



## ***THE SPOKES SPEAK - GEARED TO SERVICE***

### **Rotary Club of the North Fork Valley**

POB 1543, Paonia, CO 81428

WEB SITES: [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org) [www.rotary5470.org](http://www.rotary5470.org) [www.paoniarotary.org](http://www.paoniarotary.org)

Meeting Thursdays at Noon in the Paonia Town Hall

District 5470

Club 1180 - Chartered 12/20/22

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LAST MEETING: January 24, 2019

#### Announcements:

Need someone to run pancake breakfast in June—Ulli volunteered and Randy will help.

Norm is home. Has a cane. Doing physical therapy. He's having some cognitive problems.

#### **Program: Solar Energy International (SEI) and Vista**

SEI brought to us by Stefan and Shane. SEI's mission is to Educate, Empower, Engage. SEI was started in 1991 in Carbondale, Colorado. Each year about 1000 students come through the SEI campus here in Paonia or about 5000 per year including online. Since the beginning 65,000 students have been through SEI. SEI teaches solar installation, operation and maintenance. There is a training solar workforce going forward. SEI produces \$1M per year in economic impact on community, which may be a low estimate. SEI's instructors are practitioners, they aren't just professors.

SEI has gone International and has started a Costa Rica campus and another in Oman. They are looking at a third campus in South America and perhaps another in North Africa but not so much in Asia since China has their own institutions. India has the need, but cannot agree on a mutual price point for this sort of training. SEI would like to train trainers to run programs in other countries.

In 2014 SEI started AmeriCorp – Vista's Volunteer Program and 8 volunteers have participated so far.

The Solar Forward program takes work of volunteers and carries it forward.

There is currently \$1.5 M in solar in Delta County.

SEI believes in a world powered by renewable energy and will need 110,000 students trained to meet this goal. The goal is to meet 100% of Colorado energy needs by the year 2040, according to Governor Polis.

Trainees are diverse; usually adults retraining for jobs in solar energy with a variety of backgrounds. Also train staff at utility companies, military (to support military solar installations). The courses are paid for by participants, but there are also grants and scholarships available. Many people come through that and end up working in sales, customer management and business development, along with hands-on engineering side.

SEI is installing systems in 4 local schools (Hotchkiss, Cedaredge, Delta and Olathe/Montrose) and are working to provide training to students. Paonia School was installed a year ago.

SEI has 3 key priorities:

1. Access: worldwide campuses

scholarships for students

programs

2. Quality Training:

cutting edge curriculum

expertise – industry professionals (practitioners, not academics)

industry-leading campuses

3. Workforce Development

industry partnerships for workforce training

job placement

Storage systems are dropping in price.

1,000-Day Funding Plan - \$2M goal – have raised over \$220,000.

Champion SEI (serve on board, spread gospel)

Invite

Invest – with a commensurate commitment.

#### UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- 2/7/19: Jon Howard, KVNF Station Manager (Felix)**
- 2/14/19: Neal Schwieterman - Arts 4 All (Sarah Bishop)**
- 2/21/19: Paul Larmer, publisher of High Country News (Bill Bishop)**
- 2/28/19: TBD (Ed Bliss)**
- 3/7/19: TBD (Pam Bliss)**
- 3/14/19: TBD (Randy Campbell)**
- 3/21/19: Lori Lenhart – PACE (Karri Polson)**

