

Big Skylights



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

A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

March 16, 2017

Members at Big Horn Electric hear good news on advanced metering

New advanced meters to be installed over the next three years will help Big Horn County Electric Cooperative run more efficiently, members were told during the co-op's 78th Annual Meeting March 14 at the Big Horn County Fairgrounds in Hardin.

Manager **Reed Metzger** told members in attendance the substations will be upgraded in 2017, and meters will be installed at residences and businesses over the next three years. In addition to planned upgrades, any meter called in for having an issue will also be swapped out at that time.

The new meters will allow crews to detect the area and cause of an outage much quicker. They also will free up linemen to do more maintenance, as currently those employees hang door hangers prior to disconnects and must go out in teams of two to disconnect service. The new meters allow for remote disconnects.

In a separate report, Board President **Brett Nedens** told members a new approach to budgeting will allow the co-op to better plan for replacing equipment on a regular schedule, improving efficiency and safety.

In addition, MECA was pleased to provide a legislative update.

In elections, incumbents Mr. Nedens and **Lila Taylor** were re-elected without opposition. Incumbent **Hale Jeffers**, who was appointed in the past year, also won election to the board.

DOT training to be held at MECA statewide office

MECA will hold a ½ day DOT compliance-training course at our statewide office in Great Falls on March 21. The training will run from 9a.m. – noon. The purpose of this course is to cover all aspects of DOT compliance, including CDLs, vehicle inspections, motor carrier rules and load securements. A Q&A session will be available at the end of the training.

The training will be instructed by **J.R. Killham**, who is a commercial motor vehicle safety investigator at the Montana Department of Transportation.

The cost of the course is \$50. The registration deadline is Friday, March 3.

For those participants needing overnight accommodations, MECA has corporate rates at the Best Western Heritage Inn (406) 761-1900; the Staybridge Inn & Suites (406) 761-4903; or, the LaQuinta Inn & Suites (406) 761-2600. When calling, be sure to request the Montana Electric Co-ops (MECA) corporate rate.

If you have any questions, including questions about registration, please contact **Lea Potoczny** at meca@mtco-ops.com or (406) 761-8333.

Glacier Electric to host NESC training May 16

MECA, in cooperation with Glacier Electric Cooperative, will hold a one-day NESC training at Glacier Electric Cooperative in Cut Bank on **May 16, 2017**.

The course will focus on the major changes in the 2017 NESC, and provide a general overview of each part of the NESC. A full course description has been sent to line superintendents and line foremen. The registration deadline for this training is Monday, May 1.

For those participants needing overnight accommodations, area hotels include the Super 8 in Cut Bank (406) 873-5662; the Glacier Gateway Plaza in Cut Bank (406) 873-5544; the Comfort Inn in Shelby (406) 434-2212; and the Best Western Shelby Inn and Suites (406) 424-4560.

If you have any questions, including questions about registration, please contact **Lea Potoczny** at meca@mco-ops.com or (406) 761-8333.

Job Market

Journeyman Lineman

Goldenwest Electric Cooperative in Wibaux, Mont., is seeking a full-time journeyman lineman.

Responsibilities include construction and maintenance of overhead and underground distribution lines, along with maintenance of transmission lines and substations. A valid Montana or North Dakota CDL is required for this position. Applicants must be certified in climbing and working in all aspects of the lineman trade. The person in this position will be required to lift up to 100 pounds, work in all weather conditions, be on-call and work long hours when required.

Goldenwest Electric Cooperative offers an excellent wage and benefit package in a non-union environment. Qualified applicants can send a resume with at least three references to **John Sokoloski**, General Manager, Goldenwest Electric Cooperative, PO Box 177, Wibaux, MT 59353. This information can also be emailed to gwec@midrivers.com. Questions should be directed to Mr. Sokoloski at (406) 796-2423 or emailed to gwec@midrivers.com. The submission deadline is March 31, 2017.

Master Electrician

McCone Electric Cooperative in Circle, Montana, is seeking a highly motivated Master Electrician or Journeyman Electrician who could test for a Master Electrician License. This is a position for a qualified professional. Applicants should have a working knowledge of the National Electrical Code (NEC) and the National Electric Safety Code (NESC). The successful candidate must have the ability to handle a variety of diverse tasks and organize work to meet deadlines; have proficient communications skills, both written and oral; must be organized, a problem solver, and future-oriented; and must be able to climb, lift and operate a variety of equipment. McCone Electric Cooperative offers an excellent wage and benefit package. McCone Electric is committed to having a strong safety program, and safety is the co-op's first priority. McCone Electric Cooperative delivers electric power to more than 5,000 meters in 14,400 square miles of eastern Montana. McCone Electric's member-owners have relied on low-cost, reliable electric service for 70 years. McCone Electric employs 24 dedicated team members and has annual revenues in excess of \$7 million.

Applications can be downloaded at www.mcconeelectric.coop or picked up in the Circle office. All inquiries or email applications can be sent to **Scot Brown** at sbrown@mcconeelectric.coop or mailed to: McCone Electric, PO Box 368, Circle, MT 59215. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled.

CALENDAR

March

14-17	New Co-op Communicator Orientation	Arlington, VA
18	Flathead Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Kalispell, MT
18	Missoula Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Missoula, MT
18	Ravalli County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Corvallis, MT
21	DOT Compliance Training	Great Falls, MT
21	Mid-Yellowstone Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Hysham, MT
23	Yellowstone Valley Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Billings, MT
25	Lincoln Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Eureka, MT
30	Central MT Electric Power Cooperative Annual Meeting	Great Falls, MT
31	Sun River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Fairfield, MT

April

1-4	Directors Conference	Tampa, FL
3	Directors Course 921.1 – Board Leadership Certification	Great Falls, MT
4-5	MECA Spring Committee & Board Meetings	Great Falls, MT
6	Upper Missouri Power Cooperative Annual Meeting	Sidney, MT
11-13	New CEO Orientation	Arlington, VA
12	Glacier Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Cut Bank, MT
14	Marias River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Shelby, MT
23-25	NRECA Legislative Conference	Washington, D.C.

May 1

2-5	NRECA Connect Conference	Tampa, FL
6	Northern Lights, Inc. Annual Meeting	Sagle, ID
7-10	NWPPA Annual Meeting	Sunriver, OR
9-10	MECA Line Superintendents' Group Spring Meeting	Lewistown, MT
9-11	Gettysburg Leadership Experience for Co-op Leaders	Gettysburg, PA
9-11	New Director Orientation	Arlington, VA
16	National Electric Safety Code (NESC) Training	Cut Bank, MT
17-19	New CFO Orientation	Dulles, VA
13	Hill County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Havre, MT
23-24	Accounting for Non-Accountants Workshop	Great Falls, MT