

Big Skylights



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

A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

February 17, 2005

'Great Expectations' highlights NRECA annual meeting

The theme for this year's NRECA Annual Meeting, Feb. 23-March 2 in San Diego, is "Great Expectations." The keynote speaker for the annual meeting will be Sen. **Bob Dole**, former Senate majority leader and the 1996 Republican presidential nominee. A total of 39 Montanans representing 15 distribution cooperatives and two generation and transmission cooperatives have signed up to attend this year's annual meeting.

Burns to attend NRECA annual meeting

Montana Republican Sen. **Conrad Burns** will attend the NRECA Annual Meeting in San Diego. MECA will host a reception for Sen. Burns as part of the annual meeting.

Also, MECA will cosponsor a Northwest Public Power Association (NWPPA) reception as part of the NRECA Annual Meeting. The reception will be held Monday, February 28, from 5 to 7 p.m. and from 10 p.m. to midnight. The reception will be held in the San Diego Marriott and Marina Hotel. Check with the hotel concierge for room location.

Distributed energy workshop piques co-ops' interest

A total of 39 people representing 15 cooperatives and one generation and transmission cooperative attended MECA's Distributed Energy 101 Workshop Feb. 8 in Lewistown. Speakers included Western Area Power Administration's **Ed Weber** and **Ron Rebenitsch** of Basin Electric Power Cooperative. A panel discussion on distributed generation was moderated by **Jasen Bronec**, manager of Glacier Electric Cooperative. Panelists included **Rollie Miller** of Hill County Electric Cooperative, **Roy Nollkamper** of Glacier Electric Cooperative and **Toni Cody** of Park Electric Cooperative. Panel members discussed their experiences working with members who installed distributed energy generators.

Sign-ups needed for retirement seminar

More sign-ups are needed for a MECA-sponsored NRECA retirement planning seminar March 22-23 in Great Falls. A minimum of 40 registrants are needed by March 1. MECA has only six people registered so far. Contact MECA's **Sharon McDonald** for more information or to register.

Job Market**Communications Director**

MECA is seeking a talented, energetic, team-oriented individual to serve as its director of communications. Editing, writing, taking photographs and overseeing all processes in the production of the association's statewide magazine and other publications are among the primary duties.

Other communications duties include writing press releases, working with the media and preparing and staffing exhibits at trade shows and other events. The person may be called upon to represent the association to the public and to other associations and agencies. The person also works with the association's communications committee and board of trustees. A degree in journalism or English or equivalent experience is preferred. Knowledge of the cooperative way of doing business is helpful. MECA offers a salary commensurate with qualifications and experience plus an excellent benefits package. Deadline for resume acceptance is March 21, 2005. Please direct questions and resume with salary history to Gary Wiens, MECA Assistant General Manager, Box 3469, Great Falls, MT 59403, (406) 761-8333, gwiens@sofast.net.

2005 CALENDAR**February**

23-March 2	NRECA Annual Meeting	San Diego, CA
25	Vigilante Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Dillon, MT

March

8-9	Central Montana Electric Power Cooperative Annual Meeting	Great Falls, MT
11	Upper Missouri G&T Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Sidney, MT
12	Big Horn County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Hardin, MT
12	Lincoln Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Eureka, MT
15	Mid-Yellowstone Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Hysham, MT
19	Missoula Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Missoula, MT
22	Yellowstone Valley Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Huntley, MT
22-23	Early Career Employment Retirement Seminar	Great Falls, MT
26	Flathead Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Kalispell, MT
28	Sun River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Fairfield, MT
29-30	Apprenticeship School	Great Falls, MT

April

12-13	Rubber Gloving School	Sidney, MT
12	Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association Spring Board Meeting	Great Falls, MT
13	NRECA Director's Course 967.1 Fundamentals of Energy Risk Management for Directors	Great Falls, MT
16	Glacier Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Cut Bank, MT
22	Marias River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Shelby, MT

May

1-4	NRECA Legislative Conference	Washington, D.C.
7	Northern Lights Annual Meeting	Sagle, ID
10-12	NRECA's Small Commercial Energy Audit Workshop	Fort Benton, MT
14	Hill County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Havre, MT