

F E R G U S

FEATURES

Member Newsletter ♦ Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc., Lewistown, MT ♦ www.ferguselectric.coop



MANAGER'S MESSAGE

From Carson Sweeney

In the past few months, we have seen abnormally warm temperatures and dry conditions accompanied by high winds. The wind event on December 17 caused extreme electric utility damage from western Montana into the central part of our state. Unfortunately, I have experienced several very large and damaging storms in my career. I don't believe I've witnessed such widespread damage impacting all the electric utilities within a 400-mile path like this storm produced.

Fergus Electric's system did quite well given the circumstances. Many of our outages were due to problems with our transmission operator, and thus beyond our control. I was impressed by our lack of tree issues after seeing the vegetation damage many of our landowners endured. We encountered several downed trees, but our good fortune is no doubt due to the continual work of our employees over the last several years. Our crews worked diligently to identify problems and restore power as quickly as possible. Our office staff was taken aback by the graciousness and kindness of members who called the office to report their



outage, and our Facebook page was filled with messages of encouragement and support for the line crews who were working in heavy wind and in the dark to restore power. I appreciate and thank our members for their positive and rallying spirit.

In early January, our operations

Fergus Electric's system did well in wind event

Gratitude to members, employees

team met with a FEMA representative to identify the damage and costs associated with the storm. Our system sustained approximately \$150,000 in damage. FEMA will work through the details and inform us if we will be eligible for reimbursement. Our costs were quite minimal as compared to those on the western side of our state.

As is typical after a large outage event, we received many calls from members interested in purchasing a Generac generator. I highly recommend considering investing in a backup generator. Throughout our service territory we have electricians and service providers who are very knowledgeable about installing and maintaining Generac generators. In the event of an electrical outage, the generator quickly and automatically starts and provides power until we can restore utility power. Generators provide members with peace of mind in rural Montana while our team works to fix the system damage of Mother Nature. If you are interested in learning more about Generac generators, please contact our office and ask to speak with one of our engineers. RM

PRESIDENTS' DAY CLOSURE

Fergus Electric Cooperative's office will be closed
on Monday, February 16



Keith King is the Camp Ranger and year-round caretaker at K-M Scout Ranch. | PHOTO BY CATHY MOSER

K-M Scout Ranch a world-class camp

Ranch serves all scouts in the heart of central Montana

STORY BY CATHY MOSER | FOR FERGUS ELECTRIC

UPON its founding in 1910, the Boy Scouts of America adopted a 12-point Scout Law. To better reflect an ongoing commitment of welcoming all youth to experience the benefits of Scouting, the organization changed its name to Scouting America in 2025. Conversely, the original 12 points of the Scout Law endure. Along the gravelled K-M Road leading to the K-M Scout Ranch, 12 small metal signs each announce one point of Scout Law. Every day a Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent.

I arrive at K-M Scout Ranch, pronounced K-bar-M, in the North Moccasin Mountains. Camp Ranger Keith King greets me. “Have you been

to the camp before?” he asks. I had, in August of 2023, as a member of the Lewistown Birding Bunch. In a single afternoon, the Scouts, we birders, and former Camp Ranger Nick Williams built 30 nest boxes for bluebirds. The Scouts earned merit badges for their work, and we birders had a new supply of nest boxes.

Scouts were everywhere that day. Today, no Scouts are present. The surroundings on this chilly November morning are quiet and still. “Just turkeys and deer,” Keith says of the year-round residents, other than himself, on the camp’s nearly 1,000 acres of forest, lake and meadow. Keith has been a Scout since the third grade, starting as a Cub Scout and reaching the highest rank of Eagle Scout before

servicing as a volunteer Scout leader. He relocated from Great Falls in early 2025 to become K-M Scout Ranch camp ranger, a paid position.

