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# 75 year celebration a hit

**75** Years and counting. The 2021 Annual Meeting was a HUGE success. BBQ steak, hamburgers, hotdogs, salads, beans, and cake and ice cream fed more than 300 people. We had 155 members in attendance. Over 35 door prizes were awarded, including two tickets to the Medora Musical and Pitchfork Fondue and two \$500 cash prizes. This year we also awarded child prizes. Bicycles for ages 0 to 10 and a backpack and a Bluetooth speaker for the 11 to 18 year olds. The kids were also treated to a bouncy house and a story read to them by Katie Tooke, Miss Teen Montana 2021. Horse-drawn wagon rides were a big hit as well.

Claire Vigesaa, CEO of Upper Missouri Power Cooperative, and Gary Wiens, CEO of Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association, gave us updates from their organizations. It is very interesting to hear of the challenges



Robin Kuntz and Rita Williams greet members at the registration table at SECO's 2021 Annual Meeting. | PHOTO BY JANA FIX

and growth that is going on in our area and the state of Montana.

Incumbant Trustees Mike Hansen and Karen Kreitel were elected by acclamation to serve 2 year terms.

Several congratulated Manager Jack Hamblin on his 20 plus years with Southeast Electric. Jack has plans to retire before the next Annual Meeting so be looking for celebration details in the future. Office Manager Robin Kuntz was also congratulated for her 40 years of employment with SECO.



**ABOVE:** Katie Tooke, Miss Montana Teen USA 2021, shares the story of *The Little Engine That Could*, which is the first book children receive when they sign up for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. **BELow:** Charlee Jo is excited about the bouncy house. | PHOTOS BY JANA FIX

Robin truly has the cooperative spirit. Members always come first.

The highlight of the evening was the entertainment provided by Jack and his family. They performed 20 years ago for Jack's first Annual Meeting, so we felt that it was only right they be here for his last. This family is so talented, and you could certainly tell their father is proud of them all.

We look forward to seeing you all next year!



The Hamblin family entertains at the 75th Celebration of Southeast Electric Cooperative, Inc. | PHOTO BY JANA FIX



# POWER SURGE vs. BLINKS

By ABBY BERRY

For Southeast Electric Cooperative

**H**AVE you ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave clock when you arrive home. When this happens, you've likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power surge or blink. While the symptoms of surges and blinks can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

## What's a power surge?

Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances of a power waveform that can damage, degrade or destroy electronic equipment within your home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage; however, power surges can reach amplitudes of tens of thousands of volts – this can be extremely damaging to your elec-

tronic equipment.

Surges can be caused by internal sources, such as HVAC systems with variable frequency drives, or external sources, such as lightning and damage to power lines and transformers.

Southeast Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SECO) encourages all members to install surge-protective devices (such as surge protector power strips) to safeguard your sensitive electronics. If you are experiencing frequent surges in your home or business and you believe the cause is internal, contact a qualified electrician to inspect your electrical system.

## What's a power blink?

Power blinks are also brief service interruptions, but they are typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line or a protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can occur through a variety of instances, such as squirrels, birds or other small animals contacting an energized power line; tree branches

touching a power line; or lightning and other similar events. In fact, when it comes to power disruptions caused by critters, squirrels reign supreme. In 2019, squirrels were responsible for more than 1,200 outages.

Any of the events noted above can cause your power to blink, but you may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices that act like circuit breakers are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are actually good because that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

Regardless of the cause, SECO crews will be on their way to inspect the damage and make necessary repairs after a power outage. And you can help, too! Any time you experience repeated disruptions to your electric service, please let us know by calling 406-775-8762 or emailing Vicki at vfix@seecoop.com. RM

## CONGRATULATIONS TANNER!



Tanner Fix, an apprentice lineman with Southeast Electric Cooperative, has successfully completed one of the world's most comprehensive training programs for power line personnel. The Merchant Job Training and Safety Program is administered to line personnel in more than 40 states throughout the United States. Congratulations to Tanner who can look forward to a very rewarding lifelong occupation. | COURTESY PHOTO

AUGUST 12, 13, 14, 15

# Day's of '85 Fair & Rodeo

COME JOIN US IN EKALAKA!