



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

# October is National Cooperative Month

## ENTER DRAWING - 3 TO WIN \$50 ELECTRIC CREDIT

**T**HIS month, Fergus Electric Cooperative is joining 830 distribution cooperatives nationwide to celebrate National Co-op Month, and to recognize the many ways cooperatives meet the needs of their members and communities.

"Co-ops Build Economic Power" is the theme for this year's celebration. Electric cooperatives serve 42 million people and power more than 21 million businesses, homes, schools and farms in 48 states.

We are governed by a seven-member board whose directors are members of the co-op. Our mission is to provide reliable, safe and affordable energy services to the members we serve.

We deliver electricity to 4,016 members, and maintain a total of 3,966 miles of overhead and underground distribution and transmission powerlines in Blaine, Cascade, Chouteau, Fergus, Golden Valley, Judith Basin, Meagher, Musselshell, Petroleum, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Treasure, Wheatland and Yellowstone counties.

As a member of a cooperative, you receive an annual allocation of capital credits. The amount Fergus

Electric allocates to each member is based on the net margin (revenue less expenses) of the cooperative, and the amount of total electricity purchased by each member. Over the last five years we have returned \$5,682,262 to our members in the form of retired capital credits.

Montana law allows rural electric cooperatives to use retired capital credits that remain unclaimed for a

period of five years for educational purposes. Our board of directors, management and staff are pleased to support our youth's education. Since 2000, we have awarded approximately \$147,350 in scholarships funded by a combination of unclaimed capital credits and from generous donations of estate capital credits.

*See CO-OP MONTH, page 7*

## October is Co-op Month

### SPREAD THE WORD — CHANCE TO WIN \$50 CREDIT

Help celebrate Co-op Month! Complete this form and return it to Fergus Electric Cooperative, 84423 U.S. Highway 87, Lewistown, MT 59457 by October 31. Your name will be entered in a drawing for an electric credit of \$50. **Three winners will be contacted in November.**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_



## MANAGER'S MESSAGE

From Carson Sweeney

# Energy generation, transitional technologies and energy economics

I was recently invited to a small conference held on the campus of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, MA. The meetings focused on energy generation, transitional technologies and energy economics.

We were hosted by the MIT Energy Initiative (MITeI), an impressive organization deploying hundreds of millions of dollars in research and analysis projects to meet future energy needs. We heard from some of the smartest minds on the planet on how the world's energy systems will transform within my lifetime.

I am confident that institutions such as MIT will eventually invent renewable energy technologies, significantly reducing carbon dioxide emissions, while also meeting our minimum requirements of reliable and

affordable electricity. I am also confident that these emerging technologies do not currently exist to deploy on any scale beyond experimental.

Each time I read the news and see that another baseload coal-generating facility has been decommissioned, I become increasingly nervous. Carbon-based generating plants are being closed faster than new generating assets are being constructed.

Nuclear plants across the country face increasing pressures to close. The electric industry is being pushed toward a limited and volatile electric market that will see increasing risks of outages. If our minimum requirements are reliable and affordable electricity, we need to support the generating facilities that provide us that luxury.

It would be unrealistic and reck-

less for the energy industry to rely on existing commercially available renewable energy technologies as a main source of electricity generation.

The demand on our electric grid is variable and unforgiving. If regional transmission organizations and independent system operators are unable to meet electric demand with generation, widespread electric outages occur.

I encourage us to demand more from emerging renewable technologies. We must require renewable energy technologies to be reliable, affordable and to meet our widely varying needs. Without these specific challenges being met, we must continue to support the coal and natural gas electric-generating facilities that have supported our needs for decades. RM



## Focused on YOU.

Electric cooperatives were created to serve their members. Because we're a co-op, we're able to adapt to our community's unique needs. That's the power of co-op membership.

**OCTOBER IS NATIONAL  
CO-OP MONTH**

# CO-OP MONTH

*Continued from page 5*

Another Montana law, which went into effect in 1999, requires that every electric utility contribute to the Universal System Benefits Program (USBP). These funds are used to help fund low-income energy and weatherization-assistance programs or activities. Fergus Electric has donated \$22,000 to Energy Share every year since 1999.

Approximately one in eight residents nationwide are served by an electric co-op. Co-op employment and investments move throughout the economy and create added economic value for local communities, states and the country. When the co-op constructs new powerlines to members' ranches, farms and busi-

nesses throughout our service area the value of their property increases. It is said that co-ops are powerful engines of economic development in their local communities, and we believe that to be true.

