

GLACIER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. HIGHLINER

WWW.GLACIERELECTRIC.COM

GLACIER ELECTRIC

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Zita Bremner
President
Browning District

Jim Newman
Vice President
Cut Bank District

Willard Hjartarson
Secretary/Treasurer
Rural District

Bruce Bradley
Rural District

Brian Elliott
Browning District

Miles Lewis
Rural District

Darrol Berkram
Cut Bank District

Dave Losing
Rural District

Jim Taylor
At-Large District

GENERAL MANAGER

Matt Hudson
(406) 873-5566

2015 Annual Meeting of Members

Glacier Electric Cooperative would like to thank our members for your continued support and for making our annual meeting a success.

Glacier Electric Cooperative held its 69th Annual Meeting of Cooperative Members on Saturday April 25, 2015. Over 200 members gathered at the Cut Bank High School to enjoy lunch, learn about the cooperative, and enter for a chance to win door prizes.

Doors opened at 10:00 a.m., and members had the opportunity to visit booths set up by GEC employees. Lineman Donny Winchell and Safety Coordinator Doug Ray demonstrated electrical safety with our table-top *Farm Town* safety exhibit. *Farm Town* is a miniature life-like rural setting highlighting electrical hazards. It teaches members and children to avoid power lines, transformers, meters, and electrical boxes. Customer Service Representative Jonnalea Tatsey and Service Technician Marvin Fassett provided information about energy efficiency, rates, and the prepay system. They also presented a lighting display demonstrating how one traditional incandescent light bulb uses

more electricity than four LED or CFL light bulbs. Members had the chance to ask questions and get to know GEC employees.

Several local community organizations also set up booths to provide information about their mission, programs, and volunteer opportunities. Participating organizations included Relay for Life, Kidpacks Program, Front Range CASA, Cut Bank Saddle Club, Circle of Hope, Cut Bank Trails, and the Glacier County Extension Office.

GEC employees and the Cut Bank High School Stu-

dent Council served fried chicken, salads, and dinner rolls for lunch topping it all off with ice cream for dessert. While enjoying lunch, members socialized and had the opportunity to vote for the Board of Trustee election. Members were asked to register and were given two 12W LED light bulbs as member appreciation gifts from GEC. Members were also given a 2014 annual report summarizing key highlights about the cooperative's operations, safety, finances, and community involvement.

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GEC employee Jonnalea Tatsey explaining light bulb options.

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

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

Office Hours
Monday-Thursday
7:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Closed Fridays

2015 Annual Meeting of Members

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When lunch was finished, members gathered in the auditorium for the official business meeting. Attorney Justin Lee called the meeting to order and welcomed all of the members in attendance. Board Secretary/Treasurer Brian Elliott gave the invocation. He then established that a quorum of the membership was present and read the Notice of the Annual Meeting and proof of mailing.

President Bruce Bradley introduced the board of trustees, auditor Randy Boysun, attorney Justin Lee, and guest speaker Joe Lukas of the Western MT G&T. He introduced election candidates Miles Lewis, Willard Hjartarson, and Darrol Berkram. President Bradley also introduced special guests Mike Normandeau of Bonneville Power Administration, Ryan Hall of the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association, Harry Barnes, Chairman for the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council, and Russ Malsam, Engineering Consultant of Heberly & Associates.

Randy Boysun of Douglas Wilson & Company presented the audit report for the 2014 calendar year. Mr. Boysun discussed the comparative balance sheet and statement of revenue and expenses. Mr. Boysun noted that GEC remains very strong and stable with a 44.36% equity to asset ratio which increased from the prior year. He stated that overall the audit was very good and a clean unmodified opinion had been issued for GEC.

General Manager Matt Hudson presented his report. He thanked the Cut Bank High School for the use of their facilities and the Student Council for their help serving lunch. Mr. Hudson gave a brief background about himself mentioning that he is from Missouri where he worked as a lineman for 13 years then went on to become a teacher and coach for 7 years. While teaching, Mr. Hudson decided to join the board of trustees for the cooperative he had formerly worked for until recently moving to Montana to become the General Manager of GEC.

Mr. Hudson reviewed 2014 noting that it was a strong year for the cooperative. He discussed large projects completed and highlighted GEC's safety training and policies.

