

# Special training program

SLECA employees (shown below, left to right) Buck Theriot, Timmy Trahan, Karl Mott, Ivy Deroche and Curtis Pellegrin recently attended a training program at the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives headquarters in Baton Rouge. (Acct. No. 7350252506)

The special program included co-op personnel from five Gulf Coast states and covered special safety procedures and requirements when working in the presence of oil, especially during the current hurricane season.



## Across the Board

July 12, 2010

Present were directors Alexander Doyle, president; David Luke, vice-president; Brian Rivet, secretary; Terry Trahan, treasurer; Tracy Duval, J. D. Boudreaux, Eroy Acosta, Roger Dale DeHart, Larry J. Daigle and Lloyd Gibson, advisor. Also attending were Michael Guidry, general manager, James Funderburk, attorney, Elaine Robertson, member services supervisor, Roy Landry, Manager of Accounting and Finance and Mark Felger, Lanoux and Felger.

After the invocation and pledge, Mr. Guidry introduced Mr. Landry and Mr. Felger who was there to present the results of SLECA's 2009 audit showing that SLECA continues to be in a fairly strong financial condition.

The board then accepted the 2009 audit report and approved the minutes of the June 14th regular board meeting, 164 new members and the ALEC Report.

The financial report, approved by the board, highlighted interest earnings, cash on hand, rate comparison showing SLECA having the lowest rates compared to other area utilities, line loss, kilowatt hour sales for the month, cumulative sales to date, cost of service, equity, TIER and electric and total revenue verses cost per kilowatt hour. (Acct. No. 3954393800)

Following an update on upcoming schools, meetings and events, Mr. Guidry reported on the following: (1) SLECA continues to have the lowest rates in the area; (2) The Murkowski Resolution, that would have prevented the EPA from regulating green-house gases, failed; (3) President Obama will use the Gulf of Mexico oil spill to try to have climate change legislation passed before the fall elections; (4) A motion to invite LA Gen to ALEC meetings failed to pass; (5) The ALEC Board voted to expel Valley Electric from the association; (6) The PSC hired the law firm of Stone-Pigman and Kennedy and Associates to review the sale of Valley Electric to SWEPCO; (7) Bill 1472 requiring the dissolution of a cooperative to have a 50 percent + one vote was signed into law; (8) There is a possibility that LEPA may build a 60MW plant to serve the needs of some its member municipals and the plant may end up being in Terrebonne Parish; (9) A request from the St. Mary Parish Tourist Commission asking SLECA to bury a line near the planned site of the commission's new facility and pay to bury the line will be denied unless the board objects; (10) All employees who could be called on to go into contaminated areas after a storm recently attended a training session on July 6th and 8th dealing with what dangers to look for as well as the proper way to use the special clothing required; (11) SLECA had no NERC/SERC violations for this period and cooperation concerning specific items needed from LA Gen in order to be compliant with NERC/SERC rules improved; (12) As of July 5th there were still areas closed to fishing; and (12) There are board meeting conflict dates in September because of Labor Day and December because of the NRECA Winter Board Meeting.

Following board approval of the low bid to change out poles on three different work orders, Mr. Guidry told the board of a very nice article about SLECA in POV magazine written by Mr. Trahan's son, Terry Trahan, Jr.

The board then approved the manager's report and expenses, the safety report showing employees have worked 2,231,898 hours without a lost time accident since December, 1996 and the attorney's report and fees.

The meeting was adjourned.

You may obtain copies of the minutes by contacting SLECA, P.O. Box 4037, Houma, LA 70361 or by calling (985) 876-6880 or 1-800-256-8826.

# SLECA News



Low Rates. High Expectations.

Mike Guidry, Manager  
Alexander Doyle, President  
South Louisiana Electric Cooperative Assn.  
P.O. Box 4037, Houma, LA 70361 (876-6880)



## New computer system enhances efficiency, service

Tucked inside their mailboxes next month, SLECA members will see tangible evidence of significant improvements taking place at their local cooperative.

Members will notice a completely new bill format that reflects SLECA's investment in a new state-of-the-art computer system. The new system is being installed and implemented over several years in three separate phases: accounting, billing and engineering.

After extracting three decades of useful life out of its old computer system, SLECA's management decided to make the change after thoroughly and extensively weighing the costs and benefits of the available systems on the market.

According to SLECA General Manager Michael J. Guidry, the co-op ultimately decided to do business with another co-op - Southeast Data Information Cooperative (SEDC) based in Atlanta.

"We met with a lot of different vendors in the information industry and talked with a lot of different people. We liked the fact that SEDC is a co-op just like us and understands our focus on member service. They're committed to their members foremost instead of just seeing how much money they can make."