We value our members. In addition to being a provider of electricity, we work hard to support development and other activities that improve the lives of our members. The scholarships we have awarded help students achieve their career goals. Several students have expressed that they hope to live and work in central Montana in the future. Some will become members of our co-op, while others could potentially become a future employee of the co-op or be elected to serve as its board director.

When our members receive their capital credit general retirement checks, it is likely that a lot of those

dollars that are spent will help support the local economy.

As of this year, we will have donated more than \$500,000 to USBP. Organizations such as Energy Share use the funds that we donate to help Fergus Electric Co-op members throughout our service area who qualify for assistance.

In 2021, Fergus Electric paid \$594,044.42 in property taxes. Those tax dollars are used to directly support the 14 counties we serve.

Co-ops make a strong, positive economic impact in the communities they serve. To celebrate annual co-op month, we have included an entry form in this month's *Fergus Features*. We encourage you to complete and return the form by October 31, 2022, to be entered in a drawing for an electric credit of \$50. Three winners will be drawn. RM

## THE **SEVEN** COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

THESE ARE THE WORDS WE LIVE BY



### 1 VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP

Membership in a cooperative is open to all persons who can reasonably use its services and stand willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, regardless of race, religion, gender or economic circumstances.



### 2 DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Elected representatives (directors/trustees) are elected from among the membership and are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote); cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.



### 3 MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative; setting up reserves; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.



### 4 AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control as well as their unique identity.



### 5 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Education and training for members, elected representatives (directors/trustees), CEOs and employees help them effectively contribute to the development of their cooperatives. Communications about the nature and benefits of cooperatives, particularly with the general public and opinion leaders, helps boost cooperative understanding.



### 6 COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

By working together through local, national, regional, and international structures, cooperatives improve services, bolster local economies and deal more effectively with social and community needs.



### 7 CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies supported by the membership.

LEARN MORE AT [WWW.ELECTRIC.COOP](http://WWW.ELECTRIC.COOP)





The 2022 Montana Youth Tour delegation poses in front of the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. | **FILE PHOTO**

# Win a free trip to D.C.

**A**TTENTION high school sophomores and juniors:

Here's your chance to win a free trip to Washington, D.C., June 17 - 23, 2023.

More than 1,500 students from across America take part in the Youth Tour experience each year, and so can you! This unique trip will give you the opportunity to watch history come alive as you explore the museums, memorials and monuments with students from your state.

Gain a personal understanding of American history and explore your role as a citizen by meeting your representatives and senators. Bottom line, you will make friendships that will last a lifetime and be part of a group that has more than 50,000 alumni in every walk of life. Enter the essay contest, due November 21.

## Contest rules are:

- The student must be a junior or




senior in high school in the fall of 2023.

- The student cannot be a prior winner of the Youth Tour.
- The student and/or parent or guardian must be served by Fergus Electric Cooperative.
- The student must write an essay on the topic: *"If you could witness one historical moment firsthand, what would it be and why?"*

Essays should include a cover page with the student's name, address, telephone number, the cooperative's name and a copy of the Youth Tour application. **Essays and applications are due to Fergus Electric by November 21.**

Mail them to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, Fergus Electric Cooperative, 84423 U.S. Highway 87, Lewistown, MT 59457.

Application forms can be acquired by calling (406) 538-3465 or on the Fergus Electric website at [www.ferguselectric.coop](http://www.ferguselectric.coop). 

## 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 337402, Account 317275**

**Account 396012, Account 69501**

**Account 384401, Account 384703**

### CONGRATULATIONS!

**Joyce Dahlhausen** of Moccasin and **Joan Murphy** of Billings (Winnett service area) 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:

Dale Rikala .....	406-366-3374
Bret Ophus .....	406-366-7523
Bret Nelleremoe (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.

84423 US Hwy. 87, Lewistown, MT 59457-2058

Tel: 406-538-3465

Office Hours: 7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. M-Thu.

Website: [www.ferguselectric.coop](http://www.ferguselectric.coop)

E-mail: [ferguselectric@ferguselectric.coop](mailto:ferguselectric@ferguselectric.coop)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ferguselectric](http://www.facebook.com/ferguselectric)

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Fergus Electric is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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*Fergus Features is an award-winning newsletter.*