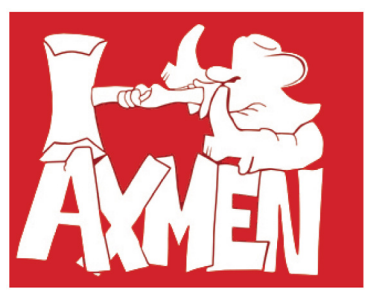


# F E R G U S

## FEATURES

Member Newsletter ♦ Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc., Lewistown, MT ♦ [www.ferguselectric.coop](http://www.ferguselectric.coop)



Location Manager Jessie Myers, left, and Axmen Feed Outside Salesman Brady Johnson take a moment in the feed warehouse on a windy day in early December. Behind them is a large assortment of products. "We can fill almost every need," Brady said. "And if we don't have it we can get it," Jessie added. | PHOTO BY CHARLIE DENISON

## AXMEN FEED

### IN LEWISTOWN FOR THE LONG HAUL

Story and photos by **CHARLIE DENISON** | contributing writer

"**E**VER been in a feed store before?" Axmen Feed Outside Salesman Brady Johnson asked as we toured the new Axmen location off Hanover Road in Lewistown. "It's not your typical retail location."

Brady and I had met a few months earlier. As a local Chamber of Commerce representative, I helped him get the word out on the grand opening in mid-October, an event he said was well attended.

"There wasn't room for people to park. People drove around just waiting for someone to leave, he said."

Since then, Brady and Location Manager Jessie Myers have been busy catering to the central Montana community's feed needs. Brady in particular has also been busy informing the public of all Purina has to offer, as Axmen is an authorized Purina retailer.

Many people, Brady said, don't

realize Purina's progress in the feed industry, but Axmen – a 40-year-old family-owned company based in Missoula (with additional locations in Columbus, Dillon and Lewistown) that specializes in fire equipment, hot tubs, hearth and fireplace, Snickers workwear, fencing and feed – understands why Purina is the perfect partner for their feed warehouses, be it for cattle,

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## MANAGER'S MESSAGE

From Carson Sweeney

**H**APPY New Year from all of us at Fergus Electric Cooperative! I hope you had an enjoyable Christmas season with family and friends. For our members and the co-op alike, 2021 presented challenges in many forms. The new year gives us each a fresh start, and an opportunity to make 2022 great.

### *New after-hour outage dispatch service*

Here at Fergus Electric Cooperative, we want to start the new year by introducing you to the after-hour outage dispatch service that we have chosen to take over for us. As I have reported in previous Manager's Messages, Fergus Electric employees have diligently been responding to outages calls. When asked to take on this new responsibility 18 months ago, the team rose to the occasion. Equipped with a single cellphone and a satellite radio, our employees have taken turns answering your after-hours outage calls and dispatching the line crews to restore power. We have asked a lot from our team, and they have done an outstanding job. However, there is only so much one person assigned to answering after-hours phone calls can be expected to do. At times of high call volumes, we recognized that our services didn't meet our own standards of providing excellent service to our members, which led us to search for an advanced long-term solution.


Throughout the past year we have been working with our power supplier, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, in Bismarck, North Dakota, and their

# Happy New Year!

dispatch team, Security Response Services (SRS), to eventually have them take over our after-hours outage calls. Established in 1992, SRS dispatches for 13 electric cooperatives in Montana, and 84 electric cooperatives throughout the United States. Their team is focused on answering member calls and relaying that information to our linemen. I don't expect our members to notice any changes as we have worked behind the scenes on a seamless transition. Nevertheless, if you call the co-op after-hours, please let me know your thoughts on our new outage dispatch service.

### *Stay informed*

Fergus Electric Cooperative continues to have strong and consistent financials. As we work to finalize our books for the 2021 fiscal year, I look forward to informing our membership on the details of where we have been, and the plans for where we are headed. I encourage all our members to stay engaged by reading our messages in the *Fergus Features* section of the *Rural Montana* magazine each month. We are hard at work planning for the future of our cooperative. We want you to be an informed member and partner on this journey.

Thank you for being with us in 2022. We would like to hear your views on any of the numerous services we provide to the membership. Let's hope that 2022 is a year that brings us sufficient moisture, zero fires and good health. Happy New Year! 



# AXMEN FEED

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horses, dogs, cats or small animal food.

“Purina has had a real big push in the last five years to be the leader in grass cow nutrition, so they’ve done a lot [to improve] with their tubs and a lot with their [added] minerals,” Brady said. “Their weaning feeds are phenomenal.”

This is no accident, Brady said, adding that Purina is committed to research.

“They have a research farm that’s over 1,000 acres,” Brady said. “It’s one of a kind. They do research on every species that they feed, and they test their products. They feed new products to their own animals first, so that your animal is not the guinea pig.”

A large amount of Purina’s research farm focus coincides with the needs of central Montana ranchers, Brady added.

“Purina knows what people on the range need,” he said. “They know what the mother cows need. They know how to develop the heifers.”

Brady can talk on this subject for hours. It’s an exciting time for Purina, he said, and for Land O Lakes – Purina’s parent company – which is currently putting a lot of resources toward sustainability of agriculture, be it carbon sequestering or simply finding better ways to supplement protein. This is one reason why Axmen’s feed warehouse emphasizes tubs.

