



# news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## Lincoln Electric Student Experiences Youth Tour

This June, Michelle Leonard, a Lincoln County High School student from Eureka, embarked upon a journey to new places. She joined 43 other Montana and North Dakota students on a trip known as the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

The Youth Tour is just one of the ways electric cooperatives follow the seven cooperative principles, especially 'Concern for Community' and 'Education, Training and Information'.

Each year, Lincoln Electric sponsors one of our member's eligible children on a free trip to our nation's capital. While there, they make new friends, tour historic sites, learn about cooperatives, meet with Montana's Senators, and more.

Michelle said she knew it was going to be busy, but was not fully prepared for quite how busy. "We toured a lot

and went hard all the time," Michelle said.

Out of all the activities, Michelle most enjoyed attending a Washington Nationals MLB game. But her favorite part of the trip was meeting so many other like-minded students.

She knew she wanted to apply because she loves to travel and Washington, D.C. was on her list of places to visit. For those students unsure about applying, Michelle advises, "Just do it. Try it. You might win and it's the trip of a lifetime."

For Michelle, the most moving site was the Holocaust Museum. She says, "It was

really emotional, moving and eye-opening to see."

Her eyes were also opened with culture shock, but she thought it was nice to see what else is out there. Before this trip, she had never been to the East Coast.

"It was very different. We ended up getting to witness a Gay Pride parade. And the

whole place is very political," Michelle recalls.

Part of the trip is getting to experience some politics firsthand. The Montana students met with Senators Daines and Testor. Michelle found them to be down to earth; they talked about where they grew up and their histories.

When it came time to ask questions of the Senators, Michelle said she was not one of the students that had any. She's not big into politics, but she appreciated some of the insightful questions the other students asked.

Michelle also got to learn more about cooperatives. She says, "I didn't know there were so many cooperatives in the U.S. They aren't just electric and telephone; they're everywhere."

She encourages those considering applying to do their research on cooperatives before their interview. She believes that was one of the reasons she was able to win the trip.

Learning is something

*Continued on page 6*



Above: Haley Labatte representing Sheridan Electric Cooperative and Michelle frame the Washington Monument. Photo courtesy of Michelle Leonard.

Right: Michelle and Haley in front of Ben's Chili Bowl. Photo courtesy of Mike Radel of Flathead Electric Cooperative.

Left: Michelle Leonard, Nick Kuster representing Marias River Electric Cooperative, and Madison Devoto representing Park Electric Cooperative inside the Hard Rock Cafe in Washington, D.C. Photo courtesy of Michelle Leonard.



LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

# Lincoln Electric Celebrates National Co-Op Month

Lincoln Electric is celebrating National Cooperative Month in October, along with 40,000 other cooperative businesses serving more than 120 million people nationwide.

“Cooperatives Commit” is the theme of this year’s celebration, when cooperatives across the nation engage in efforts to make more people aware of the advantages of the cooperative business model.

As member-owned and member-controlled businesses, cooperatives commit to meeting the needs of their members and communities, rather than generating returns for distant investors.

This year’s theme is right on target, because co-ops commit in so many ways to meeting the needs of their members and building stronger communities. Our cooperative had over \$9.8

million in electric sales last year, with most of those dollars being returned either to our members or reinvested in the co-op. Those dollars circulate close to home, helping to strengthen the local economy.

Consider these ways that co-ops commit:

### Cooperatives Commit to Community

The seventh cooperative principle is Concern for Community. Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through employee involvement in local organizations, through charitable contributions to community efforts and through support for schools.

As active participants in our communities, your Lincoln Electric employees and Trustees volunteer for various programs and events throughout the year. We coach youth sports, sponsor the Community Soup Kitchen, work at the Eureka Montana Quilt Show, are 4-H leaders, among other commu-

nity involvement.

One of Lincoln Electric’s community programs is the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). This program uses a combination of funds that were supplied by Lincoln Electric, Interbel Telephone Cooperative and the US Department of Agriculture. This pool of money is loaned out to help develop new or expand existing businesses in the community.

As the loans are paid back with a low interest rate, that money is revolved back into the pool to help fund other businesses. The main purpose is to promote job creation and retention.

We currently have seven active loans utilizing the funds with roughly \$93,000 still available for further business



**Manager’s Notes**  
by Ray Ellis

*Continued on page 6*

## 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, October 16, 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
- **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
- **Open Seat** - Dist. 1, Flathead

### 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 August 28, 2017. A quorum of trustees was present and the board took the following action:

- Approved General Manager Ray Ellis as the PNGC Director with Trustee Tina Taurman as the alternate.
- Approved Trustee Ethel White as the NRECA Montana Voting Delegate with Board President Mike Workman as the alternate.
- Approved a \$300 donation to American Legion Auxiliary Unit 74 for Girls’ State.
- Authorized Trustees Wes Loughman and Marianne Roose to attend the NRECA Director’s Conference.

