the detail. There are too many changes to the Rules and Regulations to address all of them in detail here. However we are open to discussing them with you. If you have further

questions please feel free to give us a call at 970-626-5549 or stop by one of our offices. The changes to the policy have not been finalized at the time this was written. We plan to present them to our board to be adopted as policy at the July Board of Directors meeting, which is currently scheduled for July 22nd. An updated schedule of our Board Meetings, which are open to our members, can always be found at <http://www.smpa.com/content/board-meeting-schedule>

Give **T R E E S** a Chance

Trees with mature height >40' tall
50' away

Mature trees <40' tall
20' away

Small trees & shrubs <25' tall
within 20'

50ft 20ft Within 20 ft (but not under lines)

Trees planted too close to power lines grow into a BIG problem. To prevent power outages and safety hazards, these trees need to be trimmed and sometimes removed. Do your part to keep trees healthy and prevent power outages.

Plant trees a safe distance from power distribution lines.