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Vigilante Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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2024 DISTRICT MEETINGS

As one year closes and another year begins, for Vigilante Electric Cooperative this means preparing for the most important event of our fiscal year, our trustee elections. This event culminates with our annual meeting of members, which this year will be back on the University of Montana campus on March 8. While many see this as a single event, it is the end of a series of events that begins with district meetings.

Cooperatives are bound to adhere to a set of principles. Principle #2 regards democratic member control: *“Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Representatives (directors/trustees) are elected among the membership and are accountable to them.”* Nominations for representatives (trustees) happen at the district meetings.

Vigilante Electric’s service territory is divided into nine districts. Each district has an elected representative on the board of trustees who serves a three-year term. Terms are staggered to maintain six experienced trustees at all times. District meetings provide

See MEETINGS, next page

Trustees seeking re-election



Trustee District: #4

Serving Twin Bridges/Point of Rocks
Meeting Date: January 17, 2024
Location: Montana Room, Twin Bridges High School, 7 p.m.

Trustee: Colt High - Elected to the board of trustees in 2021. Colt and his wife Kristen live and ranch near Twin Bridges. He currently represents Vigilante Electric on the MECA (Montana Electric Cooperatives’ Association) bylaws and policies standing committee.



Trustee District: #5

Serving the areas of Melrose, Divide, Ramsey and Wise River
Meeting Date: January 16, 2024
Location: Glen Bar, 7 p.m.

Trustee: Cheyenne Garrison - Elected to the board of trustees in 2015. Cheyenne and her husband Jim operate a ranch near Glen, where they raise Angus cross cattle. Currently, she represents Vigilante Electric on the MECA communications standing Committee. Cheyenne is also a member of Vigilante Electric’s Safety Committee. During her tenure, she has served as president and secretary/treasurer of the Vigilante Electric board of trustees.



Trustee District: #7

Serving the Big Hole and Grasshopper Valleys
Meeting Date: January 18, 2024
Location: Wisdom Community Hall, 7 p.m.

Trustee: Dean Peterson - Elected to the board of trustees in 2009. Dean and his wife Dianna live and ranch between Jackson and Wisdom. He currently represents Vigilante Electric on the MECA Legislative and Communications Committees. During his tenure, Dean has served as president and vice president of the Vigilante Electric board of trustees.

VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND GENERAL MANAGER

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

Tom Mitchell, Vice President
Dist. #8
Dillon South/Grant

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

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

John Moos, Trustee
Dist. #3
Townsend/N. Helena/Lump Gulch

Colt High, Trustee
Dist. #4
Twin Bridges/Point of Rocks

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

Dean Peterson, Trustee
Dist. #7
Jackson/Wisdom

Allen Martinell, Trustee
Dist. #9
Dell/Lima

Rollie Miller
General Manager

Residential demand

Rate increase due to wholesale power cost increase

BY now, our members have received a letter from General Manager Rollie Miller about the rate increase starting January 1, 2024. While this rate increase may seem drastic, it is the first increase Vigilante Electric Cooperative has made in four years. Despite the challenges our industry has faced in the past four years, we have been able to stay true to our mission of providing the most reliable service and the lowest possible cost.

As Rollie explained, the primary driver of this increase is a significant increase in our wholesale power costs. Decisions like this are never easy, but our management team and trustees spent countless hours reviewing the options available for not only meeting our financial commitments, but the best way to do it.

We have seen a demand component on our wholesale power bills for years. Starting January 1, a demand element is being added to the residential rate. First, what is demand? In an article published in the *Rural Montana* magazine in November 2015, Rollie addressed the potential implementation of a demand component to the residential rate class and used the following to describe demand and the

need for a demand charge:

“As I write this, we are evaluating modifying our retail rate structure to implement a demand component. We have the energy line item on the bills now, which is the actual usage for the period, and is measured in kilowatt hours (kWh). The demand component is the rate at which the energy is being used and is measured in kilowatts (kW). An analogy for this is the speedometer and odometer on your vehicle.

“The odometer measures usage and the speedometer measures rate of usage. We need to have our transformers and other equipment in place to handle the rate at which you are using power (speedometer) rather than the actual usage (odometer). You need a much better “vehicle” to go 85 miles per hour consistently than you do to go 45 miles per hour.”

To translate this into energy terms, the more things going on electrically at a point in time, the higher the demand for energy is. The more electrical appliances you have running at the same time in a home, the higher the potential demand. To meet this potential demand, we need adequate facilities and resources available to meet these needs.

