



# Vigilante Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

P.O. Box 1049, Dillon, MT 59725-1049  
(406) 683-2327 or (800) 221-8271

Website: [www.vec.coop](http://www.vec.coop)

E-mail: [contact@vec.coop](mailto:contact@vec.coop)

**OWNED BY THOSE WE SERVE**

## Membership has its benefits

### Capital Credits

**D**ID you know that your cooperative is, by law, a non-profit organization and that YOU (a co-op member) are part owner? Vigilante Electric Cooperative is owned by those we serve. While there are many unique features of an electric cooperative, one distinguishing feature is capital credits.

Vigilante Electric's capital credit system was adopted at the 1947 annual meeting and provides a method for allocating each individual member's share of excess revenues, or net margins. The term "capital credits" is used because the actual money, which is classified as net margins, is invested in cooperative capital. This money belongs to the members, but they have agreed to its use for capital purposes by accepting the capital credit provisions in the bylaws. This business model prevents us from having to take out additional loans and assists us in keeping our costs low for our members.

Statements are sent to our members annually, notifying them of their allocation of margins for the previous year. When financial conditions permit, a general retirement (or refund) can be made. These retired

capital credits are then paid back to the individual member in the form of a check. Past practice has been to retire the oldest capital credits first. In December 2019, we paid capital credits for 2004.

To date, Vigilante Electric has returned more than \$17.5 million back to our members, and over the past three years, the average annual amount of capital credits retired was \$601,916.

One challenge is keeping track of past members. Due to the amount of time it takes between the allocation process and the general retirement, some members move and we lose track of them. If you have earned capital credits and leave our system, please be sure to keep us informed of your current mailing address so we know where to find you when it comes time to pay you.

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 at 800-221-8271 or 683-2327, or by email at [contact@vec.coop](mailto:contact@vec.coop).

Ahern, Jack  
Dillon, MT

Allen, Charles & Angie  
East Helena, MT

Amos, Nora  
Whitehall, MT

Andersen, Jennifer  
South Daytona, FL

Anderson, Mike  
Columbia Falls, MT

Andrist, Laren  
Loveland, CO

Armstrong, Harry & Peggy  
Sheridan, MT

Arnold, Dewey  
Plains, MT

Arnold, Randolph & Sandra  
Helena, MT

Atkinson, Daniel & Alicia  
Dillon, MT

Barnhart, Cora  
Roberts, MT

Baum, Steve & Evelyn  
Apo AP

#### Board of Trustees & General Manager

Tom Helm, President  
Dist. #3

Townsend/N. Helena/Lump  
Gulch

Sharon Lasich, Vice Pres.  
Dist. #4  
Twin Bridges

Cheyenne Garrison, Sec./Treas.  
Dist. #5  
Wise River/Silver Bow/Melrose

Norm Tebay, Trustee  
Dist. #1  
Cardwell/Whitehall/Three Forks

Dean Hanson, Trustee  
Dist. #2  
Silver Star/Waterloo

Andy Johnson, Trustee  
Dist. #6  
Dillon North/Glen

Dean Peterson, Trustee  
Dist. #7  
Jackson/Wisdom

Tom Mitchell, Trustee  
Dist. #8  
Dillon South/Grant

Allen Martinell,  
Dist. #9  
Dell/Lima

Rollie Miller – General Manager

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# Let There Be Light

By Rod Siring, Member Services

**M**ANY of the longtime residents of Dillon may remember this sign. We speculate that this sign was placed on this building when Vigilante Electric Cooperative moved our main office from Twin Bridges to Dillon, and for the past 20 years this sign has showed no signs of life. Now, through the vision of General Manager Rollie Miller, there is light.

Rollie wanted to restore this vintage sign and enlisted the help of employee Jackie Clark. However, the question that they faced was who in today's world works on neon signs. Neon lights, first created in 1910, are glass tubes filled with neon gas. When an electric current passes through the gas in the tube, the gas glows and light is produced. There was nobody locally who came to mind, and there was the question of cost if we brought someone from outside the area to work on it.

To hear this story play out, I can't help but think that fate intervened.

Jackie took a phone call from Mike West at West Electric. She explained the situation with the sign and asked Mike if he knew anybody that could restore it. Mike

knew just the person, Ben Kenealey. Ben had moved his family to Dillon from Sacramento, California, to study glass blowing at the University of Montana - Western. Turns out, in California, Ben specialized in the building, restoration and repair of neon signs.

