



# news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

## Flathead District Trustee George Elam resigns

### LEC board seeks trustee candidates

After serving nearly nine years with the board of trustees, Flathead district trustee George Elam tendered his resignation in May. Citing the need to get closer to his family in the southeastern United States,

George and his wife plan to relocate in the not-too-distant future. We've all appreciated George's contributions to the board, and his role as the co-op's representative to the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association, and we thank him for his service.

With George's resignation, the LEC board of trustees is now seeking trustee candidates from the Co-op's Flathead District.

Any member who has a principal residence within the district, which encompasses all of our service area within Flathead County, is eligible for the position. The board

will be sending a letter to all members in the district, notifying them of the opening and inviting them to submit a resume. The appointed trustee will be seated at the September board meeting



George Elam

and will serve the unexpired term of Mr. Elam, being up for election at the March 2012 annual meeting.

Members who are interested in the position will want to contact the office to verify their trustee district.

If you, or someone you know, is interested in this position, you are encouraged to contact Co-op Manager Ray Ellis, or Board President Tina Taurman for more detailed information about being a board member, including policies, estimate of time requirement and other general information.

Ray can be reached at LEC by calling 406-889-3301 or 1-800-442-2994, at home, 406-889-3327, or via email at [rayellis@lincolnelectric.coop](mailto:rayellis@lincolnelectric.coop).

Tina Taurman can be reached at home, 406-882-4704, or via email at [ttaurman@nvhosp.org](mailto:ttaurman@nvhosp.org).

## System Wide Power Outage Planned

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is requiring a system wide power outage to complete critical maintenance on the transmission line serving all Lincoln Electric Cooperative members.

**All Co-op Members will be without power on Sunday, September 18 from 1 a.m. - 6 a.m.**

We apologize for the inconvenience, but this crucial maintenance will provide long term reliability for co-op members. If you have any questions, please contact the office.



Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



889-3301  
1-800-442-2994

# Finding the value of electricity

Nowadays, cell phones and personal digital devices are a part of our culture. Everyone, it seems, is connected on the go—whether they're just making phone calls, text messaging, or checking e-mail. Such communication freedom is a luxury we pay for, generally without grumbling.

So why is it that when it comes to electricity—a necessity in our modern world—many of us grumble and complain when the electric bill comes every

month? We expect electricity to be there at the flip of the switch, and when it's not, we get angry or frustrated.

Hey, I'm no different—I expect the lights to come on every time, too. And as the manager of LEC, I have a special responsibility to make sure your electric service is safe, reliable, and affordable. But I also believe that when compared to other commodities, electricity remains a great value.

For example, over the past 10 years, gasoline has shot up 10.9 percent on average every single year, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. A loaf of white bread has increased 4.2 percent annually and a dozen eggs 6.5 percent per year.

In comparison, electricity has increased just 3.7 percent a year nationally for the past decade. When you consider how reliable electricity is, the value goes up even more. In the last



Manager's Notes  
by Ray Ellis

five years, Lincoln Electric members experienced an average of about 6.5 hours of outages each year—something we're proud of, considering electricity is a 24-hour-a-day commodity. Of course, we're

working hard to reduce even those brief interruptions, increase our service reliability, and control costs through innovative technology.

Those cell phones I mentioned earlier? Nearly a third of all U.S. households have four electronic devices, such as cell phones, plugged in and charging, according to the Residential Energy Consumption Survey by the U.S.

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**Lincoln Electric  
Cooperative, Inc.**

## News & Views

Published monthly by Lincoln  
Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
Eureka, Montana

Lincoln Electric's board of trustees meets monthly at the Eureka office. The regular meetings are scheduled for the third Monday of each month at 7 p.m. Members with items of interest are encouraged to contact the general manager in advance of the meeting.

