



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

E-mail: contact@vec.coop



Increase irrigation efficiency

VIGILANTE Electric Cooperative is unique in many ways, but one of the most unique is the time of year our system demand peaks. Most utilities in a northern climate peak in the winter months because of the heating load. Due to the demographics of our service territory, we peak in the summer months due to the large amount of irrigation loads we serve.

While our mission is to provide reliable energy at the lowest possible cost, we also want to help our members use energy efficiently. We understand that energy costs for irrigation constitute a major portion of total operating costs. One way to reduce these costs is to ensure that all the components of the delivery system are working properly. This is why we offer a variety of irrigation efficiency incentives.

With any energy-efficiency project, the goal is to use less energy to perform

the same task, while producing the same result or better results. For irrigation systems, energy savings results when the amount of water needed to irrigate existing crops is applied more efficiently.

Irrigation Pumps

There are many older pumping systems in our service area and at some point, the best option is to replace the pump instead of rebuilding. Our new pump efficiency program is for the replacement of an existing pump with a newly manufactured turbine or centrifugal pump. The pump size must range from 20 to 500 horsepower, and the new replacement pump must have the same or lower horsepower rating, unless it is coupled with a variable frequency drive.

See IRRIGATION, page 7



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Vigilante Safety Roundup Tracker

Participating members: 703

Total Contributions: \$13,952.33

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

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

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

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Dean Peterson, Trustee

Dist. #7

Jackson/Wisdom

Allen Martinell, Trustee

Dist. #9

Dell/Lima

Rollie Miller,

General Manager

CAPITAL CREDIT REFUNDS

In the June edition of this publication, we ran an article dealing with capital credits. One of our main challenges of the capital credit process is keeping track of the past members who are owed capital credits. If you have any information regarding names on this list, please contact us at 800-221-8271 or 406-683-2327, or by email at contact@vec.coop.

