



news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

69TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS REVIEW

Lincoln Electric's 69th Annual Meeting of the Members was held on Saturday, March 24, 2018. We had 371 registered memberships who attended at the Lincoln County High School auditorium in Eureka.

Board President Mike Workman called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m..

Brian Van Steeland, our independent auditor from Summers, McNea & Company gave an audit report for fiscal year 2017. He reported the cooperative is in good financial position.

If you would like a copy of the audit report, please stop by the office or contact memberservices@lincolnelectric.coop.

Next up was guest speaker Gary Wiens, Assistant General Manager of Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA). He updated the membership on legislative issues facing the electric utility industry.

In Montana, a multi-million dollar program to prevent aquatic invasive species (AIS), specifically zebra mussels, is underway. Mussels infestations can be traced to mussels attached to boats brought from out of state, Mr. Wiens said. They can spread quickly.

The 2017 Montana Legislature decided not to use the general fund to fund the AIS prevention program, he said. As bridge funding until 2019, money is coming from hydropower customers. An AIS fee has also been added to fishing license fees.

For electric co-ops, the cost is about \$0.25 per cooperative member per month. Wiens said this may seem an insignificant amount, but it's bad policy in general to place fees or taxes on electricity consumers. Hydropower is not a cost causer. However, Wiens said MECA is hopeful the Legislature will keep its commitment not to charge

an AIS fee on hydropower beyond 2019. hydropower will no longer be required to pay the fee in 2019.

Wiens also noted a Federal bill was just passed that would help with right of way maintenance on Federal lands. It streamlines the permitting process for removing trees or other vegetation from utility right-of-ways on federal lands. It also reduces cooperative liability in the event of a fire starting on utility easements on federal land.

Another Federal issue is HR 3144 that would help pause litigation on salmon issues until an environmental review is completed. Wiens says, "Science, not politics, should be relied on for salmon restoration and protection."

For more information on these and other issues facing cooperative members, visit www.montanaco-ops.com.

General Manager Ray Ellis discussed the winter storms that caused prolonged widespread outages. They were caused by trees full of heavy snow. Many of the trees were from outside the right of way. The snow weight and ground conditions actually uprooted healthy trees into the power lines. Although we have well maintained right of ways, we

cannot control what is outside of that right of way. We have worked with the US Forest Service and members to widen the right of way in problem areas.

In the future, we will still need member permission to continue this aggressive right of way clearing and hopefully reduce outage frequency and duration.

Ellis then noted there are many issues facing our power supplier, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) that force rate increases.

BPA spends \$621.5 million each year on salmon in the Columbia River Basin as required by an approved Biological Opinion. That equates to about a third of their expenses every year, which is passed along to their customers like Lincoln Electric.

Ellis reiterated Wiens' observation that support is needed for HR 3144. If it does not pass, additional spill will be required of BPA - to the tune of approximately \$40 million per year. For Lincoln Electric, that's another 2% wholesale power rate increase.

BPA is also dealing with low market prices for secondary sales and attempting to raise their bank account balance for operating expenses.

Wholesale power cost increases mean retail rate increases for Lincoln Electric members. New rates will begin on May 1, 2018. For the average user, the increase will be roughly 2.8%.

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2018 Luck of the Draw scholarship winners from left: Brenton Pluid, Daniel Stark (J.J. Stark), Bailey Bishop, Annisa Brown (Diane Larsen-Brown), Ashlyn Waldo, Cheyenne Apeland (accepted by Rebekkah Apeland), Bailey Smith, Jarrett Williams, Jaimie Soderling (Jenny Soderling), Nolan Hofstee (Andre Hofstee), Brandi Nelson (Annora Nelson), Benjamin Hepner (Claudia Hepner), Brittany Hall, Sarah Hepner, Jennifer Hall, Daysha Brown (SheeLa Beeman), Elena Sullivan (Ellen Sullivan). Family members accepted on behalf of students that were unavailable due to school or extracurricular activity conflicts.

LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

NATIONAL ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH

"Safety" is a universal word that is mentioned often and used loosely. Communities large and small as well as companies across all industries are committed to safety. Unfortunately, when it really counts, steps to keep the public, workers, and loved ones safe are often ignored in the interest of expediency or convenience.

However, safety is a serious issue, especially when it comes to electrical safety. For Lincoln Electric, it's our number one priority. This is not empty talk. 2017 marked the 29th consecutive year without a lost time accident for Lincoln Electric. Over time, we have created a culture of safety by putting safety of our communities and employees above all else.

Lincoln Electric's mission is to provide safe, affordable and reliable electricity to its member-owners. At the end of the day, we strive to deliver affordable and reliable electricity to our member-owners. But equally import-

ant is that we return our workers home safely to their loved ones. To do this requires ongoing focus, dedication and vigilance.

Working with electricity is an inherently dangerous job, especially for lineworkers. We follow established safety protocols based on leading national safety practices for the utility industry. We require our lineworkers to wear specialized equipment when working next to or on power lines. There are specific protocols that our lineworkers follow when dealing with electricity.