This move was inevitable. We have

used demand as a billing component for irrigation and commercial rate classes for years. Most utilities bill demand, and this is why we have printed the demand readings on our residential bills since October 2015. Rollie noted in the 2015 article, “The intent is to more accurately and more fairly collect revenue for the electric services provided to the individual members.”

Utilities differ a little on accessing demand charges. For our billing, we will use the highest 30-minute average during each billing cycle. If your highest average demand reading is 10 kW, then that month’s demand charge is \$10.

For years, we have used these pages to inform our membership of ways to reduce energy consumption through energy efficiency and conservation. We will continue our education efforts moving forward, helping you understand your energy usage better and provide strategies to limit demand.

If you have any questions about the residential demand or any retail rate components, please call our office and we will get you the answers. All of our front-line staff will be able to answer any questions you may have.

RM

MEETINGS

Continued from previous page

members interested in running for the board with an opportunity of securing a nomination, but to secure a nomination, you need the support of other members. Nominations can also be made from the floor of the annual

meeting before the election.

The district meetings also provide those who are not able to attend the annual meeting a chance to hear about the state of the cooperative from General Manager Rollie Miller. This is an excellent opportunity to interact with our general manager because these meetings are less formal than the annual meeting, and

the group size is small, making the interaction more relaxed.

Members residing within these districts will be notified by mail. If you would like further information regarding the district meetings or running for district trustee, please call us at (800) 221-8271 or 683-2327.

RM

GO BEAVERS!

STATE CLASS A CHAMPIONS



Vigilante Electric Cooperative would like to congratulate the Beaverhead County High School Football team for winning the State Class A Championship. Many of the players' families are part of our cooperative, the coaching staff are all members, and part of this coaching staff includes our own Gary Ferris and Mick Paffhausen. Gentlemen, you did your community and school proud.

SAFETY IS A CORE PRINCIPLE FOR CO-OPS

SAFETY is a fundamental value for electric cooperatives. Delivering affordable and reliable electricity requires employees to approach their daily responsibilities with an intense focus on safety – for the sake of their fellow employees and consumer members.

Everyone from the general manager to front-line employees are responsible for sending every member of the co-op family safely home to their loved ones.

This type of buy-in is part of the culture we have built

at Vigilante Electric Cooperative, and it is a claim that we can substantiate. Each year, we must report to OSHA any work-related injuries and illnesses involving days away from work and/or days of restricted activity. This information is also used in calculating our worker compensation rates administered by our statewide association.

Recently, at the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association annual meeting, Vigilante Electric received an award for having no reportable incidents over the past six years. RM



Vigilante Electric Cooperative

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Vigilante Safety Roundup Tracker

Participating members: 841

Total Contributions: \$23,978.82

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

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



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WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE

THERE ARE OPTIONS FOR LONG-TERM HELP FOR MEMBERS IN NEED

WEATHERIZATION refers to a set of, or individual, actions a homeowner can take to reduce the loss of conditioned air to the outside through convection and conduction (or the infiltration of heat/cold from the outside). Weatherization increases your comfort, reduces the waste of heated and cooled air by sealing and/or insulating your home, and can help to improve your home's overall air quality and durability.

There are countless resources available to lead us through low-cost or no-cost DIY projects or educate us enough to feel comfortable dealing with contractors. Despite these resources, we at Vigilante Electric Cooperative understand that many of our members have neither the time nor the resources to make needed improvements.

In the October edition of this publication, there was an article regarding low-income energy assistance available through Vigilante Electric. The article

noted the weatherization program run by the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS). This program helps low-income families improve the heating efficiency of their homes, thus reducing their energy consumption.

Households that qualify for LIHEAP are also eligible for weatherization and energy education. All approved LIHEAP applications are ranked according to degree of need and placed in "priority groups." Special priority is given to older adults and disabled individuals. If your application is approved, but you are not in a priority group, and if you do not receive assistance within a year of your application date, please reapply.

An energy auditor will set up a time to visit with you about your home's needs for weatherization materials. The auditor is trained to determine the most cost-effective weatherization measures for your home. These measures may include: a furnace

tune-up, caulking, client education, insulation, weather-stripping, storm windows, replacement of broken glass or repair of exterior doors.

Weatherization workers may not be able to install all the materials you need, but they will do the most important weatherization within the dollar limits allowed.

When your home is scheduled for weatherization work, a crew or an independent contractor will come to install the necessary materials in your home. After the work is completed, you will be asked to sign a statement indicating that you believe the work was done properly and to your satisfaction.

Coming off last winter and facing increases in energy rates, we all need to look for ways to conserve energy. We will continue to be a trusted resource in educating our members on ways to conserve energy. We are in this together because it is the cooperative way. RM

