To the SMPA communities:

As the annual San Miguel Power Association meeting approaches, I have heard many voices expressing their desire for more progressive actions by the SMPA Board. Thus, I want to make you are aware of many opportunities SMPA already provides for our region, setting us apart from other electric cooperatives. These SMPA programs help you reduce your electricity use and carbon footprint, saving you money and helping the planet. Your participation makes a difference, so please engage and take action!

EcoAction Partners’ **Greenlights** program gives residents and businesses throughout SMPA territory the opportunity to purchase LED light bulbs at an extremely discounted rate of up to 75% off. This discount is possible through rebate funding from SMPA and regional governments. LED lighting reduces energy use from standard incandescent or halogen bulbs by at least 60%, saving money on electric bills!

The **SMPA IQ Weatherization & Solar Program** assists low to mid-income residents in making home energy efficiency improvements and participating in renewable energy.

Established in 2016, the SMPA IQ weatherization program provides a free Home Energy Assessment to qualified renters and homeowners. The most cost effective energy efficiency measures are prioritized and then implemented at no cost to the homeowner. Energy efficiency should always be the first step prior to renewable energy, so once the home is weatherized, the member is eligible for a complimentary solar panel(s) in the new SMPA solar array built on the site of a former landfill next to the Norwood waste transfer station. This landmark program is made possible through partnerships with the Colorado Energy Office, Energy Outreach Colorado, GRID Alternatives, EcoAction Partners, The Telluride Foundation, E3 Insight and SMPA.

The SMPA Community Solar array, located near Paradox and constructed in December 2012 offers access to 1.1 megawatts of clean, renewable power for members who own panels. The array completely sold out in 2015, demonstrating the high level of support for solar power and leaving a demand for the development of an additional community solar farm in the future. Thus, EcoAction Partners worked with SMPA and Mountainfilm’s New Normal Initiative to create the **SMPA Solar Power Pledge**. Go to SMPA’s website link: [www.smpa.com/content/community-solar-power-pledge](http://www.smpa.com/content/community-solar-power-pledge)

 to fill out your pledge to purchase solar panels. Power produced by solar panels offset a member’s utility bills and increase renewable energy in our region.

SMPA has been making renewable energy a major priority for well over a decade. Using the Green Fund, the cooperative has been consistently adding power from local, renewable sources without impacting rates for electricity. The Green Fund was established to fund local renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. You can contribute to the Green Fund through two programs:

* **Green Blocks**: This program allows members to draw their energy from 100% renewable sources through the use of Renewable Energy Credits (RECs). These credits are called Green Blocks and cost $1.00 per block, per month. One block represents 100-kilowatt hours of renewable energy. Members can purchase as many blocks as they wish with 100% of the sales going to the SMPA Green fund.

**Green Cents**: Small change can make a big difference. Green Cents participants have their power bills rounded up to the nearest dollar. SMPA collects the extra and puts it into the Green Fund to support local renewable projects.

SMPA’s **energy efficiency rebate** programs have been in effect since before 2008 and include rebates for LED lighting, electric appliances, energy audits and weatherization improvements and many other efficiency upgrades. Many SMPA members have taken advantage of these rebates to-date. The estimated cumulative savings achieved by the SMPA energy efficiency rebate program is over 11,520,000 kWh.

SMPA’s **renewable energy rebates** for grid-tied, net-metered systems significantly reduce the upfront cost of installing renewable energy. Since 2008, a total of $861,359 has been rebated to members over the years. This has resulted in over 1 megawatt of additional solar net meter capacity installed in SMPA’s service territory. Overall, with help from SMPA’s solar PV rebate and incentives like the Federal solar tax credit, SMPA members have invested over $6.7 million into the local renewable energy economy.

SMPA staff also works with governments, schools, and businesses to implement projects that significantly reduce energy use & costs for the governments and improve efficiency. Recent projects include:

* The Township LED retrofit initiative has replaced nearly all of the old inefficient lighting sources in the SMPA service territory.   In total 396 outdated Mercury Vapor, High Pressure Sodium, and Metal Halide were removed and replaced with High efficiency LED street lights and/or yard lights.  Projects have been completed in the City of Ouray, and Towns of Nucla, Naturita, Norwood, Rico and Silverton, for an approximate combined savings of 293,500 kWh and approximately $40,000.
* Large businesses like Hotel Madeline, Telluride Ski & Golf, The Peaks Resort, Alpine Bank, and the Telluride Airport have participated in the Greenlights LED rebate program, replacing inefficient lighting with LEDs and significantly reducing energy use.   Schools in Norwood, Telluride, Ridgway, and Ouray have also converted to LED lighting. This has also been used as an educational opportunity for students.

SMPA is very active with the communities, including participation on the EcoAction Partners Board of Directors, Sneffels Energy Board, sponsoring & presenting at regional Energy Events such as the San Juan Sustainable Living Forum, Ridgway RiverFest, Ridgway-Ouray Community Council and the annual San Miguel Energy Forum.

San Miguel Power Association is YOUR cooperative. You as members have a say in the direction the cooperative takes, and the board has consistently listened and responded. Please make your voice heard in the upcoming SMPA election and at the SMPA Annual meeting, and take action by participating in the above programs. San Miguel Power Association is a progressive utility working toward what is important to its members.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kim Wheels

Ophir, Colorado