### Board of Trustees

**Tina Taurman** — President, Dist. 2,

Trego — Stryker

**Marianne Roose** — Vice President, Dist. 3,

Fortine — Glen Lake

**Ethel White** — Secretary, Dist. 4,

Eureka — Tobacco Plains

**George Elam** — Dist. 1, Flathead

**Tom Klyver** — Dist. 1, Flathead

**Courtney Pluid** — Dist. 3,

Fortine — Glen Lake

**John Hossack** — Dist. 4,

Eureka — Tobacco Plains

**Joel Graves** — Dist. 5,

Koocanusa Shores — Pinkham

**Jim Reynolds** — Dist. 4, Eureka -

Tobacco Plains

**Mike Workman** — Dist. 5,

Koocanusa Shores — Pinkham

General Manager Ray Ellis

#### In case of power failure:

Call 889-3301 or 1-800-442-2994

Anytime day or night

**After hours voice-mail for  
messages 889-3304**

Visit us on the Web at:

[www.lincolnelectric.coop](http://www.lincolnelectric.coop)

e-mail: [info@lincolnelectric.coop](mailto:info@lincolnelectric.coop)

## Business and Boardroom Briefs

The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted June 27, 2011. A quorum of trustees was present and the board took the following action:

- Heard reports from the General Manager, Operations Supervisor, Engineering Supervisor and the Finance Manager.
- Approved a contract with BPA on green power Renewable Energy Certificates.
- Elected Mike Workman as representative and John Hossack as the alternate to the Montana Electric Cooperative Association (MECA) board.
- Approved a search for a new trustee to replace retiring trustee George Elam.

	Year to Date 5/30/11	Year to Date 5/30/10
YTD Kwh Sales	56,252,904	50,675,023
YTD Revenue	\$4,155,526	\$3,405,340
YTD Cost of Power	\$1,553,330	\$1,384,069
YTD Operating Exp	\$1,965,457	\$1,654,604
YTD Margins	\$655,459	\$384,643
# of Members	4,003	3,931
# of Meters	5,281	5,195
Miles of Line	926	919
Total Utility Plant	\$28,922,045	\$27,263,330
Member Equity	\$7,677,659	\$6,995,545
Avg Residential Usage (kWh)	1,045	1,093
Avg Residential Billing	\$87.93	\$78.72

# NEW FACES IN NEW PLACES IN OPERATIONS DEPT.

*Line Superintendent Roger Pitman retires after nearly 40 years of service*



Roger Pitman

In October of 1971 Roger Pitman went to work for his father, co-op manager Joe Pitman, and he's been coming to work ever since. After nearly 40 years of working on the co-op's power lines, Mr. Pitman hung up his climbing spurs in mid-July and is taking a well deserved retirement.

Arguably LEC's longest tenured employee ever, Roger's contributions to the co-op are immeasurable, and the institutional memory he takes with him will be sorely missed. All of us here at the co-op wish Roger and his wife Barb the best in their new life.

With Roger's departure, a wave of promotions and job title changes are in the works in the operations department.



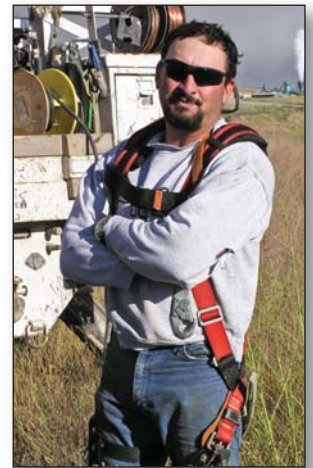
Andy Kindel

Replacing Pitman as line superintendent is 30-year LEC veteran lineman Andy Kindel. Andy has job-shadowed Roger for the last few months and is eager to lead the department.

Filling Andy's previous position of line foreman is 22-year lineman Stan Williams. Stan's previous job duties as working foreman will now be covered by Josh Jankovsky, who moves up the ranks after 19 years on the line crew.

The department's latest addition is

journeyman lineman Jonathan Peltier. Jonathan was hired in June and replaces veteran lineman Bob Dittmer who retired in March. Jonathan has traveled the country working for various line contractors building and repairing transmission and distribution lines from coast to coast. He is a Eureka native and the son of former LEC lineman Vic Peltier and his wife Betty.



Josh Jankovsky



Jonathan Peltier



Stan Williams

## Touring our Nation's Capital

Alan Wilson of Eureka was among the nearly 1,500 high school students from across the country, including 24 from Montana, who participated in the Rural Electric Youth Tour held June 11-17 in Washington, D.C. Selected in an interview process, Alan was sponsored by Lincoln Electric Co-op.