Alkire, Russ - Three Forks	Chowning, Clint - Polson	Bozeman	Krist, Kevin & Ericka - Wise River
Allen, Darlene - Townsend	Cornelius, William & Jodie - Dillon	Gregory, Meckisha & Jeremy - Jackson	Lalonde, Patrick - Whitehall
Alt, Katherine - Annapolis, MD	Cravens, Pamela - Dyersburg, TN	Griffin, Dino & Kris - Youngsville, LA	Lambert, Marc - Belgrade
Andley, Judy - Missoula	Crawford, Jason - Helena	Gruber, Marcus - Butte	Larsen, John & Cynthia - Glendive
Armading, Pam - Whitehall	Crawford, Misty - Bozeman	Guisbert, Thad & Cheryl	Lavigne, Kimberly - Townsend
Armstrong, Randy & Dana - Fallon	Crenshaw, Cameron & Kelly, Colleen - Helena	Inver Grove, MN	Leahy, Jeff & Nicki - Bozeman
Ashpole, David & Karen - Owasso, OK	Cundith, Maris - Helena	Gunter, Don & Shayla - Newport Beach, CA	Legere, Tony - Seattle, WA
Austin, Alicia - Great Falls	Currie, Justin & Granman, Tiffany - Rochester, WA	Gutierrez, Jose - Nampa, ID	Lester, David & Lorie - Silver Star
Babcock, Brock & Sienna - North Pole, AK	Curtis, Randy - Belle Fourche, SD	Hales, Farin - Dillon	Ludwig, Brenda - Townsend
Balch, Jan - Dillon	Danielson, Iris - Townsend	Haley, Tracy & Teresa - Butte	Magpantay, Samantha - Dillon
Ball, Damon & Jessica - Trout Creek	Danielson, William - Townsend	Hansen, Rebecca - Salina, KS	Marcure, Andrew - Dillon
Banks, Jean - Wilmington, DE	Davis, Adam & Danalee - Wendell, ID	Harris, Jami & Pergande, Jessica - Townsend	Marinko, Shannon & Carla - Sioux Falls, SD
Barnett, Dan & Stephanie - Three Forks	Davies, Amber - Bozeman	Harrison, Jeanne B - Dillon	Marsh, Geneva - Billings
Barrett, Timothy - Lima	Davis, Leonard - Whitehall	Havens, Stephanie - Townsend	Martinez, Cory - Dillon
Bateman, Ida Estate - Butte	Defrancesco, Rick - Twin Bridges	Hawkins, Wade & Wendi - Interlachen, FL	McDonnell, Tim - Helena
Bates, Alan E - Toston	Delisi, Steve - Monroeville, PA	Hayden LLC - Eloy, AZ	McDowell, Shawn - Ennis
Beckenhauer, Doug - Reedley, CA	Delker, Frank L - Buena Vista, CO	Hiebert, Thomas & Kayleen - Winnemucca, NV	McDuffie, Bart - Helena
Begley, Kaytlin - Livingston	Deyonge, Kenneth & Sandra - Whitehall	Hillman, Peggy - Grass Range	Mendoza, John & Leann - Lima
Berg, Ben - Hazen, ND	Dian, Paul - Wisdom	Hochstetler, Edwin - Whitehall	Meyer, Otto - Dillon
Bertke, Carol - Manhattan	Dobbs, Elaine - Dillon	Holland, John - Billings	Miller, Troy & Jane - Stevensville
Bevier, Kerry - Belgrade	Donaldson, Matthew - Dillon	Hollenback, Cody - Dillon	Miller, Jr. Harold - Cardwell
Birr, Jeremy & Heather - Astoria, SD	Dorvall, Jarad - Whitehall	Howard, Alan K - Dillon	Mock, Christina - Dillon
Bjorklund, Dale - Henderson, NV	Dunkin, Jared - Townsend	Hudspeth, Joseph & Jessica - Williston, ND	Morrow, Pat - Townsend
Blackwell, Fred - Three Forks	Dunlap, Nicole - Twin Bridges	Hutchison, Kayla - Alzada	Munden, David - Helena
Boaz, Steven & Rebecca - Belgrade	Eich, Micah - Townsend	Ingram, Jacob - Havre	Music, Norman - Oregon City, OR
Boisse, Shawn & Randy L - Kettle Falls, WA	Elmer, Patrick - Dillon	Inhelder, Robin - Wise River	Needen, George - Dillon
Boling, Craig - El Dorado Hills, CA	Enderle, Mike & Terry - Bozeman	Irby, Megan - Dillon	Nelson, Jay & Stacy - Billings
Bombaugh, Amanda - Dillon	Evans, Marvin & Cheryl - Vian, OK	Irvin, Lucas - Helena	Nyquist, Rich & Sandy - Bozeman
Boose, Tim & Traci - Bigfork	Fields, Randy & Terri - Carmen, ID	Ita, Shainalee - Spring Creek, NV	Oakes, Pete - Three Forks
Boule, Joe - Helena	Floerchinger, Tyler - Martinsdale	Jacobs, Wyatt & Coryell - Manhattan	O'Reilly, Sean - Helena
Brown, Dustin - Dillon	Fowler, Tammy & Pacurian, John - Townsend	Jenkins, Michael M & Lita - Townsend	Paige, Walter - Alpena, MI
Bryant, Jim & Angela - Townsend	Freeman, Jaime - Camp Verde, AZ	Jenks, Amy J - Helena	Pantaloni, Nick - Huson
Buchman, Jenny - Moccasin	Furniss, Leslie - Missoula	Johnson, Deborah % The Crystal Room - Mount Shasta, CA	Parker, Michael & Kyra - Lima
Burns, Arthur - Pray	Fussell, Mike & Cindy - Chandler, AZ	Jones, Bill & Tamra - White Sulphur Springs	Payne, Curtis & Jennie - Townsend
Burwell, Abbie - Dillon	Gallenkamp, Kirk & Kelly - Littlerock, CA	Jones, Deborah - Butte	Payne, Georgina - Dillon
Cabera, David & Trista - Butte	Gannett, Richard - Missoula	Kack, Chelsea - Dillon	Pedersen, Kathy - Helena
Calhoun, John - Livermore, CO	Garcia, Daniel - Butte	Kearns, Jennifer	Petelle, Kristi - E Helena
Camba, Gus & Stacy - Belle Glade, FL	Gassenberg, Joe - Dillon	Killham, Martin & Joy - Dillon	Peterson, Josh - Dillon
Campbell, Julie - Dillon	Gaudet, Lacey - Billings	King, Casey - Dillon	Peterson, William & Kristy - Butte
Campbell, Wanda - Amity, OR	Gay, David - Lander, WY	Kliver, Jan - Sheridan	Pletcher, Tara - Hermon, ME
Canney, Lucas - Lincoln	Granite Creek Construction -	Kotcher, Joanna - Lima	Potter, Kimberly - Helena
Casey, Desiree - Silverdale, WA		Kraus Construction - Three Forks	Powers, Rebecca - Tacoma, WA
Chacano, Gerardo - Killdeer, ND			Prather, Elizabeth - Fruita, CO
China Wok, Chan Herman - Townsend			Prinbow, Kerry - Butte
			Provus, Robert & Melissa - Otis Orchards, WA

