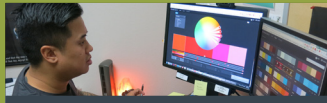




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Summer
2017

On Line

Writing, design and photography tips for Ruralite Services utility communicators and freelance writers



White Balance Offers Better Color Control

Want more control over the way colors look in your pictures? Look at your white balance setting.

White balance is what your digital camera uses to set the color temperature of your photos. It has a huge affect on the color of your photos. Color temperature measures the hue of a light source. Sunlight, candlelight, fluorescent bulbs and other light sources have unique color temperatures. White can look beige or cream based on the light's hue.

Most cameras have an auto white balance setting. That is a good place to start, but it is not always the best setting. There usually are settings for flash, incandescent and fluorescent lights and clouds.

By manually setting your white balance, you have more control over the color cast. For instance, setting the white balance to cloudy, even on a bright sunny day, causes the photo to have a slight orange, or warm, cast. This is a great trick for portraits, creating an appealing skin tone.

Read up on white balance in your camera manual so you can be in control of your camera. Start here:

- [Setting White Balance](#), Nikon
- [White Balance Settings](#), Canon

—MikeT@Ruralite.org



Curtis Condon spends much of his free time exploring the great outdoors. *Contributed photo*

Curtis Condon Retires

Often a round or two of rewrites are needed to craft a solid lead. Curtis Condon's career path to Ruralite Services included a few rewrites, too.

His journalism career began at a startup magazine, then a newspaper.

"It was such a lousy work environment I decided to quit and go to grad school instead," says Curtis, Ruralite's retiring managing editor.

He worked as a freelancer for a few magazines and was wrapping up his thesis for his master's in journalism at the University of Oregon when he heard about a job at Ruralite. He joined the company as an editor in 1990. Within two years, he was tapped to lead the

magazine staff as managing editor.

Under his leadership, Ruralite magazine won the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's George W. Haggard Memorial Journalism Award in 2015. The annual award is given to the nation's top cooperative magazine for journalistic excellence.

Curtis retires in July as Ruralite Services' longest-tenured current employee, and one of its most liked and respected.

"What will I miss most? Definitely the people," says Curtis. "The people here, the people at the co-ops and the readers."

Fond Memories

With a career spanning almost three decades, Curtis helped shape utility communications across the Northwest.

"It has been a pleasure to work with Curtis through the years," says Bob Marshall, CEO of Plumas-Sierra Rural Electric Cooperative in California. "He is a thoughtful, hardworking individual who helped keep utility communications current and engaging. Without his



[This video](#) highlights Curtis' 27-year career.

See [Curtis Retires](#), Page 6

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Communications

www.RuraliteServices.org

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Ruralite
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Why

COLORS



Watch utility communicators share their favorite colors in [this video](#).

Matter

your colors—whether used in a logo, brochure or website—are part of your company's brand. Colors can make people feel hungry or sated, happy or sad. People bring individual experiences to the meaning of colors, too. For fun examples, watch this [video of your peers explaining their favorite colors](#).

Once you pick your brand's set of colors, tie those colors into all of the materials produced throughout the year.

Less is More

How many colors should your brand's color palette include? Follow the rule of thumb designers use for fonts and stick to two or three colors for consistency.

Pick a primary color, then add a color or two that complement or contrast the primary color. Use those colors when you want to draw attention to something.

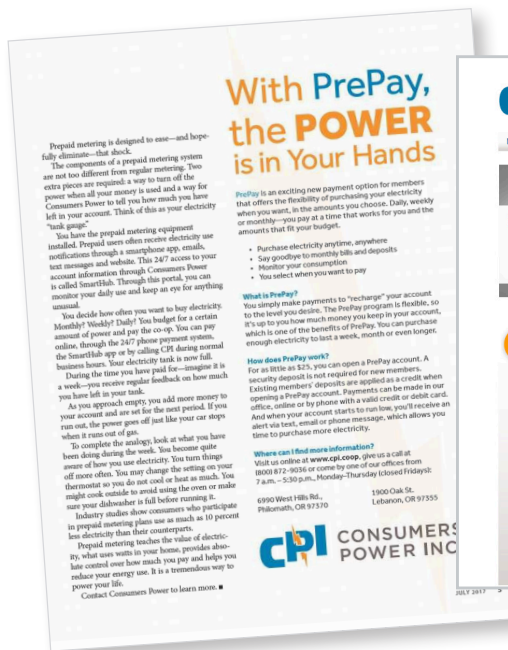
Remember that less is more. It is nice to have color options when designing for your utility, but you do not need to use all of your options all of the time.

