



# news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## NATIONAL LINEMEN APPRECIATION DAY Lives on the Line

By Meghaan Evans

Every year, we take the time to thank our extraordinary lineworkers who dedicate their lives to keeping the lights on in our local communities. Six lineworkers maintain almost 1,000 miles of line in LEC's service territory, and without them, our world would be dark.

We depend on our entire staff to keep LEC running smoothly, but on April 10, 2017, we honor all lineworkers who often find themselves in dangerous and challenging situations so our lives may be a little bit brighter and safer every day. These brave men and women repair damaged lines and maintain critical infrastructure for our communities. Without their hard work and commitment to the job, our co-op would not thrive. No matter the time—day, night, weekday, weekend, holiday—if the lights go out, so do they.

Perhaps you have seen them raising their bucket trucks in howling winds and torrential rains, or in freezing, icy

conditions. They work around the clock near high-voltage power lines until electricity is restored to every member in our co-op community.

In addition to aiding members in our local service territory, lineworkers are always willing and eager to volunteer when a neighboring community, county or state is in need after a major outage occurs.

Our lineworkers are brave, committed and critical to our success. We hope you will join us in thanking the many lineworkers—both locally and around the world—that light our lives. Remember, your power works because they do! Use #ThankALineman on social media to show your support.

*Meghaan Evans writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*



### Man on the Pole

By Anonymous

*The black blowing night and the driving snow  
Make it feel much colder than 10 below.  
The wind rasps the snow like sharp cutting sand,  
Strokes bare frozen trees with harsh icy hand.  
Stiff branches creak with the weight of the wind  
Which has sung its chill dirge for hours on end.  
No pin-point of light pricks the gloom of the street;  
The dark is forever, frozen, complete.  
By the curb stands a truck, its tail to the storm;  
Around it gray drifts have started to form.  
Dimly discerned are the lines of its back,  
The tools on its side, the higher ladder rack.  
Like a pack-horse it stands, hock deep in the snow,  
As patiently waiting, with head hanging low;  
Alone with the wind and the swirling dark,  
Dim flashers repeating their faint red spark.  
Above, on a pole, in the wintry night sky,  
A snow-blurred figure works on high,  
Clings to his perch with sharp-pointed steel,  
Arches his back to the safety strap feel.  
Desperately he twists the stiff, stubborn wires,  
His mind running home to warm glowing fires.  
He pulls with numbed hands, he face a chill mask,  
With fast-ebbing strength, completes his LONE task.  
Now light sprays from windows all down the street,  
A radio blares loudly, then becomes more discreet.  
Somewhere a dog barks his plea at a door;  
Light and life have come back to the street once more.  
The man on the pole draws a long tired sigh,  
Then picks his way slowly down out of the sky.  
The cold hours of labor have taken their toll;  
He leans for a moment against the hard pole.  
To the truck he ploddingly makes his way,  
Stows his tools in the back and drives away.  
Not a soul in those houses, now bright and warm,  
Knows that he's been there, out in the storm.  
Silently working to bring them light,  
As silently fading into the night.  
When work-a-day heroes are inscribed on the roll,  
We too often forget the man on the pole.*

LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

# GUEST COLUMN: MORE SPILL? IT'S NOT ABOUT THE FISH

This month I would like to share an excellent article on one of the factors impacting the hydroelectric system in the Pacific Northwest. The judgment from this lawsuit will impact our future electric rates. It was written by Terry Flores of Northwest RiverPartners and published in their February edition of *Current Reflections*.

Ray

In two weeks, a federal judge will hear arguments for and against an outrageous demand by anti-hydropower groups and the state of Oregon. If these litigators are successful, the Northwest's eight large federal dams will be forced to further increase "spill"—water that is spilled over the dams, ostensibly to help young salmon reach the ocean more quickly.

Instead, their approach to spill will

harm fish, cost electric ratepayers \$40 million and undermine the hundreds of millions they already pay each year to protect listed salmon.

