



# news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

## What's up, Rick?

By Marita Tolentino-Combs

What's up, Rick? The answer is always different since he has 15 to 20 different projects happening at any given time.

Like his projects, his talents are just as diverse. Edric "Rick" Vredenburg III is an accomplished violinist, eclectic and unorthodox real estate broker, adept cattle rancher and machine shop owner with his son Edric, IV aka Levi.

He may be practicing his music or checking his enterprises on the Big Island of Hawaii. When he's in Montana, he may be bending steel.

"I'm a recovering hippie still carrying on the tradition," Rick chuckles while bent over, shin-deep in debris. I found him shoveling steel shavings into 55-gallon barrels headed for recycling at Pacific Steel in Kalispell.

We're off Therriault Creek Road about six miles south of Eureka in a medium-sized metal building of V.E., Inc. Parts and partial assemblies for packaging machines are made here.

Scattered about are roughly 20 "old-school" drill presses, lathes, milling and boring machines, threaders and welding gear. It's a metal-worker's dream.

Rick points to a 1940s Cincinnati horizontal milling machine that came off a World War II battleship used to keep the war machinery



Same amount of work is done with fewer workers today than 10 to 12 in the past. "In this tough economy, we work smarter, harder and leaner." Shop team includes Mark Rice, Glen Chevy, not pictured, and Dave Rocko, above.

running.

The Japanese Okuma lathe made in 1960 remains an obsolete but dependable workhorse. "I still have the Okuma manual and it's easy to fix if you're mechanically inclined such as my son, Levi," Rick proudly exclaims. The Colchester Clausing lathe next to him is the same machine that his

father and grandfather used in the 1950s through the 1980s.

Before and during World War II, before Rick was born, his grandfather, Edric, Sr., was developing and manufacturing bag packaging systems for St. Regis Paper Company in Emeryville, Calif. The company made paper bags and, of

course, packaging systems were needed to utilize the bags. Edric, Sr., designed and invented devices that simultaneously filled, weighed and closed open-mouthed bags. Many of these devices were sold and are still in use today to fill bags.

It's safe to say that the inventions of Rick's grandfather are still filling many bags you buy today: be it cat litter, mulch, cement, horse feed, fertilizer or food products, not to mention a large diversity of industrial products and applications.

St. Regis Paper Company was the biggest manufacturer of paper products from the 1940s to the 1960s. Through a series of buyouts, its many divisions spun off and fragmented until St. Regis was no more.

But the packaging systems survived the demise and are still in existence today competing admirably with the newer technologies.

Rick's father and grandfather continued making parts for these machines through to the end of the 20th century.

Rick and his son Levi continue in this century. V.E., Inc., makes replacement parts and partial assemblies for three basic industrial types of bag packaging systems: auger feed, air-pressure agitation and impeller.

When packaging machine parts break down, V.E., Inc., gets a call. "Sometimes we have the part in inventory and sometimes we hustle our

*Continued on page 5*

# A season for us to be thankful

With the holiday season upon us it always makes me pause and reflect on the blessings in my life. Our move to the community of Eureka has been a tremendous experience for my wife and me. I want to thank everyone for the warm and friendly welcome that we have received.

It strengthens my belief that there is no better place to live than in rural America and Eureka in particular. I feel

extremely fortunate to have been given this opportunity to work for you.

I would also like to take the time to thank the employees and board of trustees of Lincoln Electric. They are all dedicated to the membership and the co-op philosophy. They have made my transition to LEC very positive. I appreciate their patience with me as I learn the operational systems of the company. Every cooperative has discretion, within certain parameters, to govern itself as its membership dictates, and LEC is no different.

The strength of LEC comes from its employees, elected board members and ultimately the membership. My observation over the last nine months is that

the staff and board care deeply about the work they do for you. They are good people who strive to help those around them which is indicative of the community as a whole.

I am grateful to be associated with them and this community. Thank you for your time and membership in this great organization.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year — Ray.



