

Big Skylights



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

A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

May 11, 2017

Northern Lights breaks ground on solar project

Renewable generation was a focal point of Northern Lights Inc.'s 82nd Annual Meeting on May 6 in Sandpoint, Idaho.

Manager **Annie Terracciano** told the members about the successful Lake Creek Dam in Troy, Montana, and showed a video of the dam taken from a drone. She also announced the new community solar project that will

be built next to the co-op's headquarters in Sagle, Idaho. Ground was broken this week on the 50 kW array, and the panels are currently more than half sold at \$300 per panel.

Board President **Steve Elgar** walked members through the process of setting up a new service, using the steps as a way to introduce each employee of the cooperative, and explain their role.

In elections, Mr. Elgar was re-elected without opposition and **Dave Anderson** defeated incumbent **G.E. "Butch" Hagen**.

MECA offers avian training seminars

MECA is organizing Avian Protection Seminars in two locations in conjunction with training requirements of the statewide Avian Protection Plan (APP) adopted by most of Montana's electric cooperatives. The APP requires periodic training on avian protection.

The trainings will be held in Missoula on Wednesday, May 31, at the Hilton Garden Inn, located at 3720 North Reserve Street, and in Billings on Thursday, June 1, at the Hampton Inn and Suites, located at 3550 Ember Lane.

Both training seminars will begin at 10 a.m., ending at 2 p.m. Lunch will be served as part of the seminar. The seminar will be conducted by **Jim Burruss**, MECA's avian protection consultant. Mr. Burruss, who developed our statewide avian protection plan, is a wildlife biologist with extensive experience working in the electric utility industry. He is well respected in Montana and other states. In addition, officials from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service will provide presentations. There will also be a presentation on bird biology, including live birds to help attendees gain additional understanding of avian issues.

Among the topics to be covered are avian reporting requirements, a review of the APP and a discussion of viable retrofit options to address avian problems. Co-ops are urged to contact MECA if they have any suggestions on information you would like to have presented. Mr. Burruss will cover any topics you may request.

It is strongly advised each co-op send at least two people to one of these seminars. The cost to attend is \$150/person, which includes the working lunch.

Registration forms have been sent out. Additional forms are available by contacting **Lea Potoczny** of our staff. We are asking that the completed forms be returned to Ms. Potoczny by no later than May 26. She can be reached by calling (406) 761-8333 or via email, meca@mtco-ops.com. Room blocks have not been established at either hotel, but currently both facilities have rooms available if overnight accommodations are needed. The Hilton Garden Inn in Missoula can be reached by calling (406) 532-5300. The Hampton Inn & Suites in Billings can be reached by calling (406) 656-7511.

Job Market**Journeyman Lineman**

Marias River Electric Cooperative (MREC) is seeking a qualified candidate to fill the position of journeyman lineman.

MREC is a rural electric distribution cooperative headquartered in Shelby, Mont. MREC is located 90 miles north of Great Falls, and serves approximately 4,000 member-owners in Toole, Liberty, and Pondera counties.

The ideal candidate must have a thorough knowledge of the construction, operation, and maintenance of distribution and transmission lines and substations. A thorough knowledge of the National Electrical Safety Code, OSHA rules and regulations, the ability to read and understand, staking sheets, federal Rural Utilities Service specifications, and assembly and material specifications. A working knowledge of leadership is required.

A high school diploma or equivalent is required, along with a Journeyman Lineman Certificate of Completion. Five-plus years of progressive experience in all aspects of electric utility construction, maintenance, and operations experience is preferred. The selected candidate will report directly to the operations superintendent.

MREC offers a competitive salary and a benefit package, including NRECA retirement and a Lineco insurance program. The selected candidate will be required to become a member of IBEW Local 44. Pre-employment drug and physical test is required, and candidate must be able to obtain and maintain a valid Montana (CDL) driver's license

To apply, please submit a cover letter and resume, along with three professional references, no later than May 26, 2017 to: Mr. **Randy Ruff**, Operations Superintendent, Marias River Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 729, Shelby, MT 59474. Phone: (406) 434-5575. Marias River Electric website: www.mariasriverec.com.

CALENDAR

May

13	Hill County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Havre, MT
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

June

1	Lower Yellowstone REA Annual Meeting	Sidney, MT
2	McCone Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Circle, MT
2	Southeast Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Ekalaka, MT
6	FEMA Training	Sidney, MT
8	FEMA Training	Great Falls, MT
8	Fergus Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Lewistown, MT
10	Fall River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Ashton, ID
10-16	Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.	Washington, D.C.
22-23	MECA Managers' Group Summer Meeting	Helena, MT

July

6-7	MECA Summer Board and Committees Meetings	Kalispell, MT
13	Goldenwest Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Wibaux, MT
22	Tongue River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Broadus, MT