Mr. Hudson emphasized the financial strength of the cooperative proudly announcing that GEC retired \$461,000 in capital credits back into members' pockets in 2014. He also noted GEC's continued support for local businesses, schools, and the community. Mr. Hudson discussed the challenge GEC faced in 2014 with the turnover of several key employees. He thanked the current employees for stepping up during this time and going above and beyond to provide quality service to the members.

After reporting on 2014, Mr. Hudson discussed key issues that could affect GEC's future—rates and government regulation. He mentioned GEC's wholesale power supplier, Bonneville Power Administration, or BPA will be increasing rates in September resulting in a small rate increase at GEC. Mr. Hudson announced that even with this rate increase, GEC will still offer some of the lowest rates in Montana and across the country.

Mr. Hudson touched on government regulations. He discussed bills within the legislature involving renewable energy. He stated that GEC supports renewable energy, but would like policies and decisions to be made at the local level not governed under statewide mandates. Mr. Hudson also discussed a legislative bill reducing forest and range fire liability that would help protect cooperatives, hunters, fisherman, farmers and ranchers. Mr. Hudson extended a special thanks to the entire staff at the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association who work hard to protect the interests of cooperatives in Montana.

Mr. Hudson closed his presentation by thanking the board of directors for the opportunity to be the general manager of GEC. He also thanked the members for building a great cooperative, and left them with the message that GEC will continue to provide safe, reliable, and affordable electricity while caring for the community.

Next, President Bradley discussed the cooperative from the board of trustee's perspective stating that the board had a busy year in 2014 especially keeping up with new developments in the cooperative world. He acknowledged the employees who left the cooperative in 2014 and wished them well in their endeavors. He recognized Greg Laasch

GEC would like to thank the following community organizations for hosting booths at our annual meeting:

Relay for Life

Kidpacks Program

Front Range CASA

Cut Bank Saddle Club

Circle of Hope

Cut Bank Trails

Glacier County Extension Office



GEC lineman Donny Winchell demonstrating electrical safety for members and children.

who retired from the Cooperative after 30 years of service. He also introduced new employees Jenna Running Wolf and Keelie Montalban. President Bradley closed by saying he is proud to serve on the board of trustees and thanked the members for their great support.

Vice President Zita Bremner recognized the Washington, D.C. Youth Tour Winners and Scholarship Recipients. Some of the scholarship recipients were in attendance and received a round of applause.

Guest Speaker Joe Lukas, the General Manager of the Western MT G&T shared information about his organization. The Western MT G&T works with BPA to keep power available and affordable. Mr. Lukas regularly reviews BPA's costs and programs encouraging them to be more efficient with the use of rate payer dollars. He discussed the proposed rate increase noting that the majority of it is due to increased debt service for past BPA capital spending. Costs for energy efficiency programs, fish and wildlife mitigation and rehabilitation of aging dams and power infrastructure also contribute to ongoing costs. Mr. Lukas works hard on behalf of cooperative members to make sure their interests are a priority to BPA. He knows that having access to low cost power is crucial to the economic well-being of the cooperative and its members.

Attorney Justin Lee called for any unfinished business. None was called to the table. Mr. Lee then called for any new business. None was called to the table. When the election results came in, President Bruce Bradley announced that incumbent Darrol Berkram was re-elected for the Cut Bank District, and incumbents Miles Lewis and Willard Hjartarson were re-elected for the Rural District. After the business meeting was complete, many great door prizes were awarded including the grand prize 50" TV.

The board reconvened at the GEC office to elect new officers. Zita Bremner was elected President. Jim Newman was elected Vice President, and Willard Hjartarson was elected Secretary/Treasurer.

The employees, management, and board of trustees would like to thank those of you who joined us at our annual meeting. We hope to see you all next year!



GEC members enjoying lunch at the 69th Annual Meeting.

Thank you to the following businesses for donating door prizes for our annual meeting:

Altec
Billman's True Value Hardware
Border States
Burk, Lee, & Bieler, Attorneys at Law
National Rural Utilities CFC
Cut Bank Chamber of Commerce
Cut Bank Tire
Faught's Blackfeet Trading Post
HD Supply
Heberly & Associates
McFarland Cascade, a Stella-Jones Company
Northern Chrysler
Northwest Industrial Supply Co.
Outback Power Company
Red Rock Power, Inc.