Colorful Examples

Ruralite Services' member colors are mainly navy blues and forest greens. A few pastels or neon colors are used. For the most part, utilities opt for safe, traditional colors. But as we work to connect with younger consumers, we should consider modern design colors, too.



[Consumers Power Inc.](#)'s choice of blue and orange is bold and bright—a good example of a fresh color palette. The complementary colors work well on the logo. The website and magazine pages play the colors off each other to draw attention to headlines and calls to action.



See Why Colors Matter, Page 3

Writing Tip:

Harness Colorful Language

Adjectives and adverbs modify a word by emphasizing information. Just as color adds depth to a photograph, modifiers add meaning and color to stories. But too much saturation leaves readers feeling overwhelmed.

Adjectives answer one of three questions about a noun: which, what kind or how many. Add flavor to a story by showing a noun's origin, type, shape or color.

Adverbs modify verbs by answering one of five questions: how, how often, how much, when or where. They explain action. Some writers tap the same adverbs repeatedly. If possible, avoid the three most common adverbs: not, very and too.

Use, But Avoid Abuse

As much fun as adjectives and adverbs may be, avoid using them too much. Instead of liberally sprinkling them throughout a sentence, use them sparingly to make an impact.

Example:

Kyle Bender counts weeds, measures rain and drives 38 miles to shop for groceries. Sound like a dull life? Don't be fooled. This **quiet young** man working the fields in Sherman County is the latest in a **long** line of farmers helping to further science and feed the world.

*Excerpt from **Farmers + Scientists = Best Possible Wheat**
By **Drew Myron**, Wasco Electric Cooperative, OR*

There is no need to add adjectives about the weeds or rain. Drew saves her adjectives for the hero of the story, not the surroundings.

Strengthen Verbs

Instead of relying on adverbs, strengthen verbs first. Try this list of [action verbs](#) from [WritersHelpingWriters.net](#).

Example:

Equestrian trick riders will **thunder** into Lincoln County's rodeo arena ...

*Excerpt from **Fair Fun for Everyone**
By **Dianna Troyer**, Lincoln County Power District No. 1, NV*

Dianna used the strong, descriptive verb "thunder" instead of a verb paired with an adverb, such as "ride loudly."

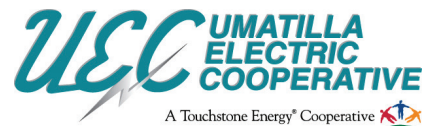
Stop Double Dipping

Cut adjectives or adverbs when the noun implies the same thing.

Examples:

They walked across the **frozen snow**. *versus* They walked across the **snow**.
She **screamed loudly** *versus* She **screamed**.

Harness colorful language to keep your stories—and readers—focused on what matters most. —[MeganM@Ruralite.org](#)



Umatilla Electric's logo is another fun example of a bright, friendly color palette. The utility uses one primary color—a bright teal—on its logo and website. A lighter shade of the color is used on the back of the magazine, complementing the primary color.

Be Color Blind, Too

Not all communications are in color (business forms, for example), and some utilities do not use color regularly on their magazine pages.

Although powerful, always remember design does not start with color. Some people are so tied to color that it blinds them to the actual design. Color can be a distraction in the early stages of designing a logo or other graphic.

Working on a design? First, see what it looks like in black and white. An easy way to test a design's strength is to use a photocopier to make a black and white copy of your work. See how the bones of the design or layout—not the color—stand out.