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Quayle, Stephen & Janet - Bozeman
 Quickenden, Sharon - Missoula
 Rebman, Mary - Dillon
 Reese, Don & Emily - Jackson
 Regnier, John - Belgrade
 Richert, Paxton & Megan - Helena
 Richmond, Jessie - Havre
 Rife, Matt - Great Falls
 Robertson, Robert J - Exeter, CA
 Robinson, Richard - Helena
 Rodriguez, Steve & Jannae - Lansing, MI
 Ross, Shannen - Dillon
 Russell, Dana - Missoula
 Sandru, Cindy - Helena
 Schilling, Jeff & Shirley - Elliston
 Schwartz, John & Gina - Wildomar, CA
 Schwarz, Laura - Dillon
 Scrivner, Shane - Bozeman
 Seymour, Danny & Debbie - Dillon
 Sheets, Mike & Jessica - Dillon
 Simpson, Amanda - Townsend
 Smith, Angela - Billings
 Smith, Derek - Dillon
 Smith, Kyle & Leslee - Dillon
 Snelders, John & Bonnie - Sun City, AZ
 Spengler, John & Mary - Cottonwood, CA
 Stacey, Shea - Whitehall
 Stanhope, Denny & Christy - Kingman, AZ
 Stasch, Sherilyn - Basin
 Stockburger, Daniel & Roma - E Helena
 Swan, James & Cheryl - Dillon
 Thompson, Luke & Kim - Rice Lake, WI
 Toledo, Ray - Belgrade
 Trost, Kaylee - Bozeman
 Tucker, Albert & Rene - Missoula
 Turner, C J - Blackfoot, ID
 Turner, Joe & Leah - Three Forks
 Uecker, Rachel - Dillon
 Van Woert, Josh - Dillon
 Vanek, Donald - Lewistown
 Walter, Edwin M - Twin Bridges
 Walter, Trevor - Whitefish
 Wetmore, Keith - Denver, CO
 White, Chester & Tammy - Pompey Pillar
 Williams, Jane - Dillon
 Williams, Jean - Irvine, CA
 Williams, Kimber - Helena
 Wilson, Amanda - Hill City, SD
 Wilson, Ron & Audrey - Niles, OR
 Winn, Stephanie & John - Denver, PA
 Winslow, Trudy - Clancy
 Wood, Barbi - Silver Star
 Zitzelberger, Ronald & Debbie - Spokane Valley, WA

IT ALL BEGINS WITH COMMUNICATION

WE make every attempt to make your interactions with us as easy and convenient as possible. This is why we offer a variety of platforms for communication. Yet, in today's interconnected world, we feel it is important to understand the available platforms and how to best utilize them.

We receive many messages through our Facebook page and Facebook Messenger. The majority of these communications are general comments on current posts; however, we do receive a surprising number of messages from members reporting that their power is out. Our Facebook page is not monitored 24/7, so we recommend that you call us at 406-683-2327 or toll free at 800-221-8271 to receive immediate assistance. During regular business hours our staff will assist you; after hours, your call will be directly routed to our dispatch service, which will notify our linemen.

We also interact with members quite frequently using email. Our email can be accessed through Facebook, from our

website or by using contact@vec.coop. Email is an excellent means of communicating with us. The best way to use email is for timely, but not necessarily urgent, requests for information. Email allows for mindful consideration of your request, and a detailed response. In addition, having a current email attached to your account allows us to notify you about planned outages in your area, and information specific to your account.

For those of you who like to have instant account access and information, we recommend using SmartHub. SmartHub is a web and mobile app that allows you to review your bill, update personal information, and securely pay your bill and store payment information. It also gives you the means to interact with us from your computer, smartphone or tablet.

All of the aforementioned means of communication are great ways of staying in touch with us. Please remember, however, that the best way to reach us for urgent and time-sensitive matters is to call. 

