



# VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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## Northwest River Partners

Vigilante Electric Cooperative, along with utilities throughout the Northwest, benefit from the clean, low-cost generation provided by hydroelectric generation from the Columbia River Basin which includes Hungry Horse and Kerr Dams. In fact, it is fair to say that the economy of the Pacific Northwest was built on our access to this resource and all of its benefits. It is vital to our region, and that is why we are a member of Northwest River Partners.

Northwest River Partners is an alliance of farmers, utilities, ports and businesses working together to promote and defend all the assets of these working rivers. We promote hydroelectricity as the region's premier clean, renewable and reliable energy resource. Additionally, we promote the economic and environmental benefits of the Columbia and Snake rivers, as well as fish and wildlife policies and programs that are based on sound science.

Hydroelectric generation is clean — there are no emissions. It provides 60 percent of the Northwest's electric energy, and 90 percent of its renewable energy. It is a reliable energy source because it can be stored and released when needed. It is also a firm resource (consistently available), providing the best way to back-up intermittent wind and solar resources.

Hydroelectric generation is extremely efficient. Electricity is created by passing stored water through turbines. This form of electrical generation converts 90 percent of the available energy into electricity. In comparison, coal or natural gas plants are about 50 percent efficient, and wind turbines are about 33 percent efficient at best.

The economic impact of the dams of the Columbia River Basin goes beyond low-cost power. The Northwest is rich agriculturally, with about 7.8 million acres of irrigated farmland. Proper management of the water stored behind the dams has improved irrigation efficiency and decreased water usage by 10 percent to 25 percent per acre over the last decade.

When you combine these elements with low-cost power, you have the recipe for a vibrant agricultural sector. The annual net earned income from Northwest agriculture production exceeds \$8

billion.

Access and usage of the Columbia and Snake rivers are vital for commerce and jobs. The rivers provide a 465-mile navigable river highway, with 36 deep-water and inland ports and locks through the dams for transporting goods. More than 42 million tons of commercial cargo, valued at more than \$20 billion, move down the Columbia and Snake rivers annually. It also accounts for approximately 99,000 jobs and keeps 700,000 trucks off the roads.

The Northwest also benefits from flood control provided by the dams of the Columbia Basin. Prior to the federal dams on the Columbia and Willamette rivers, Portland and other cities were subject to severe flooding. Controlling flood waters on the Columbia River became a high priority in 1948 when Vanport, Oregon, was destroyed in a late spring deluge.

The Army Corps of Engineers responded to the devastation by developing a reservoir storage plan for the Columbia Basin. Currently, this plan includes millions of acre feet of water storage in the Northwest and British Columbia for generation and flood control.

In February 1996, the storage plan was tested when floods threatened Portland. Dam operations on the Columbia and Willamette rivers kept the river level a foot to a foot and a half lower than it would have been. Estimates show that flood control operations saved the region \$3.2 billion from what would have been devastating flood damage.

We could go on touting the benefits of the hydroelectric system of the Columbia Basin, but I think the point is clear. The benefits from the dams in the Columbia Basin are irreplaceable and worth defending. We strongly encourage you to visit our webpage and go to the Clean Hydro site for more details.



# Principles + Values = Cooperatives

By Adam Schwartz

“A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both.” – Dwight D. Eisenhower

All cooperative businesses around the world operate in accordance with the following Seven Cooperative Principles:

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Member Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Cooperation among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community

Less known is the fact that cooperatives also have adopted a set of values that helps to put these principles into practice.

Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-ops believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Let's take a closer look at these values and see how they impact us here at Vigilante Electric Cooperative.

The founders of Vigilante Electric created it to serve the members that use the electricity and other services we provide, and we continue to do that today. This embodies the values of self-help, taking action and doing what needs to be done. We also know we must embrace the value of self-responsibility and be accountable to you, our members.

Each member has one vote, no matter how much electricity you use. This ensures that democracy is practiced the way it is intended, with equality for all members. This is a key

difference between co-ops and investor-owned companies, where the number of votes you have depends on the number of shares you own.

For co-op members, equity has two meanings. We strive to treat all of our members fairly. It also means that, as a member, you have equity (ownership) in the co-op.

While each co-op is autonomous, we do act in solidarity with other co-ops and our community. We know that we can do more for you by partnering with other co-ops and like-minded organizations.

