

Big Skylights



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

A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

January 7, 2016

Lincoln Electric takes step as CFC borrower

Lincoln Electric Cooperative recently refinanced outstanding debt from other lenders to become a 100-percent CFC borrower, the fifth from Montana, according to CFC's *Solutions* news bulletin.

Condolences

Richard "Dick" Artz, 73, a trustee at Sun River Electric Cooperative, passed away Dec. 16 at his home with his wife and son by his side. Funeral services were held Dec. 23 at St. Matthias Catholic Church in Augusta.

Mr. Artz was born in Great Falls on Oct. 10, 1942, to Norbert and Marie Artz. He was raised and educated in Augusta, graduating in 1960, and then attending Northern Montana College in Havre.

Nov. 16, 1963, he married **Shirley Weikum** and in 1971, a son **Shawn** was born. Together they operated a combination irrigated/dry-land small grains farm along with a cow/calf operation. In 2012, he had to cut back on the work, and in 2014 he had to lease the place out. In his early years, Dick enjoyed fishing, trapping and hunting in this beautiful state of Montana.

Dick served two years in the Montana Air National Guard, six years on the Augusta School Board, 50 years as a member of the Augusta American Legion Post #51, 28 years as president of Nilan Water Users Association, and seven years as a director for Sun River Electric.

He fought leukemia for three years. Later, other health issues took over, and his body just couldn't take the stress anymore.

Mr. Artz is survived by his wife, Shirley of 52 years; son Shawn Artz; sister **Barbara (John) Krause**; nephew **Justin (Prairie) Krause**; and several aunts; uncles; and cousins. He was preceded in death by his parents, **Bert and Marie Artz**. The family would like to thank Dr. **Brian Martin**, and all the staff at Sletten for the exceptional care Dick received.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be sent to Sletten Cancer Institute, 1117 29th St S, Great Falls, MT 59405 or the donor's choice.

Foreman skills sign-up extended due to shortfall in enrollment numbers

Due to low enrollment, the registration deadline for the upcoming Foreman Leadership Skills Certificate Program has been extended. If you have anyone who you would like to send who isn't already registered, MECA is taking registrations up until the Thursday before the start date of each session.

Following is the sessions schedule:

- Sessions 1 & 2 in Billings (Jan.12-15) – New registration deadline: Thursday, Jan.7;
- Sessions 1 & 2 in Missoula (Feb. 9-12): New registration deadline: Thursday, Feb.4;
- Sessions 3 & 4 in Billings (Feb. 23-26): New registration deadline: Thursday, Feb. 18;
- Sessions 3 & 4 in Missoula (March 22-25): New registration deadline: Thursday, March 17.

Also, those individuals unable to attend all four sessions can attend some now and some at a later date, and still receive their certificate once all four sessions are completed. Also, sessions do not have to be taken in order, meaning sessions 3 & 4 could be taken before 1 & 2.

For additional information and to register, please contact **Lea Potoczny** of our staff. The phone number is (406) 761-8333. Her email address is meca@mtco-ops.com.

OSHA 1910.269 training offered March 1-3

MECA will offer OSHA 1910.269 training at our statewide association office in Great Falls, March 1-3.

The course will be taught by MECA's senior safety instructor, **Johnnie Stanton**. He will cover all topics in the OSHA 1910.269 regulation — electric power generation, transmission and distribution.

The course will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 1 and conclude by noon on Thursday, March 3. Lunch will be provided on Tuesday and Wednesday, and a continental breakfast and snacks will be provided each day.

Monday, Feb. 15, is the deadline to register.

For overnight accommodations, MECA has corporate room rates at the following hotels in Great Falls: LaQuinta Inn & Suites (Ph: 406-761-2600); Best Western Heritage Inn (Ph: 406-761-1900); and, Staybridge Inn & Suites (Ph: 406-761-4903).

Anyone with questions or needing additional information should contact Lea Potoczny of our staff at (406) 761-8333. Her email address is meca@mtco-ops.com.

