

Big Skylights



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

A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

September 20, 2007

President Clinton's energy speech hindered by outage

Maybe it had something to do with California's heavy reliance on green energy, maybe not. But, ironically, a speech by former President **Bill Clinton** on the topic of energy at a Hollywood-area fundraiser for **Hillary Clinton** Tuesday night was accompanied by a vivid reminder of just how dependent even celebrities can be on electricity. According to press reports, about 300 California actors and artists were gathered at a Brentwood home listening to President Clinton's energy speech when the power went out – in the entire neighborhood. The outage put the event into near total darkness, leaving only light from candles and some battery operated lanterns to shine on President Clinton as he spoke in the backyard pool area. According to news reports, the makeshift lighting helped but it was still hard to see guests. And with no electricity and, therefore no microphone, it wasn't always easy to hear, according to a guest.

“There are a lot of great things about the modern world,” President Clinton said, according to the guest. “Predictable electricity may not be one of them.”

Workshop offered for non-techies on utility basics

A two-day MECA-sponsored workshop providing electric co-op employees with a comprehensive understanding of electrical system operations, including generation, transmission and distribution will be held Nov. 13-14 at the MECA headquarters building in Great Falls. Titled “Electric Systems Operations for the Non-Engineer,” the workshop will be conducted by the Northwest Public Power Association.

The class is vital for anyone who anyone who needs a clear understanding of the technical heartbeat of the utility. Mechanical and civil engineers, engineering techs, purchasing agents, contract specialists and those in public relations will find this course helpful. Organizers say it's simply a great class for anyone desiring a better understanding of the “nuts and bolts” of an electric cooperative utility.

The fee for this course is \$300 per person with a minimum of 24 participants registered by the early registration date of Oct. 26 or the course may be cancelled. To obtain more information on registration, contact MECA's **Sharon McDonald** at 406-761-8333 or via electronic mail. Her e-mail address is: sharonm@mtco-ops.com

MECA kicks off first in series on leadership skills

The first in a series of courses leading to a certificate in foreman leadership skills is being sponsored by MECA and will be presented Nov. 5-6 at the MECA headquarters building in Great Falls. Northwest Public Power Association is conducting the course titled “Foreman Leadership Skills Program, Part 1.” Three additional courses that are part of the foreman leadership program will be offered by MECA in a multiple-day training session in

February, 2008. Participants must complete all four courses in order to receive the certificate. However, individual courses may be attended without receiving the certificate. For more information on this course and the series please contact MECA's **Lea Upshaw** at 406-761-8333 or via electronic mail. Her e-mail address is meca@mtco-ops.com.

Openings available for fast-track course

People can still sign up for the NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director Fast Track Course Series Oct. 29-Nov. 1 at the statewide office in Great Falls. Course No. 2600, "Director Duties and Liabilities," will be offered Oct. 29. Course No. 2610, "Understanding the Electric Business," will be held Oct. 30. Course No. 2620, "Board Roles and Relationships," will be held Oct. 31 and Course No. 2630, "Strategic Planning," will be offered Nov. 1 and "Financial Decision Making" will be offered Nov 2. Each course will begin at 8 a.m. and course fee is \$450 per course includes a continental breakfast and lunch each day. Oct. 10 is the early deadline for registration for the courses. For more information on this series contact MECA's **Sharon McDonald** at 406-761-8333.

CEO appraisal and compensation course set for fall

More slots are available for NRECA Course No. 935.1, "Appraising and Compensating the CEO," which MECA is offering this year in conjunction with MECA's annual meeting at the Heritage Inn in Great Falls. The course will be held Oct. 1. Course fee is \$250. Key topics addressed in this course include the role of the board in CEO appraisal and compensation, identifying goals for the chief executive in the strategic planning process, reaching consensus in performance appraisal, determining fair and equitable compensation and communicating with the CEO in the appraisal process. For more information and to register for this course, please contact MECA's **Sharon McDonald** at 406-761-8333.

CALENDAR

September

22	Beartooth Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Red Lodge, MT
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October

1	METSPool Annual Board Meeting	Great Falls, MT
1-4	MECA Annual Meeting	Great Falls, MT
4-5	Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee Meeting	Colstrip, MT
10	Valley Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Glasgow, MT
13	Big Flat Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Malta, MT
17-19	NRECA Region IX Meeting	Coeur d'Alene, ID
18	CFC District IX Meeting	Coeur d'Alene, ID
20	Sheridan Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Medicine Lake, MT
25	Goldenwest Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Wibaux, MT
26	Park Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Livingston, MT
29-Nov. 1	MECA-Sponsored NRECA Director Fast-Track Course Series	Great Falls, MT

November

5-6	MECA Course: "Foreman Leadership Skills Program, Part 1"	Great Falls, MT
6-8	MECA Operations Conference	Great Falls, MT
13-14	MECA Workshop: "Electric Systems Operations for the Non-Engineer"	Great Falls, MT
27-28	MECA Winter Board Meeting	Great Falls, MT