

# Big Skylights

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



A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

January 6, 2005

## New safety instructor named for S/LC services

MECA has hired a third safety/loss control instructor. He is **Paul Towers** of Great Falls. Mr. Towers began working January 4. He is a long-time safety professional having most recently worked for the Montana Workers' Compensation State Fund as a safety consultant. Mr. Towers has numerous areas of safety expertise that should further enhance our safety training program.

## Flathead Electric announces rate reduction

Congratulations to Flathead Electric Cooperative, which has announced a reduction in its energy supply rates, effective January 5, 2005. The rate decrease is the co-op's first since January, 2003 when Flathead Electric lowered its basic service charge. The co-op's last rate increase was in October, 2001.

In announcing this latest rate reduction, the co-op said it is reducing rates because of lower-than-expected maintenance, customer service and interest costs, along with higher revenue than projected earlier in 2004, resulting in higher-than-expected co-op margins. "We have exceeded our goals needed to satisfy our obligations to our bankers and improved our financial standing enough to pass a rate decrease to the members. This decrease in revenue for 2005 is projected to be \$2 million," the board stated in a recent announcement. The rate per kilowatt hour will go from 6.22 cents to 5.9 cents. On average, based on members' usage, the monthly savings per meter is estimated at \$3.18, or \$38.16 per year. This rate decrease affects the members in the 'Small General Service' rate class, consisting of mostly residential and small commercial accounts, which is 90 percent of the meters Flathead Electric bills every month.

The co-op has also announced that, as another benefit of the financial stability of the cooperative, members with the co-op in 1982 and 1983 will receive around \$725,000 of capital credits refunds in 2005.

## Flathead Electric elects new board president

**Jay Downen**, a trustee at Flathead Electric Cooperative and former general manager of MECA, has been elected president of the Flathead Electric Board of Trustees. He succeeds **Bruce Measure** who resigned from the board to accept an appointment as a Montana representative on the Northwest Power and Conservation Council by Montana Gov. **Brian Schweitzer**.

**Printing begins  
on MECA  
Legislative Guide**

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 should be available later next week. As usual, we will be distributing copies of the guide to our member cooperatives. Call MECA Communications Director **Mack McConnell** if you have any questions or have specific requests on the numbers of guides you'd like to receive.

**Job Market**

*Assistant Operations Superintendent* – Park Electric Cooperative, a consumer-owned electric utility providing electricity to 5,000 services from 1,400 miles of distribution and transmission line, seeks qualified candidate for middle management position. Position assists Operations Supt. in supervision of three construction/maintenance crews and is involved with operation's overall management. Communicates and works with consumers in designing new and upgrading electrical services. Performs cost estimates and prepares staking sheets. The successful candidate will be involved with sectionalizing studies and system work plans and must have a minimum of 5 years electric utility operations experience, strong communication skills and a desire to work in a team environment. A basic knowledge of MS Excel and Word software is required. Familiarity with RUS construction standards is desired but not mandatory. Competitive pay and benefits are offered for this position. A job description and application are available via phone at (406) 222-3100 or email at info@parkelectric.coop. The regular mail address is P.O. Box 1119, Livingston, MT. The deadline for application is January 18, 2005.

*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. Interested applicants should contact Kalispell Job Service for a 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, interested applicants should contact Kalispell Job Service. This job listing is open until February 11, 2005.

**VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT  
FOR THE POSITION OF CONTROLLER**

**SUMMARY:**

**This position directs the planning, coordination and control of the accounting functions in order to ensure that the Cooperative financial records are kept in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles and RUS requirements. Performs all work in a dependable, confidential and professional manner.**

- Bachelor's degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in accounting preferred or extensive Accounting/Controller experience.**
- Initiates the internal auditing program to provide effective control and safeguarding of Cooperative assets.**
- Must possess the ability to apply common sense understanding to carry out and follow instructions.**
- Develops general accounting and member accounting procedures and implements changes as directed.**
- Must be able to handle the physical demands of the job as described in the job description.**

**Entry Level Salary: DOE**

**Closing Date of Application - Open Until Filled.**

**Application packets and instructions are available at:**

**Missoula Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
1700 West Broadway  
Missoula, Montana 59808**

**Posting No.: 04-10**

**Posting Date: June 30, 2004**

**MISSOULA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER  
MISSOULA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS A DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE**

## 2005 CALENDAR

### January

17-18	Montana Council of Cooperatives Annual Meeting	Helena, MT
18	Montana Council of Cooperatives Legislative Banquet	Helena, MT
19	Electric Co-op Day in the Capitol Rotunda	Helena, MT

### February

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

### March

12	Lincoln Electric Co-op Annual Meeting	Eureka, MT
12	Big Horn County Electric Co-op Annual Meeting	Hardin, MT
19	Missoula Electric Co-op Annual Meeting	Missoula, MT
22	Yellowstone Valley Electric Co-op Annual Meeting	Billings, MT
26	Flathead Electric Co-op Annual Meeting	Kalispell, MT
28	Sun River Electric Co-op Annual Meeting	Fairfield, MT

### April

16	Glacier Electric Co-op Annual Meeting	Cut Bank, MT
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**Montana Electric  
Cooperatives' Association**  
P.O. Box 1306 Great Falls, MT 59403