



Jemez Mountains Electric
Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

La Luz

JMEC Newsletter October 2021

It's National Co-op Month: Learn how JMEC came to be

October is the month that electric cooperatives throughout the United States observe as National Co-op Month.

Just imagine, as late as the mid-1930s, nine out of 10 rural homes were without electric service. The farmer milked his cows by hand in the dim light of a kerosene lantern while the wife was constantly using the wood stove and washboard.

The unavailability of electricity in rural areas kept their economies entirely and exclusively dependent on agriculture. Factories and businesses, of course, preferred to locate in cities where electric power was easily acquired. For many years, power companies ignored the rural areas of the nation.

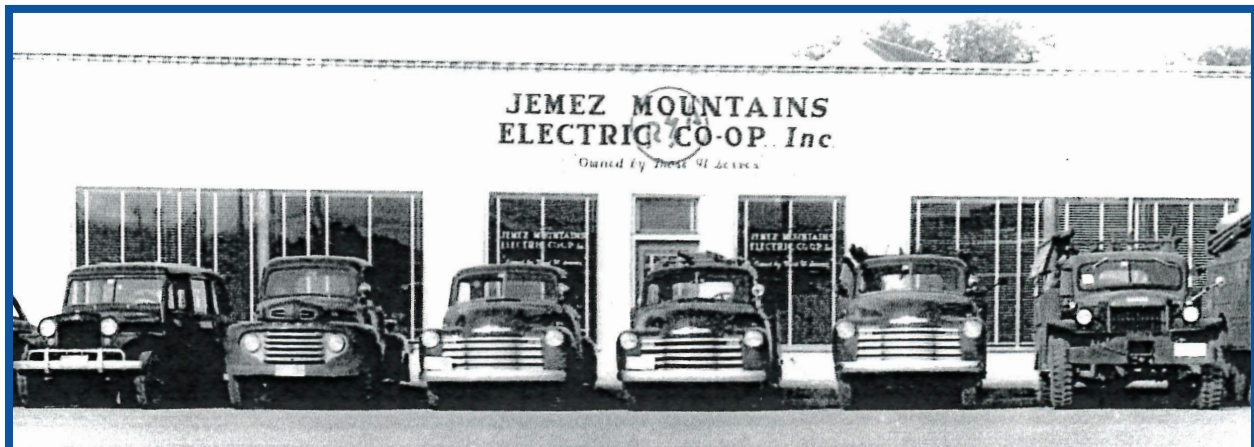
The idea of providing federal assistance to accomplish rural electrification gained ground rapidly when President

to enable the formation and operation of not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives.

Within four years following the close of the World War II, the number of rural electric systems in operation doubled, the number of consumers connected more than tripled and the miles of energized line grew more than five-fold. By 1953, more than 90 percent of U.S. farms had electricity.

Today, about 99 percent of the nation's farms and rural areas have electric service. Most rural electrification is the product of locally owned rural electric cooperatives that got their start by borrowing funds from REA to build lines and provide service on a not-for-profit basis. REA is now the Rural Utilities Service, or RUS, and is under the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Our cooperative officially became known as the Jemez



Roosevelt took office in 1933. On May 11, 1935, Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 7037 establishing the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). It was not until a year later that the Rural Electrification Act was passed and the lending program that became the REA got underway.

Within months, it became evident to REA officials that established investor-owned utilities were not interested in using federal loan funds to serve sparsely populated rural areas. But loan applications from farmer-based cooperatives poured in, and REA soon realized electric cooperatives would be the entities to make rural electrification a reality.

In 1937, the REA drafted the Electric Cooperative Corporation Act, a model law that states could adopt

Mountains Electric Cooperative in 1948. It began as a small hydropower generating station in Jemez Springs serving three families.

In 1947, Fred Abousleman and his brothers installed a small generating plant on the Jemez River to provide themselves and a couple neighbors with electricity. It was a small start, but it was city comes to country as far as the three families were concerned. Absolutely there were struggles, but the minimal power they received was a major improvement over what they previously had.

The brothers were called to serve during World War II and they returned home to find the old hydropower generator in disrepair. "Every little town in Germany had power and I made up my mind I was going to have central power from somewhere," Abousleman said.

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It's National Co-op Month:
(continued from front cover)

After approaching the Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM), Abousleman found out what rural residents in many parts of New Mexico wanting electricity were finding out, and that was that larger urban power suppliers didn't want to invest in a few outlying rural customers. It was too costly, with too little return, for these investor-owned utility companies!

About the same time, J. Antonio Montoya of San Ysidro was meeting with representatives of the Continental Divide Electric Co-op in Grants to see about extending electric service to the Jemez Area. The Grants, N.M., cooperative had

been founded under the federal Rural Electrification Act of 1936, and although Montoya and others met with congressional delegates, the plan seemed to be getting nowhere.

Montoya, Abousleman and other interested citizens from Cuba and outlying areas eventually met to make plans for their own cooperative. As this cooperative materialized, it began to sign people up for a \$5 membership fee. They incorporated the co-op on April 22, 1948 and went in search of federal funding to build their own power plant and distribution system. They hired an engineer to draw up plans and a line crew began installation of the poles and lines. The REA approved a loan for \$930,000,

most of which was designated to purchase the Inland Utility Company which had been serving the power needs of the Espanola area. Other communities surrounding Espanola joined the developing system which significantly expanded the service area of the newly named Jemez Mountains Electric Cooperative (JMEC). Today, JMEC is the largest cooperative in the state, serving our more than 22,000 residential, commercial and industrial members with over 31,000 meters and maintaining more than 4,000 miles of line within five counties in Northern New Mexico.

**Board of Trustees,
Jemez Mountains Electric Cooperative
Dennis Trujillo, President**



JMEC Employee of the Month

Candace Alire

"I so enjoy working with our customers," said Candace Alire, assistant cashier. "It is like they become part of my family. I get to see many nearly every month so I catch up on their families and what is going on in their life. I really look forward to seeing them."

As part of the JMEC customer service team, Candace often is the first person a cooperative member sees when they come in the Espanola office. She says she has learned a lot about the cooperative in the eight years since she joined JMEC and it's a good thing as she has to be ready to answer all kinds of questions!

"I really like problem solving with our members, making sure they feel heard and taking care of what they need," she added. "I try to help the best way I can." Candace works with multiple departments and does everything from take payments for things like utility bills, solar installations and new services to helping members with update forms and more.

Mom to an eight-year-old, Candace lives "far up" in the mountains. It's worth the drive. "I love my job and I enjoy being in the outdoors and spending time with family," she added.

Introducing our Incoming Board of Trustees Members

We are pleased to welcome the new members of our board of trustees – Dennis Gallegos, District 3; Manny Bustos, District 5 Ward A and B who also was elected to serve as vice president on the executive committee; Elias Coriz, District 5 Ward B; and Marcelina Martinez, District 6 Ward A.

Thank you for your willingness to serve!



Dennis Gallegos



Manny Bustos



Elias Coriz



Marcelina Martinez

We Need our Members' Help as We Update our Notification Systems

JMEC is hard at work updating our entire notification system. There are a lot of pieces and parts that have to be in place, people trained, best practices practiced and more! We want all our members to have easy access to information about their accounts and to stay informed in the case of an

outage. For JMEC's notification system to work, we must have our members' current email and the correct mobile number associated with your account.

So, be on the lookout! You might find a form asking you to provide this information tucked in with your monthly bill. Or, you might be

asked for this information if you call in to the cooperative. We will do this together – our team carrying out the needed updates to the notification system internally and our members sharing with us or validating their needed contact information.

Thank you for your cooperation!



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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