Vigilante Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

OWNED BY THOSE WE SERVE

P.O. Box 1049, Dillon, MT 59725-1049
(406) 683-2327 or (800) 221-8271
Web site: www.vec.coop
E-mail: contact@vec.coop

Touchstone Energy

Co-op Connections — One way of helping you save

Vigilante Electric Cooperative looks out for its members by providing them with the most reliable electric service at the lowest possible cost. That's the foundation of our cooperative — and something we're very proud of. Now with our affiliation with Touchstone Energy, we can provide our members ways to save money everyday.

Last month we noted the many benefits of being a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, and the variety of programs and tools it offers to help us help you. This month we are digging deeper into one of those programs — Co-op Connections. This program is designed to help us build loyalty with our members and provide our members with several avenues to obtain valuable discounts on products and services.

Since the inception of Co-op Connections, the most successful offering has been the prescription discount program. Discounts are negotiated through pharmaceutical suppliers and are honored at more than 60,000 national and regional pharmacies. Discounts can range from 10 percent to 60 percent.

In addition to the prescription program, Co-op Connections provides other ways to save money while staying healthy. Through participating providers members can receive discounts on dental, vision, hearing and chiropractic care, as well as lab work and imaging.

Co-op Connections also can help you save money everyday. Co-op Connections provides national discounts with companies such as Hertz, Best Western, Wyndham and other top names in travel. Coupons.com helps you save on your next trip to the grocery store, giving you the ability to go online and print out coupons on top brands. My VIP Savings offers big discounts and cash back rewards at more than 1,000 major online retailers.

There also will be an opportunity for local savings. Starting in February, Vigilante Electric Cooperative will send out information to local businesses in an attempt to recruit their participation in this program. As businesses are recruited, their information and the discounts they offer will be promoted to our membership.

So, when can you start saving through Co-op Connections? Currently, we are working with Touchstone Energy on the production of cards and key fobs that will be printed in March. Then, one card and two key fobs will be mailed to each member of Vigilante Electric Cooperative. We are estimating this will happen in April. Until then, we will keep bringing you more details on all of the Touchstone Energy programs.

Outage Notification Numbers

M-F 8 A.M. TO 5 P.M.

683-2327 or
(800) 221-8271

Dillon

AFTER HOURS
MON. - THURS.

Dan Snellman.....683-6222
Tim Myllymaki 683-6369
Charles Wharton....660-1878

WEEKENDS

683-2327 or
(800) 221-8271

Whitehall

AFTER HOURS AND WEEKENDS

Marty Simons.....287-3950
Wayne Lemrick....287-5800
John Moos 266-3605
Justin Bair 266-3351

Townsend

AFTER HOURS AND WEEKENDS

John Moos 266-3605
Justin Bair 266-3351
Marty Simons.....287-3950
Wayne Lemrick ..287-5800

75 Years and Counting

1957 Annual Meeting

Over the past several months we have used this section to visit the past acknowledging people and events that have shaped this organization. With our Annual Meeting just around the corner we are looking back at Vigilante Electric's Annual Meeting in 1957, specifically the guest speaker, David A Hamil, Administrator, Rural Electric Administration (REA).

REA, now Rural Utility Service (RUS), was an agency of Department of Agriculture and one of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal agencies. Its primary goal was to help promote rural electrification. To have the administrator of a federal agency at a local cooperative's annual meeting would be a big deal even today. Here is the article written by Bruce Watters as it appeared in the Montana Rural Electric News in 1957.

Hamil Proves Hit in Visit To Vigilante Annual Meeting

By BRUCE WATTERS

In a whirlwind visit to Southwestern Montana, David A. Hamil, Administrator for Rural Electrification, arrived in Dillon accompanied by 14 inches of snow, with million-dollar moisture. However, the snowstorm did not dampen the enthusiasm of those in attendance for the various functions in conjunction with the Administrator's visit.

On Wednesday, March 13, the Beaverhead County Chamber of Commerce played host to the REA Administrator at a capacity crowd breakfast. President W. E. Fry of the Beaverhead Chamber of Commerce introduced Vigilante Electric Directors and other distinguished guests at the breakfast. Administrator Hamil in his timely remarks outlined REA and local electric cooperatives when he said "the Rural Electric Administration is a lending agency, not an operation unit to service electric energy."

He also stated that the local Cooperative was locally owned and locally operated and that REA's only part was to furnish funds for feasible expansion and service. The Administrator pointed out that REA funds are today doing a job that others did not see fit to do, to serve rural America.

The Administrator's next appearance on his rapid-fire visit to Dillon was to speak to nearly 100 boys and girls gathered for the fourth Annual Youth Electric Fair. In his talk, Administrator Hamil praised the work of the young people in this program. He personally viewed the exhibits and talked with many of the young people.

Administrator Hamil said to them, "You, young people, are learning with electric energy to do the jobs that I once used a scoop shovel to do." He also pointed out that the scoop shovel days were gone and that Young America is moving ahead with the benefit of electric energy in Rural America.

In his address to the Annual Meeting held in the Beaverhead County High School auditorium, the national administrator asked this question. "Why has REA accomplished so much?" He answered in this way. "In 1935, only 11% of farms had central station power. Today, 95% of rural America is electrified. This has been accomplished because people have given unselfishly of their time and efforts to organize Cooperatives and to make them function. REA has made possible $3 billion dollars in loan funds to organize the Cooperatives.

"The local Cooperative has elected good boards, who have selected good management, and the people with interest in bettering themselves, made the Rural Cooperative a growing concern," he said.

