

Electrical Hi-Lites

**Yellowstone Valley
Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Huntley, MT**



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

Photo by William H. Kelly

Cooperative invites you to the annual meeting March 13



Standing: General Manager Terry Holzer, Trustees J. William Keller, Dave Kelsey, Marlene Amen. Seated: President Daniel Swartz, Vice President Larry Kaufman, Secretary/Treasurer Robert Hari, Assistant Secretary Treasurer Richard Weldon.

Plans are in full swing for the 2007 Yellowstone Valley Electric Cooperative Annual Membership Meeting at the Holiday Inn/Montana Convention Center on Tuesday, March 13.

Registration and the health fair will start at 10 a.m. and run until noon. There will be other booths for you to visit. A

sit-down luncheon will be served at noon sharp. The meeting will begin at 12:45 p.m.

Auditor Rick Matusiak will give the 2006 financial report and General Manager Terry Holzer will inform the members of the progress the cooperative has made during this past year.

Three trustees will be elected for three-year

terms; one from District 1, the Custer and Pompeys areas; District 4, the Shepherd area and east of Billings, north of the Yellowstone River; and District 7, Pryor and all parts of the system lying south of the Yellowstone River not assigned to other described districts.

Nominations are made
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MANAGER'S COLUMN BY TERRY HOLZER

Power plant moves forward

Southern Montana Electric Generation and Transmission Cooperative (SMEG&T) continues to progress with the proposed construction of a 250-megawatt coal-fired power plant near the city of Great Falls.

Yellowstone Valley Electric Cooperative is one of the founding members of SMEG&T, which was formed for the purpose of supplying long-term power supply after 2011, when our Cooperative's Bonneville Power Administration power supply contract expires. The following are some of the milestones reached thus far.

- ✓ A draft air quality permit has been issued by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality.
- ✓ An environmental impact statement has been completed and will be released in January, 2007 for public comment. A final record of decision is expected sometime in March, 2007.
- ✓ The Cascade County Commissioners voted to change the zoning on the land where the power

plant will be built from agriculture to heavy industrial.

Unfortunately, a legal challenge has been filed against the county commissioners to force a review and possible reconsideration of the zoning change. (#726700000)

- ✓ Final negotiations are underway with the steam turbine and boiler manufacturers.
- ✓ An option on the land where the power plant will be constructed has been secured.
- ✓ A \$10 million line of credit has been established with CoBank for interim financing for permit filing, land acquisition and preliminary design work.
- ✓ Transmission studies for interconnection with NorthWestern Energy's transmission system have been completed.
- ✓ A \$12 million Conservation and Renewable Energy Bond has been secured through the Internal Revenue Service for the construction of six megawatts of

wind energy at the power plant site.

Not everyone supports the construction of a new coal-fired power plant in Montana. Even though our power plant will utilize proven "clean coal" circulating fluidized bed technology to control 90+ percent of sulfur dioxide, mercury, and other common power plant emissions, a vocal minority in Montana are pushing to have all coal-fired power plants shut down.

Unfortunately, some people are misguided in their belief that Montana's future energy supply should consist solely of wind generation. About 15 bills have been introduced or are in draft form in the 2007 Montana Legislative Session to force the shutdown of coal-fired generation in Montana.

These bills have been introduced under the title and theme of carbon sequestration and global warming prevention. However, they are really intended to make the



generation of electricity from coal cost-prohibitive for Montanans, thereby forcing the construction of more wind farms, which can only generate power about 35 percent of the time.

I hope our state legislators realize that if global climate change is not a natural occurring phenomenon and is really being caused by coal-fired power plants, Montanans cannot shoulder the financial burden for an issue that is debatable and global in scope.

meeting

Continued from page 3 from the floor.

The most exciting event will be the "Luck of the Draw" drawing for six \$500 scholarships. Either the parent or the student must be present to win.

Since each of you is a member of the cooperative, you share equal ownership with all the other members in the cooperative. It is your responsibility to attend the annual meeting so you will get to exercise your right to vote. The

one-member, one-vote concept has been the backbone of the rural electric program since the beginning. It is the cooperative way of doing business through the democratic process.

Over the years, the membership has changed. Surviving members who helped organize the cooperative are small in number. Our membership, which includes many young people who are very mobile, has increased rapidly.

We hope, whether you are young or old, that you will attend the 69th

annual meeting. This is a great opportunity to learn about your cooperative, ask questions and meet your trustees and employees. It is also a good day for fellowship with your neighbors, good food and health fair activities. You may be lucky enough to win one of the door prizes.

We have a free babysitting service for children 3-6 years of age.

We hope to see you at your annual membership meeting in the Montana Convention Center on Tuesday, March 13, 2007.

YELLOWSTONE VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Telephone Numbers
Huntley Office 406-348-3411 or
1-800-736-5323
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406-245-0352

Outages

After 5 p.m. Weekends & Holidays
Huntley 406-348-3411 or
1-800-736-5323

Trustees

President Daniel Swartz,
2076 Lower Canal, Ballantine
Vice President Larry Kaufman,
1817 Dover, Rd., Billings
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Assistant Secretary/Treasurer Richard Weldon,
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Diana Propp, Editor

Check our website: www.yvec.com

Why is my bill so high?

During the winter months, the office personnel receive many phone calls and are asked why particular bills are so high.

The winter weather plays an important part. In November and December the temperature was about average but we had a fair amount of wind, which causes the heating systems to work overtime. Heating systems, whether coal, oil, gas or propane require the use of electricity to run the fans. (#577390000)

During the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Holidays, more baking, cooking and entertaining goes on. All the Christmas tree lights and outdoor lighting displays were on during December.

