



Vigilante Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Youth Tour winners have the opportunity to visit Washington D.C. | FILE PHOTO

2022 YOUTH TOUR

Continuing a remarkable tradition

BENJAMIN Franklin once said that an investment in knowledge pays the best interest. At Vigilante Electric Cooperative, we couldn't agree more. We find that true knowledge comes not only through education, but experience. This is why I believe that the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. is the most important youth program we support, and a legacy worth continuing.

For the past two years, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., has been canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. While there is still uncertainty around this event, it seems that



there is renewed interest and a cooperative determination to make the Youth Tour happen in 2022.

The seed for this event can be traced back to the 1957 National Electric Cooperative Association Annual Meeting in Chicago, when then-Senator Lyndon B. Johnson addressed the participants: *"If one thing goes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital, where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents."*

In 1958, rural electric cooperatives in Iowa sponsored the first busload of

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VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND GENERAL MANAGER

Cheyenne Garrison,
President

Dist. #5
Wise River/Silver Bow/Melrose

Andy Johnson,
Vice President

Dist. #6
Dillon North/Glen

Tom Mitchell,
Sec./Treas.

Dist. #8
Dillon South/Grant

Norm Tebay, Trustee

Dist. #1
Cardwell/Whitehall/Three Forks

Dean Hanson, Trustee

Dist. #2
Silver Star/Waterloo

Tom Helm, Trustee

Dist. #3
Townsend/N. Helena/
Lump Gulch

Colt High, Trustee

Dist. #4
Twin Bridges/Point of Rocks

Dean Peterson, Trustee

Dist. #7
Jackson/Wisdom

Allen Martinell, Trustee

Dist. #9
Dell/Lima

Rollie Miller,
General Manager

IT'S A MATTER OF (CO-OP) PRINCIPLES

By **ANNE PRINCE**

ACE Hardware, State Farm, REI, Land O'Lakes and Vigilante Electric all share something in common: We're all cooperatives.

We may be in different industries, but we all share a passion for serving our members and helping our communities thrive. In fact, all cooperatives adhere to the same set of seven principles that reflect our core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater community good. October is National Co-op Month, so this is the perfect time to reflect on these principles that have stood the test of time, but also provide a framework for the future. Let's take a look at the first three cooperative principles.

Voluntary, open membership

Just like all co-ops, Vigilante Electric was created out of necessity — to meet a need that would have been otherwise unmet in our community. In 1937, a group of neighbors banded together to tackle a problem that they all had but couldn't solve alone, and organized our electric co-op so everyone in our community could benefit. They worked together for the benefit

of the whole community, and the newly established electric lines helped power economic opportunity in our community.

While this history may be forgotten, key parts of that heritage remain — the focus on our mission and serving the greater good. In this, we include everyone to improve the quality of life and economic opportunity for the entire community. Membership is open to everyone in our service territory, regardless of race, religion, age, disability, gender identity, language, political perspective or socioeconomic status.

Democratic member control

Our co-op is well suited to meet the needs of our members because we are locally governed. Each member gets a voice and a vote in how the co-op is run, and each voice and vote are equal. Vigilante Electric's leadership team and employees live in the communities we serve. Our board of directors, who help set long-term priorities for the co-op, live on co-op lines. These board members have been elected by members such as you. We know our members have a valuable perspective, and that's why we are continually seeking your input and encourage you to weigh in on import-

ant co-op issues and participate in co-op elections.

Members' participation

As a utility, our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to our members. But as a co-op, we are also motivated by service to the community rather than profits. Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of Vigilante Electric. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for co-op programs, initiatives and capital investments, and support other activities approved by the membership.

Because we are guided by seven cooperative principles, it's not just about dollars — it's about opportunity for all, and being fair when engaging with our members. The cooperative way is a values-based business model.

Vigilante Electric is a reflection of our local communities and their evolving needs. We view our role as a catalyst for good and making our corner of the world a better place. And by the way, that sums up the seventh co-op principle, "concern for community," which I'll elaborate on in the next edition of this publication. RM

ON THE JOB: JOE KIDD

Vigilante Electric Cooperative would like to take this opportunity to introduce our newest employee, Joe Kidd.

Joe was originally hired as a 1,000-hour laborer for us, and his hard work has earned him a full-time position. Joe is now an apprentice lineman, and will be working out of our Whitehall shop.

Joe was raised between Divide and Wise River, Montana, and is a graduate of Beaverhead County High School. He attended Highlands College of Montana Tech, where he completed the pre-apprentice lineman program. Prior to working for us, he was employed by Rocky Mountain Contractors.

We would like to welcome Joe to Vigilante Electric, and look forward to a long association. RM



Joe Kidd

LABOR DAY PARADE



Raquel Reno-Morast, Chelsey Hutchison, Jackie Clark, and Paige Garrison stand in front of the Vigilante Electric Cooperative float for the Labor Day Parade in Dillon.

Norm Tebay joins Vigilante's 25 year club

THERE are several attributes of a successful electric cooperative, and a major part is the composition of the board of trustees. At Vigilante Electric, we are blessed by the trustees who have served over the years. Our current trustees are similar in certain ways and quite diverse in others, yet all are working for a greater good. This month, we honor Norm Tebay for his 25 years of service to our organization.

In name alone, many of you may be unfamiliar with Norm. If you have attended an annual meeting in the last 20 years, however, you will recognize him as the man who leads the invocation, sometimes in prayer, but more often in song.

Norm was appointed to Vigilante Electric's board of trustees on August



Norm Tebay is honored for his 25 years of service to Vigilante Electric.

