



Vigilante Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Last year's Annual Meeting of Members was a success. This year's event is set for March 4 at the Beier Auditorium on the campus of the University of Montana - Western. | **VEC FILE PHOTO**

84TH ANNUAL MEETING

WHERE ENGAGEMENT AND CAMARADERIE MEET

By **ROD SIRING** | *Member Services*

COOPERATIVES are different because we adhere to a set of seven core principles that are the foundation of everything we do. Principle #2 states: *Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The elected representatives are accountable to the membership.*

The annual meeting is the truest symbol of this principle.

For Vigilante Electric Cooperative, this is the most important event of the year, and the culmination of all the activities from the previous year. This informative meeting provides you, the member, an opportunity to help shape the future of our organization.

Our annual meeting is not a singular

event, but a process designed to engage our membership as fully as possible. In January, we take the first step in our annual meeting process by holding district meetings. Nominations for district trustee are made by those whose primary membership is located within the trustee district.

Our service territory is divided into nine districts in which an elected representative serves a three-year term. Terms are staggered to ensure at least six experienced trustees are on the board at all times. The trustee districts that will go through the election process at the annual meeting this year are District #1 Cardwell/Whitehall/Three Forks, District #2 Silver Star/Waterloo, and District #6 Dillon North.

We are currently preparing for our 84th

See ANNUAL MEETING on page 8

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

DILIGENCE PAYS OFF

Our mission to our members

AT Vigilante Electric Cooperative our mission is to provide our members with the most reliable service at the lowest possible cost. To be successful in this mission in the long term it takes proper planning, efficient operation and effective management. How are we doing? For members of our organization, all you have to do is look at our rates to determine that we are doing very well.

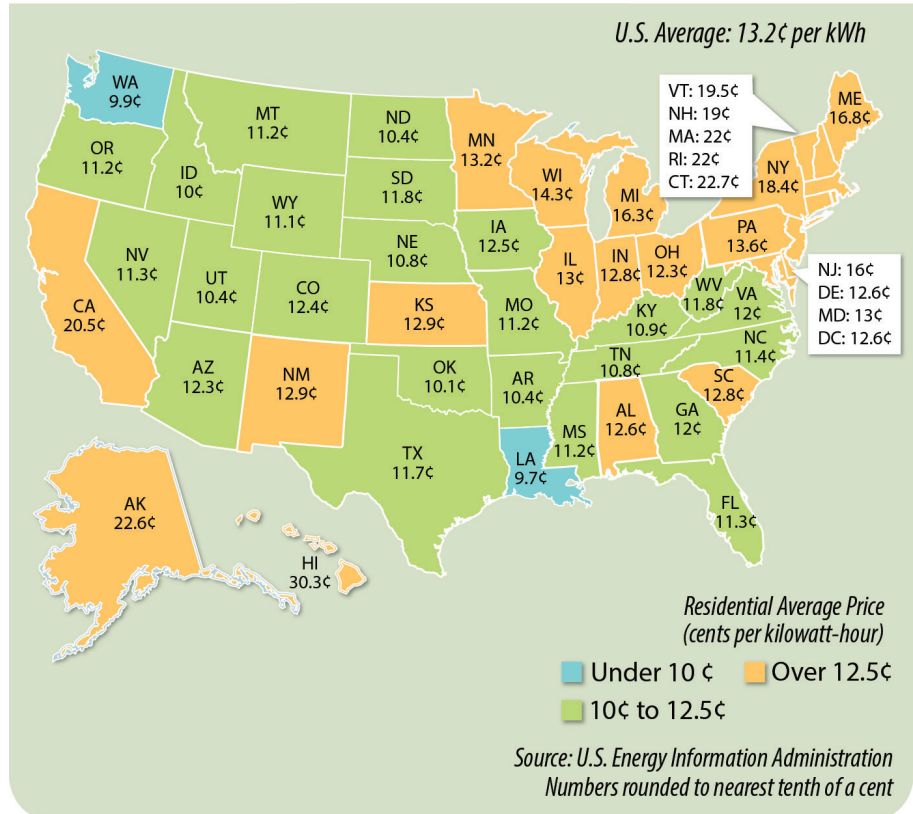
To give a little historical perspective, in an October 2017 article in this publication, General Manager Rollie Miller ended his commentary regarding a rate modification that would take effect January 1, 2018, with this statement, “our wholesale rate increase was the smallest of the utilities in Montana served by Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), and our retail rates for residential and irrigation are some of the lowest in the country. More importantly, we plan to keep it that way.”

