

Professional Development Services Provided by



Montana Electric
Cooperatives' Association
Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Montana Electric
Cooperatives' Association

501 Bay Dive
PO Box 1306
Great Falls, MT 59403

Phone: 406.761.8333
Fax: 406.761.8339
website: www.mtco-ops.com

2018 Education & Training Program

Board Governance Courses

929.1 Current Issues in Policy Development

Policies set the standard for board behavior. Attendees learn to view policies as proactive tools to establish a standard of board behavior required for governance in today's electric cooperative boardroom. This course revisits the fundamentals of governance and the roles policies play in contributing to effective governance. Participants take part in discussions about current issues facing rural electric cooperatives and how the governance function contributes to the cooperative and adds value. As these issues are discussed and debated, a sample set of policies are used to show examples of policies relevant to addressing today's governance issues.

Where: MECA Statewide Office

When: April 3, 2018 (In conjunction with MECA Spring Meeting)

Cost: No cost to co-ops enrolled in 2018 Education & Training Plan
\$600 per participant for co-ops not enrolled in 2018 Prepaid Plan

955.1 Your Board's Culture: It Impact on Effectiveness

Directors have official responsibilities but they also tend to conform to the unofficial norms and ways of behaving that evolve uniquely in each boardroom. Such local norms, approved behaviors and ways of thinking that come to be adopted by a group constitute a board's culture. Some cultures can promote board effectiveness, but others lead to conflict, complacency or similar counter-productive behaviors. This course explains the concept of boardroom culture through an examination of real board case studies, and it discusses why directors should understand and monitor their own boardroom culture.

Where: MECA Statewide Office

When: October 1, 2018 (In conjunction with MECA Annual Meeting)

Cost: No cost to co-ops enrolled in 2018 Education & Training Plan
\$600 per participant for co-ops not enrolled in 2018 Education Prepaid Plan

2620 Board Operations and Process

The success of the cooperative is based on its ability to nurture and maintain effective relationships with members, community leaders, media, public officials and others. This course explains how the director and the full board each play a key role in developing plans and in implementing actions to maintain and manage these relationships.

Where: Yogo Inn—Lewistown, MT

When: March 13, 2018

Cost: No cost to co-ops enrolled in 2018 Education & Training Plan
\$600 per participant for co-ops not enrolled in 2018 Education Prepaid Plan

2640 Financial Decision Making


This course is designed to help directors understand the role of the board in financial planning, including identifying the basic documents used in financial planning and reporting, assessing the issues that drive financial decisions, balancing competing goals, and taking responsibility to monitor and evaluate results.

Where: Yogo Inn—Lewistown, MT

When: March 14 & 15, 2018 (only 1/2 day on the 15th)

Cost: No cost to co-ops enrolled in 2018 Education & Training Plan
\$600 per participant for co-ops not enrolled in 2018 Education Prepaid Plan

Please note: We are working on bringing in an additional class for Rules and Procedures for Effective Board Meetings. At this time, I am still researching instructors—course materials.



"The education of our people should be a lifelong process by which we continue to feed new vigor into the lifestream of the Nation through intelligent, reasoned decisions. Let us think of education as the means of developing our greatest abilities, because in each of us there is a private hope and dream which, fulfilled, can be translated into benefit for everyone and greater strength for our nation."

— John F. Kennedy

Member Services

Role and Importance of Member Services in a Cooperative

Course description to come.

Where: Great Falls, MT

When: TBD

Cost: No cost to co-ops enrolled in 2017 Education & Training Plan
\$600 per participant for co-ops not enrolled in 2018 Prepaid Plan

Writing & Editing Workshop Website & Indesign Workshop

Course descriptions to come.

Where: Great Falls, MT

When: March 27-28, 2018

Cost: No cost to co-ops enrolled in 2018 Education & Training Plan
\$700 per participant for co-ops not enrolled in 2018 Prepaid Plan

General Office

NRECA Retirement Seminar

Do you have employees who are within approximately 10 years of retirement? Are they asking questions about how to withdraw their retirement benefits or whether they will have enough money to live on?

The Retirement Planning Seminar is presented by NRECA's experienced investment advisors, field services representatives and local Social Security and estate planning professionals.

Seminar Outcomes:

- Understand the taxation of retirement benefit withdrawals
- Estimate future expenses and retirement income needs
- Calculate additional savings needed to meet retirement goals
- Anticipate needs for long-term care, health insurance and estate planning
- Develop a retirement investment strategy
- Assume control of planning for retirement

Where: MECA Statewide Office

When: August 14-15, 2018

Cost: No cost

Social Skills for Cooperatives: Meeting the Members In the Age of Digital

Gone are the days of only serving the co-op members face-to-face. Today's co-op employee must not only communicate across many generations but do so through the use of many different types of technology. This workshop will provide co-op employees with the critical communication skills they need to meet and exceed their members' expectations in the age of iPhones and Facebook. Topics include:

- LEARN practical techniques for handling personal encounters with co-op members, both in person and online through social media.
- PICK the words that communicate confidence while avoiding the words and phrases that suggest insecurity.
- UNDERSTAND the importance of differentiating the online critic from an online troll.
- RECOGNIZE AND CONTROL what is being communicated through body language.
- HOW to manage the member who wants to film their encounters at the co-op. Should you allow it and why or why not.
- KNOW when private information becomes public. How to contain the chatter while serving the members.