Your parents were right when they said, “honesty is the best policy.” As an owner, you have the right to expect us to act with openness and in a transparent manner. We welcome your active participation in our co-op.

Cooperatives have long (and correctly) been identified as the original socially responsible business, meaning we care about the impact we have on the community, while ensuring we are economically viable.

We try to demonstrate our concern for the community through caring for others every single day, whether it is through funding scholarship opportunities to students, providing financial assistance to area fire departments or doing safety demonstrations for emergency responders.

By using our values in support of our principles since our founding in 1937, we have been able to serve you for the past 78 years, and will do so long into the future.

*Adam Schwartz is the founder of The Cooperative Way a consulting firm that helps co-ops succeed. He is an author, speaker and a member-owner of the CDS Consulting Co-op. You can follow him on Twitter @adamcooperative or email him at aschwartz@thecooperativeway.coop.*

## Be Mindful with Irrigation Pipe

Vigilante Electric Cooperative has a safety committee that meets quarterly to discuss and address safety issues of our cooperative. At our latest meeting, one of our trustees reminded us of a safety issue that has great relevance this time of year. Vigilante has a large number of irrigation accounts, and one of our greatest concerns is how our members handle irrigation pipe.

Irrigation pipe is an excellent conductor of electricity, and making contact with an overhead power line can be fatal. Use the following as a guide when storing and transporting irrigation line:

1. Do not store pipe near power lines.
2. Flush small animals out of the pipe with water. Do not tip the pipe on end. Doing this puts you at risk of contacting a power line. Plus, the

obstruction may be so bad that it won't dislodge even if the pipe were perpendicular to the ground.

3. Make it a practice never to lift one end higher than the other.
4. Do not assume that everybody knows the location of power lines just because you do. If you or others will be handling pipe or moving tall equipment, take the time to remind your family members, and all who work for you, of the location of power lines and the dangers of making contact with them.

As with any project, you have to keep the costs of a mistake in mind. As this article indicates, the costs can be more than financial. If you have any questions, contact us at our Dillon office. At Vigilante Electric Cooperative, we want you to be safe when working around electricity.



# Co-op Connections — Mail Order Contacts

For more than two years we have been touting the benefits of the Co-op Connections program and the countless ways you can save money on everyday purchases. While I do my best to stay on top of program features, I have to thank an astute member for bringing this feature to my attention — Mail Order Contacts.

It is estimated that more than 30 million people in the United States wear contact lenses. If you are part of this statistic, you can save between 10 percent and 40 percent on your contacts using this mail order service. Most major brands of contact lenses are available, including disposable, toric, bifocal and gas-permeable lenses.

Members simply call toll-free (800) 800-7616 for price quotes and to place an order. Most orders are received within 7 to 14 days. All valid prescriptions are kept on file for one year for reordering, and there is no limit on the number of times the membership may be used during the year.

This is another example of how Co-op Connections saves you money on the things you need. The member that brought this to my attention saved 17 percent on her purchase. As with all benefits in the Healthy Savings program, this is not insurance. It's a negotiated discount with the provider. Best of all, you don't need a computer or Internet access to benefit from the savings.

## Capital Credit Refunds

Vigilante Electric Cooperative is currently trying to locate the following individuals for payment of Capital Credits. If you have any information regarding names on this list please contact us.

*Vigilante Electric Coop., Inc. · PO Box 1049 · Dillon MT 59725 · MT Toll Free 800-221-8271 or 683-2327*