While the more behind-the-scenes changes will come in the accounting and

engineering departments, members will notice the billing changes immediately when they receive their October bill statements. Not only will members receive a newly formatted bill, but they will also receive the benefit of a secure online payment option at [www.sleca.com](http://www.sleca.com) and kiosks stationed in both the Houma and Amelia offices where members will be able to pay their bills with a credit or debit card.

The new paper bill that replaces the old post-card format will arrive in mailboxes inside an envelop on standard letter-size paper. The bill will include much more information designed to empower members by providing more details about account status and electricity usage.

The monthly statement generated by the new system will include features such as the exact number of days in the current billing cycle, a brief message center, a graph showing the member's power usage over the past 12 months and a new customer account number.

SLECA employees received member input before deciding on a final design to make the statement easy to read and informational, Guidry said.

The first phase of the computer system changeover - the accounting system - has already been implemented. The system enables employees to process much more



Pictured from left to right are Manager of Engineering Steve Giroir, Manager of Finance and Accounting Roy Landry, Billing Supervisor Beverly Gathen (seated), Computer Systems Analyst Donna Hymel and Accounting Supervisor Ann Arcement.

information, both for internal use and for members, in a more efficient fashion.

According to Roy Landry, SLECA's manager of finance and accounting, "We now have so much more information right at our fingertips, and that helps us access data more quickly and provide quicker service for the members. It's a whole new way of doing business for us."

Landry said much work has gone into the computer system changeover and he and his co-workers are excited about completing the second phase of the process over the next few months.

The third phase will apply to the engineering department. Manager of Engineering Steve Giroir said converting SLECA's old-style mapping system from paper to digital will open the doors for a wide range of possibilities as far as improving reliability, responding to routine service calls and restoring power after a major storm. (Acct. No. 2550486301)

Once installed, the new Geographical Information System (GIS) will result in faster response time when a power interruption occurs anywhere on the cooperative's grid. Digital mapping will also allow for application of geographical positioning technology so that dispatchers will be able to pinpoint the cause of an outage and notify crews that are in the vicinity.

Giroir said the plan calls for laptops to be installed in service vehicles so that field personnel can send and receive more information without having to return to the office, saving both time and money.

"We'll be able to get on the computer and look at the map and pull up all the member information, transformers, phas-

ing, and anything else we need to know to take care of the problem," Giroir said. "That way, we can provide more detailed and accurate information for the consumer in terms of what the problem is and how long it will take to repair."

He mentioned that the GPS-based map will come in handy during a major storm because many of the line crews that arrive to help are younger and more techno-



Beverly Gathen (left) and Ann Arcement look over the new billing statement that SLECA members will receive beginning in October.

logically savvy and therefore should be more comfortable working with the new computer-based system.

Guidry said the new computer system and all three phases of the project would have been closer to completion at this point if not for hurricanes Gustav and Ike. "Those two storms set us back quite a bit, but we're finally getting it done," Guidry said. "Our computer system was so old, you couldn't find any replacement parts for it. We had to go on eBay to get the parts. But now we're where we should be. Our employees will have the tools they need to do their jobs better, and it's a great benefit to our members."

## Allyson Pellegrin retires after 33 years of service

SLECA's Material Supervisor Allyson Pellegrin retired on Aug. 26, 2010, after more than 33 years of service to SLECA members.

Employees and family members were on hand to thank Allyson for her many contributions to SLECA.

SLECA General Manager Michael J. Guidry presented Allyson with a marble engraved plaque of appreciation for her work and dedication.

Allyson said she is looking forward to spending time with her granddaughter Brenly Moss. (Acct. No. 1451336906)



## SLECA employees participate in Level IV safety training

SLECA employees (shown below, left to right) Brennan Blanchard, Reggie Pontiff and Lee Aucoin recently participated in the Level IV stage of the Louisiana Lineman Training Program administered by the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives in Baton Rouge.

SLECA remains committed to equipping all its employees with the proper tools and training necessary to better serve its members.



## SLECA SWEEPSTAKES

Did you know that each month SLECA gives away CASH just for reading LOUISIANA COUNTRY? It's true. Every month, SLECA account numbers are randomly selected by computer. Four account numbers are hidden in the articles in the SLECA News section of LOUISIANA COUNTRY. Then it's up to you. If you see your account number, call SLECA and win \$25.00 in cash or have your winnings applied to your bill. It's that simple. So, if you are not reading LOUISIANA COUNTRY you're missing out on great local articles and the possibility of winning extra money.

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# LOUISIANA COUNTRY

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## IN WITH THE NEW

Be on the lookout for a new bill format coming to SLECA members in October