



VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

P.O. Box 1049, Dillon, MT 59725-1049

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2013 EDUCATIONAL AWARDS

By Rod Siring, Member Services

At Vigilante Electric Cooperative, we understand the importance of education. We have a longstanding commitment to education by not only providing financial assistance to deserving students within our membership, but also providing opportunities where experience is the best teacher. The following is a review of the assistance and educational opportunities that Vigilante Electric provided for the 2012-2013 school year.

Every year the Board of Trustees of Vigilante Electric Cooperative awards financial assistance to students who are the dependents of members of the cooperative. This year the board approved 11 scholarships, worth \$750 each. The 2013 school year recipients have proven themselves in and out of the classroom, and therefore the board provided more scholarships and more dollars than ever before. This year's recipients are:

Austin Carver
Beaverhead County High School

Kristen Cottom
Beaverhead County High School

Morgan Evans
Beaverhead County High School

Kayla Meine
Beaverhead County High School

Morgan Peterson
Beaverhead County High School

Ashleigh Rhea
Beaverhead County High School

Kansas Suenram
Beaverhead County High School

Dustin Clark
Broadwater High School

Mariah Romo
Broadwater High School

Sam Watne
Broadwater High School

Amy Tilstra
Twin Bridges High School

Vigilante Electric Cooperative also provided funding for students to attend events that offered very unique educational opportunities, along with a chance to travel and experience history.

For many years Vigilante Electric had sent a deserving student from our membership to the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. This is an all-expenses-paid trip where, over the course of a week, participants tour historical sites, visit with Montana's congressional delegation, watch bills being debated and interact with more than 1,500 students from 44 other states.

In 2012, the cost of this trip was \$2,700 per student. The 2013 participant for the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., is Jordan Peterson from Beaverhead County High School.

This year we also sent students to Helena for the Capital Connections Youth Tour. 2013 marked the first year for this event. Modeled after the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., this event sent students to Helena during the Montana legislative session. Participants took historical tours of the area, watched the legislators and Supreme Court in action, and learned more about electric cooperatives and the values they fight for. The cost of the event was \$400 per student. This year's participants were Dusty Sue Keim from Twin Bridges High School and Sara Madany from Dillon, who is homeschooled.

All of the educational opportunities are funded through unclaimed capital credits. Vigilante Electric would like to congratulate all of the winners and wish them well in all of their endeavors. Benjamin Franklin once stated that an investment in knowledge pays the best interest — so true.

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**683-2327 or
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After Hours Mon. - Thurs.
Dan Snellman683-6222
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By Rod Siring, Member Services

Since the delivery of the Co-op Connections cards to our members we have received several questions about this program and what benefits there are for members who do not have a computer. The answer is there are many benefits. With the right information, you can save money using your phone.

The best group of discounts available through the Co-op Connections program is for travel, specifically lodging and car rental. Touchstone Energy has secured discounts with organizations that have properties and services nationwide and, for that matter, worldwide. Many are with organizations that you already know and trust — such as Best Western and Hertz.

No matter where your travels take you, there is a good

Co-op Connections

National Discounts on Travel

chance that Best Western is there. There are more than 4,000 Best Western properties worldwide. Your membership with Vigilante Electric Cooperative provides you with an opportunity for a discounted rate every time you stay with Best Western.



To qualify for the discount, you must reserve your room in advance of your stay. Reservations can be made online through the Co-op Connections webpage by following the links and instructions on the site, or you can call 1-800-WEST-ERN (1-800-937-8376). When you call, tell the reservation agent that you have a discount agreement with Best Western through its Best Business Worldwide program, and give them your Touchstone Energy Cooperatives ID Number: 01399660 (This number identifies you as a co-op member).

Traveling and need to rent

a car? Why not try Hertz? Hertz has approximately 10,400 locations in approximately 150 countries.

Advance reservations are required and can be made online by following the links and instructions on the Co-op Connections website, or by calling the Hertz reservation line at 1-800-654-3131.

When talking to the agent, tell them that you are a member of a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, and that your CDP# is 1694664.

These discounts and more are available each and every time you travel. It will take some time and planning on your part, but the discounts will be worth the effort. In the coming editions of this publication we will preview others travel discounts available through the Co-op Connections program.



