



news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

LEC Trustee Phyllis Hansberry retiring

Story and Photos
By Marita Tolentino-Combs

Having served 21 years on the Lincoln Electric Board, Phyllis Hansberry is retiring. She says with confidence, “I know there is someone amongst the Fortine-Glen Lake district membership willing to step up and devote time to the board.”

Phyllis ran for the position in 1988 when members called for a special meeting. At the time, she was 53 and occupied with helping her husband, Wes Hansberry, in office matters for his logging business.

By attaining the Board position through election, Phyllis became the second female trustee in the entire 38 years of the co-op’s existence. Billy Gossett was the first female, and only after 35 years. Today, four women serve alongside Phyllis on the ten-member board: Kathern Mounter, Marianne Roose, Tina Taurman and Ethel White.

Phyllis knows what it’s like to be without electricity. When she married in 1950 at 16 to 19-year-old Wesley, she moved from her parents’ home in Libby—equipped with bathroom, running hot water, electric stove and heater—to a cabin in the woods at Warland boasting only an outhouse and a nearby creek from which to haul water for cooking, bathing and washing. In the winter,



Trustee Phyllis Hansberry

“I’d be cutting out blocks of ice from the creek.”

After two years, Phyllis and Wesley moved to the Tobacco Valley. For 37 years, she helped her husband with their logging business and raised three children. She also finished high school via correspondence course from American School of Chicago.

The educational fast track for a new trustee consists of immediately taking at least three basic courses “to know what is going on and what you’re doing.” Every year of service often requires travel to conferences where electric cooperatives across the state come together to learn about current events relevant to the

electricity industry. Phyllis studied and became a Credentialed Cooperative Director and, last year, completed her Board Leadership studies.

The goal of the board is to insure affordable, reliable electricity to Lincoln Electric homes, schools and businesses in the coming years while maintaining the cooperative in the black. But Phyllis says it’s become complex, “Where we used to buy from just one source, it is multiple sources today; plus, board decisions are more complex because of the global warming issues.” What the new trustee needs, says Phyllis, is willingness to commit the time to attend

meetings, take courses and keep abreast of developments facing electric cooperatives. She will miss working as a trustee, “The board has a rapport and never fought, even though individual desires and thoughts did not always mesh together.”

With retirement, she plans to step up her membership in the Red Hat Society of women who have shouldered various responsibilities at home, at work and in the community their whole lives, to briefly bid burdensome undertakings and obligations goodbye and indulge in a little self-celebratory fun.

(If you have a local topic of interest to Lincoln Electric Cooperative members, contact Tim Engleson 889-3301. Author is co-owner of the multimedia company Applied Visions Media LLC in Eureka.)

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Wise investments in energy efficiency

The economic uncertainty we're facing these days has many of us putting money into something we feel comfortable with: our homes. Making a few upgrades around the house generally pays big dividends. And when boosting energy efficiency is one of them, the decision becomes a no-



brainer.

For any energy efficiency work made at your residence during the coming year, Uncle Sam will foot 30 percent of the bill—not a bad deal! Through the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act—better known as the stimulus bill—the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) offers a personal tax credit of up to \$1,500 for energy efficiency improvements made to existing homes during 2009 and 2010.

The credit covers 30 percent of the cost of adding insulation materials and exterior doors, windows, and roofs designed to help

reduce a home's heat loss or gain. It also includes efficient central air conditioners, air-source heat pumps, hot water boilers, and biomass stoves.

For weatherization-related work the credit covers only the cost of materials. With heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems as well as biomass stoves installation costs also count toward the credit.

So how does the math work out? Say you spend \$1,000 on new insulation. You would get, in the form of a tax credit, \$300 back. If you spend \$3,000 to purchase a new HVAC system and have it installed, you'd have a \$900 tax credit to show for it.

To take advantage of the program, a home improve-



Manager's Notes
by Mike Henry

ment must have taken place after Feb. 17, 2009 (the day the stimulus bill was signed into law), and products must meet specific energy efficiency criteria. A few rules of thumb will help you determine those criteria.

