

# Big Skylights



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

A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

September 28, 2006

## New manager takes helm at Missoula Electric

MECA extends a warm welcome to our newest co-op manager, **Tony Sinclair**, the new general manager at Missoula Electric Cooperative, who assumed his duties Sept. 15. Mr. Sinclair replaces retired manager **Jack Hunt**. Mr. Sinclair comes to Montana from Alabama where he was the chief financial officer of the second largest electric cooperative in that state. He holds a bachelor's degree in business and management and is a CPA. His experience includes management positions at two electric cooperatives, work as a CPA and 14 years in oil and natural gas operations.

## Rural Montana wins two national awards

Rural Montana, the statewide association's magazine, recently received two first-place awards in the national Statewide Editors Association contest. Graphics and design specialist **Sherri Carl** won first place in the SEA contest category Best Photo Illustration for her February 2006 cover illustration, a composite of three photographs put together to resemble a single image. The cover featured Marias River Electric's **Randy Ruff** and **Ryan Austin** at work in the Sweet Grass Hills, but against the backdrop of a peak transplanted from Glacier National Park. In the Best Editorial category, editor **James V. Smith, Jr.**, won first-place for his column titled, "Youth Is Montana's True Treasure," a tribute to Youth Tour students and the late **Katie Aschim**, a talented young writer.

## Schedule for MECA meetings

Following is the schedule for the MECA board and committee meetings at the Heritage Inn in Great Falls in conjunction with the MECA annual meeting in October:

Monday, October 2, 2006		Tuesday, October 3, 2006	
8:00 am	S/LC Committee Breakfast Meeting	7:00 am	Tribal & Cooperative Issues Committee Breakfast Meeting
9:05 am	Managers Group Meeting	8:05 am	Audit Committee
10:00 am	Communications Committee	9:10 am	Enabling/Restructuring Legislative Subcommittee
11:10 am	Power Supply Committee	10:15 am	Resolutions Committee
		11:20 am	Legislative Committee
12 noon	Lunch	12:15 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm	Nuts & Bolts of MECA's Grassroots' Efforts in Helena - 2007	1:30 pm	MECA Board meeting
2:05 pm	Tax Legislative Subcommittee		
2:05 pm	Education & Training Committee		
2:45 pm	Territorial Integrity Act Legislative Subcommittee		

3:10 pm	Member Services Committee		
3:35 pm	USBP Legislative Subcommittee		
4:25 pm	Renewable Energy & PURPA Standards Legislative Subcommittee		

### Retirement seminar planned

MECA will host an NRECA Retirement Seminar Oct. 31-Nov. 1 at the statewide association building in Great Falls. This two-day course helps co-op employees evaluate distribution options from their retirement plans, estimate retirement income and expenses and understand the need for continued investment during retirement years. It is suggested that employees and their spouses who are within 10 years of retirement attend this informative seminar. The seminar is presented by NRECA's experienced investment advisers, field services representatives and local Social Security and estate planning professionals. Attendees are encouraged to participate with questions, comments and class exercises. More details on this seminar, including registration information, were recently mailed out.

### Condolences

MECA's cooperative family lost a wonderful friend and stalwart defender of cooperative power Wednesday with the death of **Ron Wallem**, a long-time director at Valley Electric Cooperative in Glasgow. Mr. Wallem died after a lengthy illness. Funeral services are pending.

## CALENDAR

### October 2006

2-5	MECA Annual Meeting	Great Falls, MT
14	Big Flat Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Malta, MT
14	Sheridan Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Medicine Lake, MT
26	Goldenwest Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	St. Philips, MT
27	Park Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Livingston, MT
31-Nov 1	NRECA Retirement Seminar	Great Falls, MT