

Big Skylights



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

A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

October 27, 2016

Tentative schedule set for MECA meetings

MECA has set a tentative schedule for our winter quarterly meetings of committees and the board. Meetings will be held at the statewide association building, 501 Bay Drive in Great Falls, Dec. 13-14. Tuesday evening, Dec. 13, we will hold our annual Christmas Holiday Reception & Banquet at the Meadowlark Country Club.

Following is the tentative schedule:

Tuesday, Dec. 13

2 p.m. – Audit Committee

2:45 p.m. – Legislative Committee

3:30 p.m. – MECA Managers' Group

5:30 p.m. – Social Hour at Meadowlark Country Club

6:30 p.m. – Banquet at Meadowlark Country Club

Wednesday, Dec. 14

8:30 a.m. – MECA Board of Directors

To RSVP for the Christmas Holiday Reception & Banquet, please call either **Lea Potoczny** or **Beckie Frediani** of our staff. The phone number is (406) 761-8333. Via email, you can reach Lea at meca@mtco-ops.com. You can contact Beckie via email at beckie@mtco-ops.com.

New demand charge explained to membership

Members of NorVal Electric Cooperative received a thorough explanation of the new demand charge during the co-op's annual meeting Oct. 26 in Glasgow.

Manager **Craig Herbert** told members the cooperative was no longer meeting its financial obligation to lenders and had not maintained healthy operating margins because of a drop in usage. He explained that members' usage dropped 4 percent in 2015 compared with 2014, and another 6 percent this year to date compared to 2015. In an effort to decrease costs, in recent years the co-op's staffing had been trimmed by six full-time employees and the board reduced by four members to an eight-member board, with one more board reduction planned. Even with these measures implemented, a rate adjustment was still necessary to keep the co-op financially healthy, he said.

Mr. Herbert told members that in order to better cover the co-op's fix costs a demand charge of \$3 a kilowatt was implemented while the per kilowatt hour charge was reduced by 2 cents. He noted that some members would see an increase in their bill, while some members' bills will actually decrease, depending on total usage and when the electricity is used.

MECA was pleased to be asked to provide a legislative update to the members. Central Montana Electric Power Cooperative Manager **Doug Hardy** also addressed the membership.

In elections, incumbent **Rick Molvig** was elected without opposition.

Job Market

Marketing/Public Relations Manager

Fall River Rural Electric Cooperative, based in Ashton, Idaho, is seeking an energetic, organized, and creative marketing/public relations manager. The co-op's service area includes portions of Montana.

The person in this position will utilize a multimedia approach and creatively market products and services for both electric and propane operations. This person will continue building the Fall River brand as a safe, reliable, low-cost energy provider, committed to the communities and members the co-op serves. Key responsibilities are: sales – develop and implement sales and marketing plan; Marketing – create marketing materials and promote product sales; Public relations – focus on community, brand recognition, and the co-op image; and, internal/external communications – newsletter, website and social media platforms.

Qualifications are as follows: Marketing and/or communications degree or at least two years related experience; Sales and marketing experience in a highly competitive environment with demonstrated success in building a business brand; self-starter with the ability to think and plan strategically, must work well both collaboratively and independently; excellent writing and editing skills, with the ability to speak in public with clarity and confidence, and valid state driver's license.

Fall River Electric offers an outstanding career opportunity with competitive salary and paid time off, a friendly and positive work environment, and full health benefits and retirement plans. To view the basic job description and learn more about Fall River Rural Electric Cooperative visit www.fallriverelectric.com Employment Opportunities under the QUICK LINKS heading. To apply; send resume and salary history by Nov. 25, 2016 to: Fall River Electric Cooperative; Attention: Human Resources, P.O. Box 736, Milville, UT 84326. Or, email to: melanienichols2@gmail.com

Journeyman Lineman

Vigilante Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Dillon, Mont., has an immediate opening for an IBEW journeyman lineman located at the co-op's Townsend outpost office. This is a three-person outpost primarily serving the Townsend area, but also areas north and south of Helena. Excellent pay and benefits are provided in this position. The co-op may accept applications from a fourth step and above, "hot", apprentice lineman. The position requires residing within a 20-minute response time of the Townsend office. Please contact **Justin Bair**, line superintendent, at (406) 683-2327 or, via email, Justin@vec.coop, for an application package and details/requirements related to the position. This position will remain open until filled.

Journeyman Lineman

Big Horn County Electric Cooperative of Hardin has an opening for a journeyman lineman. Applicants must have or be able to obtain a Montana CDL, have completed a recognized four-year apprenticeship program; be proficient in operating digger derricks, bucket trucks, trenchers, underground-locating and fault-finding equipment, be in physical condition to carry out the work associated with overhead and underground power lines, be willing to work in extreme conditions such as heat, cold, wind, rain, snow, at all hours and be on a rotating "on call" list, and have experience in rubber gloving, the operation of OCR's and regulators, underground and overhead distribution lines. Having a positive safety-minded attitude and being a "team player" is a must.

The successful applicant will be required to live within 15 minutes driving time of work, take a pre-employment physical and drug test, and be on a six-month probationary period.

Big Horn Electric is located in a farming/ranching community serving rural residents, including three-phase irrigation and pumping loads, an oil-field, and some small and large commercial loads in Big Horn County, Montana and a small part of North Central Wyoming.

The co-op offers a competitive salary and an excellent benefits program. Send resumes to: **Monte Russell**, District Supervisor, Big Horn County Electric Cooperative, Inc., PO Box 410, Hardin, MT 59034 or mrussell@bhcec.com. Ph: (406)665-2830. A company employment application with references will be required along with work history dating back five years. This position will be open until filled.

CALENDAR**October**

28 Park Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting Livingston, MT

November

3 NRECA G & T Legal Seminar Clearwater Beach, FL

8 Election Day

16 2016 NRECA Safety Leadership Summit Fort Worth, TX

December

6-8 Midwest Electric Consumers Association Denver, CO

13-14 MECA Winter Meetings & Holiday Banquet Great Falls, MT

January

2 Start of 2017 Session of Montana Legislature Helena, MT

9 Electric Co-op Day at Montana State Capitol Building Helena, MT