This was not an unsubstantiated claim back then, and suffice it to say that this holds true today. The energy rate for a single-phase service on January 1, 2018 was 5.8 cents, in January 1, 2020, the energy rate went to 5.81 cents and our energy rate today – still 5.81 cents.

To bring some national perspective to this, the Energy Information Administration (EIA) is responsible for collecting, analyzing and disseminating energy information, and is part of the Department of Energy. EIA has a summary of key indicators, one being the average price for residential electricity. Each year EIA publishes a rate map like the one above. While

Average Prices for Residential Electricity

2020 figures, in cents per kWh



it uses the average price per state, which includes base charges, it is not unreasonable for us to be considered as having one of the best energy rates in the nation. RAM



Vigilante Safety Roundup Tracker

Participating members: 663
Total Contributions: \$12,119.81

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

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

IN MEMORY OF RAY WHITE

We are saddened to announce to our membership the passing of retired Vigilante Electric Cooperative lineman, Ray White. The following is the loving tribute by his family.

ORLEY RAY WHITE

Born April 6, 1930 in Magna, UT, to Orley and Edna. Died December 22, 2021, after living the life of a good man who always tried to lift others up.

Ray grew up in Weston, ID, and lost his dad when he was 6 years old. He worked the summers riding a horse up Weston Canyon to take care of the neighbors' livestock.

Always an athlete, he was awarded a scholarship to Utah State University for football.

He played there with future NFL players. Ray chose to join the U.S. Navy and serve his country during the Korean Conflict aboard the USS Valley Forge. He served four years as a radarman. He also played basketball on his ship's team and got to go up against the Harlem Globetrotters (Navy lost that game). His favorite duty was aboard a minesweeper at the end of



his service.

He came home in '54 and worked in road construction, among other things, and met JoRene in '56. They married in Elko, NV. He adopted his daughter, Trisa. Ray worked at the sugar factory until he landed a job with Union Pacific Railroad. The railroad transferred him to Dillon, MT, in '59. Ray and Jo adopted a son, Steven, in '63. He worked as a lineman for 10

years for the UPRR, and then got a job with Vigilante Electric so that he could be home more with his family. He retired from there nearly 30 years later.

Ray loved to hunt and fish, and he loved the outdoors.

He served as bishop in the L.D.S. Church for five years, and lived his religion without judging others.

He was a volunteer firefighter for the DVFD, and retired as captain after 21 years.

*A friend to all
He would do anything for anyone
He wouldn't say anything behind your
back that he wouldn't say to your
face, but he'd
say it with a mind to fix it.
He kept his priorities straight...God,
family, country and community.*

Dad didn't want a bunch of commotion about his passing. There was a memorial reception January 3 at the L.D.S church. Memorial contributions may be made to local law enforcement or a charity of your choice. RM

Backup generators: Doing your part to keep us safe

If you watch the news, you have seen where devastating storms have left thousands or even hundreds of thousands of people without electricity for extended periods of time. Electricity is a commodity that we take for granted until our lights go out, and the longer we are out the more we realize everything that electricity does for us. A way to minimize the inconvenience of an outage is to install a backup generator. This is becoming more and more popular with homeowners, but is a very large concern for us.

To explain this in very basic terms, please consider the following. During normal service, electricity flows through our distribution lines at 7,200 volts or 14,400 volts. When

we connect to a service, the voltage is stepped down through the use of a transformer, to a more useful voltage. In a typical home this would be 120 volts or 240 volts.

When an outage occurs, a generator can be used for some or all of the home energy requirements. However, if the installation is not done correctly the generator can backfeed the electrical distribution system where the voltage is stepped up, re-energizing a section of distribution line. This is extremely dangerous for the line crews trying to restore power.

Therefore, the National Electrical Code requires the use of a transfer switch, either automated or manual. A transfer switch is a secondary circuit

breaker panel that isolates a backup generator from the main power grid. A properly installed transfer switch prevents feedback onto our distribution lines (protecting our linemen) and it protects the generator while the utility service is being restored.

Although the installation of a transfer switch is not rocket science, some projects are best left to professionals. A licensed electrician will be able to size and install a generator to meet your needs, and do it so that it complies with National Electrical Code.

