

Powerline Press

NEWSLETTER



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November 2021

Co-op CEO Announces Retirement

With mixed emotions, I am writing this to notify the members that I will be leaving my position as the General Manager/CEO of Lake Region Electric Cooperative. After thoughtful and long deliberation, I have decided to retire. My career with LREC spans nearly 37 years, and while I have enjoyed it tremendously, I think it is time to start checking things off my personal bucket list.

The decision to leave LREC was not an easy one. My time at LREC has been personally and professionally rewarding.

This has been a dream job. The Board of Trustees has been incredibly supportive and great to work with providing for our membership. The staff and employees have been my teammates and have helped me push the cooperative towards excellence. It has been a long and fruitful journey, and the memories will be with me forever. It has been a great privilege to be a member of the LREC team and accomplish what we have. During my tenure at the coop, we have accomplished many tasks. We have kept a community of over 1,000 members from losing their

water system and created Operation Round-Up, helping our members and our communities. Also we were the first cooperative in Oklahoma that recognized the need for high-speed broadband for our members and started providing this service.



I will undoubtedly miss my relationships with everyone here at LREC. Hopefully, we will have occasions to bump into one another or meet up to reminisce. I plan on staying until the Board has completed its executive search and has chosen a suitable candidate for the CEO position.

Many thanks to all coop members and to you who have been my teammates, coworkers, and friends.

Hamid Vahdatipour

LREC CEO Search For Replacement Underway

Hamid Vahdatipour said he plans to stay on until the LREC Board of Trustees selects his replacement, a process that could extend into spring 2022. The Board has formed a search committee and a contract with National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Executive Search Group to facilitate the CEO search process. Through the CEO change, our dedication to our member-owners remains our top priority.

Lake Region **Fiber Connects** Rural Businesses with Reliable Internet

Tahlequah is known for the Illinois river, float resorts, and communities on the river. When Lake Region launched into our fiber project, this was one of the areas we saw hundreds of pre-registrations for service. Over the past decade, internet connectivity has become a necessity, similar to electricity for rural businesses and homes.

Rural communities are who the co-op serves, and this is why Lake Region Electric Cooperative has stepped up to the plate to build fiber-optic to areas no one else would service.

We sat down with Austin Spears, Arrowhead Float Resort, to discuss how Lake Region fiber has helped his family business. Austin and his brother David Spears have owned and operated Arrowhead Resort since 1997.

“We love the fiber internet; it is fast and reliable! With the last year of COVID, we have changed how we take payments for float trips. We now accept credit card payments outside before we load the buses with our portable square card reader. We can process cards fast and it keeps the crowds down in our office. We allow guests to grab products from inside our store, but most transactions happen outside,” said Austin.

Arrowhead Resort also subscribes to Lake Region’s fiber TV and phone service for their business office and residence at the resort. Members appreciate these added services offered over the fiber network.

“After calculating the cost, we save several thousands of dollars a year, not having other providers for a

business phone with long-distance charges and satellite TV. This is significant savings for a small business,” added Austin.

Lake Region’s new 100% fiber network is built to provide businesses with the tools it needs to succeed and stay connected to its customers. From internet with speeds up to 1 Gig (1,000 Mbps) to advanced phone service and TV service - Lake Region is here to deliver the best to our local business customers so that businesses can succeed.

“Another benefit to having Lake Region fiber - the weather would sometimes cause our previous internet provider to go out, and to run a business, you have to be able to process cards at all times when you have guests,” added Austin.

Lake Region Fiber eliminates the barrier between the joy of country living and the modern life in the big cities. Everyone deserves to stay connected, and we are working to make that happen. You can now live on the Illinois River and have internet faster than some cities offer.

To learn more about what Arrowhead Resort has to offer guests visit, www.arrowheadresortok.com and to learn what Lake Region can do to make your life even better, visit us at www.lakeregionfiber.com.



Billing Employee Retires after 24 years

Congratulations Janelle!

An important position at LREC is our billing department. These ladies process billing statements, create service orders and answer members' questions. Last month a long-time billing employee retired from LREC, Janelle Quinton, after 24 years of services to the co-op. 1108000

"I've always enjoyed working with Janelle, from the time she started as a file clerk, cashier, and all the way to her most recent position in the billing department. We did not work much together the last several years, but we always enjoyed our breaks together. We've shared many talks and many laughs over the years. We also had many trips to the MIC training in St. Louis together, usually with Judy. To Janelle, I want you to enjoy your well-earned retirement, read lots of good books, drink good coffee, and enjoy life," said Carla Landaverde, Member Services Supervisor.

"Lake Region is a great place to work. I have enjoyed my time here. The employees and members are great. The big ice storms stand out in my memory at the co-op, long hours, and I was impressed the way other co-ops stepped up to help from all over Oklahoma and other states. We had several linemen as well as some internal employees who helped LREC during the 2007 ice storm. I helped with mutual aid when Kay Electric Cooperative needed people to answer phones and make lunches for all the linemen working to restore power. The cooperatives are family and are always here to help the members," stated Janelle.

LREC billing department has advanced over Janelle's time with auto meters; the LREC billing department can receive instant readings for billing processes. Also, the development of pre-paid billing has been an advancement allowing members to see their usages the same day. Our billing department has also stepped up and provided additional billing for our fiber subsidiary. Janelle's work experience will certainly be missed.

"A memorable experience Janelle, April, and I had, was working year-end. We had the best time together, working into the evening, laughing, and developing a true friendship. You have worked many years, enjoy your retirement, and you will be missed," said Sonya Pardue, Plant Accountant.

Janelle mentioned, "I will take retirement one day at a time. I plan on seeing my grandkids more and taking more trips with them. They all play soccer, and I will be able to visit more. I may eventually move closer to my two daughters and grandkids."

"Janelle's teamwork and dedication to my department have been greatly appreciated! Our billing team will miss her years' worth of billing knowledge! She is our go-to person for any problem we need to solve. Thank you for being such a great employee; I will miss you greatly," added April McMurray, Billing Supervisor.



Billing Dept Sonya Pardue, left, Janelle Quinton, middle, and April McMurray, right.



Janelle Quinton, and family at her retirement party.

LREC Board Announcement

The Board of Directors at Lake Region Electric Cooperative (LREC) seeks an experienced, ethical leader to join the organization as its next General Manager and CEO. LREC's new leader will replace Hamid Vahdatipour, who is retiring after 30 years of exceptional service to LREC's members as CEO.

LREC Board has contracted with National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Executive Search Group to facilitate the CEO search process. We encourage qualified candidates to apply for the position.

Hiring a CEO is the most important decision that a Board makes, and we take this responsibility as a challenge to build on Lake Region's reputation and enhance its future performance for our members.

We would like to assure the employees and the membership that we are doing everything in our power to identify not only the best technically capable individual, but the best person to lead the cooperative and represent LREC in the community and in our industry.

We appreciate your support and understanding that this is a time of change and perhaps some anxiety. We know that you have concerns and ask that you trust that we will fulfill our obligations and exceed your expectations. That is our goal and responsibility to you.

LREC's new leader must personify the cooperative's values of Integrity, Accountability, and Excellence. LREC is looking for a leader who can work productively and synergistically with the board and the cooperative staff to achieve outstanding results.

Thank you,
Board President, Scott Manes

Scott Manes
Board of Trustees
NRECA Executive Search Group

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