For exterior windows and skylights, rely on the Energy Star label. For other efficiency upgrades, request what's called a "Manufacturer

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Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

News & Views

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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

- George Elam** — President, Dist. 1, Flathead
- Marianne Roose** — Vice President, Dist. 3, Fortine — Glen Lake
- Ethel White** — Secretary, Dist. 4, Eureka — Tobacco Plains
- G.I. Burk** — Dist. 1, Flathead
- Tina Taurman** — Dist. 2, Trego — Stryker
- Phyllis Hansberry** — Dist. 3, Fortine — Glen Lake
- John Hossack** — Dist. 4, Eureka — Tobacco Plains
- Kathern Munteer** — Dist. 5, Koochanusa Shores — Pinkham
- Jim Reynolds** — Dist. 4, Eureka - Tobacco Plains
- Mike Workman** — Dist. 5, Koochanusa Shores — Pinkham

General Manager Michael T. Henry

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

e-mail: info@lincolnelectric.coop

Business and Boardroom Briefs

The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted December 21, 2009. A quorum of trustees was present and the board took the following action:

- Approved a proposal to award 6-\$1,000 Luck of the Draw scholarships at the 2010 annual meeting.
- Approved a \$150 donation to the Trans-Montana Snowmobile Charity Ride for Multiple Sclerosis.
- Approved the 2010 budget.
- Approved the purchase of a 2010 Altec digger-derrick truck.
- Approved a new bank account be set up for HSA contributions.
- Approved moving the February meeting date to Tuesday, February 16, 2010.

	Year to Date 11/30/2009	Year to Date 11/30/2008
YTD Kwh Sales	103,183,077	105,826,877
YTD Revenue	\$7,035,693	\$6,668,256
YTD Cost of Power	\$2,862,406	\$2,985,808
YTD Operating Exp	\$3,762,192	\$3,376,260
YTD Margins	\$494,582	\$360,354
# of Members	3,930	3,851
# of Meters	5,207	5,117
Miles of Line	910	889
Total Utility Plant	\$26,714,250	\$25,648,570
Member Equity	\$6,818,949	\$6,634,110
Avg Residential Usage (kWh)	1,476	1,436
Avg Residential Billing	\$99.16	\$97.12

LEC board seeks trustee candidates from Fortine-Glen Lake District

With the impending retirement of Phyllis Hansberry (see related story), the LEC board of trustees are now seeking trustee candidates from the co-op's Fortine-Glen Lake District. Any member who has their principal residence within the district is eligible for the position. Any members interested must be nominated from the floor at the Co-op's annual meeting slated for Saturday,

investments

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Certification Statement" that the product or component qualifies for the tax credit. Many manufacturers post these on their websites, but be sure to verify that the product does qualify before making a purchase. You can also visit www.irs.gov/recovery to review guidelines for eligible purchases.

Energy tax credits reduce taxes owed, dollar for dollar, and can be carried forward to following years. While they can help boost any refund you receive, you won't receive a check directly for the credit amount. You can file for energy tax credits using IRS Form 5695, with a total maximum value of \$1,500 for improvements made in 2009 and 2010. State tax credits from Montana may also be available for your project.

For suggestions on how you may make your home more energy efficient while taking advantage of these tax credits, please don't hesitate to give us a call. Contact Tim Engleson at 889-3301 with any questions you may have.

March 27, 2010.

Members who are interested in the position will want to make note of the following information that comes from LEC Policy 204-Qualifications for Trustees:

A. Qualifications for Trustees:

1. Must be a member, and have their principal residence within the trustee district they are nominated from.
2. Must be willing to promote and safeguard the interests of the Cooperative.
3. Will be required, and, therefore, must be able to represent the entire membership on an impartial basis for the good of all.
4. Must not be employed by or in any way financially interested in a competing enterprise or business or a business selling electric energy or supplies or other products offered by the Cooperative.
5. Must be willing to attend regularly scheduled and special meetings of the Board of Trustees; national, state and other meetings of organizations with associated interests that further the cooperative movement; training institutes or seminars which will aid in keeping the Trustee well informed on matters affecting the Cooperative.
6. Must be aware that members of the Board of Trustees serve without salary and on a fee basis only for time given to regularly scheduled and approved affairs of the Cooperative plus reimbursement for all reasonable expenses in connection with such scheduled activities.
7. Must agree to serve the term of office for which

elected until a successor has been appointed or elected and qualified.

