

GLACIER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. HIGHLINER

WWW.GLACIERELECTRIC.COM

GLACIER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

GLACIER ELECTRIC

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bruce Bradley, President
Rural District

Zita Bremner, VP
Browning District

Brian Elliott, Treasurer
Browning District

Darrol Berkram
Cut Bank District

Willard Hjartarson
Rural District

Lee Holden
Cut Bank District

Miles Lewis
Rural District

Dave Losing
Rural District

Jim Newman
Cut Bank District

OFFICES

Cut Bank (406) 873-5566
410 East Main Street
Cut Bank, MT 59427

Browning (406) 338-5400
P.O. Box 609
Browning, MT 59417

GENERAL MANAGER

Jasen Bronec
(406) 873-5566

Cooperative Members Come First

By Jasen Bronec

At Glacier Electric Cooperative, one priority rings through loud and clear – you, the member-owner, come first! Day in and day out, the employees at your local cooperative work hard to represent your interests.

Electric cooperatives are “of, by, and for” the people they represent. Being a member-owner of your cooperative means you, along with your neighbor, own the company and have a voice in the decisions made on your behalf. And that is a fundamental difference between your local electric cooperative and other for-profit energy providers.

There is no question that the energy industry is changing. Everyday we hear about the issues related to climate change, the rising cost of utility bills, and the hardships that are placed on people. The Board of Trustees, management, and employees of Glacier Electric Cooperative are committed to work for you and deliver the most reliable and cost competitive power possible.

Glacier Electric has finished with another great year. The financial condition of the Cooperative continues to be very stable. In 2013,

GEC was able to maintain the goal, set by the Board of Directors, of 40% equity. The Cooperative was also able to pay out \$380,000 in capital credits to members on our regular 20-year cycle. We spent \$182,200 in rebates and products to members for energy efficiency projects. Glacier Electric Cooperative continues to maintain system reliability. In 2013, \$2.5 million was invested in system improvements including pole change outs, underground conductor replacement, and substation upgrades.

The Board of Trustees approved the 2014 budget at the December board meeting. The budget calls for “NO Rate Increases” in 2014. The cooperative was able to absorb all increases related to increased taxes, operations, and maintenance costs. In 2014, Glacier Electric has planned for several system improvement projects. We will also continue conducting maintenance on poles and wire in order to ensure continued reliability.

The needs of cooperative members truly come first. The Board of Trustees’ first focus is to ensure that the cooperative continually looks for ways to improve our ability to meet your needs and strengthen the quality of life in the communities

in which we live, work, and serve. The trust you’ve placed in us is something we take very seriously, and we all work hard everyday to earn it.

Under the watchful eye of your locally elected Board of Trustees, the cooperative is focused on delivering high quality, reliable, and affordable electric service. If you have any questions, please stop by the offices in Cut Bank or Browning or call us at (406) 873-5566 or (406) 338-5400.

Energy Assistance

LIEAP Browning
(406) 338-7977

LIEAP Regional
(406) 761-0310

Energy Share Regional
(406) 761-0310

Energy Share State
(406) 442-4900

Emergency Funding Opportunities Inc.
(406) 216-2300

Glacier Electric Crisis Fund
(406) 873-5566

10 Things You Should Know

At Glacier Electric Cooperative, we want to keep our members well informed. Many people think of Glacier Electric as just another business out to make a profit; however, we are not. We are a member-owned cooperative. Which means we are non-profit, and owned, governed, and operated by our member-owners, like you!

This year we will publish a series of articles on what it means to be a cooperative member. We really want you to understand why it is important that Glacier Electric is a cooperative and not a for-profit business. We hope you will find this series interesting and helpful, and that it will inspire you to be more active in YOUR cooperative! Below you will find a list of ten things that we at Glacier Electric would like for you to know about your cooperative.

1 We are ONE Cooperative

Although we have offices in both Browning and Cut Bank, Glacier Electric is ONE cooperative. Our rates, policies, deposits, board, management, everything, is the same across our entire service territory.

2 You are an Owner

By definition, a cooperative is OWNED by its members. That means YOU own Glacier Electric. When you paid your membership fee you became a part-owner of the cooperative. Every member has an equal vote and voice in the cooperative. When you vote for the Board of Directors you are voting for the long-term direction of the cooperative.