MECA offers training in line personnel basics

MECA will hold a 2½ day lineman basics training course at our headquarters office in Great Falls, Feb. 2-4.

The purpose of this course is to provide linemen with additional training that they may not receive through their regular safety meetings, and to provide a hands-on learning opportunity. Speakers will provide in-depth training on numerous topics. These include **Diana Hamilton**, speaking on the topic of meters and metering; **John Nanini**, teaching on transformer connections and theory, and; **Tom Nordrum**, covering fusing review and three-phase transformer connection issues.

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, please contact **Lea Potozny** at the statewide office by the registration deadline of Jan. 15. If you have any questions, please contact her at meca@mtco-ops.com or, via telephone, 406-761-8333.

Job Market

Journeyman Lineman

Fall River Rural Electric Cooperative is accepting resumes for a safety conscious, highly motivated individual to fill a lineman position on the co-op's Island Park, Idaho, crew. Surrounded by the Targhee National Forest, Fall River Electric is a nonprofit electric utility engaged in improving our members' lives by providing them with reliable energy, and by actively helping members manage their energy use.

Key responsibilities of this position include the ability to safely perform maintenance and construction work on overhead and underground transmission and distribution systems, skill in operation of all applicable equipment, able to assist with outage restoration, line switching, tree trimming, etc., and requirement to take rotating on-call duty.

Qualifications are as follows: prefer a certified journeyman level lineman, but may consider a third or fourth year apprentice, will possess a working knowledge of applicable codes and safety rules; must live within a 15-minute response time from their assigned office in Island Park; strong verbal communication skills will be required in order to deal with a vast range of personalities, both inside and outside the organization; capable of working outdoors in harsh weather conditions; and must have a valid Idaho CDL.

Fall River Electric is an equal opportunity employer offering a competitive salary, paid sick and vacation days and mental, dental life insurance and retirement plans.

To be considered for this outstanding career opportunity, your resume must be received no later than January, 18th 2016. Please send to: Fall River Electric Cooperative, Attention: Human Resources, P.O. Box 736 Milville, UT 84326. Or, email to: melanienichols2@gmail.com

Staff Engineer

Fall River Rural Electric Cooperative is seeking a hardworking, organized, career-minded individual to fill the critical position of staff engineer. The co-op is headquartered in Ashton, Idaho, near Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks.

The system engineer will work under the direction of the manager of engineering, and is responsible for all engineering design aspects of the co-op's electrical system. This individual analyzes the electrical system for safe, efficient operation and monitors system reliability and resolves areas of concern as necessary. This individual also works closely with dispatch to ensure effective SCADA system operation and provides support in the automation of the cooperative's substation, transmission, and distribution systems. This individual provides guidance and direction to employees whose duties relate to engineering functions within the co-op.

The preferred applicant will have a four-year college degree in engineering and/or be a professional electrical engineer, with emphasis in power systems. A minimum of five years' of work experience in electrical utility engineering activities is required, along with a valid state driver's license.

In addition to an outstanding career opportunity, Fall River Electric offers a competitive salary, paid sick and vacation days, as well as comprehensive benefits, including medical, dental, life insurance and retirement plans.

To view the staff engineering job description and learn more about Fall River Rural Electric Cooperative, visit www.fallriverelectric.com. Information about the position can be found under "My Cooperative/Employment Opportunities." To apply, send resume and salary history by Jan. 8, 2016 to: Fall River Electric Cooperative; Attention: Human Resources; P.O. Box 736; Milville, UT 84326. Or email melanienichols2@gmail.com.

