



THE SPOKES SPEAK - GEARED TO SERVICE

Rotary Club of the North Fork Valley

POB 1543, Paonia, CO 81428

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: May 26, 2016

ANNOUNCEMENTS: June 23 will be the annual business meeting and the passing of the gavel to the new President. A budget for 2016-17 will be presented. [Could club members see that in advance? - ED]

The Ducky Derby will be Sept. 10. PHS principal, Randall Palmer, very enthusiastic about having students help sell tickets. The school will receive some percentage of the ticket sales. The event organizers have discussed with the Western Slope Conservation Center where on the river the duckies ought to float.

The pancake breakfast is 6/25. Sell tickets. We want people to attend!

PROGRAM: Sarah Bishop introduced Gerald Espinosa, an Americorps VISTA at Solar Energy International (SEI). He is in charge of the Solarize Delta County initiative. At Espinosa's urging, Bishop gave a testimonial about the solar installation on her and Bill Bishop's home. They were the first to sign up during the Solarize the North Fork initiative last summer. The Dahlgrens and Thompsons also "went solar" last summer.

SEI is a technical training institution with 50,000 alumni worldwide. SEI decided to launch a solarize initiative in the North Fork Valley to show how to use solar installations as an agent of economic development. The objective of this project was to develop awareness, leading to education, then adoption of solar power, and creation of new jobs. In just a few months, Empowered Energy Systems - SEI's partner in the project - hired 6 employees, who installed 23 new PV (solar photo voltaic) systems, providing 120 kw of power, with a total investment of \$400,000 in solar. Delta County Economic Development (DCED) then asked SEI to extend its solarize program to all of Delta County. The program was launched April 15 with 62 homes and businesses registered for a site assessment so far. A 25 kw system was just installed on a commercial building in Delta, the biggest system in the county to date. The average size of PV systems installed in the county in 2015 is 5 kw. The life expectancy of the PV modules is 25 years.

PV systems have been around for 40 years. Prior to 2015 there were only 300 net meter customers in the county. (Net meters measure both how much power comes from the power company as well as how much power the customer's system puts back into the power grid.) The cost of the hardware associated with solar has dropped 70%, while the "soft" costs - marketing, permitting, etc. - have remained the same. The solarize project helps reduce some of the soft costs by encouraging a greater number of customers to



sign up than installers might be able to generate on their own. The solarize Delta County project offers rebates up to \$600 based on the number of kilowatt hours contracted by August 15, 2016. (You must be registered by July 15. Once registered, potential customers will receive a free on site assessment.) In addition to the rebate, there is a federal tax credit of 30% of the cost of the system. Another favorable aspect of the solarize project is Espinosa's team will help find financing if needed.

"Time to get off the dime," Espinosa said. For more information, call 527-7657 x 213 or www.solarenergy.org/solarize-delta-county. [NOTE: Espinosa reported that 3 Rotarians registered after the meeting. Go solar!]

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL: The June Rotary theme is Rotary Fellowships. Rotary Fellowships are groups of Rotary member who: 1) share a common interest in recreational activities, sports, hobbies, or professions; 2) further their vocational development with others in the same profession or field; 3) enhance their Rotary experience by exploring new opportunities and making connections around the world. Each fellowship functions independently of Rotary International, establishing its own rules, dues requirements, and administrative structure. Membership is open to Rotarians and their family members as well as participants and alumni of all Rotary and Foundation programs. Fellowships must have an international scope, with active members in a least three countries. (More next week)

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

June 2: Monica Wiitanen, updates to Cottage Industry law

June 9: Paul Ramsey, A Little Help, organizing to serve seniors in the North Fork

