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## Notables: Rates to Remain Unchanged in 2015



Kevin Ritter  
SMPA General Manager

First I get to announce a decrease in the surcharge, and now I get to announce that we aren't planning a rate increase for next year - for the second year in a row! It's been nice to be a bearer of good news.

San Miguel Power's wholesale power provider, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, has announced it is not planning a rate increase for its member cooperatives. This heavily influences SMPA's decision to increase or not increase rates, because wholesale power costs make up approximately 56% of our operating expenses.

The absence of a Tri-State increase, plus SMPA's current solid financial condition has put us in a position to keep rates steady into the next year. SMPA's board will officially approve this plan at their December board meeting when they review and ratify the 2015 budget.

SMPA members last saw a rate increase in January of 2013 after sales dropped significantly in 2012 and a cost of service study indicated the co-op's access charge was not fully recovering SMPA's fixed costs – an issue our board will have to continue to address in the future.

As we move into the future, we know that legislation, greater demand, alternative resources, and inflation will all play bigger roles in our rates. Unfortunately, most projections show them moving upward. This is why SMPA provides programs and services that help our members improve the energy efficiency of their home and businesses today. Changing your consumption behavior and employing efficient technologies can help both you and SMPA manage costs in the future.

Rate	Energy Charge	Demand Charge	Access Charge
Residential	\$0.137555/kWh	n/a	\$16/bill
Residential Demand	\$0.077736/kWh	\$14/bill	\$25/bill
Three Phase	\$0.131586/kWh	n/a	\$29.50/bill
Three Phase Demand	\$0.080029/kWh	\$14/bill	\$40/bill

CURRENT RATES

## Funds Still Available for Rebates

Time and money still remain for SMPA members to take advantage of the co-op's efficiency and renewable rebates. But act fast. December 31, 2014 is the deadline to cash in on your efficiency measures.

One of the most substantial rebates still available is the weatherization rebate. SMPA will pay back 50% of the project cost, up to \$1,000, for qualifying weatherization projects. Qualifying measures include, but are not limited to, air sealing, insulation, duct sealing, vapor barriers, and heat recovery ventilation.

All weatherization projects must be completed and paperwork submitted by 12/31/2014 in order to be eligible for the rebate. Prior to beginning work, members should review the application terms and conditions available online at <http://www.smpa.com/content/rebate-programs#weatherization> or contact Wiley Freeman, Energy Services Executive, at [wiley@smpa.com](mailto:wiley@smpa.com) or (970) 626-5549 ext. 231. Pre-installation site visits are required.

For information on other available rebates and applications visit [www.smpa.com](http://www.smpa.com) or contact [rebates@smpa.com](mailto:rebates@smpa.com).



San Miguel Power offices will be closed the following days in celebration of Thanksgiving

**NUCLA:**

Closed Wed., November 26 and Thurs., November 27 (always closed Fridays)

**RIDGWAY:**

Closed Thurs., November 27 and Fri., November 28 (always closed Mondays)

San Miguel Power wishes you a joyous, delicious, and love-filled holiday. Happy Thanksgiving.

**ELECTRICAL SAFETY 101**

When cooking your holiday feast, be sure to have a working fire extinguisher nearby, just in case.

**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](http://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](mailto:energywise@smpa.com)



San Miguel Power is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

# Asplundh Takes Over Tree Trimming Operations

Asplundh Tree Expert Co. officially took over SMPA's tree trimming operations in October. What does that mean for you? You'll be seeing some new faces and new vehicles out and about maintaining SMPA's rights-of-way and trimming trees that could impact our power lines. Just keep an eye out for the bright orange bucket truck.

Asplundh is a nationwide tree service contractor headquartered in Philadelphia, PA. It is a full-service contractor, performing a wide range of duties in addition to tree trimming: vegetation management, emergency storm work, line clearance, and even aerial side trimming. What's aerial side trimming? Powerful saws are suspended by aluminum pipe directly below a helicopter. The helicopter flies along the power line right-of-way with the saw, quickly and effectively trimming difficult vegetation. It is especially good for rough terrain where maneuvering trucks and ground equipment is difficult.



**ABOVE:** Roy Gomez and Zach Ross of Asplundh Tree Expert Co. - SMPA's new tree trimming contractor. Asplundh is responsible for clearing trees, brush, and other vegetation from SMPA's rights-of-way. If you see trees that could pose a risk to our power lines or equipment call us at (970) 626-5549 or (970) 864-7311. Never trim trees near our power lines or equipment yourself!

Why does SMPA need a tree trimming service? That's easy, for safety and reliability. By maintaining a right-of-way around our power lines and equipment, we are essentially maintaining a minimum distance between the lines and vegetation or other structures. This reduces the risk of hazards, such as fires that could result from tree-wire contacts and electric shock.

Trees can be common culprits of power outages. When they are too close to our lines, the tree and its branches can interfere with your service, especially during severe weather. Wind, lightning, and snow can bring down trees into the lines, resulting in damages and outages. Our tree trimming operations act as a preventative medicine. And while we can't guarantee that we'll catch every potential tree issue, regular maintenance and the removal of branches, vines, trees, and brush from our equipment and power lines reduces the risk of tree related outages.

Next time you see a bright orange Asplundh truck patrolling our power lines and rights-of-way, remember they are an important part of maintaining a reliable power system.

## Reader request

**Q** How can I be sure my home and family are prepared in the event of an extended power outage?

**A** Although SMPA is one of the most reliable power providers in the state, power outages still can (and do) happen.

Luckily there are steps to make sure your home and family stay safe and comfortable during an outage – whether it lasts 30 minutes or 3 hours.

Be prepared. Always keep a battery-powered radio and flashlights, plus a supply of extra batteries, on hand. Fill containers with water for washing and store a supply of bottled drinking water. Stock your pantry with non-perishable food items, and don't forget the manual can opener.

During winter outages stay inside and dress in layers. It is also helpful to store your extra blankets in an easily accessible location inside your home. It's never fun fishing extra blankets out of the crawl space in cold weather! Remember, never use a charcoal grill to cook or heat with inside your home. Burning charcoal gives off deadly carbon monoxide gas.

Protect your electrical appliances, such as TVs, computers, and DVD players with surge-protecting power strips. We also recommend turning off all electronic equipment. Be sure to leave at least one outside and one inside light on though, so that you and our crews can see that power has been restored.

Most outages will not affect your refrigerated food supply, as a full freezer will keep food frozen for up to three days if the door remains closed. Don't open your freezer or refrigerator unless absolutely necessary.

And of course, listen to your battery-powered or wind-up radio for outage information and advice from authorities. You can also use your smart phone to access outage information on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/SanMiguelPower](http://www.facebook.com/SanMiguelPower).

Once you and your family are safe and warm, we recommend you sit back, relax, and enjoy each other's company. We'll be working hard to safely restore your power as quickly as we can.

Submit your reader request question to [energywise@smpa.com](mailto:energywise@smpa.com), and we'll answer it in an upcoming newsletter!

**Reminder:** Holiday Card Coloring Contest submissions due Monday, December 1.