

SOUTHEAST ELECTRIC Cooperative



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

National Co-op Month

SECO improving reliability through partnership

By **TYE WILLIAMS** | *Manager*

AT Southeast Electric Cooperative, we recognize October as Co-op Month. The cooperative movement began in England in 1844, and grew mainly due to farmers pooling together to increase their buying and selling power. This movement grew outside of supplies and crop prices, eventually banding together to start electric cooperatives across the United States of America.

Over the decades, Southeast Electric has continued to expand our cooperative network in conjunction with the cooperative guiding principle of Cooperation among Cooperatives. Southeast Electric has been a Basin Electric



Power Cooperative member since the onset. To this day, it supplies the majority of our power needs. The software company we use is a technology cooperative that focuses on the needs of electric and telecommunication cooperatives nationwide. Our insurance provider and one of our banking lenders are cooperatives funded by electric cooperatives nationwide. Our newest material supplier, RESCO, is also a cooperative that focuses on the needs of electric cooperatives.

We are also active members of the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) and the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (NRECA), which allow electric

cooperatives to have a unified voice on legislation that affects us at the state and federal levels. NRECA and MECA also offer training for cooperative employees and board members to keep us updated in an ever-changing landscape. Our safety program is run through MECA, and we have recently joined its Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP), which provides further insights into improving our safety program. NRECA also improves our buying power by administering the benefits and pension plan for most electric cooperatives across the U.S.

In addition to the large cooperatives we belong to, we continue to actively work with our neighboring cooperatives. In August, we were able to send

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OCTOBER IS NATIONAL



Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit, community-led utilities. Because we are a co-op, we can adapt our local member's needs, providing the programs and services you care about most. That's the POWER of co-op membership.

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a crew of linemen to assist Tongue River Electric Cooperative in restoring power after a devastating fire had gone through their territory. Just recently, Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative was able to provide material to us for a project, as the delivery lead time from suppliers was too long. We also partner with Lower Yellowstone to meet our IT needs. Next year, we will work with Slope Electric in North Dakota and Grand Electric in South Dakota on two projects to improve capacity.

While October is recognized as Co-op Month, Southeast Electric continually looks for ways to partner with other entities to improve reliability while keeping costs down. RM



MEET THE STAFF

Letting members know of a few changes

TIME gets away from us. Office hours change and staffing changes, and we forget to let our members know.

During recent outages, we had retired employees get phone calls, so SECO thought we should update everyone on the current staff: Tye Williams, General Manager; Robin Kuntz, Office Manager; Rita Williams, Materials Manager; Jake Hammel, Operations Manager; Adam Kuntz, Journeyman; Sam Erfman, Journeyman; Dave Loudermilk, Apprentice Lineman; Trenton Reinhart, Apprentice Lineman; Wilson Venhaus, Apprentice Lineman; Carson Hilliard, Apprentice Lineman; Dave Johnstone, Groundman; Kathy Kittelmann, Custodian; Vicki Fix, Member Services.

Keep in mind that if the power outage is widespread, office staff will be answering phones, so the linemen can concentrate on getting the power on safely.

Board members are an important role to Southeast Electric. Those members who dedicate their time to

serve are Albert Paul-12 years, Mike Hansen-9 years, Karen Kreitel-18 years, Dave Hayden-19 years, Doug Gardner-8 years and Clayton Jardee-4 years.

Office Hours

The office is open from 8 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. The office is closed during the following holidays: New Years Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

From 5 p.m. on Friday to 8 a.m. on Monday, phones are forwarded to a lineman who is on call. After hours, Monday-Friday, you can call the following: Jake at 406-581-0884, Adam at 406-941-0861, or Sam at 605-347-1687. Please do not use Facebook to report outages as it is not monitored after hours.

When your power goes out, it is helpful to have your account number, meter number or address when you call. Southeast Electric Cooperative is proud to serve you, the members. RM

SOUTHEAST ELECTRIC BILLING CHANGES BEGINNING IN NOVEMBER

- Bills will be mailed after the 1st of each month.
- Payments will be due on the 5th of each month rather than the 1st.
- Members will have until the 20th of each month before the forfeited discount is applied.
- SMART HUB auto payments will be processed on the 15th rather than the 10th.