28, 1996, to serve District #1, which includes Cardwell, Jefferson Island, Three Forks and Whitehall. He and his wife Michelle reside between White-

hall and Cardwell, where they ranch. During Norm's tenure, he has served as president and vice president of the board of trustees, and currently represents Vigilante Electric on the Western Montana G&T and Montana Energy Alliance boards.

Norm's positive nature comes across as soon as you meet him. He greets you with a smile and is always ready to laugh. His cheerful demeanor, coupled with his willingness to take on challenges and responsibilities, makes him very easy to work with.

"The management and staff of Vigilante Electric would like to express our gratitude to Norm for his dedication and service to our organization, and we look forward to many years to come," said Rollie Miller, manager of Vigilante Electric Cooperative. **RM**

YOUTH TOUR

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youth on a weeklong study tour of the nation's capital, and other states started picking up on the idea. In 1964, NRECA began to coordinate the program. Participating groups arranged to be in the city the same week, and there were about 400 young people from 12 states that year.

Vigilante Electric's participation in this event started because an adventurous student by the name of Melissa Hibbard submitted an entry in an essay contest sponsored by our statewide association. Her essay was one of two winning essays that received an

all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., to participate in the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Tour. Upon her return, we invited her to give a presentation for our board of trustees, and the rest is history.

In 2022, Vigilante Electric will send two deserving students on an adventure of a lifetime. The dates are June 18-25, 2022. To qualify, the student must be the dependent of a member of Vigilante Electric Cooperative and must currently be a sophomore or junior. Contest rules, applications and a resource guide are available at area high schools and on our website at vec.coop.

Selection is based on the appli-

cation and a short essay. The topic is "What does the second cooperative principle mean to you and your community?" Applications and essays are due to the Vigilante Electric office by November 19, 2021.

The impact that this event has on its participants is truly remarkable. It opens their eyes to a world that many have only seen on TV. The tour inspires many students to push out of their "comfort zones," instilling new-found confidence and an explorer's attitude toward the world, all while making new lifelong friends. So, if you are, or know, someone who would like to partake in this adventure, please apply or encourage them to apply. **RM**



Vigilante Safety Roundup Tracker

Participating members: 618

Total Contributions: \$10,373.03

To apply, contact our office at
(800) 221-8271 or 683-2327

An online application is available at www.vec.coop.



Vigilante Electric Cooperative Trustee Allen Martinell was inducted into the Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame. | FILE PHOTO

Martinell family joins Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame

THE mission of the Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame & Western Heritage Center is *“To honor our cowboy way of life, American Indian cultures and collective Montana Western heritage. We exist to serve as a resource to all who wish to see this way of life passed forward to the next generation.”* At Vigilante Electric, we applaud this effort because we, too, value the history and heritage of Montana. We are pleased to now have the opportunity to congratulate one or our own on his family’s induction: Vigilante Electric trustee Allen Martinell.

In August, the Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame & Western Heritage Center honored the 2020 class of inductees. One of the night’s inductees was the Lee Martinell Company. The Lee Martinell Company was formed in 1961 by Lee and Ethel Martinell on property north of Dell. Lee and Ethel were Allen Martinell’s parents, and Allen still runs the ranch and lives in the house his grandfather built in 1898.

We would like to congratulate Allen on his family’s induction into the Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame, as well as the entire Martinell clan for its stewardship of the family ranch, which is an important part of the history of the Dell area. ^{RM}

Winter heating help

Where to turn for assistance

LIKE it or not, winter will be upon us soon, and for many, the prospect of a long, cold winter is scary. Every year, the cold of winter puts upward pressure on our expenses and lowers our comfort level. For low-income families, winter can be dire, with struggles to keep homes warm and utility bills paid. Fortunately, there are organizations available to lend some assistance.

Vigilante Electric Cooperative has helped qualified members receive credit on their accounts to aid in winter heating since 1998. Applications for our assistance program are available starting October 1, and must be returned by December 3, 2021. You can contact us at (800) 221-8271 or (406) 683-2327 for an application. (Please note that if you received assistance last year through Vigilante’s program, you will automatically receive an application from us for this year. For the programs listed below, you will need to request an application each year.)

It should be noted that the funding level for Vigilante’s program is very limited. This is why we strongly recommend that families in need apply for the programs offered by the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS).

DPHHS administers federally funded programs designed to help low-income families. The following is a brief description of the opportunities available and income guidelines (the same ones we use) for the coming heating season.

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) pays part of winter energy bills for eligible people. Most utilities offer LIEAP recipients discounts on their bills.

The Weatherization Program helps participants improve the heating efficiency of their homes and thus reduce their energy consumption.

Energy Share of Montana – This program provides emergency utility assistance loans to households experiencing financial hardship.

LIEAP FINANCIAL GUIDELINES

FAMILY SIZE	INCOME LIMITS	FAMILY SIZE	INCOME LIMITS	FAMILY SIZE	INCOME LIMITS	FAMILY SIZE	INCOME LIMITS
1	\$27,282	4	\$52,465	7	\$70,828	10	\$80,610
2	\$35,676	5	\$60,859	8	\$72,402	11	\$87,420
3	\$44,071	6	\$69,254	9	\$73,976	12	\$94,230

If you qualify, call for an application. While that application process can be a little daunting, it is worth the effort. There are people available to help you through the process; please reach out to us if you would like contact information for them. Also, please inquire about the weatherization program. Where LIEAP provides assistance for your immediate needs, the weatherization is a long-term solution, helping lower your energy bill.

These programs are administered through regional offices. Each office serves specific counties, so contact the office nearest you. ^{RM}

LIEAP CONTACT NUMBERS

Action Inc., Butte (800) 382-1325 (406) 533-6855	Rocky Mountain Development Council LIEAP Office, Helena (800) 356-6544 (406) 447-1625	District IX HRDC Bozeman (800) 332-2796 (406) 587-4486
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