“In a year like this with drought and everyone feeding straw...tubs are so valuable,” Brady said. “They are a great way to get protein into an animal. We have tubs here that are molasses-based with 10 percent fat. When you cut it open you can see nuggets of fat in it, and that type of fat is a bypass fat, which is a great feed source. It’s a wonderful breeding tub.”

This is just one of many examples of Purina products available at the new Axmen location, one of four in



Axmen’s Lewistown feed warehouse, which opened in October 2021, is one of four Axmen locations in the state, and the third location specified as a feed warehouse. There is more to the operation than the warehouse as Axmen has a small retail space, sells Hi-Hog Equipment and has plans to expand in the future. | PHOTO BY CHARLIE DENISON



Jessie Myers and Brady Johnson stand by Axmen’s delivery truck. Axmen also assists with ration balancing, and offers hay, feed and water tests.

the state, and the third location specified as a feed warehouse.

“There’s a wide range of different products for different uses, including many high-volume items, such as salt, cattle minerals and tubs,” Brady said. “We also have a large selection of bagged items, be it a bag of chicken food or a bag of horse food. We have stuff for basically every species, including llama and alpaca food.”

Brady’s enthusiasm for the subject of feed was contagious. I found myself eager to learn more.

“What is it that makes Purina such a leader in the industry?” I asked.

“Our big thing is palatability and consistent consumption,” Brady said. “We also want to provide products in the most convenient way possible by utilizing our drive-through warehouse operation. We have the doors open

and people can just drive right in. You’re out of the wind, you’re out of the rain. It’s really handy.”

## **Beyond feed**

There is more to the operation than the warehouse, as Jessie Myers has set up a small retail space inside the building that now features a popcorn machine.

This space has received more use than Axmen anticipated.

“The amount of people who come in the retail space for horse food and pet food has been surprising,” Brady said.

“I think actually the majority of our sales so far has been horse feed,” Jessie added.

Jessie’s accurate intuition comes naturally. Although new to Axmen, she is not new to central Montana, nor to the feed industry. For nine years she worked at CHS, a feed store no longer in operation in Fergus County.

Jessie said she finds comfort in working for a smaller, family-owned business that gives employees opportunities to be creative and supports their ideas.

“It’s nice to be able to donate to fundraisers and support local firefighters or the Fergus County Livestock Board,” she said. “Axmen leadership basically says, ‘as long as it’s related to what we do, go for it.’”

Jessie said she looks forward to

**See AXMEN FEED, next page**

# SCHOLARSHIPS

APPLICATIONS ARE DUE AT THE END OF JANUARY

**F**ERGUS Electric Cooperative, Inc. is accepting applications for the Basin Electric Power Cooperative and the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) memorial scholarship. All applications must be submitted by the due dates listed below to: Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc., Attn: Sue, 84423 US Highway 87, Lewistown, MT 59457.

20% - Employment, volunteerism and community service

40% - Personal statement

The application and guidelines are posted on Fergus Electric's website <https://www.ferguselectric.coop/> or our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ferguselectric/> or you may call (406) 538-3465.

## Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association Memorial Scholarship

MECA is offering a \$500 scholarship to one eligible student from the southwest district of Montana. The applicant's parent/guardian must be a Fergus Electric Cooperative member. The applicant must be attending college in the fall of 2022.

Applicants must return their application form, transcripts and letters of reference to Fergus Electric Cooperative by January 25, 2022.

Your application will be judged based on the following components:

20% - Academic Strength (as demonstrated by rigors of coursework, GPA, and national testing scores)

20% - Activities in school and community, awards and honors

## Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship

Fergus Electric's power supplier, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, is offering a \$1,000 scholarship to the dependent of a member of Fergus Electric Cooperative.

The topic for the 2022 Essay Scholarship is: "What challenges face rural electric cooperatives in the coming years, and how do you think challenges should be addressed?"

Applicants must submit all materials to Fergus Electric Cooperative by January 31, 2022.

The application and guidelines are posted on Fergus Electric's website <https://www.ferguselectric.coop/> or our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ferguselectric/> or you may

## AXMEN FEED

*Continued from page 7*

assisting the community more as a member of the Axmen team. For example, the Axmen team plans to offer 4-H and FFA member discounts.

Brady said Axmen is also planning an enthusiastic presence at the Winter Fair in January, and is constantly seeking other ways to be involved with the community.

"We are invested," Brady said. "We are not trying to come in, have a few

good years and when the market changes, walk out. Axmen and Purina want to be in Lewistown for the long haul."

For more information, go to [facebook.com/AxmenFeedLewistown](https://www.facebook.com/AxmenFeedLewistown) or call Axmen's Lewistown Feed Warehouse at (406) 380-2099. The warehouse is located at 66 Fairway Lane, and is open Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Editor's note:** *Axmen BTO Inc. became a member of Fergus Electric in October 2021.*

## IDENTIFY ACCOUNT NUMBER\*

### WIN A \$32.50 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 \$32.50 credit on next month's statement.

**Account 395091, Account 317042  
Account 379411, Account 388518  
Account 344145, Account 393260**

**No winner** to report for last month.

\*NUMBERS ARE DRAWN MONTHLY

## Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc.

LEWISTOWN, MT

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:

Dale Rikala .....	406-366-3374
Bret Ophus .....	406-366-7523
Bret Nellermoe (Roundup).....	406-939-0636
Carson Sweeney .....	406-366-0971
Melanie Foran.....	406-462-5650
Scott Olson.....	406-366-5822
Dan Balster.....	406-366-0975

### FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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