3 What is Budget Billing

We offer a wide variety of payment options to help make bill payment as easy as possible for all of our members. Budget or leveled billing is one such option. If you chose to use budget billing we will determine your average monthly cost over a 12 month period and charge you a leveled amount. This means that your bill will be about the same year round rather than being higher during colder months. This is a great option if you are on a fixed income or if you simply prefer to pay the same amount year-round. Call us if you are interested in this option.

4 Community Support

Like all cooperatives, Glacier Electric is very involved in the community. We support local events and education throughout the year. In fact, we give more than \$50,000 in community support every year in response to requests from members. If you have a request, please send it, in writing, to the Glacier Electric Board.

5 Economic Development

Glacier Electric believes that a strong local economy improves the lives of all of our members. We help improve the local economy by offering business loans through our

revolving loan program, working to secure grants for essential services such as local hospitals, and offering support both in participation and financial contribution to local economic development organizations across our service territory. If you know of an economic development project that GEC could help with, please contact Virginia Harman.

6 We are Non-Profit

We sometimes hear complaints about the cost of electric bills. We understand that many of our members are on fixed or low incomes and that high bills can be a burden. However, we want all of our members to understand that Glacier Electric Cooperative is NOT FOR PROFIT. That means that the rates that we charge cover only the cost to provide electrical service to you. If we make any "profit," also called margins, it is returned to you, our members, through capital credits. Our board and management keep rates in the forefront of every decision, as low rates are part of our core mission. Despite all of our efforts to keep rates as low as possible, we face continued increases in power supply costs, labor costs, and material costs for our power lines, substations, meters, etc. These costs must be passed on through rates, in order to continue to deliver reliable power.

7 Caring Neighbor

Glacier Electric works to be a good neighbor. We understand that all people have hard times and face financial difficulties. In order to help our members when they are in these situations we offer the Glacier Electric Crisis Fund. The board allocates approximately \$15,000 to this fund annually. If you or someone you know is facing a financial crisis, this fund is available to help. Money from the fund is applied to the electric accounts of members who are approved for assistance. Approval is based on documentation of a financial crisis, the presence of children, individuals who are handicap, or an elderly person in the household and availability of funds. Applications are available at both Glacier Electric offices. Recently, Glacier Electric has also worked with LIHEAP, Blackfeet Housing, and other entities to provide assistance to individuals who experienced a lapse in their regular paychecks or LIHEAP payments due to governmental issues.

8 How Do Capital Credits Work

Members often ask questions about Capital Credits. It can be a rather difficult subject to explain. In short, Glacier Electric retires capital credits (which are allocations of "profit" from any given year) on a 20-year cycle. Members who had service during the year being retired, receive a check for their share of the "profits" from that year. Next month we will discuss this topic in much greater detail. In the meantime if you have a question about capital credits please call one of our offices.

About YOUR Cooperative

9 Disconnect Policy

Although we would prefer to never have to disconnect any members, there are times when members accounts are more than 60-days past due. In order to ensure that members who pay their bills do not have to continue to "foot the bill" for those who don't, we have a disconnect policy. Our disconnect policy, for a traditional account, is Policy 500. The full policy is available at www.glacierelectric.com or by request at our offices.

Prepay accounts are not subject to the deposits, fees, or disconnect policy associated with a traditional account. They are, however, subject to the prepay agreement which is signed at the time a member starts prepay service. This agreement outlines disconnect procedures for prepay service. If a member on prepay would prefer to be under the traditional disconnect policy, they may choose to convert to a traditional account.

10 Why Do We Charge Deposits

You, like other members, might wonder why we charge security deposits for traditional accounts. Deposits help the cooperative recover negative balances that occur when a member does not pay their electric bill. Typically

utilities charge a deposit that is equal to the liability associated with an account. Because of our 60-day disconnect procedure, traditional accounts are 60-days past due before they are disconnected. This leaves a large unpaid balance. The deposits help cover that liability. Deposits are \$400 for non-electrically heated homes and \$600 for electrically heated homes. Deposits are not required if the individual has a good credit check (done by a third party), has a signed letter of guarantee from another Glacier Electric Cooperative member (who is in good standing), or if the member chooses to have a prepay account rather than traditional.

Please look in February's Rural Montana for more information about Capital Credits. If there is a topic about your cooperative that you would like us to discuss in the magazine, contact Virginia Harman at 873-5566.