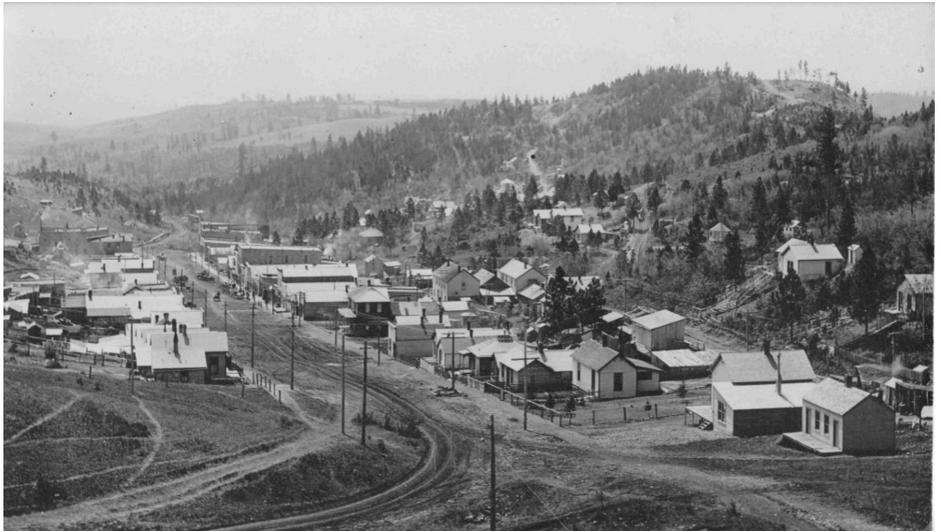
Of course, when the calendar flips to July, the camp will revert to what I remember from three summers ago, boys and girls scampering from one activity or adventure to the next. Keith tells me the camp exists to “support Scouting programs by delivering outdoor experiences for youth.” K-M Scout Ranch primarily serves the Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA and Venturing programs, but Keith says it’s a camp for all Scouts. Last summer, the camp hosted more than 1,100 Scouts and leaders, of which 700 were “youth participants,” meaning they ranged in age from five years to 20 years old.

Camp sessions run for one week.

Of the outdoor activities and adventures offered, the most popular is hands-on All-Terrain Vehicle training. "It's for Scouts 14 years old and older," Keith says. "They learn to drive an ATV safely. The camp has five miles of ATV trails, which the Scouts ride after they've completed training."

Scouts who enroll for aquatics learn how to swim, canoe and kayak at Taylor Lake. The camp recently revitalized the small lake, including installation of three underwater cameras to monitor aquatic activity. The Scouts can view trout spawning and other underwater action on camera monitors in the Nature Cabin. Camp offerings integrate science, technology, engineering and math, or STEM. According to the Scouting America website, STEM-based activities help to "expand a sense of wonder in Scouts." STEM also teaches some of Scouting's core values, including leadership, teamwork, creativity and problem solving. The construction of a new building for STEM activities is one of the camp's future projects.

Another popular program is Range and Target Activities. Scouts learn to shoot an arrow from a bow and how to fire a .22 rifle and a shotgun. Adventure



The Kendall gold mining town in its heyday. | PHOTO COURTESY OF LEWISTOWN PUBLIC LIBRARY

CONTACT:

- Learn more about the opportunities in Scouting that await your kids by visiting scoutingmontana.org.
- If you would like to host your event at K-M Scout Ranch, contact the Scouting America Montana Council in Great Falls at 406-761-6000.

awaits at the climbing tower, where Scouts try their hand at rappelling and learn how to rappel safely.

"It's rewarding to see youth having fun and wanting to come back to camp next year," Keith says.

These contemporary outdoor programs adopted by Scouting America complement original programs such as Scout Craft, First Aid, Orienteering and Wilderness Survival, all instituted in 1910. Coincidentally that year, K-M Scout Ranch's most novel feature, the Kendall townsite, enjoyed its most productive year of its brief existence. At the Barnes-King gold mine in the North Moccasin Mountains production peaked and the population in the town supporting the mine and miners, Kendall, swelled to a zenith of 1,500 residents. Kendall flourished in the first decade of the 20th Century as Montana's richest gold-mining town. The mining industry around Kendall eventually waned, with the Barnes-King Mine closing completely in 1921. As residents moved away, Kendall became a ghost town.

In 1968, the land gifted to the Boy Scouts of America included the townsite, with its few sandstone ruins. That year, the site found new life as the home of the Camp Kendall Scout camp. In 1973, the camp moved to a new loca-



The Scouts partnered with the Lewistown Birding Bunch and Town & Country grocery for a community project of bluebird box building. | PHOTO BY CATHY MOSER

See K-M RANCH, next page

FEC seeking District 2 and 4 director candidates, Annual Meeting is June 4

In accordance with Fergus Electric Cooperative Bylaws, Article IV, Section 4.3, the committee for selecting board candidates will be appointed, and will meet to nominate candidates for the Board of Trustees.

