



# news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## Special Annual Meeting Issue

Trustee elections and Bylaw amendment on agenda for Co-op's 61st Annual Meeting

Lincoln Electric's 61st annual meeting of the members is slated for Saturday, March 27, 2010 at the Lincoln County High School auditorium.

Registration begins at 8 a.m. with the business meeting starting at 9 a.m. Officers of the co-op will update attending members on the co-op's activities and financial condition for the last year. Members will also be electing a slate of five trustees and voting on a proposed bylaw amendment approved by the board of trustees.

### Trustee Elections

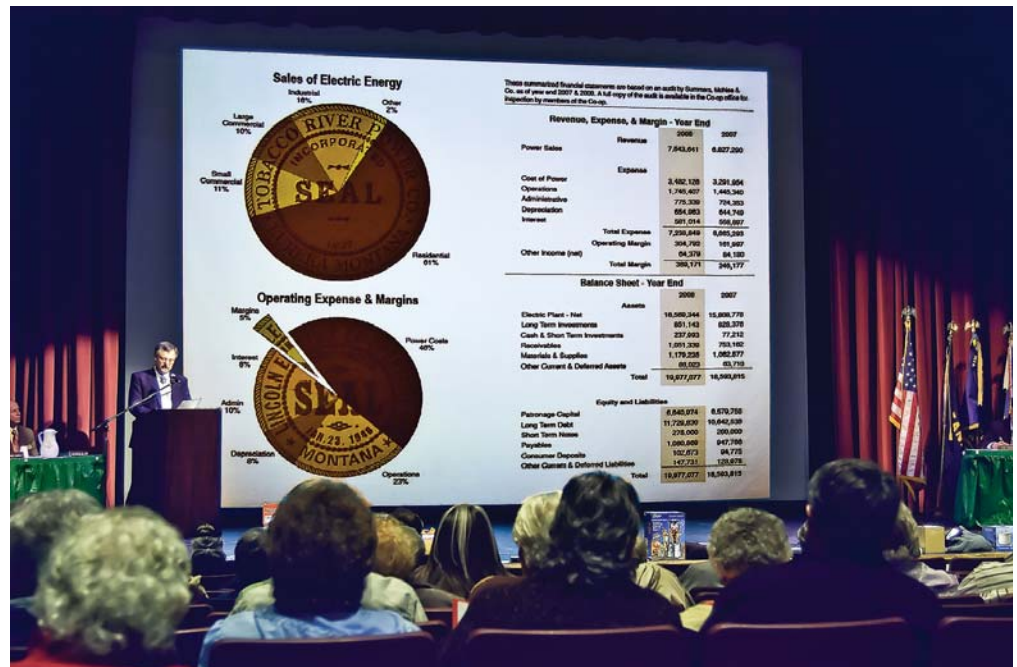
The Cooperative's election process begins with nominations taken from the floor at the meeting. Any member residing in a district has the right to nominate a candidate from that district. A candidate must be a member residing in the district, and must possess the qualifications for trustees, specified in LEC Policy 204.

Trustees are elected for two-year terms. If you are interested in running for the board, please contact the office for an information packet. See the positions that will be up for election at the meeting on this page.

For complete information on this year's meeting watch for your annual report which will be mailed to all members by mid-March.

### Bylaw Amendment

The following amendment to Lincoln Electric's Bylaws



Co-op members review the financial report at last year's meeting.

has been proposed by the board of trustees for consideration by the members at the 2010 annual meeting.

The proposed amendment would alter the number of trustees elected at each annu-

al meeting from five, to three or four; and would eventually increase trustees' terms from two years to three years.

Currently, five of the 10 trustees are elected each year and serve two-year terms.

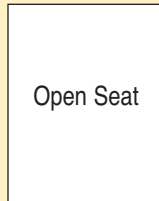
The proposed amendment provides a method to change to three-year terms, with three or four trustees elected each year.

*Continued on page 5*

## Trustee seats up for election



**George Elam**  
District 1  
Flathead



**Open Seat**  
District 3  
Fortine -  
Glen Lake



**Jim Reynolds**  
District 4  
Eureka -  
Tobacco  
Plains



**Ethel White**  
District 4  
Eureka -  
Tobacco  
Plains



**Kathern Mounteer**  
District 5  
Koochanusa  
Shores -  
Pinkham

# Is it your turn to serve at your co-op?

Your cooperative's annual meeting is fast approaching and this year we will have one of the five trustee positions up for election in which there will not be an incumbent.

Several months ago, long time trustee Phyllis Hansberry announced that she would not seek another term as trustee representing the Fortine-Glen Lake dis-

trict. Losing a valuable member of our cooperative team got me thinking about what it takes to run a successful cooperative operation – and who will now step up to the plate – and replace a part of one of the three main components of a successful co-op.

In a cooperative, it takes three primary components to make the operation a success: The first, and most important, is the membership. The second is the employed operating staff. The third is the elected board of trustees.

