



THE SPOKES SPEAK - GEARED TO SERVICE

Rotary Club of the North Fork Valley

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WEB SITES: www.rotary.org www.rotary5470.org www.paoniarotary.org

Meeting Thursdays at Noon in the Paonia Town Hall

District 5470

Club 1180

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LAST MEETING: February 25, 2016

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The Paonia Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring a Paonia Council candidates forum on March 10. It will be held in the community room of Town Hall. The League of Women Voters will moderate this forum of 9 candidates.

Thanks to Tamie for the wonderful article in the DCI about our Rotary Club's scholarship to the North Fork Ambulance Association to send an EMT to EMT - Intermediate training. As our grant will be matched, the NFAA will be able to send two EMTs to this training. The DCI also published Tamie's picture of our Kids in the Kitchen project.

Randy spoke about Paul Harris Fellowships (PHF). Club members become a Paul Harris Fellow once they have made a \$1000 donation to The Rotary Foundation annual fund or polio plus fund. The annual fund helps Rotary districts fund local projects, such as our Kids in the Kitchen. He invited members who are part way toward earning a PHF to talk with him about completing the journey, that there are ways club members can help them get there. He then introduced Greg Thompson, our latest member to earn his PHF. Greg said his Aunt Peg had a PHF plaque among her belongings when she died. At the time, he did not appreciate what it was. "Now I know what it is, and am glad to be a PHF myself", he said.

Bob McHugh visited from Grand Junction and exchanged his Horizons Sunrise RC banner for our banner.

Karri's husband Alan will be 16 on 2/29 . . .

PROGRAM: Betsy introduced John Gavan, a consummate supporter of community organizations, who sits on the DCED, DMEA, SEI and Tri State boards. She noted he is about to go on a high fiber diet. Speaking as a member of the DMEA Board, John announced that the shareholder owned organization is inaugurating a fiber optic cable program to bring broadband Internet service to homes and businesses by the end of 2016. It will be a subsidiary business to DMEA, which is currently putting together a business plan and hiring a supervisor. Phase I will roll out by this summer when DMEA members will be invited to sign up for the service. When there are sufficient subscribers, DMEA will start laying fiber optic cable, which is the gold standard for Internet service. Broadband at 1 gigabyte per second service to a residence or business would put us at the cutting edge of technology. DMEA will offer a three part package: broadband Internet, cable TV and telephone service. One does not have to subscribe to all three to receive broadband, but there may be significant cost savings in doing so.

DMEA is a customer owned, low profit company. Its broadband subsidiary will operate under the

same principle. John is very enthusiastic about the economic opportunities DMEA's new venture will bring to the area. Some technicalities: DMEA is close to resolving the easement situation regarding where the new cable will be placed. Some of it will be hung as overhead lines; and some will be placed in existing trenches. As a rural utility service, DMEA qualifies for lower rate loans than other service providers. Thus John thinks DMEA's charge for broadband service will be less than that of other providers. "For years, we have been asking for other telecom carriers to provide high speed Internet. They did not so DMEA will."

DMEA is an electric cooperative service provider of 100 mega watts of power at its peak load to 30,000 customers. It is one of 44 cooperatives that has contracted with Tri-State to receive the majority of its power. Tri-State produces most of its power from old coal fired generating plants. The federally mandated Clean Power Plan calls for reducing carbon emissions. Tri-State will be forced to build new plants using other fuels. The likelihood of major rate increases to its cooperatives is significant. DMEA wants to avoid passing along these rate increases to its customers by using more locally generated power, which will cost less. It has developed 2 hydro power local providers - the South Canal project - to provide 6% of its power at a low and steady cost. DMEA petitioned FERC to be able to use more locally generated power, as there was another hydro power facility it would like to have access to. Tri-State objected, but FERC ruled in DMEA's favor. Now Tri-State is petitioning FERC to allow it to recover lost revenue from DMEA, should it purchase less power from Tri-State. If Tri-State should prevail, DMEA could not afford to buy local power and pay the cost recovery penalty. FERC received 70 letter of support from customers who wanted DMEA to be able to purchase locally generated power. John thinks that support helped FERC arrive at its favorable decision. [NOTE to club members: we should write to FERC in defense of DMEA's purchasing locally generated power and rejecting Tri-State's petition. Details regarding submitting comments have already been sent to club members. Please send your comments to FERC by March 11.]

When asked about where DMEA stands with the other cooperative member companies, John stated our cooperative was far ahead of the other 43 in terms of developing inexpensive power and broadband service. As for the contract with Tri-State, it is currently in effect until 2040. However, Kit Carson, a cooperative in New Mexico, has negotiated a buyout and will leave Tri-State by the end of 2016. Hope springs eternal that DMEA might be able to get out from under Tri-State soon. Great presentation, John!

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL: RI's theme for March is "Water and Sanitation". Clean water is a basic need for human beings. When people, especially children, have access to clean water, they live healthier and more productive lives. However, at least 3,000 children die each day from diseases caused by unsafe water, which is what motivates our members to build wells, install rainwater harvesting systems, and teach community members how to maintain new infrastructure.

While very few people die of thirst, millions die from preventable waterborne diseases, providing the impetus for our members to also improve sanitation facilities in undeveloped countries. Members start by providing toilets and latrines that flush into a sewer or safe enclosure, and then add education programs to promote hand-washing and other good hygiene habits.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

March 3 - Jack Ferrell and Cassandra Shenk, on Teens on Farms

March 10 - Burnie Zercher of Pueblo speaking about The Rotary Foundation

March 17 - Steve Lyons, on "Green Burials"

April 14 - Dr. Jerry Nelson, on "Climate Change and Food Security"