8. Must not use, or cause to be used, their position as Trustee to further any political ambitions.
9. Must agree to take an Oath of Office.

B. Responsibilities of Trustee

Service as a Trustee shall include the following responsibilities for growth and development, for keeping themselves and others informed, and for participating in all functions of the board:

1. To expend the effort needed to understand the Cooperative's problems, and to provide the judgment needed to reach decisions in constantly changing circumstances.
2. To support all official decisions and actions made or taken by a majority of the board.
3. To conscientiously study the information contained in reports submitted to the board.
4. To contribute to the development of statements on functions and responsibilities of board members and to work toward their constant improvements.
5. To objectively evaluate and consider the questions and problems with which the Cooperative is faced.
6. To keep informed as to the ideals and objectives of the Cooperative and to further study and analyze the policies, plans and problems, which result from efforts to achieve such ideals and objectives.
7. To keep informed on, alert to, and aware of the attitudes of the members and general public toward the cooperative's objectives and policies.
8. To inform all interested

persons about the Cooperative's ideals, objectives, programs and service.

C. Personal Qualifications

The following suggested questions should be considered when reviewing the personal qualifications of the proposed nominee:

1. What is the business record of the individual and what has the management of their own affairs indicated as to the possession of sound business judgment?
2. What is the judgment of the proposed nominee's neighbors as to their demonstrated capacity for leadership and their reputation for honesty and integrity?
3. What has the proposed nominee done that would demonstrate their capacity for working with others?
4. What are the ideas and objectives of the proposed nominee as they relate to cooperative principles and philosophy?
5. What are the problem areas which the proposed nominee might encounter when helping their fellow members obtain a more complete understanding of the Cooperative and its activities and problems?

If you, or someone you know, is interested in this position, you are encouraged to contact Co-op Manager Mike Henry for more detailed information about being a board member, including policies, estimate of time requirement, and other general information. Mike Henry can be reached at LEC by calling 406-889-3301 or 1-800-442-2994, at home, 406-882-4864, or via email at mikehenry@lincolnelectric.coop.

NEW THIS YEAR AT LINCOLN ELECTRIC

“Luck of the Draw” Scholarships to be awarded at annual meeting

How would you like to win a \$1,000 scholarship for yourself or a dependent during LEC’s annual meeting this year? For the first time, LEC will be giving away six \$1,000 scholarships during our annual meeting on March 27, 2010. Lincoln Electric invites all its members and member dependents enrolled or planning to enroll in an accredited college to attend LEC’s annual meeting and enter to win one of six \$1,000 scholarships. The rules are very simple.

1. The applicant must be a member, or the dependent of a member who is currently receiving electric service from LEC.
2. All applications must be signed. If the applicant is a dependent, both applicant

and parent or guardian must sign application form.

3. The applicant, or in the case of a member dependent, the dependent’s parent or legal guardian must attend the Co-op’s annual meeting on Saturday, March 27, 2010 at the LCHS auditorium, register at the “Luck of the Draw” registration table, and be present for the drawings. Dependents are also encouraged to attend to learn more about the cooperative business model.
4. The applicant must be enrolled or planning to enroll in a full time undergraduate or graduate course of study at an accredited two or four-year college, university, or vocational technical school for the upcoming fall term.

5. Completed applications must be received by the Co-op after January 31, 2010, but no later than 4:30 PM close of business Friday, March 12, 2010.

