

Big Skylights



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

A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

December 6, 2007

Sign-ups needed for MECA workshop

A two-day MECA-sponsored workshop providing electric co-op employees, including trustees, with a comprehensive understanding of electrical system operations, including generation, transmission and distribution will be held Jan. 8-9, 2008. Titled "Electric Systems Operations for the Non-Engineer," the workshop will be conducted by the Northwest Public Power Association.

In addition to technical information, the course also covers the economics of operation, system and equipment protection, and safety. In addition to non-engineers, the instructor, Skip Collier suggests that engineers would benefit from the course regardless of type and experience as it provides a way for new engineers to leap frog a lot of the effort in trying to figure out how the systems and equipment work.

This class is vital for anyone who needs a clear understanding of the technical heartbeat of the utility. Mechanical & civil engineers, engineering techs, purchasing agents, contract specialists and those in public relations will find this course helpful. It is simply a great class for anyone desiring a better understanding of the "Nuts & Bolts" of an electric utility.

For more information on this workshop, contact **Sharon McDonald** at the MECA office at (406)761-8333.

Condolences

Robert (Bob) Curtis, a long-time electric cooperative lineman in Montana, died on Nov. 8 at the age of 59 after a courageous battle with cancer.

He was born on August 11, 1948 to **Max and Esther Curtis**. He was raised by his beloved grandmother, **Ethel Curtis**, and some of his fondest memories were growing up in the Yellowstone River Valley outside of Sidney, Montana. Before his junior year in high school, he went to live with his father in Aberdeen, Idaho and graduated from high school there in 1966. He joined the Navy in 1967 where he did three years of service and two deployments aboard the USS John F. Kennedy. After an honorable discharge from the Navy, he went on to Bismarck Junior College in North Dakota and attended Lineman School. He worked for Fergus Electric Cooperative in Lewistown, Montana before taking a job with Vigilante Electric Cooperative and moving to Townsend in 1975. He retired as the area foreman in 2006. He was dedicated to the people he served, and will be remembered for his statement of "I'm just bringing power to the people."

He was a 35-year member of the American Legion and served on the Military Affairs Committee. Bob also served several years on the Townsend Housing Board. He married **Gaylene Scoffield** on August 13, 1977, and to this union, their son **Aubrey (A.J.)** was born. In addition to his wife and son he is survived by his step-daughter **Niki Scoffield** and his precious twin granddaughters, **Jade and Jordyn Scoffield**.

Bob will most be remembered for his love of life – and he lived it to the fullest. His generosity was endless, and he had a heart as big as the countryside.

Job Market

Line foreman

Fergus Electric Cooperative headquartered in Lewistown, Montana is seeking a line foreman for its Roundup, Montana satellite office/shop. The existing crew in Roundup consists of three journeyman linemen and an assistant line superintendent. Work duties include supervising and working with the line crew, construction of new services, mostly overhead, pole replacements, outage calls (nights and weekends), tree trimming and maintenance of power lines (7200/12470 volt and 50/69KV). For information call **Dale Rikala** at 406-535-3465 (in Lewistown) or Don Criswell at 406-323-1602 (in Roundup). The job does require a current CDL and an IBEW Journeyman card and requires supervisory skills, line construction knowledge, preferable RUS standards.

Journeyman Lineman

Sun River Electric Cooperative, Inc. in Fairfield MT is accepting applications for the position of Journeyman Lineman in the Fairfield area. The position requires the ability to perform all responsibilities required of a Journeyman Lineman, including rubber gloving and construction and maintenance of electrical transmission, substation, and distribution systems. Must have valid Montana CDL, First Aid/CPR Card, journeyman

lineman certification, and ability to climb poles and operate bucket trucks, digger derricks, backhoes, and other equipment commonly used in the utility business. Must pass pre-employment physical and drug and alcohol test prior to employment. Employees are required to live within 30 minutes of company headquarters. Applicants not meeting the journeyman criteria may be considered for hire as an apprentice based on experience and training and completion of an apprentice course. Interested applicants send resume to: Robert Anderson, Operations Manager, Sun River Electric, PO Box 309, Fairfield MT 59436-0309. Email: randerso@3rivers.net; phone: 406-467-2526. Deadline: December 21, 2007.

General manager

Burke-Divide Electric Cooperative of Columbus, N.D. is seeking a new general manager to replace the retiring manager. The board of directors seeks candidates with backgrounds that are broad enough in scope to include experience in utility operations, financial management and member relations. The board also seeks an individual with an appreciation for the cooperative business model, communications and people skills. The cooperative serves more than 2,300 meters and maintains 2,104 miles of line in five counties.

The company offers an excellent NRECA benefits package, including a competitive salary commensurate with qualifications. Please send resume, a minimum of three professional references and salary expectations by Jan. 15, 2008, to **Don Negaard**, Pringle & Herigstad, P.C., 2525 Elk Drive, P.O. Box 1000, Minot, ND 58702-1000. The information can also be e-mailed to Mr. Negaard. donn@srt.com

CALENDAR**January**

8-9	Electric systems workshop	Great Falls, MT
14-15	Environmental Quality Council meeting	Helena, MT
24	Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee meeting	Helena, MT