



# news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## A Journey Down Memory Lane How 4-H & Lincoln Electric Taught Me the Value of Membership

By Melissa Brandon  
Lincoln Electric Cooperative

A country bumpkin. That's what people might call me. I was raised in Trego, a small town. Though using the word 'town' to describe it may be a bit of a stretch.

My father worked in the timber industry after returning from his stint in the Marine Corps. My mother, a stay-at-home mom, was raised in Trego by her parents, who relocated to Trego in 1940 via Great Falls and Wisconsin.

From the time they moved here, my grandparents raised cattle. Never enough to be considered a ranch, but enough head to provide meat for the family. In addition, there was always a flock of chickens and sometimes a couple of hogs.

Growing up, I learned the value of hard work, getting your hands dirty, and responsibility. Besides being taught these tenements by

my parents, it was further ingrained in me through my involvement in 4-H.

My mom participated in 4-H as a kid. She later became a leader as an adult, dragging my dad along for the ride. As such, my three sisters and I were all 4-H members. From the tender age of 9, I learned and lived the motto "I pledge my head to clearer thinking, my heart to greater loyalty, my hands to larger service, and my health to better living, for my club, my community, my

country and my world".

A big part of the appeal for 9-year-old me was the chance to earn money on my own. I could raise a livestock animal and sell it at the fair in the fall. Oh, what dreams I had for that money!

Many years later, I can't remember the specifics of those monetary dreams, but I do remember and hold dear to the lessons it taught me.

We'll start with the money since that was my focus back then. I did not end up with as much of a bounty as I antici-

pated. Mind you, my animal sold for more than a tidy sum. But my earnings were definitely not mine to do with as I wished.

I was unable to buy the puppy farm or horse or something along those lines I'm sure was in my imagination. There was the matter of paying my parents back the money they loaned me to purchase the animal and buy feed.

Then I had to put a large portion of the profit in my savings account for college and the future. I'm sure I must have pouted thinking, "I'm only 9, Mom and Dad! What do I need to worry about saving money for the future?!"

But that planning for the future has served me well in the intervening years. I will forever be grateful that I was instructed on the importance of money management at such a young age.

*Continued on page 5*



LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

# Guest Column: Tips to Prevent Wildfires

By Abby Berry

In 2016, more than 65,000 wildfires burned 5.4 million acres of land in the United States according to the National Centers for Environmental Information. The worst part? Many of these wildfires could have been prevented.

While some wildfires are caused by lightning, approximately 90 percent are caused by human error. Many times, wildfires occur when campfires are left unattended, debris is burned improperly or cigarettes are carelessly discarded.

A wildfire can grow rapidly out of control when the three following conditions are present: oxygen, fuel and a heat source. The fuel can be any materials that are flammable near the wildfire, and the heat source can be a variety of

things, like campfires, cigarettes or even warm winds. When these three conditions are met, a violent wildfire can ensue.

By taking a few extra precautions, campers and outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy the sights of nature without causing a wildfire. Here are a few tips from National Geographic to help prevent wildfires:

- Never leave a fire unattended, and make sure you completely extinguish the fire when you're done. Drench the fire with water and stir the ashes until cold.
- Play it safe when using fueled lanterns, heaters and stoves. Lighting and heating devices should be cool before refueling. Keep flammable liquids and fuel away from appliances.
- Never discard cigarettes, matches

and smoking materials from moving vehicles, or anywhere on park grounds. Completely extinguish cigarettes before disposing of them.

- When burning yard waste,

follow local ordinances. Avoid burning in windy conditions, and keep a shovel, water and fire retardant nearby to keep fires in check.

If conditions are right and you find yourself in the path of a wildfire, evacuate immediately. Listen to local emergency notifications for the most up-to-date information. Better yet, make a wildfire plan for you and your family before a fire occurs.

Visit <https://www.ready.gov/wildfires> for more information about wildfire safety and prevention.

*Abby Berry 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.*



**Manager's Notes**  
by Ray Ellis

## News & Views

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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, August 28, 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
- **Myra Appel** - Dist. 1, Flathead
- **Joel Graves** - Dist. 5, Koochanusa Shores-Pinkham
- **Tom Klyver** - Dist. 1, Flathead
- **Marianne Roose** - Dist. 3 - Fortine-Glen Lake
- **Tina Taurman** - Dist. 2, Trego-Stryker
- **Terry Utter** - Dist. 4 - Eureka-Tobacco Plains
- **Ethel White** - Dist. 4 - Eureka-Tobacco Plains

### General Manager Ray Ellis

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

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PO Box 628  
Eureka, MT 59917

[www.lincolnelectric.coop](http://www.lincolnelectric.coop)  
[info@lincolnelectric.coop](mailto:info@lincolnelectric.coop)

## BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS

The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted on June 26, 2017. A quorum of trustees was present and the board took the following action:

- Approved a Revolving Loan Fund request.
- Approved the review and revision of various policies.
- Approved the creation of Policy 417, Posting to Online Platforms.
- Appointed General Manger Ray Ellis as the authorized signer on real estate documents pertaining to Rural Propane Services, LLC.
- Approved a property lease agreement with Rural Propane Services, LLC, for propane storage.