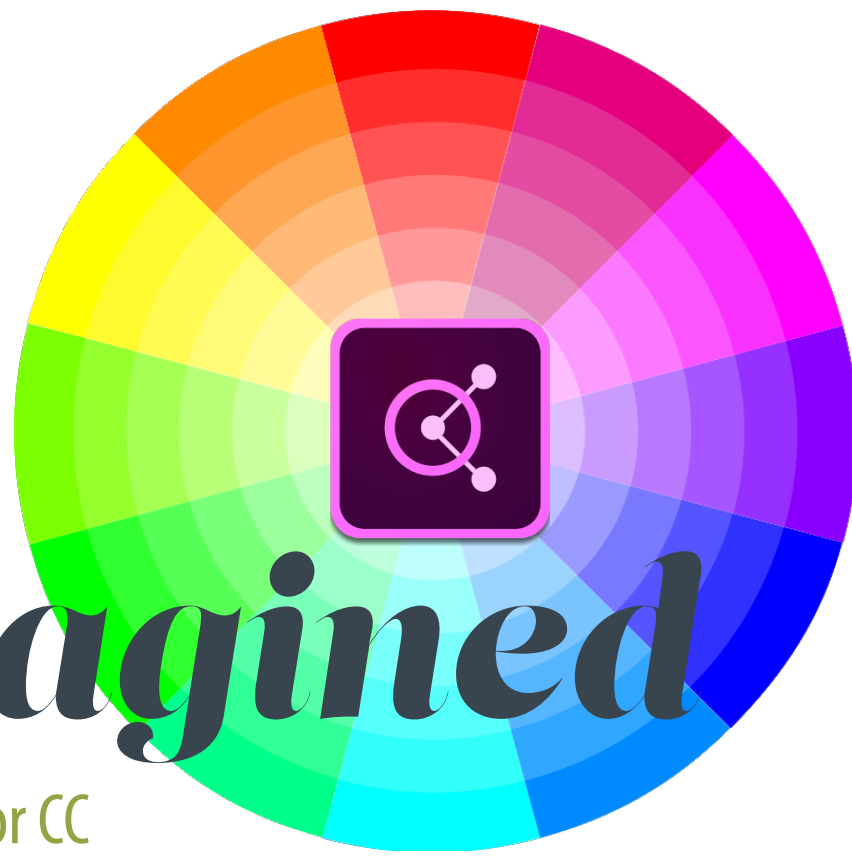
—[DuyM@Ruralite.org](#)

Have a writing tip to share? Send it to meganm@ruralite.org.

Design Tip:

The Color Wheel

Reimagined



Discover three ways Adobe Color CC delivers fresh color mixes to energize your brand

Trying to pick colors for a page layout, or looking for inspiration to freshen your brand hues? Since the 1800s, designers have used color wheels to identify which colors work well together to set a tone or draw attention. [Adobe Color CC](#) takes the color wheel online, offering three ways to find fresh color combinations.

Browse for Bright Ideas

Start at [Color.Adobe.com/Explore](#). You will see sample color mixes from designers around the world. On the top left drop-down menu, select “Most popular” to find current color trends.

Need to evoke a specific feeling? Search palette names in the top right search box. The feature is hit or miss, since color names are highly

subjective. But you might find a fun, unexpected mix.

Looking for the colors for a brand (Seahawks or 49ers fans, anyone?) or a palette to match an occasion? You can search for brand names or generic events, too.

Pull Colors from a Picture

[Upload an image](#) to find five colors that convey a colorful, muted or deep meaning.

After adding a picture, use the left drop-down navigation pane to set a mood (colorful, bright, muted, deep or dark). Each option picks five different colors from the picture to help evoke a feeling. You can also use the custom option to handpick five colors from the picture.

Custom Blends

Ready to create your own color combinations? Use the manual color wheel at [Color.Adobe.com](#).

Enter a color you want to work with. If your logo uses NRECA's green ball icon, enter the green RGB color (Pantone 348, RGB 0/132/61).

Now use the drop-down color



Ruralite Services Graphic Designer Duy Mai taps Adobe Color CC for fresh color palettes.

Photo by Megan McKoy-Noe

rule menu to view analogous, monochromatic, triad, complementary or compound colors. Want to stay close to home? Opt for shades of the selected color. You can also pick five colors you think pair well with each other, using the custom option.

Save Your Colors

Find an inspiring color palette? You do not need an Adobe membership to use Adobe Color CC, but you must be a member to save the colors you discover. If you are an Adobe Creative Cloud member, save your palettes to other Adobe software (i.e. PhotoShop, InDesign, Illustrator). Otherwise, take a screen shot and jot down the formulas (RGB or CMYK) for your favorites.

Need help finding a Pantone color (used by printers) that matches a screenshot? Adobe Illustrator's Recolor Artwork tool (Edit> Edit Colors> Recolor Artwork) can help. If you do not have the software, your editor can work with you to find a Pantone color that works for your brand. Screen and printing colors will always be different, so keep that in mind.

