

F E R G U S

FEATURES

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



MANAGER'S MESSAGE

From Carson Sweeney

THE team at Fergus Electric Cooperative is undertaking several projects to improve communications with our membership. We are enhancing how we text, email, call and notify our members for projects such as pole testing and aerial drone patrol. We will also begin using these services to proactively notify members that we are aware of an outage affecting your electric service.

When your meter identifies a loss of power, we will text and email you that we are aware of the outage, and we have operations personnel responding to restore service.

Once our linemen have restored power, we will send out another notification providing each member with an update as soon as possible. Our intent is to begin utilizing the new communication tools for outage notifications early this summer.

To be sure we are sending notifications to the correct phone numbers and emails, please update your information within the SmartHub app. Our

app lets each member choose how they would like the co-op to notify them. Please login to the SmartHub app and verify your information within Settings: Manage Notifications.

The app is easily accessible from your mobile device. Seventy percent of members at Fergus Electric Cooperative utilize the app, which provides a wealth of billing information as well as historic electric usage for both peak kilowatts and kilowatt-hours.

We are updating and simplifying our website to help members access the information they are looking for quickly and efficiently. Most often, members use our site to obtain contact information or to pay a bill.

I am excited for members to see the impressive updates early this summer. The website will also include an online outage map that will provide real time information on outages throughout our service territory. Members will be able

Communications improvements are in the works at FEC




to see whether an outage impacts only them or is affecting a larger number of members.

I hope to unveil these improvements at our upcoming annual meeting scheduled for Thursday,

June 4, at the Fergus County Trade Center. I will also be covering the work completed in 2025, along with cooperative financial information.

In previous annual meetings, members have won half of a 4-H hog or other great gifts during our door prize drawing.

Member students enrolled in post high school education should complete and return the Luck of the Draw Scholarships application, included in this month's *Fergus Features* section of the *Rural Montana* magazine, and attend the annual meeting with their parents or guardian. Last year we awarded member students with \$47,000 in scholarships! See you there! 



REMEMBER AND HONOR
MEMORIAL DAY
— ★ ★ ★ —
CLOSURE

Fergus Electric Cooperative offices will be closed Monday, May 25

Notice of 88th Annual Meeting

PURSUANT to Article III, Section 3 of the bylaws of Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc., notice of the 88th annual meeting is hereby given. The member meeting will take

place at the Fergus County Trade Center, Lewistown, Montana, on Thursday, June 4, 2026. Registration begins at 11 a.m., with lunch at noon. The business meeting convenes at

1 p.m., with the order of business as follows: report of members present, reading of notice and proof of publication, election of two trustees and transaction of other business. RM

MEET THE BOARD CANDIDATES

In accordance with Fergus Electric Cooperative Bylaws, Article IV, Section 4.3, the nominating committees met and elected candidates for the Board of Trustees.

In addition to the procedures set

forth above, any 15 or more members acting together from the district in which a trustee is to be elected may make other nominations by petition not less than 30 days prior to the meeting, and the secretary shall post such

nominations at the same place where the list of nominations made by the aforesaid committees are posted. No other method of nominating candidates for trustee shall be posted.

DISTRICT 2

Brett Maxwell



Incumbent Brett Maxwell is seeking another three-year term as a member of Fergus Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors. Brett said, "It is a privilege to serve as your board director, and I would be grateful to have your continued support in serving the membership for another term." Brett has served as the co-op's District 2 board director for the past eight years. In 2022, Brett successfully completed the series of National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) courses to become an NRECA Credentialed Co-op Director. The program focused on basic governance knowledge and essential skills required of cooperative directors.

Brett is the owner/operator of a family-owned cow/calf and hay operation. He was born and raised on the same ranch that he calls home today, 9 miles southwest of Lewistown. He is a graduate of Fergus High School and has a certificate in livestock technology from Dawson Community College.

In addition to ranch duties, Brett is pleased to be serving his sixth term on the Moore Farmers Oil Board as secretary. He served eight years on the Fergus County Fair Board; he served as treasurer and vice president of the Fergus County Livestock Association and served on the advisory board for the Lewistown branch of the Bank of the Rockies.

His wife Jennifer works for the state of Montana in the Office of Public Assistance. They are the parents of Meagan (21), Kate (20), Thomas (17), and Emmet, aka Knute (10).

"It is an honor to be selected for this position, and I look forward to the challenges and opportunities to broaden my horizon and to preserve this great co-op," Brett said.

DISTRICT 4

Cathy Kombol



My husband Terry and I raise cattle on our 1909 homestead ranch. We are the third generation to do so, and the fourth and fifth are in line as their time comes. We have been married for 50 years and know and appreciate what it takes to survive in this challenging business. We believe the previous generations here were "tough people for tough times," a legacy to pass down for sure!

I have served on the Board of Directors for Fergus Electric for the past nine years as your district 4 trustee, and am seeking a fourth term. This journey has been a rewarding experience full of challenges and learning opportunities as I continue to represent the co-op members. Before I became a board member, I attended some annual meetings, read our meters and paid the monthly bill. But I really didn't know how our co-op operated until I was elected to the board and then I saw how every employee, management and board member was top notch and dedicated. They kept things running smoothly and efficiently even in times of outages, storms and fires, always going the extra mile. I am proud to be a part of this team, and together we can face and accomplish many things in this ever-changing world we live in.

