

# Big Skylights



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

A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

May 25, 2006

## MECA, co-op earn top awards

MECA's *Rural Montana* and Hill County Electric Cooperative recently took honors in the 2006 "Spotlight on Excellence" awards program, sponsored by the Council of Rural Electric Communicators. *Rural Montana* magazine, produced by **Jim Smith**, MECA communications director, and **Sherri Carl**, publications technician, received the Award of Excellence as the top magazine among all NRECA statewide magazines and newspapers, finishing ahead of *Carolina Country* in second place with an Award of Merit.

*RM* also received an Award of Merit, a second-place finish in the Best Photo category. The winning entry was the December 2005 cover photo of a Ravalli County Electric line crew at work and reflected in a pond. Hill County Electric received an Award of Merit in the Best Multi Media Presentation Category for "Celebrate Youth," a PowerPoint presentation created by **Kevann Elletson-Campbell** and featuring photography by **Paulette Preeshl Shipp**. Both Kevann and Paulette are marketing representatives for the cooperative.

"Cooperatives are working hard to communicate effectively with the people they serve – their members," said **Maggie Tilley**, administrator of Spotlight on Excellence. "Those efforts were clearly demonstrated in the entries we received from across the nation. Co-op members are being well-served by these outstanding communicators, who deserve recognition." The Council of Rural Electric Communicators presented the award to Ms. Elletson-Campbell during a special luncheon at the Connect 2006 Conference. All winning entries were displayed at the conference held in San Antonio, TX, from May 17-19. The Spotlight awards competition is an annual event recognizing the top-rated communication and marketing efforts by electric cooperatives and related organizations. Electric cooperative communicators and marketing professionals submitted more than 700 entries in the Spotlight on Excellence program, now in its 18<sup>th</sup> year. Faculty members from the prestigious University of Missouri – Columbia and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill judged the entries.

## CFC seeks candidates for new seat

Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) is seeking candidates for a new at-large director "financial expert" position on the board. The new seat was created by a 2004 change in CFC's bylaws. The action also authorized the board to decide when to fill the position. The bylaws amendment was the direct result of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002. Qualified candidates may submit their names, along with a description of their qualifications in writing on a form to CFC no later than July 1, 2006. The board will review all candidate materials at its July board meeting and develop a final slate of candidates for this position. Balloting will be held at each of the CFC District meetings this fall; the candidate with the most votes will be declared the CFC director at-large. The new director will be seated at the CFC Board Organizational Meeting immediately following the CFC Annual Meeting on March 21, 2007. Anyone with questions about the process or about meeting qualifications for the position should contact **Mike O'Brien**, CFC's vice president of corporate communications, by phone 703-709-6709, or by e-mail at [mike.obrien@nrucfc.coop](mailto:mike.obrien@nrucfc.coop).

## Flathead Electric elects new officers

Flathead Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors has elected new officers. **Earl Messick**, Libby, will serve as president. **Alan Ruby**, Kalispell, is the new vice president. And **George Taylor**, Kalispell, will serve as secretary-treasurer. Re-elected to the board in the co-op membership's recent trustee elections were **Jay Downen**, **Emery Smith** and Mr. Ruby.

**Job Market****General Manager**

The Missoula Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees is conducting a search for interested, qualified general manager candidates. The current general manager plans to retire in August 2006, and the co-op plans to have the selected successor available by early August to provide a smooth transition. The co-op is looking for candidates with high integrity and credibility, a four-year college degree, five or more years of upper level electric utility management experience, excellent people skills, proven leadership and management capability and broad experience in engineering, operations and financial/accounting principles. Additional consideration will be given to individuals with multiple or advanced degrees, electric cooperative experience and demonstrated strong commitment to customer service. Missoula Electric Cooperative currently has 42 employees servicing 13,000 meters in seven counties of western Montana. Electric utility growth has averaged 4 percent over the last few years and is expected to continue. A subsidiary partnership provides propane to 11,000 customers. The general manager position offers an excellent benefits package and salary commensurate with experience and qualifications.

A resume, a minimum of four professional references and salary expectations should be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than June 1, 2006 to: Missoula Electric Cooperative, Inc.; Board of Trustees Search Committee; 1700 West Broadway; Missoula, MT 59808

**Journeyman station wireman**

Flathead Electric Co-op, Kalispell, Montana has a full-time union position with a wage of \$30.82 per hour and excellent benefit package. Duties: Responsible for the construction/installation, operation, testing, and maintenance of electrical equipment and apparatus within substations and on the transmission and distribution system. Prerequisite Skills and Experience: Must have completed a recognized, qualified apprenticeship and be recognized by I.B.E.W. as a Journeyman Station Wireman. Live in the beautiful Flathead Valley close to Glacier National Park, Flathead Lake, two major ski areas, and lots of outdoor activities. The complete job description may be viewed and vacancy announcement at [www.flatheadelectric.com](http://www.flatheadelectric.com) or call **Debbie Biggar**, (406) 751-4425 for an application. For more information, contact **John Eisinger**, (406) 751-4493 or **Brian Plunkett**, (406)751-4496. Application and resume must be submitted before June 1, 2006.

**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 driver's 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 Mr. Prevost 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.

**CALENDAR****June 2006**

1	Lower Yellowstone REA Annual Meeting	Sidney, MT
2	McCone Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Circle, MT
2	Southeast Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Ekalaka, MT
3	Hill County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Havre, MT
8	Fergus Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Lewistown, MT
10	Ravalli County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Corvallis, MT
10 -16	NRECA Youth Tour	Washington, DC
17	Fall River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Ashton, ID
21	Northern Electric Annual Meeting	Lustre, MT
26-28	MECA Managers Group Summer Meeting	Lewistown, MT

**July 2006**

11-12	MECA Committees and Board Meetings	Miles City, MT
11	MECA Barbecue at the Helm Ranch	Miles City, MT
12	MECA Dinner at Range Rider Museum	Miles City, MT
15	Tongue River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Ashland, MT