

# Big Skylights



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

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A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

January 19, 2017

## Electric Co-op Day draws crowd to Capitol Rotunda

By all accounts, MECA's Electric Co-op Day in the state Capitol Rotunda on Jan. 9 was a success. Nearly 400 lunches, featuring Montana beef, were served to legislators, legislative staff and other staff working in the Capitol. Thanks to our electric co-ops' member services staff for organizing the event.

As part of the day's activities, MECA was grateful for the opportunity to have the entire one hour of Northern Broadcasting Network's Voices of Montana radio talk show devoted to the electric co-ops, allowing us to talk about our legislative issues of concern, as well as about who we are across the state. We were interviewed by **Jon Arneson**, host of the show.

## Social media workshop set for February 16

MECA will hold a one-day Social Media Workshop Feb. 16, at the statewide association office in Great Falls. The workshop will be presented by **Molly McPherson**. Ms. McPherson brings more than 25 years of communications experience helping clients find the right strategy for 21st-century communications, combining the best practices of today with the traditional methods of the past. She is a frequent featured speaker and trainer for several national agencies and associations including FEMA, Homeland Security, and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

The one-day workshop will cover: overview of the top social media networks (as of Feb 2017); basic social cues, etiquette, formatting; social media dashboards; online reputational management; social media exercises; social media best practices for co-ops; generational use and expectations in an online work environment; top communication skills for 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace; overview of social media section of Crisis Communication toolkit on cooperative.com; and co-ops in an online crisis — how to handle and prevent an online hijack or attack.

For co-ops enrolled in the 2017 Prepaid Education & Training Program, there is no charge for this workshop. A \$600 per participant fee will be charged for co-ops not enrolled in the prepaid program.

For information on registration or if you have any questions, please contact Beckie Frediani at the statewide office. She can be reached via email: [beckie@mtco-ops.com](mailto:beckie@mtco-ops.com). The phone number is (406) 761-8333. Registration can also be completed online at [www.mtco-ops.com/social-media-workshop-registration](http://www.mtco-ops.com/social-media-workshop-registration).

## MECA offers course on workplace conflicts

MECA will offer Workplace Protection Training: Verbal De-escalation and S.A.V.E. Yourself at the statewide association office in Great Falls on **Feb. 22**. This course is designed for all cooperative employees, whether it's inside personnel or outside line personnel. The verbal de-escalation portion of the course focuses on conflict resolution and trains employees on how to deal with difficult or non-compliant people. The S.A.V.E. Yourself program teaches employees how to survive if they are ever confronted with an active killer. The instructor, **Chad Sheehan**, has trained electric cooperative employees from Iowa, South Dakota, Missouri and Minnesota. In total, his programs have been taught to more than 35,000 people from different states.

The registration deadline for this course is Friday, Feb. 3. The registration fee is based on the total number of participants in the class. The fee is \$400 per person if there up to 20 participants in the class, \$300 per person for 21-29 participants in the class and \$200 per person if there are 30 participants in the class. The registration

fee includes lunch. No refunds for cancellations will be given after Feb. 3. However, participant substitutions are welcome.

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.

To register or if you have any questions regarding this course, please contact **Lea Potoczny** at the statewide office. She can be reached via email: [meca@mtco-ops.com](mailto:meca@mtco-ops.com). The phone number is (406) 761-8333.

## **Job Market**

### **Consumer/Accounting Clerk**

Vigilante Electric Cooperative is searching for a dedicated and outgoing individual to provide courteous and efficient customer service. Candidates must have excellent oral and written communication skills, demonstrate teamwork and flexibility, and must be able to use business software packages, including Microsoft Office Suite. An equivalent combination of education and experience is desirable.

This is a career job with progressive pay and an outstanding benefits package. The work schedule is full-time, 40 hrs/wk. The deadline for application is Feb. 15, 2017. Applicants should submit a cover letter and resume directly to Vigilante Electric Cooperative, PO Box 1049, Dillon, MT 59725 or contact **Raquel Reno-Morast**, (406) 683-2327 for more information.

### **IT Specialist**

Ravalli Electric Cooperative (REC) is looking for an IT Specialist who is responsible for providing corporate-wide server and end-user device support for a variety of computer equipment, software and operating systems.

The person in this position will be responsible for maintaining corporate networking, including Windows and other servers, wired and wireless infrastructure and WAN access, including routing, firewalls and remote access, Active Directory and all other server infrastructure, including databases such as Microsoft SQL Server and Oracle, and monitoring cyber security for all computing resources to maintain availability for corporate needs while delivering IT support and training to REC employees and the board of directors.

Experience/educational requirements are as follows: A four-year college degree in Information Technology or a related field and MCSA certification is preferred. However, consideration of education and work experience, including the management and technical support of a LAN and WAN system, Windows Workstations and Servers, Active Directory, MS, SQL, Oracle and UNIX/LINUX responsibilities may be given in lieu of a degree. Applicants must have good analytic, written, and oral communication skills, experience with customer service and be able to lift and carry up to 50 pounds. The successful applicant must possess a valid Montana driver's license, present a professional appearance at all times, and have the ability to travel occasionally out of town. Offers are contingent upon completion of a background check.

To apply, please visit REC's website at [www.ravallielectric.com](http://www.ravallielectric.com) and submit a completed REC job application, resume and letter of interest. A benefits package is available after 90 days, and competitive wage depends on experience. This position will remain open until filled.

## CALENDAR

### February

7-9	Lineman Basics Training Course	Great Falls, MT
16	Social Media Training Course	Great Falls, MT
22	Workplace Protection Course	
23-26	Director Education Programs, Pre-NRECA Annual Meeting	San Diego, CA
26-March 1	NRECA Annual Meeting	San Diego, CA
26-March 1	NRECA Tech Advantage Conference	San Diego, CA

### March

3	Vigilante Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Dillon, MT
8-9	NRECA Training Courses: 2600 Director Duties & Liabilities and Understanding the Electric Business	Great Falls, MT
14	Big Horn County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Hardin, MT
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
14	Marias River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Shelby, MT
23-25	NRECA Legislative Conference	Washington, D.C.