The trustee in a cooperative must furnish a dependable link between the membership and those who are

engaged and paid to provide the service. The membership body cannot establish policies and supervise the day-to-day activities, nor can the paid staff establish policies, for the cooperative identity would soon be lost.

These are roles that only the elected trustee can fill, serving as an extension of the rights and responsibilities of the cooperative members. So what does a trustee do? What makes a good trustee of a cooperative? Take a look at the list below and see if you have what it takes to be a good trustee.

- A good trustee is a member willing to take time to serve on the board.
- A good trustee listens to other members and keeps



Manager's Notes  
by Mike Henry

- an open mind to another's point of view.
- A good trustee must watch the co-op but not interfere with the daily operations.
- A good trustee needs to practice sound business principals in his or her own affairs.
- A good trustee can be trusted.
- A good trustee takes part in the community.

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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

- 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, Koocanusa Shores – Pinkham
- Jim Reynolds** – Dist. 4, Eureka - Tobacco Plains
- Mike Workman** – Dist. 5, Koocanusa 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 January 18, 2010. A quorum of trustees was present and the board took the following action:

- Approved new policies 211-Conflict of Interest and 212-Code of Ethics; and approved amendments to Policy 302-Line Extensions.
- Approved donating about 550 old meters to the NRECA International Program.
- Approved the 2009 annual safety report.
- Approved a 2010 capital credit retirement of \$324,735.
- Approved the Revolving Loan Fund committee's recommendation to grant a \$60,000 loan to NW Healthcare for facility improvements.
- Approved the 2010 Success Sharing Goals.

	Year to Date 12/31/2009	Year to Date 12/31/2008
YTD Kwh Sales	116,405,529	119,509,147
YTD Revenue	\$7,883,938	\$7,543,640
YTD Cost of Power	\$3,338,447	\$3,497,326
YTD Operating Exp	\$4,060,784	\$3,741,523
YTD Margins	\$570,332	\$369,171
# of Members	3,935	3,859
# of Meters	5203	5130
Miles of Line	912	889
Total Utility Plant	\$26,979,684	\$25,598,151
Member Equity	\$6,894,699	\$6,640,974
Avg Residential Usage (kWh)	2,083	2,066
Avg Residential Billing	\$131.64	\$130.81

# Serve?

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- A good trustee voices opinions honestly and has good judgment.
- A good trustee recognizes and assumes legal responsibility for his or her actions as a board member.
- A good trustee knows that cooperatives are like other

businesses except for the fact that the members own and control the cooperative with their votes and that the cooperative does not keep a profit but returns any margins back to the members as capital credits. A good trustee can explain these differences, called “the cooperative way.”

- And finally a good trustee is committed to learning

and studying ways to become a better trustee.

So, do you have what it takes to be a good cooperative trustee? If so, your opportunity to run for elec-

tion is fast approaching. Stop in or give me a call if you are interested, and I will be glad to furnish you with more information about being a trustee of your cooperative.

## Eye on the prize

*U.S. National Telemark Ski Champion  
Kelsey Schmid-Sommer of Whitefish*

Story and Photos  
By Marita Tolentino-Combs

The beautiful prize is on display, but still awake and drooling for four-time U.S. National Telemark Ski Champion and Lincoln Electric Cooperative member Kelsey Schmid-Sommer.

Like clockwork, four-month old Nicholas has been falling asleep exactly at 7 every evening . . . except lately. Undaunted, Kelsey keeps her eye on the prize out there waiting to be reborn—reclaimed—all over again. This focus that is the hallmark of any champion means something like “no matter what happens—good, bad or ugly—keep going, don’t give up and focus on

that positive end result.”

Besides keeping an eye on her infant son and adapting to his new schedule, this 33-year-old new mother is also eyeing a fifth championship title at the 2010 Telemark National Championships to be held at Whitefish Mountain Resort March 18-21.

Telemark ski races are downhill like Alpine, but distinguished by the Telemark turn and free-heel boot. The boot connects to the ski only at the toes. The Telemark turn involves leading with the outside ski while trailing the inside ski. The heel lies flat on the outside ski (the downhill ski at the end of the turn) while the inside (uphill) ski is pulled beneath the skier’s body with a flexed knee and raised heel.

Speeds are between 20 to 38 miles per hour during 2- to 3-minute races. Skiers follow a curving path as they turn around tightly placed flags called gates where they are judged by their form. Mid-race comes the telemark jump which Schmid-Sommer describes as “a distance jump where you land in a lunge, one foot in front of the other.” Further along in the race, participants move into a 360-degree curved snow bank and then transition into

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## Annual Meeting

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### ARTICLE IV. TRUSTEES

**Existing Section 2.**  
(Would be deleted from Bylaws if approved)

#### Term of office.

At the annual meeting of the members there shall be elected the number of trustees equivalent to the number of trustees whose terms expire in March of that year, and each of such trustees elected thereafter shall hold office for the term of two years. Despite the expiration of a trustee term, the trustee continues to serve until a new trustee is elected.