Now when you pass by our offices at night you will see this beautiful old sign. Vigilante Electric would like to thank Ben for restoring the sign, Mike for his guidance and Jackie for making the project a reality.



## Is the wiring safe in older homes?

**M**ANY homes have older wiring systems. It's important to make sure they don't present a safety hazard.

Anyone who has ever owned an older home has seen the old knob and tube wiring systems, or dealt with frayed or torn electric wires. The question is, are older wiring systems a safety hazard?

More than 41,000 home fires each year are caused by faulty electrical wiring, according to the National Fire Protection Association. The Electrical Safety Foundation also estimates that more than 50 million U.S. homes don't meet current electrical code safety standards.

While these statistics are alarming, older wiring doesn't necessarily spell trouble. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) suggests the following key indicators as signs of potential problems with your electrical system:

- Lights dim, or the television picture shrinks when other appliances are turned on.

- Circuit breakers often need resetting, or fuses need frequent replacement.
- Appliances such as toasters or irons don't get as hot as they should, or take a long time to heat up.

Older electrical systems can cause other issues as well. Older homes are not often equipped with ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). GFCIs are designed to protect against electrical hazards in bathrooms and kitchens. A lack of electrical outlets can also lead to frequent use of extension cords, which is associated with an increase in fire hazards.

If you suspect that your home wiring is not up to code or is a safety hazard, have it inspected by a qualified electrical contractor. For more information, see the *Guide to Home Wiring Hazards* from the CPSC.

# Windows

## Know what you're investing in

By Rod Siring, Member Services

**W**HETHER you are looking at ways to save energy or are preparing to remodel a home — one of the more important considerations you will make is about windows. Windows are a significant component in a home's envelope and ensuring they are as energy efficient as possible can save energy by reducing heating and cooling costs.

A home's envelope refers to the physical barrier between the inside and outside of your home. The better the components and construction of your home the better your home resists air, water, light, noise and heat transfer. According to the Dept. of Energy, heat transfer through windows is responsible for 25 percent to 30 percent of residential heating and cooling energy use.

New windows can be a big investment, and one that you may not be able to make at this time. If this is the case, there are still steps you can take to reduce energy consumption. With a small investment and a little bit of your time, you can make your home more comfortable and efficient:

- Start by checking your existing windows for air leaks. One place where you will often find gaps is on exterior window frames. Look where the window frame meets the side of your house to see if there's a gap. If the gap is less than half an inch, you can seal it with caulk.
- Consider hanging curtains that help trap heat inside during the winter and keep heat out in the summer.
- If your windows were designed for storm windows, repair them and use them.

If you are in the financial position to do a window replacement, the first thing I recommend is to do your homework so that you can make informed decisions and help you in discussions with a building contractor or window representative. The Internet has copious amounts of information, but here are a few thoughts to get you started:

- If your window frames are in good shape, you may have the option of replacing the windows. Ask your contractor or sales representative.
- Understand what is meant by double-pane or triple-pane windows.
- When discussing frame type, understand the pros and cons of metal-, composite-, fiberglass-, vinyl- and wood-framed windows.
- Understand the purpose of using gas in between the panes, and why spacers are used.
- While not a technical decision, give some thought to how windows operate. This might not seem important, but



with investments such as this, you want to understand what you're paying for. Terms to understand about how a window operates are awning, hopper, sliding, fixed, single hung, double hung and casement.

A good way to narrow the selection process is to look and ask for EnergyStar-rated windows. All EnergyStar-rated windows will be labeled. These labels are full of information. One of the most important is the map highlighting what regions the windows are certified for.

EnergyStar-rated windows also come with an NFRC rating. The National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC) operates a voluntary program that tests, certifies and labels windows, doors and skylights based on their energy-performance ratings. The NFRC label provides a reliable way to determine a window's energy properties.

One component of these labels, which is helpful to understand, is the U-factor. U-factor is the rate at which a window, door or skylight conducts non-solar heat flow. The lower the U-factor, the more energy efficient the window, door or skylight. Montana building code for new construction windows must be rated at U-.32 or lower. While not required in a retrofit, it gives you a good reference point.