IRRIGATION

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Variable Frequency Drive (VFD)

Under the right operational conditions and proper installation, a VFD can reduce energy costs and extend the life of the pump. Many irrigation systems in our service territory have variable flow and/or pressure needs. VFDs are electric controllers that vary the speed of the pump motor, allowing the pump to respond smoothly and efficiently to fluctuations in flow and/or pressure demand. Our variable frequency drive program provides rebates for drives for pumps ranging from 7.5 to 1,000 hp. Contact Vigilante Electric to determine if you will qualify.

Irrigation Hardware

Whether you use a center pivot, wheel lines or hand lines, attention needs to be given to the system components to ensure that everything is running appropriately. Over time, fittings leak, nozzles wear and regulators degrade. When this occurs, there is the potential of over-watering or under-watering the crop. Both situations will reduce quality, uniformity and yields of your crop. We provide a wide variety of incentives for irrigation hardware.

As with any of our efficiency programs, certain criteria need to be met before an incentive is paid. For more details and incentive levels, please contact Rod Siring at our Dillon office, 800-221-8271 or 683-2327. Agriculture is the lifeblood of rural communities, and we want to part of their success — as they are of ours. 

KNOW THE SIGNS OF A SCAM

By ANNE PRINCE

IT'S no secret that consumers with a water, gas or electricity connection have long been targets for utility scams, but fraudsters have changed their tactics since the COVID-19 pandemic. As consumers became more reliant on technology for work, school and commerce, scammers noted these shifts and adapted their tactics to this changed environment.

Imposter scams are the number-one type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission. While scam artists may come to your door posing as a utility worker who works for the "power company," in today's more connected world, attempts are more likely to come through an electronic device, via email, phone or text.

Common Types of Scams

A scammer may claim you are overdue on your electric bill and threaten to disconnect your service if you don't pay immediately. Whether this is done in-person, by phone, text or email,

the scammers want to scare you into immediate payment so you don't have time to think clearly.

If this happens over the phone, simply hang up. If you're concerned about your bill, call Vigilante Electric Cooperative at 406-683-2327 or 800-221-8271. Our phone number can also be found on your monthly bill and on our website, *vec.coop*. If the scam is by email or text, delete it before taking any action. If you're unsure, you can always contact us, or use the SmartHub app to check the status of your account.

Some scammers may falsely claim you have been overcharged on your bill and say they want to give you a refund. It sounds easy. All you have to do is click or press a button to initiate the process. If you proceed, you will be prompted to provide banking or other personal information. Instead of money going into your bank account, the scammers can drain your account and use personal information such as a social security number for identity theft.

If this "refund" scam happens over

the phone, just hang up and block the phone number to prevent future robo-calls. If this scam attempt occurs via email (known as a "phishing" attempt) or by text ("smishing"), do not click any links. Instead, delete it and, if possible, block the sender. If you do overpay on your energy bill, Vigilante Electric will carry the credit over for future billing. When in doubt, contact us.

Defend Yourself

Be wary of calls or texts from unknown numbers. Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a utility worker who requests banking or other personal information, and never let anyone into your home who you don't know, unless you have a scheduled appointment or have reported a problem.

We want to help protect the communities we serve against utility scams, and you can help create the first line of defense. Please report any potential scams to us so we can spread the word to prevent others in the community from falling victim. 

What is Going on When the Lights Blink

HAVE you ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave clock when you arrive home. When this happens, you've likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service.

Power blinks are typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a powerline. For almost every fault, the interruption in power is caused by the operation of a protective device called a recloser.

We use reclosers throughout our service territory. A recloser is used to section off portions of a circuit to avoid having the entire circuit go down in the event of a fault. Reclosers detect a problem on a line and interrupt the flow of electricity in an

attempt to clear a temporary fault, after which the recloser will reset. If the fault has cleared, the electricity stays on; if it hasn't, then this cycle will happen again.

While we understand that blinks can be seriously annoying, these brief power interruptions caused by protective devices are actually good, because they mean the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

What causes a recloser operation? The answer: a wide variety of things. In our service territory, small animals and trees contacting powerlines are not only the leading causes of blinks, but also outages in general. Blinks can occur during weather events and even when large animals rub against poles

or guy wires.

One thing that is important for our members to understand is power distribution systems are complicated and constantly evolving and, despite our best efforts, it is impossible to prevent all blinks and outages. By working together, however, we can minimize the frequency of these occurrences.

If you're experiencing frequent interruptions in your power, we have the equipment and personnel to help determine what is going on. If it is on our side of the meter (from the transformer to the meter), we will take the proper steps to mitigate the situation. If the problem is between the meter and the home, your best course of action is to contact an electrician. 