I encourage every member to join us at the Fergus County Trade Center in Lewistown, Thursday, June 4, for the annual meeting. I would sincerely appreciate the opportunity to serve as a trustee on the Fergus Electric Board of Directors.

Thank you, Cathy Kombol

2026 scholarships awarded

WE received excellent applications for the various scholarships we offer. The following scholarships were offered: The memorial scholarships sponsored by Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) and Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. Our power supplier, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, sponsored a scholarship and our power supplier, Members 1st sponsored two scholarships. MECA has not yet announced the district winner of its 2026 memorial scholarship.

The Montana Electric Cooperatives'

Association Memorial Scholarship recipient, which Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. sponsored, was selected based on academic strength, activities in school and community, awards and honors, employment, volunteerism, community service and personal statement.

Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Members 1st scholarship recipients were selected based on academic record, potential to succeed, leadership and participation in school and community activities, honors, work experi-

ence, a statement of education and career goals, and an outside appraisal. The topic for the 2026 Essay Scholarship was: "How does the electricity provided by your electric cooperative improve the quality of life in your community?"

Congratulations to this year's scholarship recipients: Ella Cooney, Jacob Swanz, Rhett Comes and Dashed Ruff. The scholarship recipients will be recognized in person at our annual meeting on June 4. RM



Ella Cooney

MECA Memorial Scholarship - Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. Scholarship Recipient

Ella Cooney of Harlowton, was selected to receive a \$1,000 scholarship sponsored by Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Ella is a senior at Harlowton High School and the daughter of Spencer and Bethany Cooney of Harlowton. Ella has plans to attend MSU-Bozeman and study business, finance and management.



Jacob Swanz

Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship Recipient

Jacob Swanz of Judith Gap, was selected to receive a \$2,500 scholarship sponsored by Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

Jacob is a senior at Stanford High School and the son of Jason and Jody Swanz. Jacob has plans to attend MSU-Bozeman and study architecture.



Rhett Comes

Members 1st Scholarship Recipient

Rhett Comes of Lewistown, was selected to receive a \$2,500 scholarship sponsored by Members 1st Power Cooperative.

Rhett is a senior at Fergus High School and the son of Kevan and Annette Comes of Lewistown. Rhett has plans to attend MSU-Northern in Havre and study welding.



Dashed Ruff

Members 1st Scholarship Recipient

Dashed Ruff of Lewistown, was selected to receive a \$2,500 scholarship sponsored by Members 1st Power Cooperative.

Dashed is the son of Tyson Ruff and Jinx Ruff of Lewistown. Dashed attends Montana Technological University and is studying civil engineering, with a minor in business.

LUCK OF THE DRAW SCHOLARSHIPS

10 scholarships to be given away at the Annual Meeting

Must be present to win

Fergus Electric Cooperative will offer 10 \$1,000 scholarships in a drawing during this year's annual meeting June 4 at the Fergus County Trade Center.

Rules for the scholarship drawing are: 1) The applicant must have a home address in a residence served by Fergus Electric or be the child of a current Fergus Electric member. 2) The applicant must have at least a "C" grade average, 3) Applicant **MUST** return application slip by June 1. No applications will be accepted at the annual meeting. 4) The scholarship may be used for undergraduate college, vo-tech or for graduate studies.

No support documentation is required. Winners are determined by the luck of the draw. Checks will be written to the college or school in which the student will enroll.

Please complete the following application and return it to: Fergus Electric Scholarship Drawing, 84423 U.S. Highway 87, Lewistown, MT 59457.

FERGUS ELECTRIC LUCK OF THE DRAW SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

Application due by June 1

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

College/Vo-Tech attending/will attend:

I maintain at least a "C" average:

Student Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

IDENTIFY ACCOUNT NUMBER*

WIN A \$35 CREDIT

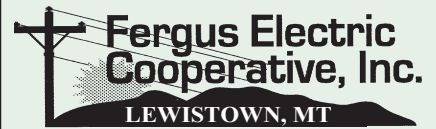
If one of the following account numbers is yours, call Fergus Electric (406-538-3465) and identify yourself and your account number, and you will receive a \$35 credit on next month's statement.

**Account 398621, Account 385680
 Account 395306, Account 139802
 Account 398096, Account 318825**

CONGRATULATIONS!

Tyler and Martha Davidson of Shawmut 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 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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Office Hours: 7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. M-Th.

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Facebook: www.facebook.com/ferguselectric

Carson Sweeney.....General Manager

Bret Ophus Line Superintendent

Sally Horacek Office Manager

Janine Rife Didier.....Editor

Fergus Electric is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District 1: Paul Brady, Lewistown, 366-3316

District 2: Brett Maxwell, Lewistown, 535-4300

District 3: Brad Arntzen, Sec./Treas., Hilger, 462-5555

District 4: Cathy Kombol, Roundup, 428-2202

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

District 6: Jason Swanz, Vice President, Judith Gap, 473-2462

District 7: Bob Evans, Jr., Geysers, 735-4476

Fergus Features is an award-winning newsletter.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

