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Next Board Meeting
May 14, 2009

MAILING ADDRESS
P.O. Box 170
Granby, CO 80446-0170

STREET ADDRESS
321 West Agate
Highway 40
Granby, CO 80446

970-887-3378 Phone
877-887-3378 Toll free

www.mpei.com Web
mpei@mpei.com Email



LOCAL CO-OP CONTROL MATTERS

BY JOE PANDY, GENERAL MANAGER

When it comes to Mountain Parks Electric, Inc., local control matters.

Local control means:

- When members like you have a question or concern, you just call me — the general manager — or members of the co-op's board of directors.

- Those board members are your neighbors who were elected by you and your fellow co-op members. That ensures they're accountable to you.

- You're not just a customer; you and your fellow members own Mountain Parks Electric, Inc.

- Our co-op has a seat on the governing board of the company that provides our co-op with electricity — Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association. It's controlled by us and 43 other electric cooperatives.

Compare this local control with a different model that's being considered by the Colorado Public Utilities Commission. This model would cede significant control of Tri-State's planning for our future energy needs to the PUC's three commissioners.

Chances are you don't know these three commissioners. Few people do. That's because they're appointed — not elected — and they work in Denver, far away from us.

As you may have gathered by now, this potential regulation by the PUC would be a step away from local control, which is a bedrock principle of electric cooperatives. That makes it a step in the wrong direction. Expanded PUC regulation would undermine and erode rural Coloradans' local, democratic control of their not-for-profit electric co-ops — a fundamental principle of the successful, tried-and-true cooperative business model — replacing it with the regulatory authority of three

appointed officials in Denver.

If you share this concern, there's still time to help influence whether or not this change occurs.

The PUC commissioners are taking public comment on this matter. We know they're hearing from people who support expanding the PUC's authority to regulate Tri-State in this way. We want to make sure the PUC also hears from co-op members like you. (Steven Ingebritson, Fraser, Acct. #100239406)

Tri-State has made it easy for you to make your voice heard. If you have Internet access, just go to www.tristategt.org and click on the button on the home page that says "Take Action — Support Local Control of Your Co-op's Power Supplier." That will take you to a website that includes more background on this issue and provides you with a quick and convenient way to send an email.

If you'd prefer to comment the old-fashioned way — through the United States Postal Service — you should send a letter to: Colorado PUC, 1560 Broadway, Suite 250, Denver, CO 80202. Make sure you note that you're commenting on Docket 09I-041E, which concerns the issue I've outlined above.

I encourage you to tell the PUC that the current system of local control is serving MPEI and Colorado's other rural electric cooperatives well and that moving away from this local control model would be a mistake. Of course, feel free to add whatever personal observations or anecdotes you'd like to include. You don't need to be a lawyer or an expert to comment. Your views matter.

Thanks for your attention to this issue. With the help of co-op members like you, we can make sure that local control remains strong in our community.