

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

Website: www.vec.coop
E-mail: contact@vec.coop



Vigilante Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

KEEPING UP WITH THE CHANGES

Column by **TREVOR PARKE**
General Manager



Many things have changed in the way that we have conducted business over the past few years. Good or bad, most of us use the computer in our pocket or at home daily. We can instantly gather information, communicate or even pay our bills. Modern technologies and trends have changed the way your electric cooperative serves your needs.

Vigilante Electric Cooperative has a website, social media pages and electronic payment options. These technologies have helped us get information about the membership, lower costs and increase efficiencies. With the recent postage rate increase, we encourage our members to receive and pay their bill electronically. We have information on our website about several of the web and mobile payment options.

Many of our members have taken advantage of these technologies, which have drastically reduced the number of office

visits and phone calls. The good news is that this has helped us control costs at the utility. Effective July 1st our office will be open 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 8 a.m. to noon on Friday. To drop off a payment after-hours, we offer a drop box at all of our locations. If you have any questions or need help setting up electronic payments, do not hesitate to contact the office.

Vigilante Electric serves nine Montana counties and one Idaho county. We have 11,000 services and maintain 2,700 miles of line. Crews are dispatched from three locations: Dillon, Whitehall and Townsend. With a vast service territory, communication to our crews during outages is very important. We use a regional call center to effectively handle our after-hours calls.

This service uses interactive voice response to direct the calls to the correct individuals. Callers have the option of reporting outages, making payments, checking balances or talking to a live representative. Soon we will be using this system during regular business hours, and it will direct you to the appropriate staff member to assist you. RM

AUGUST 2024

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

Trevor Parke
General Manager

Labor Day CLOSURE

Vigilante Electric
Cooperative's office will be
closed Monday, September 2



VIGILANTE ELECTRIC STUDENTS AND CHAPERONE TALK ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE

Out of my comfort zone

IN A CONSTRUCTIVE WAY

By **HUNTER WIGEN**
Vigilante Electric Youth Tour participant

WHEN I heard the news that I was accepted to be a youth tour delegate for Vigilante Electric Cooperative I had no idea what to expect.

I was told many times that I would learn a lot and meet people I had never met before, but somehow I was still shocked when both these things came to fruition.

Not only did I gain knowledge about the history of our country, but I learned much about what it is to be a person.

When I walked into our hotel for the first time I was surrounded by people I barely knew, instantly we were greeted with a sunset unlike any I had seen before, and I knew that everyone there saw that same sunset in a very meaningful way.



I quickly found out that these friends I made would last a lifetime even though we had only a week to get to know each other.

Throughout the trip, I was frequently pushed out of my comfort zone in a constructive way. My eyes were opened to a culture of hospitality that I was entirely unfamiliar with, and I was encouraged to experience every emotion there is.

I was beyond impressed with the size and manor of our government, and all of the intricate systems that allow it to function. It was a remarkable feeling to see how far we have come as a country. We were all inspired to be the few who bridge the gap made by division in modern-day America. I am confident that I was given a valuable experience,



which is beyond what money can buy. I'm so thankful that I was able to share it with the future leaders of our nation.

I could not be more grateful for Vigilante Electric co-op and all the other co-ops around the United States for everything they do to improve the lives of all. RM

The experience is hard to explain in words

By **KALEN MARTINELL**
Vigilante Electric Youth Tour participant

FIRST, I would like to thank the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association and Vigilante Electric Cooperative for the opportunity to experience this very memorable trip. I would also like to share a couple of my stories regarding Washington, D.C.

One of my favorite memories would be when we got to explore the Smithsonian Museums. There is so much to see and experience, even though we were there for a short time, we were still able to see many exhibits. The Philadelphia gun boat, which was used by the Continental Navy, is a breath-taking



sight I was very fortunate to experience.

It was very easy to picture this magnificent museum piece on ocean waters, and to see the cannons fired from this wooden ship. The amount of effort to preserve the Philadelphia is very evident and mind-blowing.