Manager's Notes  
by Ray Ellis



**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,

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

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

## \$500 MECA Memorial Scholarships available to students of Lincoln Electric

Two \$500 scholarships will be awarded to students who will be attending college in the fall of 2011. Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) will once again sponsor the Memorial Scholarship program funded by individual contributions.

In order to apply for the scholarships, applicant's parents or guardians must be a member of Lincoln Electric and the applicant must complete an application form available at the LEC office, from your high school counselor, and also online at [www.lincolnelectric.coop](http://www.lincolnelectric.coop). Applicants will need to return their

application form, transcripts and letters of reference to Lincoln Electric's office by the end of business, Tuesday, January 31, 2012.

Finalists from each of Montana's 26 electric cooperatives will be forwarded to MECA's office for the selection of the two winners. Applicants must be a graduating high school senior entering his/her freshman year in college or vocational technical training institution, or a student entering another year of undergraduate school. Good luck to all students applying for these scholarships!

## Business and Boardroom Briefs

The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted October 17, 2011. A quorum of trustees was present and the board took the following action:

- Appointed trustee Mike Clark to the finance committee.

	Year to Date 9/30/11	Year to Date 9/30/10
YTD Kwh Sales	82,351,077	77,064,382
YTD Revenue	\$6,346,079	\$5,428,891
YTD Cost of Power	\$2,184,050	\$2,034,017
YTD Operating Exp	\$3,348,104	\$2,941,407
YTD Margins	\$860,764	\$499,325
# of Members	4,030	3,987
# of Meters	5,321	5,251
Miles of Line	929	922
Total Utility Plant	\$29,328,234	\$28,137,157
Member Equity	\$7,869,353	\$7,094,206
Avg Residential Usage (kWh)	806	911
Avg Residential Billing	\$73.62	\$79.93



## What's up?

*Continued from page 3*

tail ends to make and ship it on the same day!" Few shops can solve the problem within 24 hours.

The shop has a dark loft called the The Museum. "There are parts 80 years old up there that I don't throw away because, once in awhile, I'll get a call for a museum piece once worth \$30 that can fetch \$300."

Levi brought some modern technological expertise to the business, especially with the

incorporation of a plasma cutter, which he has mastered, resulting in benefit to the operation.

The next time I saw Rick, he was playing beautiful music with his violin. He started playing the violin when he was four years old, a forced-fed propensity since his father, Edric, Jr., was a demanding concert violinist.

He also started playing, as he puts it, with machinery when he was in kindergarten.

"After school, my playground was in the garage where my father and grandfa-

ther tinkered with machines, and I was a conscripted participant."

Rick is a brainteaser, a conundrum. Something like the vegetarian who orders the Moral Conundrum at Zoe's Dogs in San Francisco: veggie hot dog wrapped with bacon. It's to say, "Like life, be diverse and enjoy it!"

(Author owns *Applied Visions Media* in Eureka. Contact her 889-3833 or Tim Engleson if you have a story that would be of interest to *Lincoln Electric* members 889-3301.)

*Top left: Rick works on the Japanese Okuma lathe made in 1960, an obsolete but dependable workhorse. Top left: V.E. Inc., makes replacement parts and partial assemblies for bag packaging systems. Above: Rick takes a measurement on a part he is creating.*

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## HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES & JUNIORS WASHINGTON D.C. YOUTH TOUR

# Better rules for broken bulbs

By Megan McKoy-Noe, CCC

As energy-savvy consumers know, equipping five of a home's most frequently used light fixtures with compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) can save a family \$70 a year in lighting costs. But what should you do when a CFL breaks?

CFLs are made of glass tubing containing about 4 milligrams of mercury. Although this isn't much—classic thermometers contain 500 milligrams of mercury—consumers should still take precautions if a CFL breaks, since mercury vapors may pose health risks. In December the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) updated the guidelines for cleaning a broken CFL.

"We want to provide consumers with the most important information they need to know on how to clean up a

bulb without overwhelming them with detail," stresses Richard Yost, an EPA spokesperson.