**Proposed Section 2.**  
(Would be added to Bylaws if approved)

#### Term of office.

At the annual meeting of the members in 2011 two trustees will be elected for two year terms and three trustees will be elected for three year terms. At the annual meeting of the members in 2012 one trustee will be elected for a one year term, one trustee will be elected for two year terms and three trustees will be elected for three year terms. Thereafter, at each annual meeting of the members, there shall be elected the number of trustees equivalent to the number of trustees whose terms expire in March of that year, and each of such trustees elected thereafter shall hold office for the term of three years. Despite the expiration of a



*You are invited to come a little early and have a bite to eat before the meeting.*

trustee term, the trustee continues to serve until a new trustee is elected.

If you have any questions about the proposed bylaw amendments, please contact your trustee or the office for additional information.

### Luck of the Draw Scholarships to be Awarded

New this year! LEC will award six \$1,000 scholarships by “luck of the draw.” Six lucky students will be drawn from eligible entries. To enter just complete an application form available from high school counselors, Lincoln Electric’s office, or online at [www.lincolnelectric.coop](http://www.lincolnelectric.coop). Deadline for applications to be received at LEC is March 12, 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. Some eligibility rules apply.

## Prize

*Continued from page 5*

a skate ski. The tail end of the race consists of more turns around another set of gates, stopping suddenly in a spray of snow.

At last year's March event in Colorado, Schmid-Sommer won a tiebreaker race by 1.18 seconds, beating another U.S. National Telemark team member half her age, 16-year old Lorin Paley. In so doing, she became the only female racer on record to win the U.S. National Telemark Ski Championship four straight years from 2006 through 2009. She also ranked seventh in the Telemark World Cup in Austria last year.

Father Nick Connors put her on skis at three years old in Franconia, New Hampshire. She began alpine racing at eight years old, winning an important giant slalom race by her senior year of high school. Her skiing interest switched from alpine to telemark when she transferred to the University of Montana in Missoula, which had no ski team.

After graduating with a degree in Sculpture, she moved to Whitefish in 2001, then home for 13 U.S. National Telemark team members.

The team trained together with no coaches, no official

training site and very little financial support. Schmid-Sommer skied alongside Whitefish local telemark skiers like Reid Sabin, the only American to win the Overall Telemark World Cup Title, and for two years straight.

The camaraderie and dedication among friends in this obscure sport helped Schmid-Sommer win her first three titles.

Then along came trainer and physical therapist Mike Carvey, who was tired of traveling with a minor league team of the NHL's San Jose Sharks, and was missing out on a family life with wife and children. He started the Flathead Performance Training Center outside of Whitefish where Schmid-Sommer trained for her fourth championship title.

She has teamed up with Mike again this year to try for her fifth title. Schmid-Sommer says her first priority is her son, but is training hard "to give my best on race day."

With or without trainer, Schmid-Sommer obviously possesses the persistence to train hard seven days a week and yet give time to Nicholas, husband Dave Schmid-Sommer and a business carving whimsical birds out of wood.

Telemark skiing has no prize purses, no profitable

endorsements, no televised specials and no Olympic status. Yet Schmid-Sommer switched from the hard-driving "get-down-the-slopes-as-fast-as-you-can" alpine skiing to the graceful, form-centric sport of Telemark where skiers are judged not only by time, but also by form. Schmid-Sommer says, "I'm in telemark races for the camaraderie and pure exhilaration I feel coming through the finish line."

Her focus on the prize starts at the racing gate where she begins to tune out voices and noise, quieting her mind. As she bursts through the starting gate, her mind is clear and focusing on just

herself and the course. Her eye on the prize is the two or three minutes of complete rhythmic immersion in speed, balance and air time.

The March championship offers races for all levels of telemark skiers, from novice to expert in a variety of race categories. Volunteers are being recruited to help with race organization and logistics. Each volunteer will receive lift tickets on race day as well as a ticket voucher for another day of skiing.

Those interested should contact Linda Hobbs, administrator of the U.S. Telemark Skiing Association at 862.3303.



## Membership has its privileges

One of the primary benefits of cooperative membership is capital credits. Since LEC is non-profit, capital credits are simply any revenue we have in excess of our costs each year. We allocate these margins back to you based on your share of our overall revenues.

Each year, your board of trustees determines whether

or not the financial condition of the cooperative warrants returning

any portion of these capital credits to the members. We are happy to report that for the 30th consecutive year we will be making a capital credit retirement. Again this year, the Board of Trustees has authorized the retirement of approximately 5 percent of



our outstanding capital credits. This amounts to over \$324,000 that will be retired this month. If you were a member in 1993 you will be receiving a check in early April if you don't pick it up at the annual meeting.

Since our inception Lincoln Electric has returned over \$8.6 million to members in capital credits. This is over 61 percent of the total capital

credits that we have allocated to members over the last 61 years. When compared to other electric cooperatives, we are in the top 1 percent nationwide when it comes to capital credits retired. This is a remarkable achievement when you consider that we also have among the lowest rates for cooperatives in the nation.