—DuyM@Ruralite.org

What Works for Me: Show Your Story

Need to engage members in a long-term project? Show your story.

A [video](#) by [Copper Valley Electric Association](#) in Glennallen, Alaska,



Sharon Crisp

won gold from NRECA's 2017 Spotlight on Excellence Awards for Best Digital Storytelling.

The video takes viewers through the construction of the [Allison Creek Hydroelectric](#)

[project](#), highlighting major project components and key people.

"Digital storytelling has become so incredibly important," says CVEA Director of Communications Sharon Crisp. "No one would ever read through the pages it would take to tell the details of three years of a hydro project construction."

In today's age of short attention spans and a need for visual aids, video is a valuable tool to spread important utility information.

"While not quick and easy to produce, it is pretty easy to put video and other digital media at the fingertips of those we want to see it," Sharon says.

She has three tips for showing stories:

1. Be consistent.

Make sure your imagery and messages tell the same story. Know your goals, objectives and audience before sharing information.

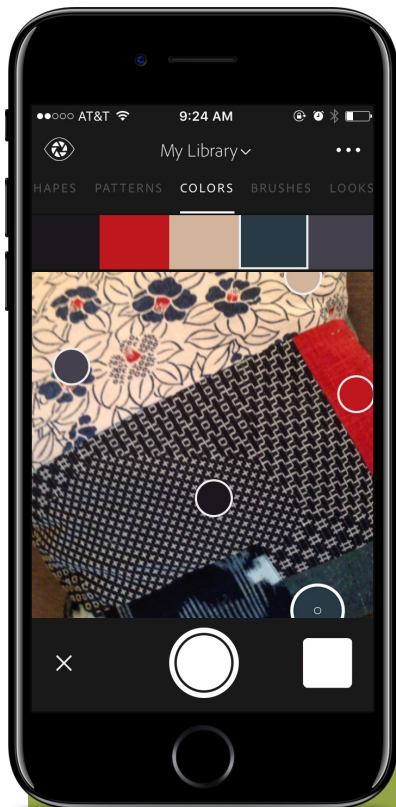
2. Diversify your sharing.

Use various platforms to spread your message. Try social media, website, newsletters and magazines.

3. Include visual aids.

Whether you are sharing digitally or in print, use images, graphics or videos to support the message.

Watch the [video here](#). Questions? Contact Sharon at Crisp@cvea.org.
—VictoriaH@ruralite.org



Design Tip:

Mobile Color Mixes



Need more tools to find fresh color blends? Try the Adobe Capture CC app ([iTunes](#), [Google Play](#)). The app makes it easy to pull colors out of your surroundings. You can also turn pictures into vector shapes or brushes, then make the files available in Adobe PhotoShop and Illustrator.

The app is free to download, but you must sign in with your Adobe Creative Cloud password to use the features.

—MeganM@Ruralite.org

Want to share a writing or design tip?
Send it to MeganM@Ruralite.org.



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What Works for Me:

Five Tips for Writing an Impactful News Story

Forget fluff pieces. Benson, Arizona-based [Arizona G&T Cooperatives](#) commissioned an in-depth study to uncover the impact of power plants in the region.

The bet paid off. One of the stories on the study results, [Apache Generating Station Vital to Regional Economy](#), won silver from NRECA's 2017 Spotlight on Excellence Awards in the Best News Story category.

"We can't let ourselves slide into doing quick and easy stories with little or no substance," says Geoff Oldfather, communications and public relations manager at Arizona G&T Cooperatives. "In today's challenging regulatory and legislative climate, we have an obligation to our members and the public to step up our game when it comes to providing information. We have to do research and back up our assertions that we are vital parts of the economies and communities we serve."

Geoff needed data to show the impact electric cooperatives and generation and transmission cooperatives have on regional economies. In 2015, he commissioned an economic impact study with Dr. Robert Carreira, president and chief economist for USEconomicResearch.com. The study was delivered in January 2016.

"The study gathered a lot of information from all our operations as well as outside our cooperative," says Geoff. "I pulled from the study for this and several other stories, too."

Geoff shares five tips for writing a news story with impact.

1. Find and focus on a theme. It was logical to use one of the key findings from the study—that our economic contribution is a "stabilizing" economic force in an area still reeling from the recession—for the central theme. I pulled only from the data related to that theme. Find your central theme, then focus on it and how to support it.