Adding new appliances received for Christmas to the great number one already has adds to the kilowatt usage. What about the new computer, hot tub, charging the cell phones, or the video games the family received for Christmas?

More lights are used because of fewer daylight hours. You may be watching more television or rented movies rather than braving the cold weather.

Electric heat tapes, engine heaters, stock tank heaters and space heaters are used, sometimes continuously.

All of this adds up to greater kilowatt usage. If you feel your bill is too high, consider the above. If you still have questions, give us a call and we will try to help.

You can also go onto our website: www.yvec.com, click under usage and billing, then click energy analysis, click on Touchstone Energy Home Energy Audit, and you are on your way to doing an energy audit on your own. Good luck!



A big *thank you* for the photos

We had a great response with the scenery photos contest and want to thank everyone who participated. We received some very interesting pictures. There is some great scenery in our service area. Each month we

will feature one of the photos on the front page giving the photographer credit for the photo.

Instead of listing the winners, we want to be more secretive and the winner will be notified a couple of weeks before the magazine comes out. Also the credit on the electrical bill will be applied then.

If you have any more questions, please give Diana a call. Thanks again for participating.

You may be a winner

Look for the three electric account numbers hidden somewhere in the four pages of the Electrical Hi-Lites. If you find your account number, give Diana a call at the co-op before February 15. You will receive a \$25 credit on your electric account.

Lighting tips

Why spot lighting saves money

Have you ever wondered what portion of your electric bill is consumed by the lights in your home? According to the Energy Information Administration, lighting accounts for up to one-fifth the total electrical consumption in many U.S. households. A good portion of that energy may be wasted because light fixtures are poorly located.

You can save energy and money by using spot lighting. Spot lighting is located close to the area where you're working, whether that is a desk, a kitchen counter, or the bathroom sink. Spot lighting can be used in conjunction with area lighting that illuminates an entire room, or it can be used alone for maximum savings.

You may have noticed that it's hard to read under a dim light unless you move close to the lamp. That's because as light travels outward from its source, the same amount of illumination falls upon an increasingly large area. This explains why overhead ceiling fixtures are often configured to hold three 100-watt incandescent lamps, while a nearby table lamp provides plenty of light for a desktop task with only one 60-watt bulb.

One of the best places for spot lighting is in your kitchen. Small lamps that fit under an upper cabinet will direct light right where you need it the most, and there are many different styles available at home improvement stores. If you install new fixtures, be sure to place the switches in a convenient location so you can shut them off as you leave the room. When you are using spot lighting, remember to shut off the area lighting in the room to save even more energy and money.

*Photo credit
Renee Butler.*



Annual holiday goodies program was attended by many

A full house of members attended the cooperative's annual holiday goodies program Dec. 14.

Special guests were students from Huntley Project's Culinary Arts Cooking Class and three home-schooled children.

Diana Propp with the help of employee Barb Strickler showed how to make many delicious appetizers, cookies and candies. There was also a section of diabetic recipes, one dough and 12 different cookie recipes and a section of recipes for the kids to make.

Foods sampled were Bread Bowl, Seafood Dip, Christmas Meatballs, Orange Ginger Fruit Dip, Hot Broccoli Dip, Santa Fe Cheesecake, Grilled Chicken with Pineapple Salsa, Sausage-Filled Stars,

Three Cheese Loaf, Artichoke Dip with Pretzels, Holiday Moments, Mini Pear Cinnamon Caramel Tarts, Cherry Snow Balls, Cream Cheese Mints, Microwave Truffles, Chocolate Candy Clusters, Candy Bar Fudge, Peanut Butter Chip Brittle, Low-Carb Snickerdoodles, Chocolate Covered Pretzels, Nutty Marshmallow Kisses, Crunchy Karmel Corn Snack Mix, Cranberry Fruit Punch and the basic dough which made Chocolate Mint Bars.

When prizes were given away each of the young people there received one of the cute "Coconut Snowmen" made by co-op employee, Darlene Laferriere.

If anyone would like to have a copy of the recipes, give Diana a call, and she will send you a copy.

Are you looking for something easy for Valentine's Day?

Cherry-Fudge Cheesecake Dessert

- 1 pkg. any original brownie mix (one with the chocolate syrup pouch) (#745840000)
- 3 tbsp. butter or margarine, melted
- 2 pkgs. (8 oz. each) cream cheese, softened
- 1 ½ cups whipping (heavy) cream
- 1 can (21 oz.) cherry pie filling



Heat oven to 350 degrees. Stir together 1 ½ cups of the brownie mix (dry) and the butter. Press in the bottom of an ungreased springform pan, 9 x 3 inches or square pan, 9 x 9 x 2 inches. Beat cream cheese in a large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed about 2 minutes, scraping bowl frequently, until smooth. Add remaining brownie mix, the whipping cream and chocolate syrup. Beat on medium speed, scraping bowl frequently, until smooth. Pour over crust in pan. Bake 45 to 50 minutes for springform pan, 35 to 40 minutes for 9 inch square pan, or until set; cool 20 minutes. Run metal spatula along side of cheesecake to loosen before and after refrigerating. Spread pie filling over cheesecake. Cover and refrigerate until chilled, about 2 hours. Cover and refrigerate any remaining cheesecake.



Top: Look at all this good food! Above: The snowmen were a big hit among the winners.

Scholarship reminder due dates

"Luck of the Draw" (6) \$500 Scholarships

*Drawing to be held at YVEC's Annual Meeting
March 13, 2007 at the Holiday Inn-Montana
Convention Center
Deadline March 9, 2007*

\$1,000 YVEC (7) Scholarships

Deadline March 16, 2007

For scholarship applications you may call the office and they will be mailed out to you, pick them up at your school guidance counselor's office, or go to www.yvec.com.