ABERNATHY, LEONARD WHITEHALL, MT	BAY, JOSH MISSOULA, MT	BUZZELL FAMILY TRUST SIERRA MADRE, CA	CLARK, JIM/JOHN STEVENSVILLE, MT
ADAMS, DAMON TEN SLEEP, WY	BAYLESS, WILLIAM E/SARA HELENA, MT	BYRA, ANDY/PAULA STERLING, VA	CLAY, LORETTA S FIELDS, OR
ALLEN, DAN/LISA EUGENE, OR	BECK, PETER L DILLON, MT	CALKINS, HANS DULUTH, GA	COBBAN, JOHN/CONNIE WINSTON, MT
AMOS, CORI R DILLON, MT	BEEBE, BRENT TOWNSEND, MT	CAMPBELL, DOUGLAS P/WANDA DILLON, MT	COGDELL, VICKI SHELBY, MT
ANDERSEN, JERRY J/RAKEYA GREAT FALLS, MT	BETTERS, BARRIE/PATTIE SALEM, OR	CAMPBELL, KIMBERLI/JAMES FT LEWIS, WA	COLDWELL BANKER HELENA, MT
ANDERSON, ART GREENVILLE, SC	BICKFORD, WILLARD MEDFORD, OR	CANTRELL, KENNETH ANACONDA, MT	COLE, KEVIN WHITEHALL, MT
ANDERSON, JENNIFER L DILLON, MT	BINKLEY, KIM/ KENNEDY, DAVID CLANCY, MT	CARSON, JOE/GUIN DILLON, MT	COLEMAN, AL/ SCHNEIDER, ELAINE MISSOULA, MT
ANDERSON, LIZ DILLON, MT	BLACK, SCARLETT TWIN BRIDGES, MT	CARTE, GRACE A ENNIS, MT	CONTWAY, BRUCE P TUSTIN, CA
ANDERSON, VIC TOWNSEND, MT	BOLIBAUGH, ALAN/JODY DOUDS, IA	CHACANO, ALEJANDRO TOWNSEND, MT	COOPER, LA DALE DILLON, MT
BAILEY, DEBBIE K TOWNSEND, MT	BRAUER, ROBERT/DEBORAH TOWNSEND, MT	CHANDLER, RAYMOND/ANGELA WHITEHALL, MT	CORBITT, COREY C/COLETTE BUTTE, MT
BAKER, ROY A/ANNA WISDOM, MT	BROWER, BEV DILLON, MT	CHAVEZ, JOE LIMA, MT	CRAFT, JERRY/JESSICA AUBURN, WA
BALDOCK, CAROL WHITEHALL, MT	BRUNS, GALEN /SUSAN TOWNSEND, MT	<b>CHICHESTER, ISREAL</b> <b>CLEARFIELD, UT</b> <b>CHITWOOD, CURTIS</b> <b>SMELTERVILLE, ID</b>	CYR, ANITA HELENA, MT
BALSLEY, SHELLY R HELENA, MT	BRYANT, SHARON ST JOSEPH, MO	CHRISTENSEN, ART/MARGARET DILLON, MT	DALTON, PEGGY A LUPTON, AZ
BARRETT, DAVID/MELANIE DARBY, MT	BUCHER, SUSAN J GREAT FALLS, MT	CHRISTIAENS, TASSIE L CONRAD, MT	DAVIES, DOUGLAS W POLSON, MT
BASYE, SHARON L BOZEMAN, MT	BURK, JOY BUTTE, MT	CHRISTIANSEN, GORDON LIMA, MT	DEBOISE, GLEN P/VALORIE HELENA, MT
BAUER, KAREL/MARY DULUTH, MN	BURKETT, KEVIN M/JENNIE HOPKINSVILLE, KY		

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DEBORDE, INC HELENA, MT	FLOQUET, GEORGETTE EATONTOWN, NJ	HALVERSON, RON BIG TIMBER, MT	JENSEN, KATRINE/ MURPHY, BILL HOT SPRINGS, MT
DELANEY, RICK FRUITA, CO	FORNOF, RICHARD RATHDRUM, ID	HAMBY, CHARLES E/VERONICA BELGRADE, MT	JOHNSON, MICHELLE BUTTE, MT
DELVAUX, CHRIS/DARLENE BUTTE, MT	FOSS, BEN COLUMBIA FALLS, MT	HANSON, BRIAN E DILLON, MT	JONES, LOWELL H GRAND JUNCTION, CO
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EVANS, KELLY EAST HELENA, MT	GRASSHOPPER INN DUBOIS, WY	HURLBERT, JANE BOZEMAN, MT	LANDMARK CATTLE CO WHITEHALL, MT
EXIT 15 INN MYRTLE POINT, OR	GRASSY MTN RESORT TOWNSEND, MT	INGRAM, REX/DEBE DILLON, MT	LARBY, MICHAEL J/RITA HENDERSON, NV
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FLEMING, JOHN DILLON, MT	HAGGERTY, MIKE/PATRICIA ANACONDA, MT	JENKINS, ROSSER DILLON, MT	
	HALL, DANIELLE DILLON, MT	JENNINGS, NAOMI B TOWNSEND, MT	

*CAPITAL CREDITS  
Continued next month*