



Board Candidate Questionnaire (for publication to all members)



First Name: Sandra (Sandy)

Middle Initial: D

Last Name: Long

Director District: At-Large

Sangre de Cristo Electric Association is a member-owned, not-for-profit, corporate cooperative that provides electric service to over 14,500 homes, businesses, farms, and ranches in five counties. SDCEA is self-regulated and governed by a seven-member Board of Directors elected by and from our membership. Five board members are elected from Director Districts and two are elected At-Large.

1. How long have you been a member of SDCEA? 20 years.

2. What insights do you feel you could bring to the board that would increase their understandings of all members? For the last two years, I've attended SDCEA Board meetings and have talked to Board members and staff. I thoroughly analyzed the Cost-of-Service Study and applicable PUC rulings and provided input to Board members. As the group leader of the Chaffee County Citizens' Climate Lobby Chapter, I am very familiar with the Inflation Reduction Act and rebates and incentives. I've organized educational sessions on energy topics including heat pumps, home audits, electric vehicles, and IRA incentives. At the Home and Garden show, the Mountain Mania Car Show, and the Green Home tours, I've had the opportunity to talk with members of the community about new technology and incentives and to hear their concerns.

3. What responsibility do board members have to communicate with the membership of the cooperative? Communication is a top responsibility of board members. Dialogue must be two-way and include active listening. All viewpoints must be heard and respected. When big changes like new rates are proposed, the board should communicate what is being proposed and why, and then get feedback from members before approving changes. I recommend a monthly email newsletter to members which includes a note from the CEO or Board Chair. As a board member, I will be available for phone calls, meetings, and prompt email replies. The board must be transparent about issues and upcoming challenges so the membership is part of the solution.

4. What education and background experience do you have that specifically apply to governing this electric cooperative? I have an Electrical Engineering degree and a Master's degree in Business Administration (MBA). For most of my career I was a Product Manager, setting requirements, introducing new products, driving cost reductions, meeting with customers, and responsible for the overall profitability of the product. I was mostly in the telecom industry but spent 4 years as product manager of a solar inverter which we sold to utilities. I also managed people for over 15 years. For eight years, I was on the board of directors of a manufacturer of brooms and cleaning tools. I am very experienced in approving budgets and expenditures, financial analysis, strategic planning, and working with a CEO and management.

5. What are the three most important issues to members that SDCEA should focus on?

First, SDCEA has one of the highest electricity rates of all the Tri-State Coops and a very high monthly access charge. With lower monthly access charges, customers can have more incentive and ability to lower their own energy bill by using less. Also, if we can reduce the peak demand costs that SDCEA pays to Tri-State, we can save money for all members.

Second, Tri-State as our electricity supplier has a lot of challenges that may impact SDCEA. Some co-ops have already left Tri-State, and more intend to leave. Tri-State applied for \$970 million in funding through the IRA, but we are still unsure how much of that they will receive. Tri-State has an ambitious Electric Resource Plan, but it has yet to be proven if they will meet their goals.

Third, SDCEA needs to maintain high reliability and utilize new technology (battery storage, demand response, microgrids, etc.) to increase resiliency while reducing costs.

6. How do you view the future of energy in central Colorado (i.e., affordability, renewable energy, electric vehicles, battery storage, micro-grids, etc.) and what is SDCEA's primary responsibility moving forward? SDCEA must proactively manage new growth. With the growth of electric vehicles, SDCEA must have a plan to make sure members don't charge their vehicles during periods of peak demand. Many homes in our region have electric resistance heating which is very inefficient and results in high energy demands during Tri-State's highest rates. SDCEA needs to promote programs to increase energy efficiency (i.e., insulation, window upgrades, etc.), transition members to heat pumps, and incentivize battery storage (thus turning solar power into an advantage to offset peak power costs).

7. Please add anything else you would like members to consider. I'm confident that I will add value to the SDCEA board with my expertise in both technology and business. I'd be honored to serve on the SDCEA Board of Directors and represent all members during this exciting energy transition.