Each year in June, an activity-filled week affords these high school youths opportunities to learn first-hand what it is like to be involved in politics, com-

munity development and today's social issues. Highlights included meeting with their elected representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate to discuss the process of government and issues of the day, and increasing their knowledge of cooperative electric utilities and American history. In addition to taking in the sights and sounds of the nation's capital, all the state groups convene for Rural Electric Youth Day to learn from public figures and other inspirational speakers.



*Above: Alan with some new found friends.*

*Left: Alan, lower left, with the Montana delegation in front of the White House.*



# The BIG Green Box

They're big. They're often green. They generally sit on a pad, often within housing developments. Some folks don't like these "electrical boxes" (a common nickname for pad-mount transformers) and try to hide them with bushes, fences, or flower beds. But stay clear: even small additions around pad-mount transformers create hazards.

To improve aesthetics of new neighborhoods, developers often put in underground power lines. While this eliminates utility poles and overhead wires, it requires installing pad-mounted transformers in some front yards. Unfortunately some homeowners, concerned about curb appeal, attempt to screen pad-mount transformers from view—creating an unsafe situation for all concerned, including Lincoln Electric Co-op lineworkers.

"We realize landscaping represents an investment of time and money," shares Andy Kindel, operations superintendent. "We respect the effort and care our members invest in making their properties attractive. However, landscaping around electrical equipment interferes with our ability to deliver reliable power."

## Electricity

*Continued from page 4*

Energy Information Administration. In the past 30 years, the amount of residential electricity used by appliances and electronics has increased from 17 percent to 31 percent. More homes than ever use major appliances and central air conditioning. Digital video recorders (DVRs), computers, and multiple televisions have become ubiquitous.

Clearly, our appetite for electricity shows no signs of slowing down. So the next time you flip a switch, use your toaster or run your washing machine, remember the value electricity holds. And know that we at Lincoln Electric are looking out for you by working together to keep electric bills affordable, controlling costs through innovation, and putting you, our members, first.

Lincoln Electric recommends leaving at least 10 feet of clear space in front of pad-mount transformers. Linemen repair units while they are energized so homeowners don't experience an interruption in service. To ensure safety, they use an 8-foot fiberglass hot stick that requires about 10 feet of "elbow room" in front of the access panel.

"In some cases, consumers may leave plenty of space in front of the transformer, but grow vegetation on the other three sides," explains Kindel. "This invites other problems. For example, plant roots can interfere with its operation. Overheating is another big concern that can cause service interruptions when air circulation is compromised."

Pad-mounted transformers surrounded by vegetation or a structure may overheat and cause service interruptions when the air circulation around them is compromised. Allow at least three to four feet of space on both sides and behind the transformer.

Members should also be aware that plantings along rights-of-way—strips of land owned by a member on which the co-op places poles, wires, and other equipment like pad-mount transformers—could be damaged by co-op vehicles.

"Occasionally, we may need to repair a transformer, and eventually transformers must be upgraded and replaced," says Kindel. "To perform this work, line trucks must be driven into the right-of-way and the transformer lifted out. Although we try to minimize the impact, plants may be damaged if they're in the way."

## Call before you dig!

Because underground service continues from the transformer to your home, you should never dig anywhere in your yard without first calling 811 to find out where cables are buried.



## Transformers need to be left alone

- Never let anything grow closer than 10 feet from a pad-mount transformer. (The access panel is marked by a handle, lock, and sticker on the front.)
- Never enclose a pad-mount transformer with fencing, shrubs, or anything else with less than a 10-foot-wide gate or opening.
- Never allow children to play near pad-mount transformers.
- Never pour waste oils, chemicals, or other liquids on or near a pad-mount transformer. These liquids can seep into the ground and damage underground cables.

## Come See the Fair

**Join us for Co-op Day  
at the Lincoln County  
Fair**



**Lincoln Electric  
Cooperative, Inc.**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



**from 65 feet  
in the air!**

**Friday, August 26  
10 am - 4 pm**