Vigilante Electric Cooperative also requests that you notify us in writing if you have or will be installing a generator as a backup source of power. RM

Your winter comfort requires some attention

ACCORDING to the Department of Energy, heating your home uses more energy and costs more money than any other system – typically making up about 29 percent of your utility bill. However, saving energy and money long term does not necessarily have to be complicated or expensive.

To start, set your thermostat as low as is comfortable in the winter, and lower the setpoint when you're sleeping or away from home. Clean warm-air registers, baseboard heaters and radiators as needed, and make sure they're not blocked by furniture, carpeting or drapes. Also be mindful of kitchen and bath exhaust fans and how long you let them run.

For central heating, regardless of the fuel source, you can save money and increase your comfort by properly maintaining and upgrading your equipment. Having your heating system inspected annually will help ensure your home's comfort during



the winter months.

Air ducts are one of the most important systems in your home, and require some attention. Ducts that leak heated air into unheated spaces can add hundreds of dollars a year to your heating and cooling bills. You can reduce that loss by sealing and insulating your ducts. Insulating ducts in unconditioned spaces is usually very cost-effective. Existing ducts may also be blocked or may require simple

upgrades.

Another important consideration with central systems is the air filters. Air filters trap pet hair, dust and other irritating particles so that your air-conditioning system delivers fresh, clean air back into your home.

When filters trap too much dust and debris, air can't properly filter or flow through the heating unit. This causes the system to work harder and run for longer periods of time. This increases energy consumption and costs. This continuous strain on your heating system can eventually cause the unit to fail, which leads to expensive repairs or replacement. The rule of thumb is to change you, filter at least every 90 days.

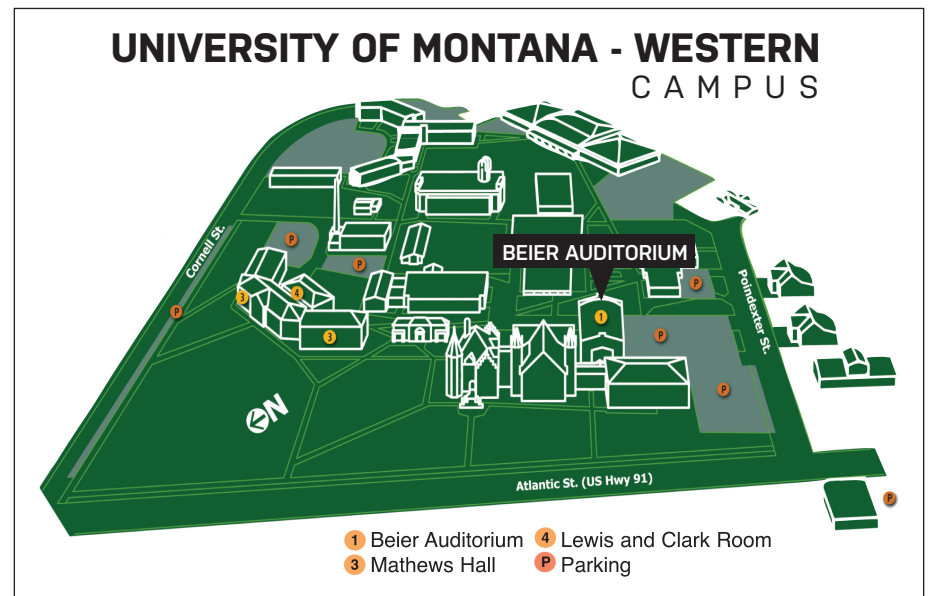
Ensuring that your heating system is functioning properly through regular maintenance should be viewed as an ongoing investment in your home, one that helps maintain your comfort and controls energy costs through the winter. RM

ANNUAL MEETING

Continued from page 5

annual meeting of members, which returns to the Beier Auditorium on the campus of the University of Montana - Western this year. The meeting will be held on March 4. Registration time and the meeting agenda will be finalized by the board of trustees at its January meeting, and will be included in the official notice. That will be mailed to every member in February.

During the business portion of the meeting, members will hear our leadership discuss cooperative issues and events of the previous year, participate in trustee elections and receive information regarding our financial status. Attending members will receive a gift at registration, be eligible for wonderful door prizes at the end of the business meeting, and



be treated to a delicious meal.

For members who attend the meeting, a ticket will be provided at the time of registration for lunch. At the conclusion of the business meeting

(around noon), members are welcome to move over to Mathews Hall, where lunch will be served in the Lewis and Clark Room, and in the campus cafeteria. We hope to see you there. RM