Glacier Electric Cooperative, Inc.

member Voices

Glacier Electric Co-op:

We want to thank you for once again renewing your Chamber membership for 2014. Your confidence in, and support of our tremendous community are so very much appreciated. We also want to thank you for your donation to the Business Appreciation Days!

-Cut Bank Chamber

Jackie, Kendra and Staff:

Thank you for allowing the Department of Environmental Quality to hold their public meeting at your office. Your assistance in helping the DEQ better serve the people of Montana is appreciated.

Best,

-Governor Steve Bullock

Glacier Electric:

Thank you for donating the \$25 gift certificates to the Financial Peace University class. I was lucky enough to receive one this year. Thanks again.

-Jamie Seifert

Glacier Electric and Board:

Thank you for the 60 and over program and the \$100.

-Tom Moulton

60 Plus Program Winner

Glacier Electric Co-op:

Thank you for your generous donation. Your contribution is a step towards the purchase of a new emergency response vehicle.

-Cut Bank Volunteer

Fire Department

Glacier Electric Cooperative, Inc.
is currently accepting
applications for the

2014 MECA Memorial Scholarship

The winner will receive a \$500 scholarship from Glacier Electric and will be entered into a state-wide competition for an additional \$500 scholarship.

Applications are available
at your school's
counseling center, at
www.GlacierElectric.com
and at your local GEC office.

Deadline is January 17, 2014.

Parents or guardians must
be members of Glacier
Electric Cooperative.

2014 D.C. Youth Tour Winners

Glacier Electric Cooperative has selected the winners of this year's Washington, D.C. Youth Tour competition. Mackenzie Fauque and Kevin Gallagher will be attending the Youth Tour this June as representatives of Glacier Electric Cooperative. Nicole Friesen was selected as the alternate. All three students wrote essays on the topic: "Describe how electric cooperatives operate based on the seven cooperative principles. Tell which of the seven cooperative principles you think is the most important and why?"

Each wrote compelling essays that demonstrated they are on their way to becoming future leaders in our community. In her essay, Mackenzie explained that she felt the seventh principle, Concern for the Community, is the most important. "I feel that Glacier Electric Cooperative is a key part of our community's success," explained Mackenzie. Kevin felt that the first principle, Open and Voluntary Membership, is the most important. "This is the most important rule because if you were to join (the co-op) you should not have to worry about anyone turning down your application... no matter what (your) race, gender, social status, or religious beliefs (are)."

When asked why she feels she should represent Glacier Electric Cooperative on this tour, Mackenzie said, "I am eager to learn and I will represent Glacier Electric Cooperative positively. I will share my learning experience with my peers and promote this learning opportunity." Kevin said, "I would like to up my public speaking skills and also meet new people. I think I would be a good representative for Browning." Both winners are very active in academic and athletic activities at their schools and in the community.



Kevin Gallagher



Mackenzie Fauque

Mackenzie is the daughter of Janice and Jeff Fauque and is a sophomore at Cut Bank High School. Kevin is the son of Loren and Tara Gallagher and is a sophomore at Browning High School. Please join us in offering congratulations to this year's winners!

The seven Cooperative Principles are:

1. Open and Voluntary Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Members' Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training, and Information
6. Cooperation Among Cooperative
7. Concern for the Community

GLACIER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE Board Room Report

The Glacier Electric Board of Trustees meets each month, typically on the last Wednesday of the month, for their regular board meeting.

Action items from the November Board meeting:

- Approved the 2014 Washington, D.C. Youth Tour winners, Mackenzie Fauque and Kevin Gallagher.

- Approved the donation of outdated GEC computers to local churches for distribution.

	10/31/2013	10/31/2012
kWh Sold	137,162,558	112,744,513
Revenue	\$12,217,820	\$12,207,630
Cost of Power	\$4,865,676	\$4,904,405
Margins	\$493,534	\$554,287

60 Plus Program

2014

Members ages 60 and older, turn in this form to GEC for your chance to win \$100.

Last month's winner was:
Willene LaPlant
of Browning

Bring your entry to one of our offices or mail it to:

Glacier Electric Co-op
P.O. Box 2090
Cut Bank, MT 59427

60 Plus Entry Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone Number _____

Age _____