



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

Are you still here??

By **JACK HAMBLIN** | *Manager, Southeast Electric Cooperative*

At the annual meeting this year, it was announced that I would be retiring. No real time frame was given for my demise, but the inference was that it would be pretty soon. After all, I took a very small role at the annual meeting, allowing Assistant Manager Tye Williams to cover any and all duties I would normally cover at the meeting.

I gave a short farewell speech, and my “obituary” during the meeting was thankfully short also. I had time to spend with my children and grandchildren, and enjoy the festivities of the day without the pressures of really being in charge. It was great.

All six of our children came, although some spouses couldn’t. Most of our 22 grandchildren were here also. When I was asked this year if my family would perform at the annual meeting, I immediately thought of my first annual meeting in 2000, where Miss America and what children we had here at the time performed a few songs. So this time, I sent the message out to our family and all of them decided to come for my last annual meeting.

It was a grand day for Miss Amer-

ica and me. I’m sure it’s the first time many of you had seen my favorite people in the world – the ones I talk so much about. As I said at the meeting, we are a musical family and sing together a lot when we’re together. That’s probably why the three sons-in-law didn’t come this trip. That and the fact they all have full-time jobs. Our performance at the meeting wasn’t very polished, but it was certainly fun for us and I hope enjoyable to you.

But back to my retirement. Just a few days following the annual meeting, I was in the front office when a local member came in and, seeing me standing there, said, “Oh, You’re still here, huh?”

“Yep,” I said. “Still here.”

“Well, when are you actually retiring?”

My response was very vague and an awkward pause followed. I was glad when he turned and left the building, shaking his head as the door closed. Just a few minutes later another member came in.

“Oh, you! I thought you’d be gone by now?”

“Well, no, not quite yet. It’ll be a few months.”

“Oh, OK. Good luck.”

By this time, I was not only feeling a little picked on, but I was also feeling that nobody really wanted me around anymore. These thoughts were circulating effectively through my head when, just a little while later, a third well-wisher came through the door.

“Oh, are you still here?”

“Yes, I’m still here, but I’m thinking about leaving.....tomorrow maybe. Is that soon enough?”

“Well, the best to you. We’ll sure miss you around here.”

I was taken back a little and thanked her for the thought. I was a little ashamed at my sarcasm. But the thought that people wanted to get rid of me kept nagging at my brain. Then another thought jumped up and I couldn’t get it out. What if....no it couldn’t be. But rather than dismissing that possibility, I decide there may be something to it.

So here is my conclusion. Tye has been paying people to come in to remind me it’s time for me to leave. RM



TODAY'S MEMBERS PROGRAM

A program that educates Montana electric cooperative members

WHAT is the Today's Members Program? During the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association Annual Meeting, the Member Services Committee hosts the Today's Members Program.

Each cooperative brings anywhere from one to four members to learn more about electric cooperatives. They can be local co-op members ranging from community business men or women, farmers, ranchers or new cooperative employees.

Each member receives attendance gifts that are donated by participating cooperatives and they have the


chance to win door prizes donated by vendors and co-ops.

Demonstrations are given by member services personnel on Co-op History, Renewable Generation and the Future of Electricity, How Electrons get to Your Place, Electric Safety and Energy Efficiency. The Editor of *Rural Montana*, Ryan Hall, shares what he looks for when putting together the magazine.

The participants also enjoy a question-and-answer session with a panel of directors from electric cooperatives across the state. The directors answer questions regarding their roles and

responsibilities, time spent in the position and issues that face the directors in their co-ops. The participants are also able to attend the general sessions of the conference with the cooperative directors, managers and other MECA attendees.

Southeast Electric would like to send at least two people to the conference in Great Falls on October 5 and 6. We pay registration fees, mileage, room and meals.

If you are interested in attending, please call Vicki at 406-775-8762, or email her at vfix@seecoop.com before September 5th. 

\$uds and \$avings



By **ABBY BERRY**
For Southeast Electric Cooperative

YOUR clothes washer and dryer account for a significant portion of energy consumption from major appliances. Make the most of your laundry energy use. The Department of Energy recommends the following tips for saving on suds:

- 1. Wash with cold water.** Switching to cold water can cut one load's energy use by more than half, and by using a cold-water detergent, you can still achieve the brilliant clean you'd normally get.
- 2. Use the high-speed or extended spin cycle in the washer.** This setting will remove more moisture before drying, reducing your drying time and the extra wear on clothing.
- 3. Dry heavier cottons separately.** Loads will dry faster and more evenly if you separate heavier cottons such as linens and towels from your lightweight clothing.
- 4. Use lower heat settings to dry clothing.** Regardless of drying time, you'll still use less energy.
- 5. Use dryer balls.** Dryer balls will help keep clothes separated for faster drying, and they can help reduce static.
- 6. Clean the lint filter after each drying cycle.** If you use dryer sheets, remember to scrub the filter once a month.
- 7. Purchase ENERGY STAR®-rated washers and dryers.** New washers and dryers that receive the ENERGY STAR® rating use about 20 percent less energy than conventional models and you also can receive a rebate from Southeast Electric Cooperative.

Meet Wilson Venhaus



Wilson Venhaus has been hired as an apprentice lineman at Southeast Electric Cooperative. Wilson was born and raised in Ekalaka. He attended lineman school in Butte.

What brings you to Ekalaka?

I was born and raised here in Ekalaka so the job with Southeast was a good opportunity to be able to move back home. Closer to friends and family.

What have you been doing? I've been self-employed the past couple years hauling gravel in both Montana and North Dakota. Before that I worked in the oilfield for about 8 years, where I didn't do much but work and sleep.

What are your hobbies? Some of my hobbies include riding my dirt bike and RZR. I also enjoy going hunting, camping and about anything outdoors.

What is something you want to do in your life that you haven't done yet? I'd like to get into the professional hill climb circuit, and would also like to do more traveling.

What are you looking forward to the most about working at Southeast Electric? I'm looking forward to working with a good group of guys and getting treats from the office ladies.

Wilson, we are glad to have you join the Southeast Electric Family.