

F E R G U S

FEATURES

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

Along with safety skills, Lewistown Bowhunter Association strives to send well-trained and educated archers into the field

Story and photos by

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Contributing Writer

On one of the first sunny days after a long winter, close to 50 bowhunter education students from across the state gathered at Hanging Tree Archery Range, a course renowned around the state for the efficiency of the training and the beauty that surrounds it. The range is in the pines, 8 miles east of Lewistown, with views of the Judith Mountains prevalent and present at each station.

It's a popular spot for many reasons, Lewistown Bowhunters Association (LBA) Bowhunter Safety Assistant Instructor Mark Schwomeyer said, one being the success of the program.

"We strive to send educated archers into the field," Schwomeyer said. "Bowhunting safety is also mandatory. You have to have a Bowhunters Education certificate to purchase an archery stamp, before getting a permit."

Not wanting anything standing in the way of their tags, bowhunter safety students engaged in each activity with enthusiasm. The wide variety of future bowhunters — ages 12 to over 50-plus — split up into four groups going from station to station, taking in the lessons, participating and doing their best, be it shooting at targets or tying a rope at the tree-stand station.

Seeing the passion of the students is what it's all about, Schwomeyer said. He was pleased to see the students listening attentively, following instructions and asking questions.



Lewistown Bowhunters Association hunter Safety Instructor Bruce Luhrsen smiles after another successful field day at the Hanging Tree Archery Range east of Lewistown.

Dalton Haugen, 12, was one of the nearly 50 students. Pumped up after taking the class, he was ready to show off what he'd learned, albeit he was a bit nervous. He wanted that archery stamp.

"Bowhunting is a challenge, but I've learned a lot, and I'm excited to go out and provide food for my family," he said.

Haugen didn't know much about bowhunting before taking the class, but he was ready to learn.

"I can't wait to hunt," he said. "I want to get an antelope, a white-tailed deer and a bull elk."

Now that he knows more about responsibilities, preparation, shot placement and recovery techniques, Haugen said he feels ready, but he knows he's got to keep practicing.

LBA Vice President Kevin Larson, a shooting instructor at the field day, said shooting as much as possible is key to being a successful bowhunter.

"Practice, practice, practice," he said. "The more you practice good form, the better you'll be. But be practical about it. Don't shoot long distances. Take the higher percentage shot. And don't practice until you are tired. That creates bad habits."

Larson was one of many instructors at field day. Chuck Cloud also assisted with shooting, Bob Barber led the blood trail, Schwomeyer taught tree stand safety and Fish, Wildlife and Parks Game Warden Shawn Briggs taught camouflage.

Briggs said he was impressed with the field day and happy to help out.

"This field day is more extensive than most field days I've seen for bowhunter safety, and I really appreciate how many people come out and participated in it," he said. "[The LBA] does a great job educating the hunter on what they may experience in the field."

Head instructor Bruce Luhrsen — who also helps man stations during field day — said he couldn't be happier with the event, adding that volunteers play a large part.

"We have great instructors at every station, which is a big help," Luhrsen said. "The program has really been phenomenal. I'd say we have the cream of the crop."

Interactive education

On the last day of hunter safety class, local students were eager. Field day was

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MANAGER'S MESSAGE

From Scott Sweeney

In celebration of Independence Day, Fergus Electric's offices in Lewistown and Roundup will close July 4.



Annual meeting review

Thank you to the 155 members and approximately 145 guests who attended Fergus Electric Cooperative's 80th annual meeting on June 7. The Central Montana Cattle Women served a delicious meal and Neil Hamilton and Friends — Les LaFranier and Carl Debelly — played music before the meeting.

Lewistown received about two inches of rain in a short period the morning of the annual meeting, so staff, members and guests had to splash through the parking lot to attend. Although the timing of the rainstorm wasn't particularly the best, the moisture is always appreciated. Thankfully, the heavy rain did not seem to discourage too many from attending the annual meeting.

Scholarships awarded

At Fergus Electric Cooperative's annual meeting we recognized recipients of various scholarships awarded in recent months. Mami Hertel and Chase Gerer each won scholarships sponsored by Fergus Electric, and Cash Cota and Bailey Collins each won scholarships sponsored by Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Members 1st Power Cooperative.

