

Big Skylights



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

A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

February 9, 2006

Workshop explores metering technologies

Electric cooperatives interested in issues revolving around smart metering and electricity demand response technologies may want to know about a Smart Metering and Demand Response Workshop being hosted by the Montana Public Service Commission in Helena on Feb. 22.

Overview presentations will be given by: **Ken Corum**, Northwest Power and Conservation Council; **Rich Barnes**, KEMA, an energy consultant and electrical equipment testing and certification business; and **Mike Weedal**, Bonneville Power Administration. Presentations on specific smart metering and demand response activities in Montana will be given by **Bill Thomas**, NorthWestern Energy; **Tamie Aberle**, Montana-Dakota Utilities; **Doug Hardy**, Park Electric Cooperative; and **Roger Adams**, ConocoPhillips. Presentations on available advanced metering and demand response technologies will be given by: **Emmett Kelly** of Itron, Corp., and **Dan Austin** of Converge, Corp. The workshop will be held from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the PSC's Bollinger Room, 1701 Prospect Ave., Helena. Registration is limited so if you plan to attend the workshop, please call **Judy Scheier** at the PSC right away. Her phone number is 406-444-5772.

MECA cosponsors forum on federal energy law

MECA is co-sponsoring an upcoming NWPPA forum regarding the federal Energy Policy Act of 2005. The forum will be held March 28-29 at the Sheraton Portland Airport Hotel in Portland, Ore. For information about the agenda, for hotel information and to register for this forum, go to www.nwppa.org. On the home page, click on "Class Schedules and Registrations" near the top, left-hand corner of the page. Then, click on "View Complete List of Events." On the events page, scroll down to March 28, 29: "Policy Perspectives Forum: The Energy Policy Act of 2005." Click on this and you will see complete information about the forum. The registration fee is \$395.

Capital credits is focus of April course

"Capital Credits: Legal and Financial Issues" is the title of the director's training course to be offered in conjunction with the MECA Board of Directors spring board meeting. The 975.1 course, which will be taught by NRECA's Rod Crile, will be held Thursday, April 6. Directors will learn the keys to adopting and implementing a capital credits policy. The discounted fee for MECA members is \$250. To register for the course, please contact MECA's **Sharon McDonald** at 406-761-8333.

Spring meetings set at MECA

The schedule has been set for MECA committee meetings in conjunction with the April 5 MECA Board of Directors meeting. Committee meetings will begin on Tuesday, April 4, at 12 noon with a meeting of the S/LC Dues Committee. Lunch will be served for that meeting. The USBP Legislative Subcommittee will meet from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. The MECA Managers' Group will meet from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. Also that day, the METSPool Executive Committee will meet. This meeting will be from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

On Wednesday, April 5, the Territorial Integrity Act Legislative Subcommittee meets from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. The Audit Committee will meet from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. The Communications Committee will meet from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. and the Legislative Committee will meet from 11 a.m. to 12 noon. Lunch will be served at noon. The MECA Board of Directors meeting begins at 1:30 p.m. A dinner will be served at the statewide building at 6 p.m. On Thursday, April 6, co-op leaders planning to attend the 2006 NRECA Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. are invited to a breakfast meeting from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. The purpose of the breakfast is to briefly discuss legislative issues and meeting plans for the Montana delegation of co-ops attending the conference.

Campaign academy plans taking shape

Plans for the MECA-co-sponsored Campaign Academy 2006 are rapidly taking shape and interest appears to be running at a high level. The academy, which teaches candidates and prospective candidates the ins and outs of running for political office, will be held this year in four Montana cities – March 13 in Missoula, March 15 in Great Falls, March 17 in Billings and March 18 in Bozeman. The academy is run under the auspices of NRECA. In addition to MECA, the academy is sponsored by the Montana Credit Union Network and the Montana Chamber of Commerce. To register or to obtain more information, call MECA's Sharon McDonald at 406-761-8333.