The plaintiffs purport to be acting on behalf of the region's iconic salmon. And some spill proponents may genuinely believe increasing spill will help fish. But by ignoring the available science and pushing for harmful, even lethal new volumes of spill, hydro and dam opponents are revealing their true aim.

And—surprise—it's not about the fish.

### Too Much Spill Can Hurt

It's well known that high spill levels at the dams can harm both juvenile salmon headed for the ocean and adults returning to their natal rivers. For young fish, too much spill can cause high levels of gas-bubble trauma, similar to human scuba divers who experience "the bends" when

they ascend too quickly. Excessive spill also can prevent returning adult salmon from finding fish ladders at the dams, or cause them to fall back as they make their climb, wasting precious energy.

Yet the federal dams already spill an average of 30 to 40 percent of the river during the salmon's spring migration. To spill more is at best a risky bet. Even the plaintiffs acknowledge the dangers, by peppering their demand with nine different conditions for when and how dam operators should reduce spill amounts to try to avoid harming the fish.

If Earthjustice, National Wildlife



**Manager's Notes**  
by Ray Ellis

*Continued on page 5*

## News & Views

*Published monthly by Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.*

Lincoln Electric's Board of Trustees hold regular meetings monthly at the Eureka office. These are typically scheduled on the third Monday of each month at 7 pm. All members are encouraged to attend. If you have any items of interest, please contact the general manager prior to the meeting.

### Next Meeting Date:

**Monday, April 17, 2017**

### Board of Trustees

- **Mike Workman** - President, Dist. 5, Koochanusa Shores-Pinkham
- **Wesly Loughman** - Vice President, Dist. 4, Eureka-Tobacco Plains
- **Courtney Pluid** - Secretary, Dist. 3, Fortine-Glen Lake
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- **Ethel White** - Dist. 4 - Eureka-Tobacco Plains

### General Manager Ray Ellis

**In case of power outage:  
Always call 406-889-3301**

312 Osloski Road  
PO Box 628  
Eureka, MT 59917

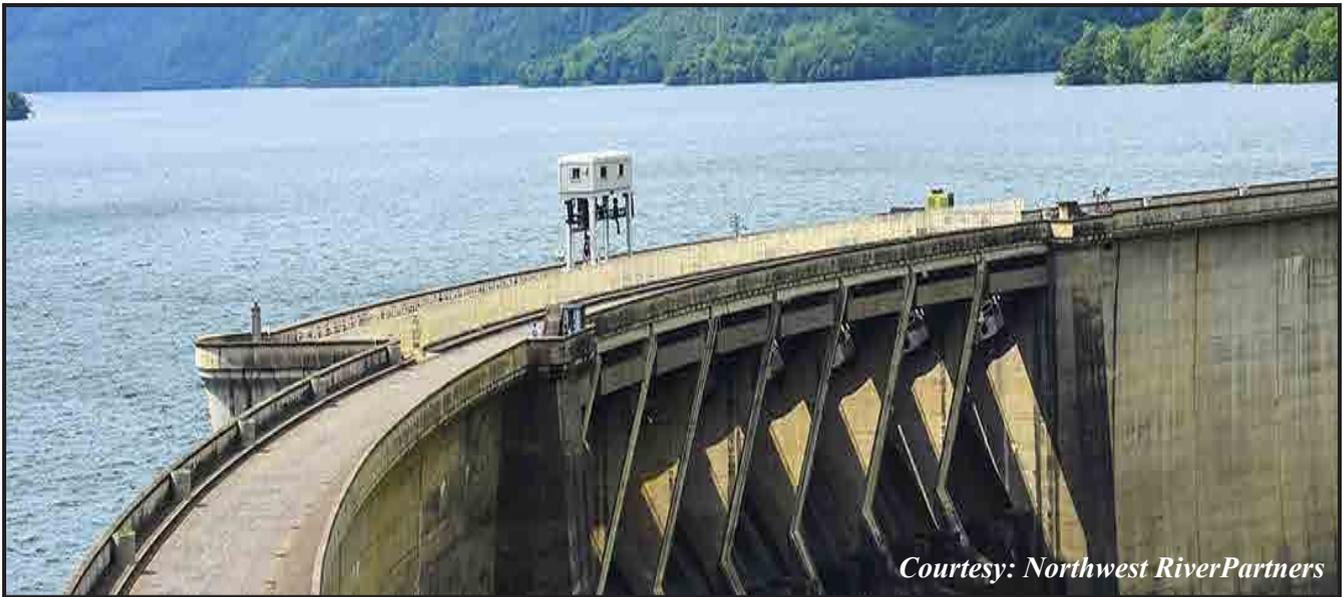
www.lincolnelectric.coop  
info@lincolnelectric.coop

## BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS

The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted on February 21, 2017. A quorum of trustees was present and the board took the following action:

- Approved awarding 14 Luck of the Draw Scholarships at the Annual Meeting from the unclaimed capital credits fund.
- Approved two Revolving Loan Fund applications.
- Authorized the purchase and installation of a video display system for outage management.
- Approved a \$250 donation to Friends of the NRA Eddie the Eagle program.
- Authorized changing the June board meeting from June 19 to June 26 and the August board meeting from August 21 to August 28.
- Authorized various Trustees to attend trainings and conferences.

	Year to Date 01/31/2017	Year to Date 01/31/2016
Year to Date kWh Sales	17,528,341	13,413,437
Year to Date Revenue	\$ 1,343,920	\$ 1,077,116
Year to Date Cost of Power	\$ 744,376	\$ 553,483
Year to Date Operating Exp	\$ 382,411	\$ 386,593
Year to Date Margins	\$ 215,234	\$ 133,251
Number of Members	4,501	4,412
Number of Meters	5,820	5,719
Miles of Line	955	949
Total Utility Plant	\$ 31,555,161	\$ 32,550,683
Member Equity	\$ 9,551,485	\$ 9,231,839
Jan. Average Residential Use (kWh)	2,602	1,961
Jan. Average Residential Billing	\$202.68	\$160.68



Courtesy: Northwest RiverPartners

## SPILL

*Continued from page 4*

Federation, Oregon officials and the other litigators were primarily concerned with helping salmon, they simply wouldn't be making a blanket, one-size-fits-all demand to increase spill to the outermost legal limit for 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for the entire spring period, at the four Lower Snake River and four Lower Columbia River dams.

### Many Factors Affect Salmon Survival

If the plaintiffs truly wanted to help the fish, they would work together and not against the federal action agencies to accomplish what U.S. District Judge Michael Simon asked for in his May 2016 ruling on salmon stocks listed under the Endangered Species Act: A comprehensive look at all the factors that impact salmon during their life cycle and all the

potential paths to restoring listed fish.

Of course, those factors include the dams—but they also extend to improving fish hatchery practices, scrutinizing harvest limits, addressing predation by marine mammals and birds and other causes of salmon mortality.

Dams have always been an easier scapegoat. And plaintiffs know that more spill makes dams less efficient. That's because any water spilled is water that cannot be used to generate clean, renewable hydropower. If dams spill too much water, they become more expensive to operate...and it becomes a whole lot easier for anti-dam groups to claim that we should remove them altogether.

### Oregon's Arguments Don't Add Up

It's particularly difficult to take the state of Oregon seriously, with its claim that more spill is necessary to

increase adult salmon returns and prevent wild salmon from experiencing further "precipitous" declines. This is the same Oregon whose state Fish and Wildlife Commission just last month gave the thumbs-up once again to fishing with gill-nets on the Columbia River—despite the fact that the nets can't distinguish between hatchery and wild salmon and are indiscriminate killers of endangered salmon.

Northwest RiverPartners, in our response to plaintiffs' demands, makes other important arguments against more spill:

- More spill means less hydropower and loss of our region's largest source of clean, carbon-free energy.
- More spill means higher power costs that will get passed on to Northwest families and businesses in their electric bills.
- More spill, when it harms or kills fish, undermines the

billions of dollars those same families and businesses have invested, through charges on their monthly electricity bills, to improve fish passage at the dams and restore salmon habitat.