In addition to candidates nominated by the committee, any 15 or more members acting together from District 2 (Glengarry, Kolin, Straw, Nihill areas) and District 4 (Winnett, Winnett Jct., Grass Range, Roundup Route 1 and 2 areas) may make other nominations by petition not less than 30 days prior to the annual meeting. Such nominations are to be posted where the committee list is posted. No other method of nominating candidates for trustees is permitted.

In accordance with Fergus Electric Cooperative Bylaws, Article III, Section 3.6, each member shall be entitled to only one vote upon each matter submitted to a vote at a meeting of the members. In the absence of the member holding a single membership, the spouse may vote.

Directors serve a term of three years and are elected by ballot at the annual meeting of the membership.

Candidates must have their principal residence in the district from which they are selected.

If you are interested in running for a position on the board, watch for meeting dates and places in local newspapers or call the office at (406) 538-3465 for more information. 

K-M RANCH

Continued from previous page

tion, about two miles from the ghost town. Taking the K from Kendall, and the letter common to each of the four land donors, M, the Scouts of America council had a name for their new camp, K-M Scout Ranch. The camp still touts its claim of the “only Scout camp in the world owning a ghost town.”

A new state-of-the-art lodge, completed in 2019, beautifully complements the camp’s forest setting and is equipped with a spacious dining hall and kitchen, offices, conference rooms, medical center and Scout store. Scout leaders use the Scoutmaster Lounge for reprieve, work and study. The lodge, with its 300-person capacity, was designed with the intent of hosting groups outside of Scouting and, according to Keith, “We are ready to welcome organizations, private events and businesspeople, and become a bigger part of the central Montana community.” All of the many donations that funded the

DONATE:

K-M Scout Ranch is in need of donations for the purchase of picnic tables to be placed throughout the camp. If you would like to contribute, enclose a check with a note stating the donation is for K-M picnic tables. Send to: Scouting America, Montana Council, 820 17th Ave. S., Great Falls, MT 59405

construction of the lodge were made anonymously.

As Keith and I stand on the lodge deck with the forest around us and a view of the Central Montana plains ahead of us, he says he has his dream job: “I always wanted to be a Camp ranger and work outdoors.”

He likes the solitude and watching the turkeys and deer as they wander through the property.

“I’m supporting the Scout program in such a beautiful place,” he says. “If I am successful as caretaker, then the camp is successful.” 

IDENTIFY ACCOUNT NUMBER*

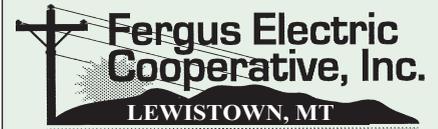
WIN A \$34 CREDIT

If one of the following account numbers is yours, call Fergus Electric (406-538-3465) and identify yourself and your account number, and you will receive a \$34.00 credit on next month’s statement.

**Account 395619, Account 275000
Account 354478, Account 313480
Account 396993, Account 317013**

Wayne Bursheim of Lewistown, **Kathy Galbreath** of Roundup, **Jerry & Patricia Giedd** of Lewistown, **Herbert & Carol Fobes** of Roundup and **Marilyn Price** of Kennedyville, MD (service in Musselshell County) were last month’s winners.

*NUMBERS ARE DRAWN MONTHLY



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

FOR OUTAGES

First: Check the fuses or breakers in the building in which the electricity is off.

Second: Check the breaker below the meter.

Third: If electricity is still out, call a neighbor to see if they have electricity.

Fourth: Call 406-538-3465 day or night or:

Tyson Ruff 406-366-9830
Bret Ophus 406-366-7523
Bret Nellerhoe (Roundup)..... 406-939-0636
Carson Sweeney 406-366-0971
Melanie Foran..... 406-462-5650
Scott Olson..... 406-366-5822
Dan Balster..... 406-366-0975

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Bret Ophus Line Superintendent

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Janine Rife Didier.....Editor

Fergus Electric is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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District 5: Terry Frost, President, Roundup, 323-3415

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Fergus Features is an award-winning newsletter.