Job Market

Apprentice lineman

Southeast Electric Cooperative, with headquarters in Ekalaka, has an immediate opening for an apprentice lineman. This is a full-time position at the office in Ekalaka. Minimum qualifications include a high school diploma or equivalent and must have or be able to obtain a Class A Montana Driver's License. Applicants with experience in line work or documented completion of lineman training school will be preferred. Application forms are available at the office in Ekalaka, or send a resume with references and cover letter to: Jack Hamblin, Manager, Southeast Electric Cooperative, Inc. P.O. Box 369, Ekalaka, MT 59324 or call (406) 775-8762 and speak with Mr. Hamblin or Herb Kerr, line foreman.

Office assistant

Southeast Electric Cooperative, with headquarters in Ekalaka, has an immediate opening for an office assistant. This is a full-time position at the office in Ekalaka. Minimum qualifications include a high school diploma or equivalent and proficient computer skills. Applicants with training or experience in bookkeeping or accounting will be preferred. Application forms are available at the office in Ekalaka or send a resume with references and cover letter to: Jack Hamblin, Manager, Southeast Electric Cooperative, Inc. P.O. Box 369, Ekalaka, MT 59324 or call (406) 775-8762 and speak with Mr. Hamblin or John Willson, office manager.

Journeyman and/or apprentice lineman

Lower Yellowstone REA, Inc., located in Sidney, has positions open for a journeyman and/or apprentice lineman. Applicants must possess the ability to perform skilled work in construction, operation and maintenance of an REA electrical system including transmission, substation and distribution for both overhead and underground line. Candidates must have a high school diploma or GED equivalent, possess a current driver's license, plus possession of or ability to immediately obtain a Montana commercial drivers license. A drug test will also be required. To apply for this position, mail a resume and cover letter to Donald Prevost, General Manager, Lower Yellowstone REA Inc., PO Box 1047, Sidney, MT 59270, or you may call 406-488-1602 to speak to Don or Ed Savelkoul, manager of operations. A complete job description and job application is available at Lower Yellowstone's office. Jobs will be open until filled.

Surveying/staking technician

High Plains Power is seeking an individual for the position of surveying/staking technician. High Plains Power covers approximately 12,500 square miles of territory, has 4,700 miles of line and is located in west-central Wyoming. The successful candidate must have a minimum of two years of college or four years of on-the-job experience. Graduates with a Wyoming registered land surveyor license or have the ability to obtain license are a plus. Work experience with emphasis on RUS construction specifications, AutoCad and/or GIS is desired. A current and valid driver's license is required. The person in this position will work with surveys of BLM, state, tribal and private rights-of-way properties. The person will be required to investigate, survey and stake electric distribution and transmission lines according to RUS and National Electrical Safety Code construction specifications. Please send resumes and completed job applications to: Marlene Morss, Human Resources, P.O. Box 713, Riverton, WY 82501. Applications will be accepted until March 1, 2006.

CALENDAR**February 2006**

14-22	64 th NRECA Annual Meeting	Orlando, FL
24	Vigilante Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Dillon, MT

March 2006

3	Upper Missouri G&T Annual Meeting	Sidney, MT
9-10	Central Montana Electric Power Cooperative Annual Meeting	Great Falls, MT
11	Flathead Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Kalispell, MT
11	Lincoln Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Eureka, MT
13	Candidate School	Missoula, MT
15	Candidate School	Great Falls, MT
17	Candidate School	Billings, MT
18	Candidate School	Bozeman, MT
18	Missoula Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Missoula, MT
20-21	Supervisory Skills for Line Crews	Great Falls, MT
21	Mid-Yellowstone Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Hysham, MT
21	Yellowstone Valley Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Huntley, MT
22-23	MECA Operations Conference	Great Falls, MT
31	Sun River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Fairfield, MT

April 2006

4	METSPool Executive Committee meeting	Great Falls, MT
4-5	MECA Committee Meetings	Great Falls, MT
5	MECA Spring Board Meeting	Great Falls, MT
6	MECA Legislative Conference Briefing Breakfast	Great Falls, MT
6	NRECA Course - Capital Credits: Legal & Financial Issues	Great Falls, MT
8	Glacier Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Cut Bank, MT
17-19	Member Services Spring Meeting	Missoula, MT
21	Marias River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Shelby, MT
26-27	Basin Electric Member-Managers Conference	Rapid City, SD