

Huge technology expo for kids only

The children stand and stare, transfixed by the flames shooting out of the tire before them. The fire subsides when the metal rod touching the top of it is raised. The rod is lowered again and as it nears the tire a loud “pop” is heard following by a zapping sound and the tire again bursts into flames.

The object of the children’s attention is part of a safety demonstration provided by Yellowstone Valley Electric Cooperative and Beartooth Electric Cooperative during Aviation and Technology Week in Laurel. Beartooth Electric Lineman Lee Hauge and Yellowstone Valley Electric Lineman Steve Erb were providing the startling demonstrations of what can happen when a car, or farm equipment, or people come in contact with electric wires.

The co-ops were two of over a hundred utilities, companies, local, state and federal agencies and branches of the U.S. Armed Forces to entertain and educate students from schools across Montana, North Dakota and Wyoming. Over 120 entities reached out to the over 10,000 students through speeches, demonstrations and displays at the Laurel schools. Flyovers by various types of aircraft at the Laurel Airport were highlights of the free four-day event in early May.

Although aviation is a key part of the week, the event is not an air show. It is for students only and it is a chance for them to get familiar with many technologies and their practical uses. It is a unique opportunity for young Montanans to get information that encourages them to consider, and perhaps be inspired to pursue a variety of career opportunities. The technologies on display ran the gamut from farm implements to space exploration

to the Montana Forensic Science Division.

Some lucky students got to try out the flight simulators the virtual reality parachute drop and other fun hands-on exhibits.

The biannual event began in 1991 as an air show. It has been held every other year except for the millennium year. For more information about the Aviation and Technology week, go on the internet to www.laurel.k12.mt.us.



Yellowstone Valley Electric Lineman Steve Erb zaps a tire as Beartooth Electric Lineman Lee Hauge tells children how to be safe around electricity.