

SOUTHEAST ELECTRIC Cooperative



PO BOX 369, EKALAKA, MT 59324 • PH 406-775-8762 • WWW.SEECOOP.COM

Looking ahead to 2024

By **TYE WILLIAMS** | Manager

It is hard to believe another year is upon us, as it seems 2023 just flew by in the blink of an eye.

Over the last few months, we have been working with a grant writing company to apply for grant funds through the GRIP grant program. Our application was submitted in mid-January.

Southeast Electric Cooperative's goal is to continue our pole change-out program so the grant would enable us to change 2,500 poles on our system. Currently, we have approximately 27,000 poles, so if we receive this round of grant funding, we would be able to change out almost 10 percent of our poles.

Along with the GRIP grant submission, we also have submitted an application for smart grid grant funds to implement SCADA technology at our substations. This technology would allow our linemen to have access to data to more quickly determine where outages occur.

It is very nice to see Carson Hilliard in the back with the rest of the line crew. We currently are fully staffed and working on plans for summer construction. The main goals will be to continue the pole change-out program and to upgrade underground wire and transformers at Trails End Ranch. We will also have contractors working on 40 miles of 115 kilovolt (kV) transmission line and a substation along Mill Iron Road. This construction is currently scheduled to start in mid-May, and last throughout the year. Construction of the transmission line will take 10 to 12 months, so the entire



project is planned to be complete in May 2025.

We will be implementing a satellite radio system for our line crews, as our old system has become too unreliable to ensure communications. The system we will be implementing has been proven to be very reliable at Fergus Electric Cooperative, based in Lewistown, over the past 20 years. McCone Electric Cooperative in Circle recently implemented the same system.

We are also getting a drone to improve our line inspections. The crew members will be working to receive their FAA Part 107d license and we will only be flying above Southeast's respective right-of-way to inspect Southeast Electric lines. If you see a drone flying around our powerline and you have concerns, please call our office to verify it is a Southeast Electric drone.

We are planning a busy 2024, so if you have projects planned for the new year, i.e. upgraded service, new service, or other work which would involve Southeast Electric, contact our office at 406-775-8762. Our Line Foreman Jake Hammel will need to discuss your project with you. Along with the scope of work to be completed, please provide us with a start and completion date for your project. This will aid us in scheduling, and ensure we will have the necessary material on hand. Depending on the work needing to be done, we will need a deposit, membership agreement and a state-provided electrical permit. Information can be found on our website at www.seecoop.com.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call in or stop by and the staff and I will be happy to help you. Have a productive 2024, and I hope to see all of you at our annual meeting in June. RM

PRESIDENTS' DAY CLOSURE

Southeast Electric Cooperative's office will be closed on Monday, February 19.

YOUTH TOUR WINNERS ANNOUNCED

S**SOUTHEAST** Electric Cooperative has chosen two candidates to go to Washington, D.C., in June. The candidates had to write an essay answering the question, “If you could have dinner with one prominent Washington, D.C., figure, whether from the past or present, who would that person be and why? What would you ask them?”

Travis Schallenger chose Theodore Roosevelt, stating that Roosevelt was an extraordinary leader who made a significant impact on American history. He also mentioned that he

shares President Roosevelt’s interest in hunting and ranching. Travis is the son of LeRoy and Jennifer Schallenger of Ekalaka.

Hayden Lane chose a president from the recent past. She would like to share a steak dinner with Donald Trump and visit with him about his leadership techniques and responsibilities. She is also curious as to his interests outside of work and politics. Hayden is the daughter of Bill and Katie Lane of Ismay.

Congratulations Travis and Hayden!

Travis Schallenger



Hayden Lane



The cold is coming, are you ready to save money?

W**HEN** outdoor temperatures drop, our electricity use increases. That’s because we’re doing more activities inside, and our heating systems are running longer and more often to counteract colder outdoor temperatures. Factor in that we all tend to use electricity at the same times – in the morning and early evenings – and that equals a lot of strain on our electric grid.

At Southeast Electric Cooperative, we work closely with our local generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative in resource and infrastructure planning to ensure you have the power you need whenever you flip a switch. Our G&T takes proactive steps to create a resilient portion of the grid and ensure electric reliability in extreme weather, including regular system maintenance, grid-modernization efforts and disaster-response planning.

Here are a few things you can do to save a little money this winter:

- **Select the lowest comfortable thermostat setting and turn it down several degrees whenever possible.** Your heating system must run longer to make up the difference between the thermostat temp and the outdoor temp.

Pro tip: Seal air leaks around windows and exterior doors with caulk and weatherstripping. Air leaks and drafts force your heating system to work harder than necessary.

- **Stagger your use of major appliances such as dishwashers, ovens and dryers.**

Pro tip: Start the dishwasher before you go to bed, and use smaller countertop appliances such as slow cookers and air fryers to save energy.

- **Ensure that your heating system is optimized for efficiency with regular maintenance and proper insulation.**

Pro tip: Make sure your furnace filter isn’t clogged and


dirty. Replace it as needed.

- **When possible, use cold water to reduce water-heating costs.**


Pro tip: Setting your water-heater thermostat to 120 degrees can help you save energy and reduce mineral buildup and corrosion in your water heater and pipes.

- **Unplug devices when not in use to eliminate unnecessary energy use.** Even when turned off, electronics in standby mode consume energy.

Pro tip: Plug devices into a power strip so you can turn them all off at once with the push of a button.

Adopting energy-conservation practices during periods of extreme cold can save you money on your electric bills. Stay warm and safe this winter. 

Healthy YOU



Start Small:

Don’t try to do too much at once. Start small and be consistent. Chose one or two health tips and exercise them daily until they are a habit.