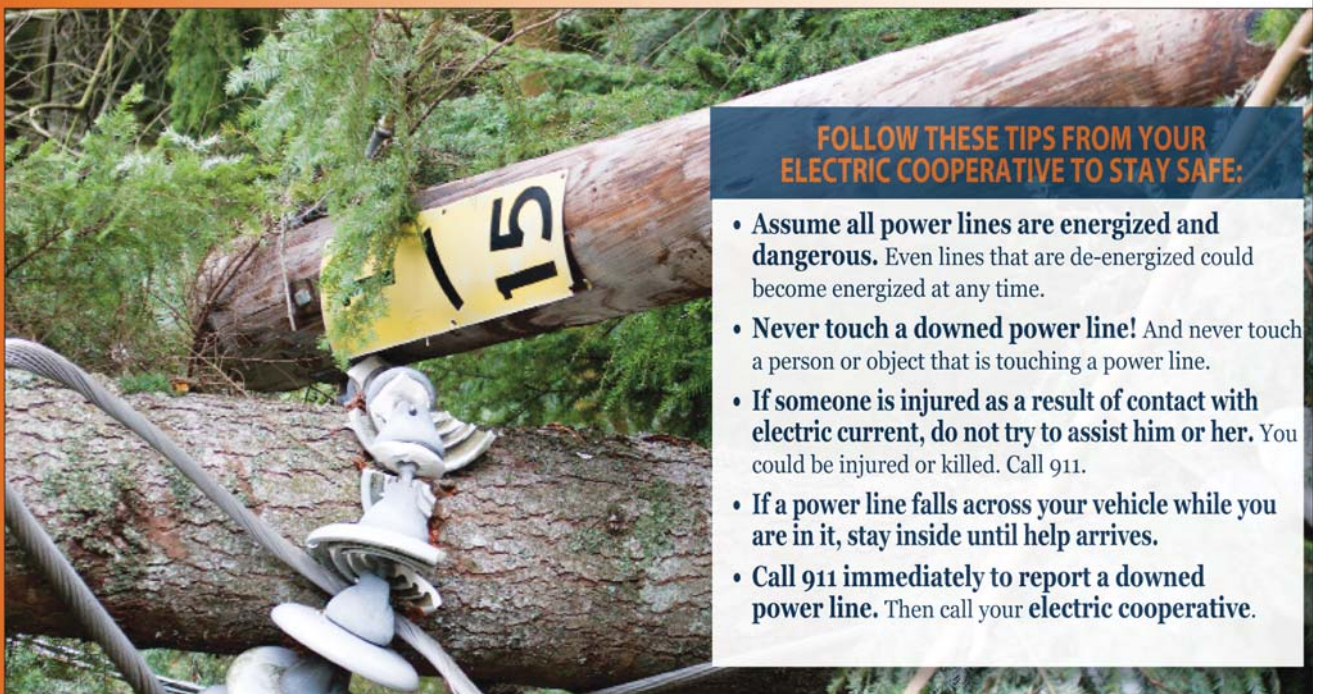
The drawing will be held at the conclusion of the Co-op’s annual meeting. Applications can be found on our website at www.lincolnelectric.coop, at high school guidance offices or the LEC office. According to Tim Engleson, manager of member services, “the board of trustees is very pleased to offer scholarships this year and they hope to make it an annual event. In these challenging economic times, and with the rising costs of higher education, LEC hopes this brings its members even more value for being part of the cooperative.”



Another important aspect of the scholarship program is that it is not funded directly through electric rates, nor will it affect rates directly. LEC’s scholarship funds come from unclaimed capital credit money that has been placed in an account and is earning interest. “It should be noted that every effort is made to notify members of unclaimed capital credits before placing the money in the account,” explained Engleson.

Stay Clear!

A downed power line may not be a dead line. It could cause serious injury or death.



FOLLOW THESE TIPS FROM YOUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE TO STAY SAFE:

- **Assume all power lines are energized and dangerous.** Even lines that are de-energized could become energized at any time.
- **Never touch a downed power line!** And never touch a person or object that is touching a power line.
- **If someone is injured as a result of contact with electric current, do not try to assist him or her.** You could be injured or killed. Call 911.
- **If a power line falls across your vehicle while you are in it, stay inside until help arrives.**
- **Call 911 immediately to report a downed power line.** Then call your electric cooperative.