During the annual meeting, 10 \$1,000 "Luck of the Draw" scholarships were handed out to our members' children who are enrolled or planning to enroll in college or a technical school. The 10 lucky recipients of the scholarships were Cody Bergum, Abigail Gatz, Chase Gerer, Jada Hartman, Anthony Hofer, Cassandra Hogan, Jake Miller, Andrea Russell, Matthew Welsh and Cooper Werdin. The scholarships were funded by unclaimed capital credits. It is wonderful to see the number of scholarship applicants increase each year.

I encourage our young scholars to read the *Fergus Features* section of the *Rural Montana* magazine and check our website and Facebook page throughout the year to learn about various scholarships that are offered through the cooperative. Congratulations to our scholars!

Youth to Washington Tour

In 2017, having written a winning essay for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth to Washington, D.C., Tour essay contest "Why I should be selected for the 2017 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.", Alyssa Thomas was selected as the winner representing Fergus Electric Cooperative on the Youth Tour.

During the annual meeting Alyssa spoke to the members, recalling highlights of her once-in-a-lifetime trip. Alyssa told the audience that she was grateful to have the opportunity to participate and we appreciate receiving such positive feedback from a contestant of an event that we promote and co-sponsor.

Cooperative bylaw amendment approved

I want to thank the membership for overwhelmingly supporting the recommended amendment to Section 7.2 of article VII of the bylaws. Implementing this change will permit the cooperative to offset, set off or recoup a member's unpaid power bill with accrued capital credits.

Board of Directors re-elected

Running unopposed, incumbent board candidates Brad Arntzen – District 3, Terry Frost – District 5, and Bob Evans – District 7, received a unanimous vote from the membership and were all re-elected to serve as directors for three-year terms. Directly after the annual meeting, the Board of Directors, cor-

porate counsel and I returned to Fergus Electric Co-op's headquarters and held the Annual Board Reorganization Meeting. The board voted to keep the officers unchanged: Bob Evans — president, Paul Descheemaeker — vice president, Terry Frost – secretary/treasurer and Jason Swanz – assistant secretary/treasurer.

Each of your board directors is committed to their role of working with the cooperative's management and key staff to develop and set policies to keep the cooperative on track and serve the membership whom they represent. The board does a great job for the members of the co-op.

Drawing for prizes

During registration, each member who registered for the annual meeting was given their choice of brightly-colored extension cords as the co-op's gift for registering, and they were handed a prize ticket for the chance to win any of the 31 prizes included in the drawings. The finale was a drawing for a \$500 cash prize, which was won by Ed Deffinbaugh. At the close of the meeting, flowering potted plants, which served as table centerpieces, were awarded to members whose agendas had a special sticker attached.

Thank you

Finally, I want to thank the staff, board, election and credentials committee and nominating committee, whose hard work before, during and after the event helped make our 80th annual meeting a success. Great job, everyone!

Alyssa Thomas reports on Youth to Washington Tour at annual meeting

As part of a record-setting crowd of nearly 2,000 students, Alyssa Thomas reported that the 28 Montana and 16 North Dakota students toured monuments, memorials, and the Capitol, and visited with Montana's elected officials. She admitted to being nervous at first, but as the week progressed she made many new friends.



Bowhunters

Continued from page 3

around the corner, and they wanted to show off what they'd learned, but, first, they had to listen: one more chapter to go.

Amy LePage, a bowhunter and emergency room doctor, shared tips on how to handle worst-case scenarios, be it a bear bite, an arrow wound, hypothermia, heat stroke or getting lost.

LePage taught students basic first aid and instructed them on what they need in their survival kit. She also taught them how to use vet wrap, and how to create a makeshift tourniquet and how to use it.

This was LePage's third time helping with the Bowhunter Safety class. And, in her experience, she's had little reason to worry about students not being responsible hunters. Luhrsen and Schwomeyer make sure of it.

"[Luhrsen] is the best instructor in the state," said Schwomeyer. "He's going on 20 years now."

Luhrsen and Schwomeyer lead the two-week, 12-hour class.

"We break the class down to six two-hour classes on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday," said Schwomeyer.