Finally, even the most energy-efficient window must be properly installed to ensure energy efficiency and comfort. Have your windows installed by trained professionals according to manufacturer's instructions, otherwise your warranty may be void.

If you are not sure if you can afford new windows there may be help available. Vigilante Electric, in conjunction with Bonneville Power Administration, has incentives available for new windows. There is very specific requirements that need to be met to qualify, so contact our office and I would be glad to discuss this opportunity. There may also be tax benefits for an upgrade like this. Keep all receipts from the project and consult your tax professional.



### Vigilante Safety Roundup Tracker

Participating members: 387

Total Contributions: \$5,198.23

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

An online application is available at [www.vec.coop](http://www.vec.coop).

# Capital Credits

*Continued from page 5*

Beick, Mel & Shirley  
Jackson, WY

Ben-Yonatan, Aelana  
Port Townsend, WA

Betten, Darwin  
Duboid, ID

Bingham, Chuck & Ida  
Pine, AZ

Bodle, Scott & Jackie  
Townsend, MT

Boswell, Kristy  
El Reno, OK

Bradley, Lisa  
Boulder, MT

Brakefield, Peggy L  
Vernon, CT

Breker, Cheryl  
Belgrade, MT

Brinkman, Virgil & Carolyn  
Lincoln, CA

Brittain, Brad  
Sheridan, MT

Broom, Rachel  
Dillon, MT

Budge, Geoffrey  
Staunton, VA

Bullard, Sabrina  
Juneau, AK

Campbell, John & Anna  
Dillon, MT

Campbell, Shawna  
Townsend, MT

Carlin, Lee & Krysten  
Watertown, NY

Carruth, Chuck & Diane  
Dillon, MT

Chambers, Bob & Faye  
Butte, MT

Chapman, Robert  
Townsend, MT

Christensen, Ryan & Marisa  
Helena, MT

Clark, Jean  
Missoula, MT

Clark, Raymond & Lorri  
Dillon, MT

Clos, Nick  
Helena, MT

Clothey, Everett  
Dillon, MT

Coleman, Ron  
Commerce City, CO

Collison, Chris & Aimee  
Helena, MT

Cook, Ted & Joan  
Poway, CA

Couch, Mike & Mary  
Idaho Falls, ID

Crowl, John  
Anacortes, WA

Curran, Teresa  
Chehalis, WA

Day, Elena  
Dillon, MT

Denicola, Jeffrey & Val  
Boise, ID

Denny, Terri  
Dillon, MT

Dodd, Misty  
Dillon, MT

Dropinski, Richard & Nancy  
Seward, NE

Eccleston, Amy  
San Antonio, TX

Eichinger, Karen  
Bismark, ND

Fellows, Doug  
Butte, MT

Fellows, Eleanor  
Butte, MT

Fenton, James & Phillips,  
Stacey  
Lewistown, MT

Ferguson, Anna  
Great Falls, MT

Fisher, Tom & Jackie  
Boulder, MT

Ford, Jeff  
Boulder, MT

Foss, Stephanie & Barnes,  
Brandon  
Libby, MT

Freed, Taylour & Nanette  
Dillon, MT

Frerck, Jenny  
Columbus, MT

Fritts, Dan & Chris  
Sheridan, MT

Fuchs, Chris & Marjorie  
Albany, OR

Funasaki, Eric  
Newberg, OR

Garcia, Genevieve  
Dillon, MT

Generic Genetics  
Mesquite, NV

Giuffre, Matt & Kelly  
Townsend, MT

Gohn, Steven & Janice  
Butte, MT

Green, Gerry  
Butte, MT

Green, Ralph & Lynda  
Riddle, OR

Greene, Glenda  
Townsend, MT

Gribble, Ryan  
Connell, WA

Grover, Mildred  
Townsend, MT

Guillen, Gabriel  
Dillon, MT

Hammond, Leroy  
Townsend, MT

Hammond, Mystel  
Dillon, MT

Hanson, Dene  
Butte, MT

Hanson, Fred  
Dillon, MT

Harrod, Bonita Est  
c/o Garry Barnett  
Mankato, MN

Hedden, Lisa  
Helena, MT

Henley, R Q  
Dillon, MT

Herbst, Clay & Trisha  
Gardiner, MT

Herring, Wendy  
Tucson, AZ

Hill, Scott  
Salt Lake City, UT

*Capital Credits  
continued next month*