	Year to Date 05/31/2017	Year to Date 05/31/2016
Year to Date kWh Sales	58,444,744	47,456,749
Year to Date Revenue	\$ 4,902,969	\$ 4,196,844
Year to Date Cost of Power	\$ 2,508,701	\$ 2,058,829
Year to Date Operating Exp	\$ 2,142,807	\$ 1,981,455
Year to Date Margins	\$ 277,129	\$ 169,416
Number of Members	4,502	4,436
Number of Meters	5,840	5,743
Miles of Line	956	949
Total Utility Plant	\$ 32,463,586	\$ 32,897,287
Member Equity	\$ 9,092,686	\$ 8,835,963
May Average Residential Use (kWh)	899	870
May Average Residential Billing	\$99.80	\$98.14



## Value of Membership

*Continued from page 3*

Also instilled in my pursuit of earning the all-mighty dollar was recognizing that it did, in fact, have to be earned. I was not going to be handed that money on a silver platter. Oh, no. I was going to have to work if I wanted to see a return.

Morning and evening feedings. Checking water levels. Keeping an eye on their health. Afternoon sessions of training for showing. Bathings. Groomings. Filling out my project journal. Attending meetings. Being an active 4-H Member.

All these chores taught me responsibility and commitment. I developed a sense of pride for a job well done and valued the return for that job.

Beyond a livestock project, I also took a variety of other projects. They ranged from sewing to leather working to small animal care. These allowed me to broaden

my horizons and develop valuable life skills.

Another great thing about 4-H was doing volunteer work in the community. What started as a requirement for membership quickly turned into a passion for helping people.

Our club would bake cookies to take caroling to community home-bound residents. We did highway clean-up. Helped people with yard work.

I continue to carry with me that desire to help where I can. 4-H helped to provide that foundation to become an active participant in my community.

It showed me that membership not only provided rewards, but also carried responsibility with it. I had the opportunity to turn a profit if I was willing to follow the requirements of being a 4-H Member.

As an adult, I appreciate beyond words all these

lesson. However, as a child, my favorite part of 4-H was the Lincoln County Fair. The culmination of all my work and the chance to enjoy a last hurrah before school started again.

Our fair wasn't fancy. We didn't have rides or much for games, but we had a great atmosphere. I enjoyed being in the thick of the activity and visiting with all the fairgoers.

To this day, I have yet to miss a Lincoln County Fair. Each year I continue to exhibit my handmade creations. I still get giddy wandering around the fairgrounds - looking at the exhibits, shooting the bull with people I may only see once a year, and gorging myself on fair food.

For the last ten years I have also gotten to interact more closely with the youngest fair attendees as a Lincoln Electric employee at Co-Op Day at the Fair. I loved making the kids smile by handing out fun prizes and helping them gear up for a bucket truck ride.

Sadly, per insurance regulations, the bucket truck rides are a thing of the past. Since then, our Co-Op Day attendance has dwindled so this year Lincoln Electric is trying something new.

We will have a manned booth with giveaways, drawings, and information for our members. Our booth will be available Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Please stop by for a visit with the employees

and Trustees of your cooperative.

Because we truly are your cooperative - owned by the members we serve. We would not exist without you, our members. Every day when we come into work, we remind ourselves of that commitment to serving our members and our communities.

Much like 4-H membership, cooperative membership holds rewards and responsibilities. Members have a say in their cooperative by voting at the Annual Meeting each year. Members receive capital credit checks from their non-profit cooperative. But they are required to follow the regulations of membership to receive these advantages.

I find it interesting that I managed to find a place to work that closely follows the basic principles of 4-H: work hard, be willing to learn, teach others, be an active participant in your community, and have a strong sense of responsibility to yourself and those around you.

My deepest gratitude to 4-H for teaching me those lessons and to Lincoln Electric for allowing me to practice them every day. And a big thanks to my wonderful parents for providing such a solid foundation from which to grow.

Call 406-297-3471 or visit [www.lcfairmontana.com](http://www.lcfairmontana.com) for more information on the Lincoln County Fair.



# 2017 Lincoln County Fair Schedule

## Wednesday, August 23

2:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
2:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
8:00 pm

Register and Weigh-In Livestock  
Livestock Interview Judging  
Barn Meetings

## Thursday, August 24

8:00 am  
12:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
12:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm  
3:00 pm - 7:00 pm  
3:00 pm - 7:00 pm  
5:30 pm  
6:00 pm  
6:30 pm  
6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Livestock Judging  
Delivery and Display Scarecrow Entries  
Register All Exhibits  
4-H Horse Interview Judging  
Register Poultry, Rabbits and Live Pocket Pets  
Register Horses  
Dog Agility  
Open Class and 4-H Dog Show  
Driving Exhibition  
Free Concert with Holly VanBemmel

## Friday, August 25

8:00 am - 8:00 pm  
8:00 am  
9:00 am  
10:00 am - 7:00 pm  
12:30 pm - 3:30 pm  
6:00 pm  
7:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
After Games

Exhibit Barns Open  
Judging Divisions A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and H  
4-H Horse Show  
Kidsville Open  
Judging Rabbits, Pocket Pets and Poultry  
Round Robin Instruction  
Friday Night at the Games  
Family Dance

## Saturday, August 26

8:30 am  
9:00 am - 3:00 pm  
9:00 am - 7:00 pm  
10:00 am  
10:00 am - 7:00 pm  
12:00 pm - 3:00 pm  
12:00 pm - 3:00 pm  
12:00 pm - 3:00 pm  
3:00 pm  
7:00 pm

Round Robin  
Logger Sports Exhibition  
Kidsville Open  
Open Class Horse Show  
Exhibit Barn Hours  
Open Class Horse Trail/Obstacle Course  
Community Gardens Open  
11th Annual Karaoke Challenge  
Livestock Auction  
The Bull Thing

## Sunday, August 27

10:00 am - 3:00 pm  
10:00 am - 4:00 pm  
1:00 pm - 4:00 pm  
3:15 pm  
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Food Court Free Stage  
Exhibit Barn Hours  
Kidsville Open  
Closing Ceremony and Award Presentations  
General Removal of Livestock and Exhibits