

F E R G U S

FEATURES

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

70TH ANNUAL
ROY OPEN RODEO
SUNDAY, JUNE 19, 1 P.M.
For more information call
(406) 464-2135



Steer wrestler Chance Fields from Roy, grapples with a steer during the 68th annual Roy Open Rodeo on Father's Day, June 2020 | FILE PHOTO
COURTESY OF NEWS ARGUS PHOTOGRAPHER MATT STRISSEL

ROY RODEO TO CELEBRATE 70TH ANNIVERSARY

STORY BY CHARLIE DENISON | CONTRIBUTING WRITER

AS Father's Day weekend nears, the community of Roy once again prepares for their biggest event of the year: the Roy Rodeo.

What the Roy Rodeo Club started 70 years ago – in 1952 – remains in many ways the beating heart of Roy and a symbol of the town's pride and perseverance.

Whether it be local families such as the Styers, Harrells, Knerrs or Rindals competing or local families such as the Gervaises, Sirokys, Bergums, or Sluggetts getting involved behind the scenes, everyone rallies together to make the weekend work.

"There's always somebody to fill in a spot and help out," said Gary Smith,

operator of Roy's G.S. Oil. "I'm glad this outfit [Roy Rodeo Club] does it and supports the community. It's held up pretty well. There's always a good turnout for the rodeo, the street dance and calcutta."

There's also an impressive turnout

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MANAGER'S MESSAGE

From Carson Sweeney

Spring storms are a mixed blessing for Montana co-ops



The April storm damage to Sheridan Electric was extensive and widespread, nearly 500 power poles were lost. Fergus Electric sent a five-person team to help. | **PHOTO BY MELANIE FORAN**



Dakota Wahl was one of the five-member crew Fergus Electric sent to help Sheridan Electric. | **PHOTO BY LOUIE HOULD**



Fergus Electric's Mark Schwomeyer and Tyson Ruff frame a pole after Sheridan Electric suffered major damage during an April storm. | **PHOTO BY LOUIE HOULD**

WHAT an amazing difference just a few rain showers have made in the last month! Wet fields of green grass are a beautiful sight. I hope the rains keep coming for all our members and that our neighbors to the north are also blessed with this springtime moisture.

At the end of April, the eastern portion of Montana received heavy wet snow along with high winds that caused devastating destruction for multiple utilities and electric cooperatives. Fortunately, Fergus Electric was not impacted with many outages. We immediately contacted our neighboring cooperatives to check in and offer assistance. One cooperative requested help and our employees quickly volunteered. We sent a five-person team to Sheridan Electric, an electric cooperative in the northeastern portion of the state. Sheridan Electric had lost nearly 500 power poles in the storm. Our crew worked alongside many other crews to help restore power in incredibly muddy conditions. As you can see from the pictures, there were instances where our crew drove for miles and didn't see a single pole standing. The Fergus Electric team represented our membership well. They worked long days on limited sleep to restore power to many coop-

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Fergus Electric's Tyson Ruff, Louie Hould and Melanie Foran frame a power pole. | **PHOTO BY MARK SCHWOMEYER**



Fergus Electric's Tyson Ruff grounded a power line so crews could work safely. | **PHOTO BY LOUIE HOULD**

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erative members. Our team helped for six long days before they returned home late on a Sunday evening. Early Monday morning they were at Fergus Electric headquarters ready to start another work week.

What an incredible group of employees we have at Fergus Electric. We could have sent any five employees to help, and I would have described every team as our "A" team. The Montana Electric Cooperative network is strong, and you can rest assured that when a brutal storm impacts our system, our neighboring cooperatives won't hesitate to offer a helping hand.

I hope to see many of you at our upcoming June 9th Annual Meeting at the Fergus County Trade Center. Registration will begin at 11:00 a.m., lunch will be served at noon with our business meeting starting at 1:00 p.m.



Members of the Fergus Electric crew tie in a conductor on a freshly set pole for Sheridan Electric. | **PHOTO BY LOUIE HOULD**



JC Desaveur from Roberts rides a bronc during the Roy Open Rodeo. | **FILE PHOTO COURTESY OF NEWS ARGUS PHOTOGRAPHER MATT STRISSEL**

ROY RODEO

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of helpers. Hannah Clemenson, who spent her childhood in Roy, recalls this fondly.