2. Keep it simple. Only use the data that relates to your central theme and key points. We placed key data in a box and used the quotes in the content. If possible, that is how you should treat a story with a lot of data. Our Currents editor at Ruralite Services, Mike Teegarden, deserves credit for a great layout.

3. Go to the top for quotes. In this case, it was the author of the study. For reaction, go to your CEO, CFO or other key people. If I were going to write a follow-up story, I would go to the man-on-the-street interviews.

4. Have confidence in your audience. Consumers are interested and willing to read what you are presenting as long as it is credible.

5. Know your audience. Who has a stake in the story? If you can answer that question, the story and supporting pictures and graphics will follow.

—MeganM@Ruralite.org



Geoff Oldfather

Curtis Retires, Continued from Page 1

influence, our members would know much less about what cooperatives bring to our communities."

"He signals the changing of the guard, the end of an era of challenge and change," says Dave D'Avanzo, member services manager at Lane Electric Cooperative in Oregon. "Curtis made a difference, at Ruralite and with its members. He's a class act, a good friend and a wonderful resource. Thanks, Curtis, for your knowledge, wisdom, hard work and, most importantly, your friendship. You will be missed."

"Far beyond his tenure, Curtis has been a rock for Ruralite Services," says Ruralite Services' CEO Michael Shepard. "His dedication to the utilities we work with, his staff and Ruralite are nothing short of legendary."

Curtis' early workplace experiences drove him to foster a work environment based on trust, teamwork and fun.

"We have all worked for bosses who talk about teamwork, then take credit for everything their staff does," says Linda Wiseman, Curtis' magazine assistant since 1995. "That's not the case with Curtis."

From organizing conferences to winning national awards, Linda says Curtis always shares credit.

"You don't win the Haggard without a team effort and a managing editor who understands that," says Linda. "We were lucky. We had both."

"Curtis always gave us room to grow our skills," says Assistant Editor Mike Teegarden, who joined Ruralite in 1994. "If we wanted to learn something new, he supported us taking a class or attending a workshop. Then he gave us ways to use the skills."

"It is difficult to lose him as my boss," says Assistant Editor Pam Blair, a 23-year staff veteran. "He looked for ways to help me grow professionally, and also supported me personally ... from struggles I faced with fibromyalgia to my journey recovering from cancer. Both cases required compassion in helping me recognize my limits and creativity in setting up schedules. Not every boss offers that kind of flexibility, but Curtis is no ordinary boss. He is also a friend."

Ruralite's new managing editor, Leon Espinoza, joins the staff in mid-August.

[Learn more about Leon here.](#)

—MeganM@Ruralite.org

Read the story [here](#). Questions? Reach Geoff at goldfather@azgt.coop.



Solar-Powered Editorial Visit

Is it possible to tap solar power at night? You bet.

On a spring editorial visit to [Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative](#), Hawaii, Ruralite Assistant Editor Jennifer Brown toured KIUC's new dispatchable solar energy plant with KIUC Public Affairs Specialist Shelley Paik.

The project, owned by Tesla Inc., covers 50 acres and feeds up to 13 megawatts of electricity into Kaua'i's grid to meet peak demand in the evening. It uses a 52 megawatt-hour Tesla Powerpack lithium-ion battery storage system.

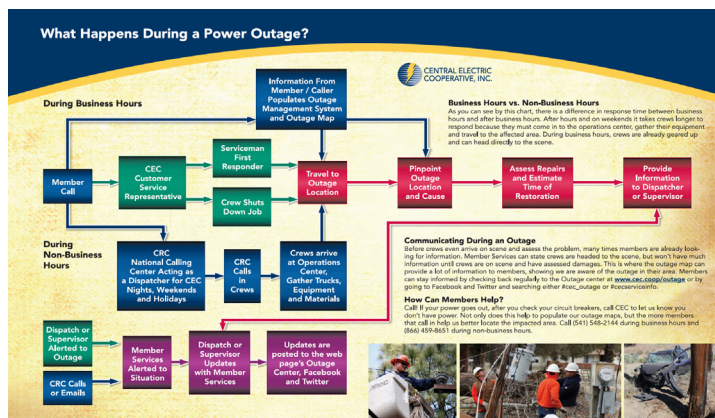
The plant will displace the use of 1.6 million gallons of diesel annually for KIUC, bringing the cooperative to more than 40 percent renewable generation. Under the terms of the 20-year contract, KIUC pays Tesla 13.9 cents per kilowatt-hour—less than the current cost of oil.