Where/When Havre, MT— July 31, 2018

Dillon, MT—August 2, 2018

Cost: No cost to co-ops enrolled in 2018 Education & Training Plan
\$700 per participant for co-ops not enrolled in 2018 Education

General Office

711.1 Everyone Communicates; Few Connect: Tools for Bridging the Gap

Clear, consistent communication is the foundation of teams working well together to get the job done in support of the co-op's mission. According to a [survey](#) by the communication consulting and training group Interact, the majority (69%) of supervisors are often uncomfortable communicating with employees. Understanding what makes people tick and adjusting your personal style improves communication and avoids a lot of headaches and heartburn. Take this opportunity to assess your communication strengths and weaknesses, recognize your assumptions and practice techniques for improving communication skills in both business and personal communications.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understand your communication style and recognize the styles of your team members and boss; appreciate how differences in communication styles impact how a message is received.
 - Learn active listening skills and how to use them effectively.
 - Learn a 3-step formula to give feedback to your team members and other colleagues.
 - Understand the impact that body language and tone of voice have on interpersonal communication.
 - Describe the impact that stereotyping, personal filters, triggers and assumptions have on interpersonal communication and how to deal with these unconscious components of communication.
- Identify the communication styles of others and adjust yours to improve communication.

KEY TOPICS:

- The role of the supervisor as a communication pipeline
 - "Above the surface" versus "below the surface" components of communication
 - Impact of body language, tone of voice and word choice on your message
 - Active listening skills
 - Personality styles
 - Learning styles
- Impact of personal filters, assumptions and values on your interpretation of what others are saying

Where: MECA Statewide Office

When: May 9, 2018

Cost: No cost to co-ops enrolled in 2018 Education & Training Plan
\$600 per participant for co-ops not enrolled in 2018 Prepaid Plan

Understanding Service Account Collections and Disconnects

For most business enterprises, collecting past-due debts is time-consuming, stressful and subtracts from the organization's overall productivity. There are federal and state laws with which to comply, as well as the overall customer and public relations issues to consider. This program is designed to assist utility service providers in collecting past-due accounts with a maximum of return on resources invested, minimal hassle, and in compliance with all applicable rules and regulations. Using class discussion, small-group activities and practice sessions, attendees will gain insight into the following key topics:

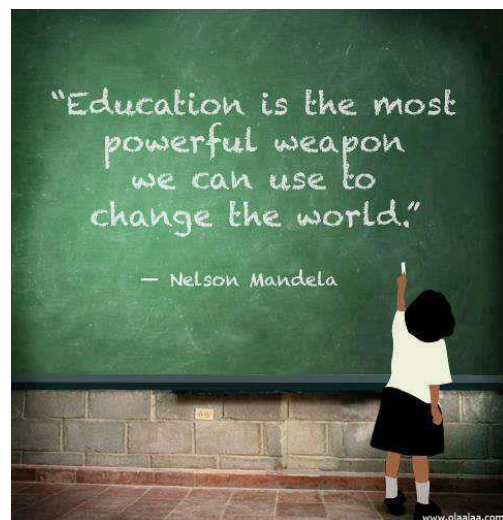
KEY TOPICS

- Key provisions of the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, and applicable terms of the Consumer Credit Protection Act of 1977
- Rules and regulations covering service discontinuance/disconnection
- Collections from estates and bankruptcies
- Small claims courts and collection agencies
- Tips and techniques designed to maximize the effectiveness of communication regarding cutoffs and past-due bill collections

Where: MECA Statewide Office

When: September 12, 2018

Cost: No cost to co-ops enrolled in 2017 Education & Training Plan
\$650 per participant for co-ops not enrolled in 2018 Prepaid Plan



Safety/Loss Control

Lineman Basics Course

This 2 ½ day course will feature various instructors who will cover a variety of topics to include:

Transformer Connections and Theory
Meters and Metering
Connectors

When: February 6-8, 2018
Where: Statewide Office, Great Falls, MT
Estimated Fee: \$325

Qualified Worker Training

This training is designed for employees who face a risk of electrical hazard that is not reduced to a safe level by the applicable electrical installation requirements. Such employees shall be trained to understand the specific hazards associated with electrical energy. They shall be trained in safety-related work practices and procedural requirements, as necessary, to provide protection from the electrical hazards associated with their respective job or task assignments. Employees shall be trained to identify and understand the relationship between electrical hazards and possible injury.

When: April 10-11, 2018 at Ravalli Electric
April 12-13, 2018 at Yellowstone Valley Electric
Estimated Fee: \$600

Regulator School

Mike Dean will once again be coming to Montana to instruct a Regulator School. This 2 day course will be limited to the first 30 registered participants.

When: July 17 & 18, 2018
Where: Park Electric Cooperative, Livingston, MT
Estimated Fee: \$375

OSHA 1910.269 Training

This course will be taught by Johnnie Stanton, Safety & Loss Control Instructor for Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association. The 2½ day course will cover all topics in the OSHA 1910.269 Regulation – Electric Power Generation, Transmission and Distribution.

When: November 13-15, 2018
Where: Statewide Office, Great Falls, MT
Estimated Fee: \$250

Foreman Leadership Skill Training Series Certificate Program

Session 1 ~ Preparing Foremen for Leadership & Learning to Lead Others
Session 2 ~ Effective Problem Solving & Transition from Employee to Foreman
Session 3 ~ Reducing Conflicts & Communication & Customer Service
Session 4 ~ Developing Management Skills & Building an Effective Workgroup

When: Sessions 1 & 2—March 20-22, 2018
Sessions 3 & 4—June 5-7, 2018
Where: Statewide Office, Great Falls, MT
Estimated Fee: Fees will range based on whether you're an NWPPA member or not

Registrations will be through NWPPA for this event.

MECA Operations Conference

This 3 ½ day event is a great learning and networking opportunity for operations personnel. Multiple trainings as well as vendors are available.

When: September 10-13, 2018
Where: Best Western Heritage Inn, Great Falls, MT
Estimated Fee: \$150