"I remember all of us children running around afterward picking up trash," she said. "Only when I grew up did I realize how extraordinary it was that such a tiny community could host this kind of large-scale event."

Reaching new heights

The spirit of the Roy Rodeo has not waned, not even at the height of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020.

"Contestants came from all over," recalled Pat Pendergrass, current Roy Rodeo President. "We had Montana world champions like Ty Erickson and Haven Meged compete. We even had to run slack because we had so many contestants. It was a record turnout."

This momentum carried into 2021.

"People remembered how fun the Roy rodeo was, and we had another huge turnout from spectators to contestants," he said. "I would like to think our 70th year will be another great one."

Pendergrass, president since 2013, said the Roy Rodeo's success is well deserved. The community, he believes, deserves to be rewarded

for their commitment to making this rodeo such a remarkable event decade after decade. It's a tremendous feat not just for the town but for the entire state, as the Roy rodeo is the longest consecutive running open rodeo in Montana.

Current Secretary, Lisa Sluggett, said this accomplishment is a true testament to the people of Roy.

"The rodeo is a success because of the support of the community, and this goes for the support from surrounding communities as well," Lisa said. "There are so many people, ranches, and businesses who volunteer their time and financial support. We have an added purse and buckles for all the event winners and the money for that is donated. Also, many people donate their time to make the rodeo happen each year. People donate equipment to prepare the rodeo grounds and they donate their time to update and repair any areas of the arena that need it. People also donate their time and vehicles to move stock for the rodeo and make sure the stock have adequate food and water. Many people organize a food booth and spend hours manning that booth during the rodeo. Any profits go to improving the rodeo grounds and supporting the rodeo. In addition,

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Tike Erickson, from Hobson, prepares to lasso a calf at a Roy Open Rodeo.

**| FILE PHOTO
COURTESY OF
NEWS ARGUS
PHOTOGRAPHER
MATT STRISSEL**



ROY RODEO

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we have people who volunteer to time the rodeo, take money at the gate (one of the most underappreciated jobs, in my opinion), sell 50/50 tickets, and do countless other things to make sure the rodeo itself runs smoothly. There are so many jobs that if I tried to name them all I would be afraid I would forget some."

The Sluggett family plays a large part in some of these operations.

"The Sluggett family has done so much to keep the rodeo going," Pendergrass said. "Lester, Carol, Lisa, and Levi all help behind the scenes. It definitely takes our entire community to fill all the positions needed from the cook shack to the front gate. We couldn't put it on without the help of our community members or the generosity of our sponsors."

Putting in the "time"

Carol Sluggett, Lisa's mother-in-law, has been timing the Roy Rodeo since 1975.

"I just do it," she said. "When the day comes people know they have to put their time in somewhere. It takes a community. No one can do it on their own."

For Carol, rodeoing has always been

in her blood. Her grandfather Fred Henderson furnished rodeo grounds in Warrick, near the Bear Paw Mountains, where Carol grew up. When she moved to Roy in the 70s with her husband, Lester, they immediately got involved with the local rodeo.

From the beginning Carol said she and Lester were impressed by the massive undertaking.

"This rodeo is a mainstay of the Roy community," she said. "It's the biggest day of the year for the town, and every year it's a little bit better. It's in everybody's mind and heart to go to the Roy rodeo and do the best they can putting it on."

At a time when many smaller agricultural communities are struggling, the town of Roy continues to show promise for the future, as the 70th annual Roy Rodeo is expected to be one of its greatest. People come from all over, Carol said, and adults and children alike take part in the festivities. It's a celebration of Western values, heritage, and a unique way of life. It's a celebration of authenticity, one that will be around a long, long while.

"It is a matter of enormous pride for our community to have produced 70 years of rodeo in Roy," Pendergrass said. "It takes a lot of work, organization and money to put on a rodeo, and it's pretty darn cool to be part of it." RM



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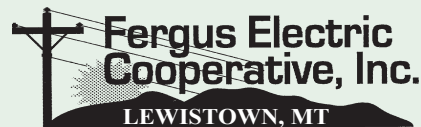
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CONGRATULATIONS!

Wm Baumgartner of Lewistown was last month's winner!

*NUMBERS ARE DRAWN MONTHLY



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