

Mitchell responds to Goodart

I would like to clarify and challenge much of what Mr. Goodart had to say in his defense of Mr. Bacon's objection to the transmission line.

First of all as a farmer (and son of a farmer) who has relied on SLVREC and Tri State for reliable and reasonable electricity for over 50 years, I need to inform folks that both above mentioned power companies are user/member owned cooperatives. Therefore it is for the benefit of their members that they choose routes for transmission lines that are affordable and practical. Many folks who take power for granted and don't ever bother to attend any meetings may not be aware how critical the situation is. Just because we haven't had a serious outage of late doesn't mean that we are not close to what could be a very costly outage. In the hot days of June or July just a few hours without power could cause serious crop loss.

Although Mr. Goodart would like you to believe that the Trinchera Ranch is one of the largest contributors to the Valley economy, I would challenge him to check out the purchase contracts at his car company. I would be willing to wager that over half are signed by farmers and ranchers or others who rely on agriculture for their own business success. Agriculture is the true economic foundation of the San Luis Valley.

Also if you ask the folks on the West side of the Valley, they would argue that the Rural Electric Customers that range from South Fork to Creede and Wolf Creek Ski area bring in more dollars to the economy annually than Trinchera Ranch brings in several years.

Mr. Goodart also criticized those defending the transmission line for using the talking points of Tri State. At least the points raised are backed by years of research and business planning that is designed to provide reliable and affordable power for the members of the coop not just off the cuff "sound good" jargon spewed by the lawyers and "spin doctors" that someone of Mr. Bacon's wealth can afford.

An example of this is the proposal to go under ground with this extremely high voltage line. On our farm we have 11 buried lines that service center pivots. Even though these lines are much lower voltage and are under ground for about 1/4 mile, the life expectancy of these lines is only 25 to 30 years and costly to replace. If one tries to bury mega volt lines for several miles the cost and maintenance increases exponentially. I could not imagine the difficulty of repairing a failing buried power line in the middle of winter under several feet of snow and frozen ground. That sounds like a rate increase to me.

Another main point is that if one is trying to improve the reliability of a power system by looping the system, it means that the system is fed from two different places. Not two power lines next to each other.

One point that I would like Mr. Goodart to consider is that as our parents and grandpar-

ents developed the power system that made this Valley a community that could financially support a large car dealership, there were many power lines that were (and still are) somewhat unsightly and in the way. I'm sure that even way back then there were folks who had the means to "say no." They may have been close to town and really didn't like or need this expanded service. The difference was that they could see the big picture and cared about the "whole" Valley. They were neighbors!

Just think, if a few years back the railroad had decided to take a protectionist attitude and do only what was best for their private property. Access to south Craft drive would not exist and all those businesses would not be located there. And maybe not even exist?

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