	Year to Date 07/31/2017	Year to Date 07/31/2016
Year to Date kWh Sales	71,964,737	60,279,820
Year to Date Revenue	\$ 6,309,364	\$ 5,565,644
Year to Date Cost of Power	\$ 3,123,487	\$ 2,660,930
Year to Date Operating Exp	\$ 3,050,679	\$ 2,805,027
Year to Date Margins	\$ 159,072	\$ 122,861
Number of Members	4,527	4,463
Number of Meters	5,862	5,770
Miles of Line	956	952
Total Utility Plant	\$ 32,381,775	\$ 32,973,809
Member Equity	\$ 8,966,058	\$ 8,782,146
July Average Residential Use (kWh)	893	829
July Average Residential Billing	\$99.19	\$95.15

# Apply Now for Low Income Energy Assistance

There is a chill in the air, leaves are falling, and pumpkins are ripening. Fall is here, bringing heating costs along with it.

If you or someone you know may have difficulty paying your heating bills, there is assistance available. The Community Action Partnership of Northwest Montana (CAP-NM) has programs to help.

CAP-NM has provided the following information on the energy programs they administer. For applications or more information on any programs, please contact CAP-NM as shown in the sidebar.

## Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)

LIEAP assists households in paying for winter home heating. Assistance may be available for a portion of the primary heating costs incurred between October 1 and April 30 of each program year.

Applications must be filled out completely and returned with all required items on the accompanying "check-list". The applicant must meet the income requirements and provide verification of this income.

## Emergency Heating System Repair and/or Replacement

Assistance may be available for the repair; or in some cases, replacement; of the primary heating system for a homeowner if it is not work-

ing properly or poses a threat to the health and/or safety of the household members. If you experience an emergency with your primary heating system after business hours and do not have back up heat, you may contact CAP-NM on-call personnel at 406-261-6524.

## Weatherization Assistance Program

Weatherization helps reduce the high cost of energy for low-income households. An energy auditor evaluates the home's energy efficiency and makes recommendations of the measures that could be done to the home to provide the biggest energy savings.

Based upon these recommendations, a combination of weatherization measures such as wall, attic, and floor insulation may be installed, doors and windows may be repaired to reduce air infiltration, and efficiency and safety measures on home heating systems may be performed.

In some cases, new heating systems may be provided to further the energy efficiency of the home. Each LIEAP approved household is prioritized based upon their annual income and the amount they spend on heating bills.

Priority lists are updated throughout the year and a household must apply for and continue to be approved for LIEAP each year to remain on the priority list.

Homes with low income and high heating bills are top priority with special consideration given to households which contain elderly and/or disabled individuals.

Upon reaching the top of the priority list, the household is contacted to set up an appointment to conduct an energy audit.

## Low-Cost Materials (LCNC)

LIEAP approved households may receive materials such as plastic window kits, weather stripping, roof patch, door sweeps, pipe wrapping, energy efficient light bulbs, and other low cost items they can install in their home to seal out drafts and to make it more comfortable and energy efficient. To receive LCNC supplies, an applicant must be approved for LIEAP and request materials from their LIEAP office.

## Energy Share of Montana

This helps Montana residents faced with energy emergencies meet their needs and move toward self-reliance. Eligibility for Energy Share is not determined solely on income but also on the extenuating circumstances a household is facing. Energy Share is primarily funded by State-mandated Universal System Benefits Program (USBP) charges, donations from private individuals and corporations, and repayments by previous recipients.

## Energy Savings Program

Energy Share of Montana may also assist with replacement of an inefficient refrigerator or a non-working water heater. Refrigerator requirements - household member 60+ years of age or disabled by Social Security standards, own your home and have an older, inefficient refrigerator. Water heater requirements - own your home and have a non-working water heater.

## Other Programs

In addition to these assistance programs, CAP-NM works with vendors to provide discounts or other programs to low-income households. Most vendors require that an applicant qualify for LIEAP services and be referred by the local CAP-NM office.

Information and brochures on ways you can improve the comfort level of your home, conserve energy and lower your heating costs are available upon request.

Members who have applied for CAP-NM programs but still need assistance should contact Lincoln Electric at 406-889-3301. We have an internal energy assistance program funded by Operation Round-Up.

