

Big Skylights



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

A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

January 20, 2005

Co-op work comp pool finishes 2004 with low losses

Montana's electric and telephone cooperatives have ended one of their best years for self-insured worker's compensation insurance since the pool – known as METSPool – began operations in 1994. METSPool finished 2004 with a loss ratio of 25.92 percent, its lowest loss ratio since 1995 and less than half the pool's average loss level of 56.89 percent. The loss ratio for 1995, for which all claims have now been closed, is 18 percent. METSPool's worst losses were in 1999.

The loss ratio for 1999, with several claims still open, currently stands at 193.47 percent. METSPool's average loss ratio for all years, including 2004, now stands at 56.89 percent. The low loss ratio for 2004 bodes well for continued rate stability for METSPool members.

MECA distributive energy workshop features top experts

We are excited about this year's new seminar "Distributive Energy 101" that MECA will hold February 7 in Lewistown, MT at the Yogo Inn. Speakers will include **Ron Rebenitsch** of Basin Electric Power Cooperative, one of the nation's leading co-op experts on renewable energy. Also speaking will be **Ed Weber** of Western Area Power Administration. Mr. Weber, a native of Glasgow, Montana, is an expert in transmission issues pertaining to distributive generation. Also featured will be a panel discussion on distributive energy featuring Montana electric co-op employees experienced with distributive energy. These include **Roy Nollkamper**, Glacier Electric Cooperative; **Rollie Miller**, Hill County Electric Cooperative; and **Toni Cody**, Park Electric Cooperative. The panel will be moderated by **Jasen Bronec**, manager of Glacier Electric and chairman of MECA's legislative net metering subcommittee.

Cost of this workshop, which includes lunch, will be only \$25. Please contact **Sharon McDonald** of the MECA staff to inquire about registration.

Housing info for San Diego meeting to be sent

Information on housing for the NRECA Annual Meeting, February 23 to March 2, in San Diego, Calif., will be mailed by MECA's **Sharon McDonald** to each of the individual participants by January 28. If you have any questions, please contact Sharon here at 406-761-8333.

MECA Legislative Guides published

Due to the delay of the Montana House of Representatives in naming House leaders and finalizing committee assignments, publication of MECA's Legislative Guide was delayed. However, with those appointments now having been made, the legislative guide was sent to the printer this morning and the guides are now available. As usual, we will be distributing copies of the guide to our member cooperatives. Call MECA's **Mack McConnell** if you have any questions or have specific requests on the numbers of guides you'd like to receive.

Job Market

Journeyman Lineman – Flathead Electric Cooperative is seeking a Journeyman Lineman. This is a full time union position with an hourly wage of \$28.22. Duties include performing construction, conversion, relocation, maintenance and service work on energized or de-energized lines throughout the area serviced by the cooperative. Applicants must have completed a recognized, qualified apprenticeship and have met all minimum requirements of the trade and must be recognized by I.B.E.W. as a Journeyman Lineman. Contact Kalispell Job Service for complete job description and employment application. All applicants need to submit applications, etc., through the Kalispell Job Service. This job listing is open until January 31, 2005.

Public Relations Director – Flathead Electric Cooperative is seeking a public relations director. The wage range is \$50,504 to \$74,244. The person in this position will be primarily responsible to assist management, staff, and the Board of Trustees with public relations and communications efforts to establish and maintain the image of Flathead Electric Cooperative both internally and externally. This position requires a bachelor of science degree in Journalism, English, Public Relations, Advertising, or related field, and significant experience in the operations of an electric cooperative or two years experience in the communications/ public relations field. This person must have strong written and oral communication skills, to include the ability to tactfully and courteously communicate with the general public and other employees and this person must exhibit proficiency and working knowledge of personal computer systems, to include word-processing and desktop publishing. For complete job description and employment application, contact Kalispell Job Service. Job listing is open until February 11, 2005.

2005 CALENDAR

February

7	Distributive Energy 101 Workshop	Lewistown, MT
8-9	Line Superintendent's Winter Meeting – Yogo Inn	Lewistown, MT
23-March 2	NRECA Annual Meeting	San Diego, CA
25	Vigilante Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Dillon, MT

March

12	Big Horn County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Hardin, MT
12	Lincoln Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Eureka, MT
15	Mid-Yellowstone Electric 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 Retirement Seminars	Great Falls, MT
26	Flathead Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Kalispell, MT
28	Sun River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Fairfield, MT
28-29	Apprenticeship Training School	Great Falls, MT