But the best argument against unreasonable spill is that it could end up hurting the very fish we're all trying to protect.

Let's be honest. Pushing for more spill isn't about helping salmon. It's about getting rid of dams—the salmon be damned.

*Terry Flores is Executive Director of Northwest River Partners, an alliance of farmers, utilities, ports and large and small businesses that relies on and promotes the economic and environmental benefits of the Columbia and Snake Rivers as well as fish policies and programs based on sound science.*

*For more information, please visit [www.nwriverpartners.org](http://www.nwriverpartners.org).*

**RELIABLE ELECTRICITY  
ISN'T SOMETHING WE  
TAKE LIGHTLY.**

[TOGETHERWESAVE.COM](http://TOGETHERWESAVE.COM)

# Technology: Products to Avoid

By Tom Tate

When it comes to saving energy, *caveat emptor* is alive and well. We are all bombarded by claims that border on outright falsehoods, so it pays to view savings claims from third parties cautiously. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it generally is.

Electric space heaters drain energy savings from your home if used incorrectly. Companies make elaborate claims about the amount of money you can save and charge exorbitant sums for their products. The advertisements frequently target those on a fixed income, presenting false hope while extracting precious dollars from their customers.

I have seen a number of these space heaters and admit they appear to be well made, but they typically offer no better economy than any other 1,500-watt electric heater. Bottom line, electric space heaters should only be used to heat small spaces – not your entire home.

Black boxes that claim to clean up power, protect appli-

ances and reduce energy use come and go. These often require an electrician to install and claim to improve power quality, smooth out power fluctuations and store energy so you can reduce your bills. Save your money.

The concepts they present are already in use by Lincoln Electric and require utility-size equipment to deliver them. Something that can fit in a shoe box is not going to deliver any value, at least not in the areas promised. If you are concerned about protecting your sensitive appliances and electronics, talk to LEC about surge protection.

When you see the ad that reads, “The power companies don’t want you to know,” skip it. These are generally claims around building your own renewable energy source from parts easily obtained at the local hardware store or a motor that produces limitless “free” electricity. I would equate these with the emails I get from foreign countries telling me I can receive millions of dollars by simply sending all my banking information.

At least in the case of the

homemade renewables and limitless motor you get some cool plans and parts lists. You decide if it’s worth \$50 – \$200. I’d give it a pass.

There is a product that claims it will replace basement dehumidifiers and save tons of money. It basically is a fan system that vents all the basement air outside. Yes, dehumidifiers can be expensive to run and are a nuisance when you have to empty the water.

Knowing that, I asked the Cooperative Research Network (an arm of the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association) a few years ago if these products delivered on their savings claims. They said no. The problem is that when you blow all the basement air outside, it is replaced with conditioned air from other parts of the house. Now your HVAC system works harder and dramatically reduces the promised savings.

Here’s my solution: I set my dehumidifier to 60 percent and run a hose to my floor drain. This resolves the water emptying hassle and really reduces the power use

while keeping my basement acceptably dry.

I will close with a non-technology warning. Scammers love to call or stop by claiming they represent the local power company. Never give anyone personal or financial information who claims to be an LEC employee without confirming their identity. Ask for a call back number from the caller, then check with LEC by calling 406-889-3301. Ask the door-to-door person for a valid LEC ID. If they really are a co-op employee, they’ll be able to prove it.

Most of us want to save energy and keep our bills manageable. Technology can help do this, but be careful. Call LEC at 406-889-3301 before making any investments in technology that seem too good to be true. You’ll be glad you did.

*Tom Tate writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation’s 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*

## Five Easy Ways to

# CELEBRATE EARTH DAY

*Every Day*

1. Conserve water by taking showers instead of baths.
2. Turn off all lights when you leave a room.
3. Bring your reusable bags to the market and other stores when shopping.
4. Go paperless. Pay as many bills as possible online.
5. Ditch the car and walk when possible.