Ruralite editors visit utility service areas throughout the year. Ask your editor when he or she will visit your state. Have a basic book story idea? Tell your editor!

—JenniferB@ruralite.org



Ruralite Assistant Editor Jennifer Brown, left, tours a new power storage system with KIUC Public Affairs Specialist Shelley Paik. Photo by Jennifer Brown



What Works for Me: How to Shine a Light on Outage Restoration

In an age of diversified power supply, electric scams and environmental policies, empowering consumers with quality information is critical.

Responding to this need led [Central Electric Cooperative](#) in Redmond, Oregon, to prepare a [Power Outage Guide](#). The brochure won gold in NRECA's 2017 Spotlight on Excellence Awards in the Best Special Publication (Small) category.

To create the guide, CEC's Communications Coordinator Courtney Cobb started with the fundamentals of power.

"We needed to better educate our consumers on what happens during an outage," says Courtney. "We focused on the basics—what consumers need to understand."

CEC customer service representatives were fielding questions about why it takes so long to restore power in remote areas and during off hours and weekends. The brochure helped alleviate that pressure. A power restoration flow chart is a key feature of the guide.

"A flow chart was the best way to tell our story," says Courtney. "You can see the differences of what happens during regular business hours and during off hours."

The brochure also covers topics such as medical equipment, outage reporting and communication during an outage.

"We also included a lot of information about what consumers can do during an outage situation to help get the power back on," says Courtney.

She suggests three ways to connect with the community when sharing new resources like CEC's award-winning outage guide.

1. Blanket approach. CEC strives to meet consumers where they are. The guide was presented at homeowner association meetings, included in new member packets and mailed before planned outages.

2. Repurpose artwork. The flow chart is on CEC's website, posted on social media and periodically printed in Ruralite magazine.

3. Share with local media. The brochure helped Courtney explain outage situations to local media. Central Oregon is a starter market for rookie reporters. The brochure is a teaching tool for new reporters assigned to write about outages.

—VictoriaH@ruralite.org



Courtney Cobb

See the full guide [here](#). Questions? Contact Courtney at cobb@cec.coop.



Guide, Social Support and On Line Win Gold



Ruralite won three 2017 Spotlight on Excellence awards from the Council of Rural Electric Communicators and NRECA. Ruralite's [Social Media Support Program](#) won gold for most innovative use of Social Media. [On Line](#), Ruralite's member newsletter, won gold for Best Internal News Publication. Ruralite's [Welcome Guide](#) got top marks for Best Special Publication. Collecting the awards at NRECA's CONNECT Conference are, from left, Content Marketing Manager Megan McKoy-Noe, Communications and Marketing Director Kathi VanderZanden, Marketing and Editorial Specialist Victoria Hampton and CEO Michael Shepard. *Photo by Carol Crabtree*



Leon Espinoza to Head Ruralite Editorial Team

Longtime Northwest journalist Leon Espinoza has been named Ruralite Services' managing editor. Leon was selected after a national search.

"Leon Espinoza is regarded as a tremendous coach, co-worker and leader," says Michael Shepard, Ruralite Services CEO. "He has been a steady and creative hand during a time of unprecedented change in the media world."

Leon has been assistant managing editor of The Seattle Times since 2013. He has worked for the newspaper since 1990, helping develop the Times' popular digital offerings, and working both as a hands-on editor and overseer of editing for Pulitzer Prize-winning stories and news series.

"With a background in public-service journalism and transformation, I look forward to the role we can play in the rapidly evolving energy industry," says Leon. "I'm eager to learn about our utility partners' desires, wishes and needs and how we can meet them. These are exciting times."

During his 27-year career, Leon has been the Times' executive news editor, deputy news editor, Sunday news editor, night news editor and worked on the copy desk. He holds a BA in communications from California State University, Fullerton.

Leon and his wife, Michelle, have three children. — KathiV@ruralite.org.

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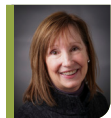
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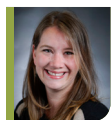
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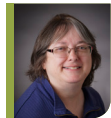
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