## CAPNM Contact Information

[www.capnm.net](http://www.capnm.net)  
[lieap@capnwm.org](mailto:lieap@capnwm.org)

### Flathead County

406-758-5433

800-344-5979

### Lincoln County

406-293-2712

LIEAP representatives

will be available

from 1-2pm at the

Eureka Food Bank

on October 19,

November 15 and

December 21

## 2017-2018 LIEAP Income and Resource Limits

Household Members	LIEAP Annualized Income	LIEAP 1 Month Income	Resources (excludes home, vehicles, personal items, & most retirement accounts)
1	\$22,712	\$1,892	\$11,160
2	\$29,700	\$2,475	\$16,744
3	\$36,688	\$3,057	\$17,861
4	\$43,676	\$3,639	\$18,978
5	\$50,664	\$4,222	\$20,095
6	\$57,652	\$4,804	\$21,212

## Youth Tour

*Continued from page 3*

that Michelle never takes for granted. She excels in academics and was just accepted into Honor's Society. She is also joining Career Club this year along with continuing her involvement in Key Club.

As if she wasn't busy enough, Michelle enjoys other varied extracurriculars. She has taken dance at the Creative Arts Center since she was three. She participates in Cross Country, Track & Field, loves to swim, hike, cliff jump, read almost anything, and draw for fun.

As part of volunteering with her church, she has helped with Bingo at Mountain View Manor since 4th grade. She likes interacting with residents and

seeing the joy she can bring them.

Michelle is a Junior this fall and has yet to settle on her future plans. For right now, she is looking into Environmental Engineering at a West Coast school.

She says that she has most been inspired by her brother to find something she loves and pursue it. He knew he wanted to be a pilot and went for it. She wants to find something she is as passionate about.

Part of that desire led Michelle to apply for the Youth Tour. She is overjoyed that she did. She says she came back from the trip with a new perspective and many new contacts.

Michelle recounts, "I met a lot of new friends. One was even a long-lost



Montana Youth Tour representatives met with Montana Senator Steve Daines. Photo courtesy of the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association. It was funny; our moms knew each other."

Michelle is the daughter of Jon and Karyn Leonard of Eureka.

# Enter to win a FREE\* trip to Washington, D.C. as part of Youth Tour 2018!



If you are a high school sophomore or junior AND Your parent or legal guardian is a member of Lincoln Electric, you can enter to win an ALL EXPENSES PAID\* weeklong trip to our nation's capital on June 9-15, 2018.

\*The trip includes flights, charter buses, hotel accommodations, tours, food (including most snacks), and t-shirts each day while in D.C.

\*Application packets can be found at [www.lincolnelectric.coop](http://www.lincolnelectric.coop) or at the LEC office at 312 Osloski Road, Eureka

Applications must be returned to LEC by 5:00 pm November 30, 2017

\*LEC's Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. trip begins in Great Falls, Montana. The winning student and/or their parent/guardian is responsible for their transportation to and from Great Falls.

## Co-Op Month

*Continued from page 4*

development. If you would like to know more about the RLF, please contact Lincoln Electric.

Several years ago we also helped to fund and establish the Tobacco Valley Business Park. The 22 acre park has 12 lots from one to four acres available for sale and lease. The facility includes a Business Incubator building for light manufacturing. They offer a variety of funding opportunities for businesses.

For more information on the Tobacco Valley Business Park, please call them at 406-291-1416 or visit them online at [www.tobaccovalleybusinesspark.com](http://www.tobaccovalleybusinesspark.com).

### Cooperatives Commit to Jobs

Cooperatives generate jobs in their communities, keep profits local and pay local taxes to help support community

services. Cooperatives often take part in community improvement programs, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to benefit from the cooperative experience.

### Cooperatives Commit to Trust

Most co-ops strive to adhere to seven key cooperative principles, which combine to help build trust between the co-op, its members and the community. For example, the first principle is Voluntary and Open Membership, which means that we are a voluntary organization open to all people to use our services and willing to accept the responsibility of membership.

The second principle, Democratic Member Control, gives members a voice in the cooperative's policies and decisions. Through the fifth principle, Education, Training and Information,

we enable members to contribute to the development of our cooperative.

Each year Lincoln Electric helps with education in our communities. We visit local schools for electrical safety and generation demonstrations. We also use unclaimed capital credits to fund Luck of the Draw scholarships and/or direct contributions to schools.

Another way we commit to our future members is by sponsoring a student each year on a free trip, called Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. Please see the feature article this month for more information on this valuable program.

### Cooperatives Commit to a Better World

Through all of the above ways, cooperatives build a better world.

Thanks for your membership,

Ray