

Big Skylights

An internal newsletter of the STATEWIDE ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES



A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

April 28, 2005

More than 40 Montanans headed for Capitol Hill

A total of 41 Montanans are scheduled to represent MECA at the 2005 NRECA Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., May 1-4. The conference – billed as one of the most powerful grassroots lobbying efforts in the nation’s capital – will include visits with Montana’s congressional delegation as well “adopted congressman” from states without electric cooperatives. Montana’s adopted congressmen include the Rhode Island congressional delegation and one representative from Massachusetts.

Cooperative trustees and management personnel registered with MECA to attend the conference this year are: Beartooth Electric Cooperative Trustees **Art Devries, Mary Lou Flanagan, and John Prinkki** and Manager **Bob Walker**; Big Flat Electric Cooperative Trustees **Betty Campbell** and **Alan Wasson**; Central Montana Electric Power Cooperative Trustee **Herb Sand**, Manager **Tom Huntley** and Secretary **Becky Batello**; Fergus Electric Cooperative Trustees **Alan Evans** and **Bob Evans, Jr.** (also representing MECA as its president) and Manager **Scott Sweeney**; Flathead Electric Cooperative Trustees **Paul Holland** and **Alan Ruby**; Glacier Electric Cooperative Trustees **Tom Blackweasel, Brian Elliott** and **Marvin Kimmet**; Hill County Electric Cooperative Trustees **Clarence Keller, Gerald Rutledge, Stuart Smith** and Manager **Rick Stevens**; Lower Yellowstone REA Trustee **John Redman**; Marias River Electric Cooperative Manager **Mark Grotbo**; Missoula Electric Cooperative Trustees **Ray Cebulski** and **Sharon Jacobsen** and Manager **Jack Hunt**; Park Electric Cooperative Manager **Doug Hardy**; Ravalli County Electric Cooperative Trustees **Robert Bailey** and **Craig Meskimen** and Manager **Ric Brown**; Southeast Electric Cooperative Manager **Jack Hamblin**; Sun River Electric Cooperative Trustees **John Burgmaier**, and **Roberta Rohrer** and Manager **Scott Odegard**; Tongue River Electric Cooperative Manager **Alan See**; Valley Electric Cooperative Trustees **Lynn Cornwell** and **Ron Wallem**; Yellowstone Valley Electric Cooperative Trustee **Dave Kelsey** and Assistant Manager **Brandon Wittman**.

Utilities offered training on new bird protection rules

Having just released its new national Avian Protection Plan (APP) guidelines, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is offering utilities 1 ½ -day training courses in Portland, OR, and Salt Lake City, UT to provide instruction regarding the guidelines. According to USFWS, these guidelines are intended to provide utilities with a toolbox to use for the development of their own APP’s. The courses also present state of the art approaches to assessing and resolving problems associated with bird electrocutions on electrical facilities. The first day will cover the content of the APP guidelines. The second ½-day will review avian protection laws, engineering, biological and environmental factors that influence avian electrocutions, and techniques to reduce

electrocution risk. Advance registration is required and limited to 75 participants, so early registration is advised. The course fee is \$75 (1st day is \$50 and 2nd ½ day is \$25). Those registering by April 29 will be charged \$50 for both days. The course registration and room reservation deadline for the Portland course is May 6 and May 13 is the registration deadline for the Salt Lake City course. For information on course registration and to obtain registration forms, contact Ms. **Deborah Wright** at 503-813-6611. Room registrations for the Portland Embassy Suites can be made by calling 503-460-3000. Room registration for the Salt Lake City course can be made by calling 801-359-7800.

**Marias River Electric
hears co-op manager
talk on renewables**

I enjoyed attending Marias River Electric Cooperative's annual meeting Friday night at which the membership elected **Mel Fretheim** to the board. Mr. Fretheim had been appointed to fill out the unexpired term of **Marvin Fretheim**. Reelected to the board were **John Lager** and **Dan Gliko**. **Jasen Bronec**, manager of Glacier Electric Cooperative, was the guest speaker, providing solid factual information on renewable energy. Following the meeting, the board met to elect officers. **Merle Raph** was elected the new board president. **Adrian Hawks** was elected vice president and **Joe Sisk** was elected secretary/treasurer.

Job Market

McCone Electric Co-op., Inc. is currently seeking a qualified applicant for a lineman position. They prefer a certified journeyman lineman or an applicant with line work experience. Applicants should be familiar with overhead and underground construction, be able to operate diggers and bucket trucks, hot sticking, rubber gloving, transmission and substations. The successful applicant must possess a valid MT CDL license (or be able to obtain one within 90 days of the hiring date), join the local I.B.E.W. and reside in Circle, MT.

Applicants must be able to deal with co-workers and consumers in a courteous and professional manner. Excellent benefits package. A McCone Electric Co-op., Inc. job application is required and may be obtained from McCone Electric at PO Box 368, Circle, MT 59215. The application deadline is Friday, May 13th at 5:00 p.m. Call for applications at (406) 485-3430 or e-mail **Larry Schmidt**. (lschmidt@mcconeelectric.coop).

2005 CALENDAR

May

1-4	NRECA Legislative Conference	Washington, D.C.
7	Northern Lights, Inc. Annual Meeting	Sagle, ID
10-12	NRECA's Small Commercial Energy Audit Workshop	Fort Benton, MT
11	Western Montana G & T Annual Meeting	Missoula, MT
14	Hill County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Havre, MT

June

1	Lower Yellowstone REA Annual Meeting	Sidney, MT
3	McCone Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Circle, MT

3	Southeast Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Ekalaka, MT
9	Fergus Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Lewistown, MT
11	Ravalli County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Corvallis, MT
18	Fall River Rural Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Ashton, ID
18 – 23	NRECA Youth Tour	Washington, D.C.
20 – 22	Manager's Group Meeting	East Glacier, MT
22	Northern Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Opheim, MT

July

7	MECA Summer Board Meeting	Missoula, MT
8	New Employee & Director Training	Missoula, MT
16	Tongue River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Ashland, MT

August

8 – 10	Office Managers Conference	Dillon, MT
29 – Sept 1	Operations Conference	Missoula, MT