The revised guidelines break the process into three steps: what to do before cleanup, during cleanup, and after cleanup. More in-depth guidelines are available at [www.epa.gov/cflcleanup](http://www.epa.gov/cflcleanup).

"We've split the detailed guidance into sections for clean up on hard surfaces and on carpeting," notes Yost. "This will aid consumers who only want the cleanup steps that address their particular situation."

The amount of time EPA recommends waiting before cleaning a broken bulb has been cut from 15 minutes to 5-10 minutes.

"The results from a 2008 study conducted by Maine on mercury exposure from broken bulbs showed mercury release peaks within the first 5 minutes of the bulb breaking," explains Yost. "Five to

10 minutes is sufficient time to clear the room, ventilate, and to gather the materials needed to clean up the broken bulb."

EPA also removed recommendations on how to handle clothing, bedding, or other soft materials exposed to a broken CFL.

"We want to keep the focus on the clean up steps for the CFL," explains Yost. "Each broken bulb situation is unique. If a consumer has a particular concern they can contact EPA or their local/state environmental agency for assistance."

The updated guidelines feature a brochure on proper handling of CFLs, cleanup procedures, and recycling tips. The brochure may be downloaded at [www.epa.gov/cflcleanup](http://www.epa.gov/cflcleanup). To learn more about CFLs, visit [www.epa.gov/cfl](http://www.epa.gov/cfl).

Sources: *ENERGY STAR*, *EPA*

# Paying your winter heating bills

Worried about how you are going to pay your winter energy bills? If you or someone you know needs help this heating season, funds are available.

## LIEAP

The Community Action Partnership of Northwest Montana offers the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) to qualifying families. They can be reached at 1-800-344-5979 or visit [nmhr-dist10.org/fa.htm](http://nmhr-dist10.org/fa.htm), or email at [lieap@kalhrdc.mt.gov](mailto:lieap@kalhrdc.mt.gov). You can also pick up an application from the LEC

office. Once you qualify, it can take up to two months before receiving assistance. The income eligibility criteria for 2011-2012 are noted below.

When applying, you will need copies of your fuel bills for the last 12 months. You will also need to provide verification of all gross income received by current household members within the last 12 months prior to the month you turn in your application.

## Energy Share

The Community Action Partnership also administers Energy Share. This program

helps Montanans faced with energy emergencies meet their need and move towards self-reliance. Eligibility for Energy Share is not determined solely on income but also on the extenuating circumstances a household is facing. Energy Share is primarily funded by State-mandated USBP charges, donations from private individuals and corporations (including LEC), and repayments by previous recipients.

## LEC Bill Assistance

This program is designed to offer a last chance to keep a residential member from being disconnected for non-payment. This program has limited funds and specific guidelines that must be met. Contact the billing department at 889-3301 or 800-442-2994 for more information.

Number in household	Annual income
1	\$20,617
2	\$26,960
3	\$33,304
4	\$39,647
5	\$45,991
6	\$52,335

## How to Clean Up a Broken Compact Fluorescent Lightbulb (CFL)



A CFL's glass tubing contains about 4 milligrams of mercury. While this isn't much (classic thermometers contained 500 milligrams) consumers should still take precautions if a CFL breaks.

- Ventilate the room, then wait 5 to 10 minutes.
- Scoop up powder and glass fragments using stiff paper or cardboard. Seal in a plastic bag.
- Use duct tape to pick up any fragments or powder.
- Immediately place all materials used to clean up and the plastic bag in an outdoor trash container. Remember to wash your hands.
- Not all recycling centers accept broken CFLs. Check with your local and/or state waste authority for disposal requirements, or visit Earth911.com.

To learn more visit [epa.gov/cflcleanup](http://epa.gov/cflcleanup).  
Source: *Electrical Safety Foundation, Environmental Protection Agency*

*May the spirit of Christmas bring you peace,  
The gladness of Christmas give you hope,  
The warmth of Christmas grant you love.*

**Happy holidays from the board, staff and employees of Lincoln Electric Cooperative**