Administrator Hamil pointed out that REA cooperatives have repaid nearly 500 million dollars in loans and made $102 million dollars in payments ahead of schedule.

The Colorado cattleman said that REA loan funds come from the general tax structure of the U. S. but that these loans are paid back to the U. S. government with interest.

The energetic Administrator explained that 80% of all electric energy is used in the home of rural America, for better living. Women are making more use of electric energy than men. He urged farmers, ranchers and rural industry to put more electric energy to work.

Dillon and its many visitors from Southwestern Montana were honored by the visit of Administrator Hamil. His short trip and three appearances in Dillon were informative, constructive and inspiring. Consequently, a better understanding by the people of Southwestern Montana concerning rural electrification administration program and the local Vigilante Electric Cooperative was made possible by the Administrator's visit.

Biggest User

Learn how to estimate your home appliances' energy use to see if it's time for an upgrade

You've had your fridge forever. With the exception of some crumbling parts of the seal, it's in pretty good shape and keeps your food cold. Why worry about budgeting for an upgrade?

For starters, inefficient appliances can have a huge impact on your home's monthly electric bill. Replacing a refrigerator made before 1993 with a new, ENERGY STAR-rated model could save you a significant amount of money each year.

When evaluating older appliances, one key question emerges: Which is the biggest user? To estimate the energy consumption of an appliance, use this general formula provided by the U.S. Department of Energy's website, *EnergySavers.gov*:

(Wattage × hours used per day × days used per year) ÷ 1,000 = annual kilowatt-hour (kWh) used

Remember: 1,000 watts = 1 kilowatt (kW).

Then calculate the annual cost to use an appliance by multiplying the kWh per year by 7.5 cents.

For example, a PC and monitor:

[(120 watts + 150 watts) × 4 hours per day × 365 days per year] ÷ 1000
= 394 kWh × 7.5 cents/kWh
= $29.55/year

You can usually find the wattage of most appliances stamped on the bottom or back of the appliance or on its nameplate. The wattage listed shows the maximum power drawn by the appliance. Because some appliances have a range of settings — just like the volume on a radio — the actual amount of power consumed depends on the setting used at any one time.

Keep in mind that as electronics and appliances become more technologically savvy, they often draw power even while turned off. A good indicator of this — called "phantom load" — is to check the device for a light that stays on all the time.

Phantom load will add a few watt-hours to energy consumption, but a few watt-hours on each of your many electronic devices adds up. To avoid this silent power draw, unplug the device or invest in a "smart" power strip, which allows certain electronics — such as a cable box, which takes time to reboot after it's been unplugged — to continue using electricity while others can be completely shut down.

Here are examples of the range of wattages for common household appliances:

- Clothes washer: 350–500 watts
- Clothes dryer: 1,800–5,000 watts
- Dishwasher: 1,200–2,400 watts (heat drying feature increases energy use)
- Hair dryer: 1,200–1,875 watts
- Microwave oven: 750–1,100 watts
- Refrigerator (frost-free, 16 cubic feet): 725 watts

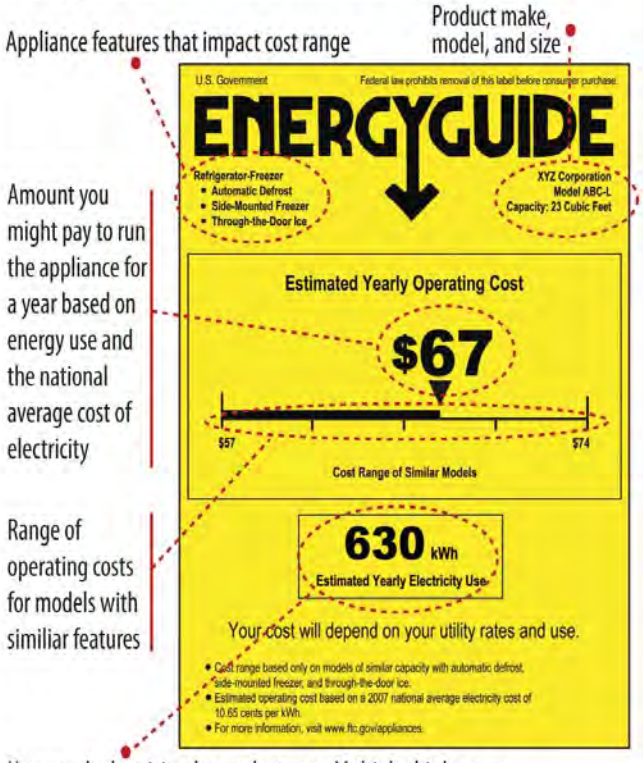
Once you calculate how much money you spend to run aging home appliances, compare this to what it would cost to use more efficient models. There are other benefits, too. For example, not only have clothes washers become 64 percent more energy efficient since 2000, but the tub size has increased by 9 percent. With a new model, you can wash more clothes for less money every month.

Don't want the hassle of adding up the potential savings? Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives' website, *www.TogetherWeSave.com*, demonstrates how small changes such as replacing an appliance or unplugging electronics lead to big energy savings. On the website, under "Add Up Your Savings," you can walk through a typical home's kitchen, living room and other common areas. Upgrade appliances and make other energy-smart choices in each room. Each time you make a change, you're shown how much money you could save on your annual electric bill.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers, ENERGY STAR

How to Use the EnergyGuide Label

Appliance manufacturers are federally required to provide an EnergyGuide label so consumers can compare energy use between different brands and models.



Source: Federal Trade Commission, ftc.gov/appliances