

# Big Skylights



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

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A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

March 3, 2005

## Sen. Burns earns top honor from NRECA

Under the theme of “Great Expectations,” 33 Montanans joined 12,000 other electric co-op leaders from across the nation February 27-March 2 for NRECA’s 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting. Among the events at the annual meeting was the honoring of Montana Sen. **Conrad Burns**, who received NRECA’s Distinguished Service Award as an outstanding national leader whose history of support for rural electrification and public power merited special recognition. NRECA Board President **David Cowan** made the presentation during the meeting’s opening general session. Mr. Cowan noted Senator Burns has been a champion of federal Power Marketing Administrations since being elected to the Senate in 1989. He also was commended for his efforts to protect the Rural Utilities Service from dramatic cuts, for his strong support for the electric cooperative small utility exemption on electric restructuring legislation and for his stalwart advocacy for electric cooperatives on the issue of captive rail shipment rates.

## Energy risk course offered

MECA will hold a course on “Fundamentals of Energy Risk Management for Directors” at the statewide association office in Great Falls April 13. The course will be held in conjunction with the MECA spring board meeting on April 12. The course, which outlines changes in the deregulated wholesale energy business, is open to both co-op trustees and co-op staff. It provides an introductory overview on rules of power supply, risk management, energy trading and the reliability of power supply contracts. The fee for the course is \$275 per person and includes lunch. A minimum of 20 attendees must be

registered by the early registration deadline of March 29 or the course will be cancelled. Contact MECA’s **Sharon McDonald** to register.

## MECA to host NRECA seminar on retirement

Nearly 20 people have signed up for the MECA-sponsored NRECA retirement planning seminar March 22-23 in Great Falls. However, walk-ins and late registrations are welcome. The seminar will be held at the statewide association building. If you have any questions, contact MECA’s Sharon McDonald at (406) 761-8333.

**Sign-ups needed  
for legislative  
conference**

Hotel rooms are still available for Montana co-op trustees or staff interested in attending the NRECA Legislative Conference May 1-4 in Washington, D.C. The conference annually brings together more than 1,000 co-op leaders from across the nation in one of the most effective grassroots lobbying efforts in the country. Call the MECA office for details 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](mailto:gwiens@sofast.net).

**2005 CALENDAR**

**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