



Your monthly report from Your Socorro Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Recently installed solar panels also provide shade for parking spaces at the NM Tech Macey Center Photo credits: Mike Reif

Solar Power Continues to Grow in SEC's Service Area

With the impending darkness from winter's shorter daylight hours upon us, you may not immediately think of solar power as a contributor for your electricity needs, but SEC continues to see Members adding solar arrays to their homes or businesses. In 2020, Members added 21 residential arrays and 9 commercial applications totaling 1,036 kilowatts (kW). In addition, New Mexico Tech and the Socorro Independent School District have recently added solar installations to their campuses. NM Tech added 580 kW of solar arrays on three parking canopies and the Socorro Schools added 329 kW at five locations in the district.

SEC has assisted our Members with the interconnection of their solar arrays since 2005, and currently there are 125 residential and 20 commercial solar installations in our service area. Over the years, the number of arrays added annually has fluctuated due in part to changes in state and federal tax incentives or depending on the marketing campaigns of solar installers. Whatever the motivation to add solar to your property, SEC wants our Members to know we are here to assist with the process.

Recently, a solar company canvassed the City of Socorro residents with its products. Unfortunately, its marketing efforts suggested that SEC was in fact a partner with the company. This resulted in several phone calls from confused Members. While SEC is totally supportive of any Member's decision to add solar or wind generation, we have never "partnered" with any renewable energy company in a way that could be construed as promoting one supplier over another.

While changes in solar technology have made panels more affordable, there are other points to consider. Is your roof structurally sound enough to handle the extra weight of the panels? Have you looked at ways to make your home more energy efficient? Reducing your current energy needs could save you money and contribute to the purchase of a smaller solar system. Do you plan to add on to your home or add a hot tub to the patio? These factors will affect the amount of energy you use and the size of solar installation you purchase.

There are many things to think about when considering installing solar and we hope our Members will see SEC as a resource for information in this process. While there are many reputable solar companies in New Mexico, this is still an emerging industry with evolving technology and there have been several "pop-up" companies in the market looking to make a quick dollar. Be wary of contractors who may tell you not to contact SEC. We are here for our Members and always remember, you have a trusted energy advisor in SEC.

If you decide to purchase solar panels for interconnection to SEC's service, please contact Adriana here at SEC at 575-838-9739, and she can assist with the process. We require an application and application fee of \$50, and we will also need to inspect your installation upon completion, change your meter, and have written approval from the NM state electrical inspector. Ask us first and let us help you make an informed decision.

Your
SOCORRO ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Spotlight on TEAM SEC - Meet our Staff, Your Neighbor

We would like to introduce Mr. Carlos Rivas, Journeyman Lineman, in our Socorro office. Carlos recently completed the 4-year Merchant Job Training and Safety Program Apprenticeship Program that includes both bookwork and satisfactory completion of in-the-field procedures. Carlos came to work for SEC in March 2016 and he brings a diverse background to SEC.

He spent 8 years testing military tanks for the U.S. Army in the deserts of southern Arizona before cutbacks in this program prompted him to make use of his CDL training when he started driving commercial trucks in the delivery of explosives for the government.

Hoping to find a climate cooler than the deserts surrounding Yuma, Arizona and with family in the area, Carlos relocated to the Veguita area in 2015. Friends suggested SEC might be a good career choice and Carlos has adapted well to his new career.

Carlos admits that working with electricity can present challenges he didn't face with tanks or explosives, but he says that having respect for electricity helps him and his co-workers perform their duties safely. While providing reliable power to SEC Members is his top priority, troubleshooting outages on the system and trying to solve these issues are his favorite part of the job. Thanks to Carlos for being an integral part of Team SEC!



Carlos Rivas
Journeyman Lineman

CONTACT US

WEBSITE

www.socorroelectric.com

PHONE

800-351-7575 or 575-835-0560

PAYING YOUR BILL

You can make your payment over the phone by check or major credit card, 24 hrs. a day, 7 days a week with our IVR phone system at no charge.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

REPORTING AN OUTAGE

Before reporting a power outage, please check the circuit breakers in your house first. If you still do not have power after checking your breakers, please call **(575) 835-0560, (800) 351-7575 or 855-881-8159**.

If you get a busy signal, it is an indication that someone else is experiencing an outage as well; however please continue to call, this will help us pinpoint the problem.

MEMBER SERVICE/BILLING

Marilyn Madrid - Member Service Supervisor
575-835-0560 Ext 1504

ACCOUNTING

575-835-0560

LINE EXTENSIONS

Bill Harris - Staking Technician
575-835-0560 Ext 2503

MARKETING & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Jimmy Capps - Director of Communications & Public Affairs - 575-838-9724
jcapps@socorroelectric.com

November 2020 Board Report - the Board met via teleconference....

- approved the contract for pole inspections for 2021.
- approved the purchase of two service vehicles for delivery in 2021.
- received Staff departmental reports & Board Committee recommendations.
- set the next Board Meeting for December 16, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.

SEC Outage Numbers

800-351-7575 or 855-881-8159 (new)

The winter season brings impressions of snow capped mountains or serene valleys blanketed for miles in a white wonderland. Sometimes the storms that deliver the peaceful snows also bring damaging ice and relentless winds which can contribute to extended power outages.

While we can never predict the weather or where, when, or how long the next outage will be, we have added a second phone number for our Members to use when reporting "After Hours" outages. We are confident this additional number will provide a solution for Members who may have been unsuccessful when trying to report an outage.

The current phone system at SEC has 20 incoming lines for calls, which are answered by the office staff between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on weekdays (normal business hours). However, when the outage being reported is **after normal business hours**, the system can quickly become congested depending on the size and/or the time of the outage. When a Member calls **after normal business hours** to report an outage, the call actually uses 2 of the telephone lines - one for the Member's incoming call and a second line when the call is transferred to reach our After Hours Call Center. So it doesn't take long for the system to get busy, especially with large outages.

Unfortunately when the system gets overloaded, the message received by Members when they've select "Option 1" to report an outage, responds with "This is not a valid extension". Understandably, many Members think this means our phone system is down and at the most inappropriate time! Please be assured the system is still functioning. It is simply overloaded at that time.

The addition of the **855-881-8159** number is to assist in outages, **after normal business hours**, to insure that all Members are able to connect to our call center to report an outage and to be placed on our "Call Back" list.