Journeyman Lineman

Sun River Electric Cooperative in Fairfield, Mont., is accepting applications for the position of journeyman lineman in the Fairfield area. The position requires the ability to perform all responsibilities required of a journeyman lineman, including rubber gloving, and construction and maintenance of electrical transmission, substation, and distribution systems. To be considered for the position, applicants must have journeyman lineman certification, valid Montana CDL, and First Aid/CPR Card. They also must have the ability to climb poles and operate bucket trucks, digger derricks, backhoes, and other equipment commonly used in the utility business. They must pass pre-employment physical, and a drug and alcohol test. The person hired for this position will be required to live within 30 minutes response time of the Fairfield shop. Applicants not meeting journeyman criteria may be considered for hire as an apprentice based on experience and training. Applications are available online at www.sunriverelectric.coop. Send applications to Robert Anderson, Operations Manager, Sun River Electric, PO Box 309, Fairfield MT 59436-0309; email: randerson@sunriverelectric.coop; phone: 406-467-2526. Deadline for application: Open until filled.

Billing Clerk

Lincoln Electric Cooperative, based in Eureka, has an immediate opening for the full-time position of billing clerk. The person in this position is responsible for managing the automated meter readings, performing the billing and collection processes, maintaining the databases that support them, accepting payments and providing customer assistance. A high school diploma or equivalent is required. Two years of post secondary education in a related field is preferred. Utility experience is recommended but not essential. If you are a highly motivated and organized individual who is customer oriented and functions well in a team environment, submit a Lincoln Electric employment application, along with a professional resume, to: Kylie Larson; Office Supervisor/HR Director; Lincoln Electric Cooperative, PO Box 628; Eureka, MT 59917. Ms. Larson's email address is klarson@lincolnelectric.coop. This position will remain open until filled.

Journeyman Lineman

Big Horn County Electric Cooperative (BHCEC), based in Hardin, Mont., has an opening for a journeyman lineman.

Applicants must have completed a recognized apprenticeship program, be a team player, be on an "on-call"

rotation and have or be able to obtain and maintain a Montana CDL. Other requirements are: Having a positive safety-minded attitude, ability to operate equipment associated with the trade, physically able to perform all the duties involved with being a journeyman lineman, and pass a pre-employment drug screen.

BHCEC is located in southeast Montana in the heart of an outdoor enthusiast's dream. If you enjoy hunting, fishing, water sports, winter activities and much more this is a great place to be. The co-op offers a competitive salary and benefit package. For more information, applicants can call the office at (406) 665-2830 to obtain an application. Email resumes to mrussell@bhcec.com.

CALENDAR

January 2016

9-13	NRECA CEO Close-up Conference	Tucson, AZ
12-15	Foreman Leadership Skills Program, Sessions 1 & 2	Billings, MT
13	NRECA Resolutions Committee Meeting	Tucson, AZ
15	Montana Legislature's Interim Energy Committee Meeting	Helena, MT
20-21	Montana Council of Co-ops Annual Meeting	Great Falls, MT
25-27	NRECA New Co-op Director Orientation	Arlington, VA

February

2-4	Lineman Basics Course	Great Falls, MT
2-4	NRECA New & Emerging Technologies Conference (NET 2016)	Fort Meyers, FL
9-12	Foreman Leadership Skills Training, Sessions 1 & 2	Missoula, MT
11-17	NRECA Annual Meeting	New Orleans, LA
23-26	Foreman Leadership Skills Training, Sessions 3 & 4	Billings, MT

March

1	MECA-Sponsored Candidate Training School	Billings
2	MECA-Sponsored Candidate Training School	Helena
3	MECA-Sponsored Candidate Training School	Missoula
1-3	OSHA 1910.269 Training	Great Falls, MT
4	Vigilante Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Dillon, MT
4	Central Montana Electric Power Cooperative Annual Meeting	Great Falls, MT
8	Big Horn County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Hardin, MT
10-12	Certified Credentialed Directors Fast Track Course – Part 1	Minot, ND
15	Mid-Yellowstone Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Hysham, MT
19	Ravalli County Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Corvallis, MT
19	Missoula Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Missoula, MT
19	Lincoln Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Eureka, MT
19	Flathead Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Kalispell, MT
22-25	Foreman Leadership Skills Training, Sessions 3 & 4	Missoula, MT
24	Yellowstone Valley Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Huntley, MT
25	Sun River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Fairfield, MT