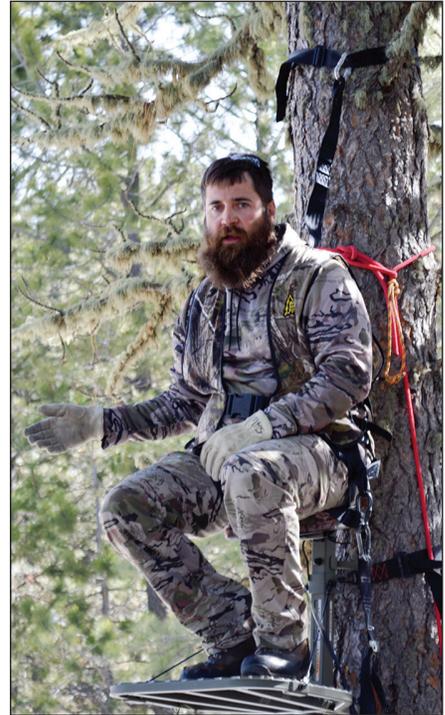
It's an intensive course, and it's one Schwomeyer and Luhrsen take great pride in, as it follows the guidelines highlighted by Bill Wadsworth, the "Father of Bowhunter Education."

Wadsworth once said, "If bowhunting as we know and enjoy it is to survive, we must be hunters who appreciate and respect the environment in which we hunt, as well as maintain a strong desire to uphold the highest standards for our sport."

The instructors take this motto seri-



Top left: Dalton Haugen and Eli Hershberger shoot their bows at the shooting station during bowhunter training. Top right: With help from TJ Phillips, Dr Amy LePage demonstrates how to use vet wrap on a wound. Bottom right: Instructor Mark Schwomeyer leads a class on tree stand safety during a field trip.



ously and implement it in each class. They'll continue to do so as long as there's a passion for bowhunting.

Those interested in participating in the LBA are encouraged to find the group on Facebook or call (406) 350-0173.

"We have two shoots a year," Luhrsen said. "We have a foul weather shoot in March and another one in August just before antelope season opens. It's a

delightful range to shoot at, and we'd love to have you along."

Schwomeyer encourages people in the community to take part in the summer cookouts and shootings every Thursday.

"It's our way of giving back to our members," he said.

Careers in the electric utility industry appeal to these young men

Left: Scott Olson is completing his second summer working with staking engineers Guy Johnson, Monte Obert and Melanie Foran in Fergus Electric Cooperative's engineering department. Scott will be a senior majoring in electrical engineering at Montana Tech in Butte.

Right: Hunter Errecart is the recipient of Fergus Electric's second \$6,000 lineman's scholarship. Hunter earned an Associate Degree in Business from the University of Montana Western this spring. In September, he will enroll in the lineman's program at Highlands College-Montana Tech in Butte. Both young men are graduates of Fergus High School in Lewistown.



Scholarships awarded at annual meeting

Along with cooperative business, elections and drawing for prizes, scholarships played a significant role in the proceedings of the day.

Mami Hertel of Moore and Chase Gerer of Denton were presented \$500 Fergus Electric Cooperative scholarships. Their applications were judged and selections made based on grades, ACT scores, school and community activities, a personal statement and one letter of recommendation.

Cash Cota of Roundup and Bailey Collins of rural Lewistown were each awarded \$1,000 scholarships from Fergus Electric's power suppliers – North Dakota's Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Wyoming's Members 1st Power Cooperative. Their applications were reviewed by power supply judges.

Forty-five students accompanied by a parent vied for 10 \$1,000 "Luck of the Draw" scholarships.



Mami Hertel



Chase Gerer



Cash Cota



Bailey Collins

Luck of the Draw winners

Front left to right: Andrea Russell, Jada Hartman and Cassandra Hogan.

Back left to right: Cody Bergum, Cooper Werdin, Jake Miller, Abigail Gatz, Chase Gerer, Matthew Welsh and Anthony Hofer.



Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program includes a review conducted by peers



Left to right: Todd Solomon of Hill County Electric Cooperative, Doug Tu of Flathead Electric Cooperative, Lea Potoczny, state administrator for RESAP, and Fergus Electric Cooperative Line Superintendent Dale Rikala are pictured following a series of observations related to the co-op. At the conclusion of the review, suggestions were given for possible improvements with emphasis placed on safety.

Identify Account Number*

Win a \$32 credit

If one of the following account numbers is yours, call Fergus Electric (406-538-3465) and identify yourself and your account number.

Account 64001

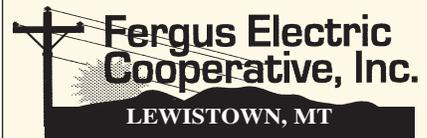
Account 92335

Account 389728

Account 381606

You will receive a \$32.50 credit on next month's statement.

*Numbers are drawn monthly.



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