

Big Skylights



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

A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

September 1, 2016

Operations conference brings together linemen

A total of about 150 people and more than 60 vendors have signed up for this year's MECA Operations Conference, Sept. 19-22, at the Radisson Colonial Hotel in Helena.

The conference, designed primarily for line personnel, line superintendents and line foremen, features 17 training sessions. Among the top speakers at this year's conference will be **Bud Branham**, NRECA safety programs director. Mr. Branham's topics are "Speak Up! Listen Up! Overview" and "Blame and Its Effect on Safety Culture." A popular speaker at this year's conference will be **Blu Santee** of HUB International. Mr. Santee will speak on "Risk Perception, Safety from Within," and "Creating Employee Accountability Through Leadership."

Annual meeting plans taking shape at MECA

For more information about the Operations Conference or to register, please contact **Lea Potoczny** of our office via email or telephone. Her email address is meca@mtco-ops. The phone number is (406) 761-8333.

MECA will hold its 2016 annual meeting Sept. 26-29 at the Heritage Inn in Great Falls. The theme of this year's annual meeting is "*Our Energy Future: Changes & Challenges.*"

Sept. 9 is the deadline for registration. Registration forms were sent out Monday, along with a preliminary agenda and also available on the MECA website. For further information, please contact **Lea Potoczny** of our office. She can be reached via email, meca@mtco-ops.com, or via phone, (406) 761-8333.

Various panel discussions and speakers will be featured, including the popular panel discussion featuring electric cooperative statewide association CEOs from outside Montana talking about the legislative and regulatory challenges they are facing in their states. CEO panelists this year will be **Bruce Graham** of the Kansas Electric Cooperatives and **Randy Pierce** of the Association of Louisiana Electric Cooperatives.

Montana Gov. **Steve Bullock** and his Republican challenger, **Greg Gianforte**, have both accepted invitations to speak at our annual meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 28.

Confirmed state legislative panelists are Sen. **Roger Webb**, R-Billings, chairman of the Senate energy committee, and Rep. **Chris Pope**, D-Bozeman, a member of the Legislature's interim energy committee, and member of the House energy committee.

Our guest luncheon speaker at 12 noon on Wednesday, Sept. 28, will be **Paul Sukut**, CEO of Basin Electric Power Cooperative. Mr. Sukut will talk about the impacts of the EPA's Clean Power Plan and what his co-op is doing to prepare for a reduced-carbon world. **Kirk Johnson**, head of NRECA's government affairs division, will provide the update on legislative and regulatory issues at the national level.

Allen Thiessen, Lower Yellowstone REC board president and former president of MECA, will emcee the Wednesday evening annual meeting banquet.

The Tuesday evening, Sept. 27, Montana ACRE auction will feature auctioneer **Mike Workman**, a MECA trustee representing Lincoln Electric Cooperative.

Job Market

Communications Specialist

Ravalli Electric Co-op (REC), based in Corvallis, is seeking to fill a communications specialist position.

The co-op is looking for "someone who shows a lot of initiative and drive, exceeds expectations and has the ability to make things happen." The person in this position must be adaptable, a creative thinker and possess the ability to make significant team contributions while serving REC's membership.

The communications specialist will be representing the co-op by increasing the co-op's public presence through business networking opportunities, attending fundraisers, coordinating and participating in community events, and social media/website communications. Minimal requirements for this position include dynamic verbal communication skills, exceptional customer service and outstanding writing/editing skills.

Experience/educational requirements include a Bachelor's degree with a focus on communications: advertising/marketing, journalism, communications and public relations, or a related degree. However, consideration of education and work experience, including marketing, editorial or public relations responsibilities may be given in lieu of a degree.

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 overnight, and work non-traditional hours, including evening and weekend hours as required.

To apply, visit REC's website at www.ravallielectric.com and submit a completed REC job application, resume, letter of interest, and (if applicable) samples of your work. Benefits are available after 90 days and wage depends on experience.

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, and snow, at all hours and be on a rotating "On-Call" list; and have experience in rubber gloving, the operation of OCRs and regulators, and 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 oilfield, 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

September

19-22	Operations Conference	Helena, MT
24	Beartooth Electric Annual Meeting	Roberts, MT
26	958.1 Succession Planning: Developing the Purpose-Driven Organization	Great Falls, MT
26-29	MECA Annual Meeting	Great Falls, MT

October

8	Big Flat Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Malta, MT
8	Sheridan Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Medicine Lake, MT
26	NorVal Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Glasgow, MT
28	Park Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Livingston, MT