We also got to tour our great nation's capital and observe some of the greatest paintings, statues and architecture I have ever seen. It was truly astonishing to get to experience all these complex structures. It's very hard for me to narrow down my favorite part of the tour, everything is equally spec-

tacular. If I had to choose my favorite part, however, I would have to pick the Apotheosis of Washington. It's hard to explain in words how magnificent this scene is, it was hard for me to comprehend the view and I witnessed it. There is a round painting as you look straight up, and as the ceiling of the dome curves to meet the floor, there is what looks like little octagonal windows in rows and columns. I felt as though I could stare at the Apotheosis all day and it would never get dull. Our tour guide that led the group was from Montana, and was a really cool guide. He told us that he grew up in Corvallis.

Continued next page



from previous page

I would like to thank all the chaperones that put up with us for a week, and our great bus driver that made sure no one got left anywhere. I am very fortunate to have made life-long memories and friends that I will most likely see on many more occasions. If you qualify to apply for this very special Washington, D.C., trip in the future, I highly recommend that you take the time to write your essay for whatever the question may be. Trust me, it's definitely worth the effort. RM

The future is in good hands

By **CHELSEY HUTCHISON**
Vigilante Electric Youth Tour Chaperone

As a chaperone, I will admit that I was most excited about the opportunity to take a trip to Washington, D.C., to see all the sights and to do all the things.

As a self-proclaimed history buff, I was so excited to immerse myself in our nation's history. While the trip was a once-in-a-lifetime experience and absolutely did not disappoint, my overall impression walking away was not what I originally expected.

I left Washington, D.C., inspired and excited, not because of our rich history, but for our country's future leaders.

Electric cooperatives across the country have sent youth from rural communities to Washington, D.C., every June since 1964, with a few goals in mind: to increase their understanding of the value of rural electrification, to become more familiar with the historical and political environment of the nation's capital, and to increase their knowledge of how the federal government works.

I had the honor of chaperoning a group of 32 youth from across the state



of Montana, and they were an AMAZING group of kids!

What I did not anticipate going in was just how knowledgeable and involved these

kids already are. They are aware and well-informed on many political topics affecting us today. They were not scared to ask questions or broach topics that were important to them, and they debated them with great maturity and respect. These kids quickly embraced each other, leaving no one behind. They spoke to each other so kindly. They laughed, learned a lot, made new friends and, most importantly, had fun. They left me in awe of them.

While I did not have the opportunity to spend time with the youth from other states, there were nearly 2,000 other Youth Tour participants just like our Montana kids: inspired and motivated future leaders that I know will go on to change our world for the better.

If anyone is worried about the current adversarial political scene, they can rest assured that our future is in good hands. RM

Communication is key

Keep your contact information up to date with Vigilante Electric

It is said that communication is key in any relationship, and that communication works for those who work at it. When it comes to communicating with our membership, our goal is to share timely and urgent information in the most efficient manner possible. To do this, we need our members' help.

An important element is having the appropriate contact

information for our members. This includes the proper mailing address, email and cellphone number. While the proper mailing address has always been essential information, email and cellphones are now crucial when communicating more timely and urgent information.

For those of you who prefer to have control over the information you provide and want to specify the types of notifications you receive, we highly recommend using SmartHub. SmartHub can be accessed through our website or mobile app, and provides you with a wealth of information, putting you in control of how we communicate.

For those members who are not SmartHub users, you can still set up email and text notifications by contacting our office. Regardless of how you receive your digital communications, we can help you navigate the process. A friendly tip: in order to receive timely digital information via cellphone, please remember to turn on your notifications.

We understand that everybody's comfort level with digital communications is different, but as we have all experienced, this has become the world we live in. While we are not abandoning more traditional forms of communication, we want to ensure that we are communicating valuable information by the most timely and efficient methods. RM



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 
Vigilante Safety Roundup Tracker

Participating members: 875
Total Contributions: \$28,700.85

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

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

DILLON MEMBER APPRECIATION BBQ

BRATS & KILOWATTS

AUGUST 28TH
11 AM - 1 PM

VIGILANTE ELECTRIC
225 E BANNACK ST · DILLON

Join the Vigilante Electric crew on August 28th for a free bratwurst lunch and a chance to win a smokeless fire pit or bill credit!