Prescription Discount Tracker

Number of Uses39
Saving, May 2013\$930.14
Savings Year to Date\$1161.56

Co-op Connections 3-D Joins as a Local Participating Business

For the past several months we have reported our affiliation with Touchstone Energy and the Co-op Connections program. One element of the Co-op Connections program provides access to discounts from national and local businesses. Vigilante Electric Cooperative is proud to announce the signing of our first local business, the 3-D.

The 3-D, Dillon's Biggest Little Store, is located at 130 S. Montana St. in Dillon. It is a retail business featuring a broad array of products. It has apparel, gifts and souvenirs, and specializes in signs and engraving.

The 3-D is offering an in-store discount of 10 percent off the regular price of any retail item. This does not include custom orders. To get the discount you must present your card at the time of purchase.

Information on the 3-D offer, or any of the participating businesses, is available at the My Co-op Deals section of the Co-op Connections website (www.connections.coop). We would like to welcome and thank the 3-D for joining the Co-op Connections program.



Taking another Look at Your Lighting

Non-residential Lighting Incentives

If you are a small business owner, you probably do not give much thought to your lights. However, think about why your lights are on, how long they are on and what that does to your electric bill. Lighting is a very essential part of your business, but it is probably costing you a lot more than necessary.

In commercial buildings, lighting accounts for approximately 35 percent of electrical consumption, and in small businesses lighting could be 20 percent to 50 percent of their annual bill. It is estimated that with

upgrades and good lighting design, energy consumed by lighting could be cut in half, while maintaining or improving lighting quality. Such upgrades with proper design typically pay for themselves in a few years.

To illustrate, let's start with some terminology and then provide a very simple example. Many businesses still have old linear fluorescent lighting. You might have heard the term T12 with magnetic ballasts. T12 indicates the lamp diameter, measured in eighths of an inch (a T12 has a diameter of one and one half inches

while a T8 will measure just one inch). The ballast is the component that controls the starting and operational voltage of the fixture.

Say we have a business with ten T12 light fixtures, they use magnetic ballasts and there are four 4-foot, 40-watt lamps in each fixture. For this example, the fixture wattage (ballast and lamps) is 192 watts. The business is open seven days a week for 10 hours a day, making the electrical consumption for the lights 19.2 kilowatt hours per day, or 576 kilowatt hours over a 30-day

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Lighting

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billing cycle.

This scenario conservatively modeled with 32-watt high performance T8 lamps and electronic ballasts would bring the fixture wattage down to approximately 108 watts per fixture. Under these conditions, the monthly kilowatt hour usage would be 324 kilowatt hours — a 44 percent reduction. Plus, the high-performance T8 would provide more light, a much

better quality of light and they last longer, too, reducing maintenance costs.

Another factor to consider is the changes in federal efficiency standards for lighting. T8 and T5 lighting systems generate energy and cost savings, and provide a better quality light. Changes in some standards affecting T12 lighting are already in place and will limit availability to the stock already in the supply chain.

Working in conjunction with Bonneville Power

Administration (BPA), incentives are available that could pay up to 70 percent of the installed cost on a qualifying project. However, the changes in the federal efficiency standards may impact these rebates. Currently, T12 technology is the benchmark, but with this type of lighting being phased out the new benchmark will be T8.

A lighting upgrade is an investment not only in reducing electricity consumption, but in improving the way a building supports its occu-

pants. Studies indicate that a building's lighting directly affects the comfort, mood, productivity, health and safety of its occupants.

For questions regarding this program or to have a free lighting audit of your business, call our Dillon office at 683-2327 or (800) 221-8271.

Incentives are only available on qualified installations, and we require a review of the site and the specifications of the upgrade before you start.

Affordable. Innovative. Member Focused.

It's hard to predict the future, but one thing seems certain — **new government regulations will increase the cost of electricity.**

We want to work with you to keep your electric bills **AFFORDABLE**. We're controlling costs and no matter what the future holds we'll continue to put you, our members, **FIRST**.



**Vigilante
Electric
Cooperative**

Find out how we're *Looking Out for You* at
www.vec.coop

Looking Out
for You