

Big Skylights



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

A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

April 6, 2007

Co-op members hear pitch for energy diversity

Former Northwest Power Planning Council member **Gerald Mueller** warned Lincoln Electric members against any energy portfolio that was 100 percent green. Mueller, now an energy consultant, spoke at the LEC annual meeting March 24. "My experience over the last 33 years with Northwest utilities has convinced me to approach electricity resource planning and acquisition with caution and a certain amount of skepticism," he said. "I have seen our region's utilities repeatedly latch onto one idea or one type of resource as the answer to our power needs. In no case has that one idea or resource type worked out as expected."

In Manager **Mike Henry's** report, he said that the continued promise of growth in residential loads would increase revenue to offset loss of commercial customers, such as timber mills. Even so he said, the cost of materials was still a concern. He told of the cost of one type of transformer going from \$972 to \$2,100 in a year.

In trustee elections, incumbents **Gilbert Burk, Tina Taurman, Marianne Roose, John Hossack** and **Mike Workman** were all re-elected.

Sun River Electric hears legislative update

I was pleased to be able to provide a legislative update to members of Sun River Electric Cooperative at their annual meeting March 30 in Fairfield. Co-op trustees re-elected **Darell Stott** and **Leonard Sivumaki**. Trustee **Robert Pasha**, who had been appointed to fill out an unexpired term, was elected by the members. More than 275 people attended the annual meeting.

MITS executive returning to private practice

Michael Strand, the long-time executive director of Montana Independent Telephone Systems, has announced he will be leaving the association of telephone cooperatives to return to private law practice. Mr. Strand had been with MITS for 12 years. He plans to practice law in Helena. MITS members include Triangle Telephone Cooperative, Nemont Telephone Cooperative, Northern Telephone Cooperative, Central Montana Communications and Project Telephone.

MECA sponsors NWPPA workshop for non-accountants

The Training & Education Committee of Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association is sponsoring **NWPPA's Accounting for Non-Accountants** workshop on May 9-10, 2007 at the Statewide Office in Great Falls. Course instructor will be **Kim Mikkelsen**, who conducted last year's MECA-sponsored work order workshop.

This 1.5 day course, a companion course to the work-order workshop, will give participants an understanding of the accounting process, especially as it applies to co-ops. The hands-on instruction allows participants to create transactions, post them to accounts, reconcile the accounts and prepare financial statements.

The fee for this 1.5 day course is \$225 per person with a minimum of 20 participants registered by the early registration date of April 24 or the course may be cancelled. The schedule for the course is 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on May 9 and 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon on May 10. Anyone with questions on this course should contact MECA's Sharon McDonald at 406-761-8333 or via electronic mail: sharonm@mtco-ops.com.

Job Market**McCone Electric –
Journeyman Lineman**

McCone Electric Co-op., Inc., is currently seeking a qualified applicant for a journeyman lineman position. The reporting position is in Circle, Mont. Circle is an area rich in hunting and fishing opportunities with access to public lands. Jordan is within easy driving distance to Fort Peck Lake, Hell Creek Marina and the famous Missouri Breaks. Mountains and great skiing are only a three-hour drive from this location. The successful applicant must possess a valid Montana commercial driver's Class A license (or be able to obtain one within 90 days of the hiring date) and join the local IBEW union. Successful candidates must pass a pre-employment drug test and physical. The successful applicants must also be able to deal with co-workers and consumers in a courteous and professional manner. McCone Electric has an excellent benefits program. A McCone Electric Co-op., Inc., job application is required and may be obtained from McCone Electric at PO Box 368, Circle, MT 59215. This position will remain open until filled. Call for applications at (406) 485-3430 or e-mail Larry Schmidt: <mailto:lschmidt@mcconeelectric.coop>.

CALENDAR**April**

11	Worker's Compensation 101 Workshop	Miles City, MT
14	Glacier Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Cut Bank, MT
24	Worker's Compensation 101 Workshop	Missoula, MT
27	Marias River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Shelby, MT

May

6-9	NRECA Legislative Conference	Washington, D.C.
9-10	Accounting for Non-Accountants Workshop	Great Falls, MT
9-10	Superintendents Meeting	Lewistown, MT
12	Northern Lights Annual Meeting	Sagle, ID
16	Western Montana Electric G & T Annual Meeting	Missoula, MT

June

1	McCone Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Circle, MT
2	Hill County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Havre, MT
6	Lower Yellowstone REA Annual Meeting	Sidney, MT
7	Fergus Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Lewistown, MT
8	Southeast Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Ekalaka, MT
9	Ravalli County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Corvallis, MT
9-15	Youth to Washington Tour	Washington, D.C.
20	Northern Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Opheim, MT
23	Fall River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Ashton, ID
25-27	Managers Group Summer Meeting	Whitefish, MT