GEC trustees Brian Elliott and Jim Newman announcing door prize winners.

60 Plus Program 2015

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

Last month's winner was:
Calvin Rowell
of Cut Bank

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 _____

Look Up, Look Around, & Look Out for Power Lines

Things we see every day can almost fade from view, but failure to notice high voltage power lines can be a dangerous oversight. Glacier Electric Cooperative and the Safe Electricity program (www.safeelectricity.org) want to raise awareness about the dangers of overhead power lines and the precautions to take around them. As the weather improves and many people begin working outdoors, power line awareness is even more important.

Whether you work on a farm, in the construction industry, or in the oilfield, it is important to be aware of your surroundings when operating large machinery. We can become complacent when it comes to power lines, but taking a few moments to look around is a critical step to keeping yourself safe. Make sure to maintain a 10-foot minimum clearance from power lines on all sides. A power line can be closer than it appears. Using a spotter and designating a preplanned route can avoid hazard areas.

It is important to evaluate your situation every time you are working with large equipment. A newer, bigger piece of equipment may no longer clear a line the way a smaller one did. Many pieces of equipment now have tall antennas extending from the cab that could make contact with power lines. Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting equipment on trailer beds. Handling long items such as pipes, ladders, and rods also pose the risk of contact with power lines. In addition, shifting soil may affect whether or not machinery clears power lines, and power lines can start to sag over the years. If power lines on your property sag so low you cannot work safely, contact Glacier Electric.

If your equipment does come into contact with power lines, stay in the cab and call Glacier Electric for help. If the power line is energized and you step outside, your body becomes the path to the ground. Even if a line has landed on the ground, there is still potential for the area to be energized. Warn others who may be nearby to stay away and wait until help arrives. If exiting the cab is absolutely necessary because of a fire, the proper action is to jump—not step—with both feet together, hitting the ground at the

same time. Do not allow any part of your body to touch the equipment and the ground at the same time. Electricity spreads out through the ground in ripples, like a stone dropped in water. The voltage is highest in the ring closest to the vehicle and decreases with distance. Hop to safety, keeping both feet together—don't run or stride—so that one foot won't be in a higher voltage zone than another, which could make you a conductor for electricity.

If you come upon, or witness an accident involving toppled power poles and lines, don't leave your vehicle to approach the accident scene. Often our inclination is to step in and help those in danger and offer assistance to the injured. However, in accidents involving power lines and poles, the best thing you can do is call for help. Wait for trained assistance to arrive.

Accidents can happen in a split-second, which is why Glacier Electric Cooperative reminds you to always use caution when working near power lines.

Safe Electricity encourages everyone to follow these guidelines when working outdoors this year:

- Look over work areas carefully for overhead power lines and utility poles.
- When moving equipment, remember to maintain a 10-foot clearance to ensure safety. Re-evaluate this every year as equipment sizes or soil conditions may change.
- Lower long equipment when moving it. Carry ladders and other long items horizontally whenever possible.
- When planning new construction, factor in existing power lines.
- Be extra careful when working around trees and brush; they often make it difficult to see power lines.
- Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. Call 8-1-1, a free national service, to locate your underground utilities.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.

For more tips and information on how to stay safe when working around power lines, visit SafeElectricity.org.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

GLACIER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE Board Room Report

The Glacier Electric Board of Trustees' regular board meeting is held on the last Wednesday of the month.

Date of Last Board Meeting: April 22, 2015

Action items from the April Board meeting:

- Approved donation to CASA with CoBank match being requested.
- Reviewed and approved 2014 audit report.

	YTD 03/31/15	YTD 03/31/14
kWh Sold	45,479,187	49,742,712
Revenue	\$4,134,890	\$4,504,118
Cost of Power	\$1,788,172	\$1,922,906
Margins	\$467,881	\$500,690

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Circulate savings! Ceiling fans are a great way to keep cool during summer months and can even allow you to raise your thermostat setting about 4 degrees without affecting your comfort.

Source: energy.gov