The crew holds a safety briefing before each job to outline potential hazards. They undergo mandatory periodic safety trainings to refresh or update skills.

We have a safety committee monitors and tracks near-misses of accidents in order to understand them, share "lessons learned" and improve in the future. They also examine any reported safety concerns.

than defaulting to a blame game. We examine the information and data gleaned from near-misses and accident reports to discern patterns and use safety metrics to improve in those areas where we have fallen short. As appropriate, we brief contractors on our safety protocols.

Because we live and work in the communities we serve, we care about our neighbors. Lincoln Electric conducts electrical safety demonstrations in schools, for community events, emergency responders, and local contractors. We also provide safety information right here in the *Rural Montana*.

May is National Electrical Safety Month. According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, each year thousands of people in the United States are critically injured and electrocuted as a result of electrical fires, accidents and electrocution in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. There is much you can do to keep



Manager's Notes
by Ray Ellis

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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, May 21, 2018

Board of Trustees

- **Mike Workman** - President, District 6 Upper
- **Wesly Loughman** - Vice President, District 6 Upper
- **Courtney Pluid** - Secretary, District 6 Upper
- **Myra Appel** - District 7 Lower
- **Becky Evins** - District 6 Upper
- **Joel Graves** - District 6 Upper
- **Marianne Roose** - District 6 Upper
- **Tina Taurman** - District 7 Lower
- **Troy Truman** - District 6 Upper
- **Ethel White** - District 6 Upper

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

As importantly, we encourage all of our crews to speak up and hold each other accountable for safety. By cultivating a culture of openness and transparency, we promote problem-solving with regard to safety, rather

BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS

The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted on March 19, 2018. A quorum of trustees was present and the board took the following action:

- Approved a \$650 donation to the Eureka Community Players.
- Approved a donation of \$750 to Rendezvous Days.
- Approved a \$600 donation to the A.L.E.R.T. Banquet.

	Year to Date 02/28/2018	Year to Date 02/28/2017
Year to Date kWh Sales	28,114,611	31,097,675
Year to Date Revenue	\$ 2,386,800	\$ 2,433,090
Year to Date Cost of Power	\$ 1,286,863	\$ 1,370,342
Year to Date Operating Exp	\$ 990,849	\$ 809,061
Year to Date Margins	\$ 110,822	\$ 256,554
Number of Members	4,556	4,499
Number of Meters	5,900	5,820
Miles of Line	962	955
Total Utility Plant	\$ 32,086,117	\$ 31,613,853
Member Equity	\$ 9,486,733	\$ 9,516,435
Feb. Average Residential Use (kWh)	2,009	1,979
Feb. Average Residential Billing	\$176.12	\$161.93

UNCLAIMED CAPITAL CREDIT LIST

As part of a cooperative, our members are entitled to a refund of margins for years they had economic participation in the cooperative. These are returned in the form of capital credit checks. However, when members move, they sometimes fail to notify LEC of their address change and the checks are undeliverable. In order to make every effort possible to find those that have capital credit funds due to them, we are asking our current members to lend us a hand. Please look over the 2017 unclaimed capital credit list of names below and the full list of names at www.lincolnelectric.coop. If you have a way to contact any of these folks, please contact us at 406-889-3301 or info@lincolnelectric.coop. Thank you for being great members!

Member Name	Joint Name
ANSTEAD, TANYA L	
ARNOLD, JAMES C	ARNOLD, LUCINDA M
BARE, LYLE L	
BARNES, CONNIE	
BARTLETT, JOHN C	BARTLETT, BILLIE S
BENEDICT, MARK D	
BENTLEY, MELISSA A	
BERROW, MARTIN D	BERROW, CHARLOTTE P
BOISSERANC, MAURICE G	
BOKA, WILLIAM M	
BOUCHARD, GARY J	
BOUTTE, SUSAN A	BOUTTE, BRUCE A
BRADFORD, BRENDA	
BRINTON, ROBERT G	
BRONSON, KATHY J	
BRUCE, STEVEN T	
BYERS, GARY L	
CABE, JAMES E	
CARNEY, EDWARD J	
CATHEY, PETER	CATHEY, P J
CHALCRAFT, AMY R	
CHEATLE, MARTIN D	CHEATLE, PAULA A
COLGROVE, SCOTT C	COLGROVE, DIANA K
COLLINS, STUART R	
COSTOFF, RICHARD C	COSTOFF, BEVERLY
DANSIE, JOANNE D	
DAVIS, WILLIAM K	
DEAL, ELIZABETH J	DEAL, LEONARD J
DELONG, SHARON	
DILKA, PAULA L	
DOOLING, MARGARET L	
DRUMM, SUSANNAH C	
DUFFY, CHARLES E	
DUNCAN, DAVID G	DUNCAN, ALICE
DUSCHKA, RON	
EDEN TRUST	
EMERSON, RICHARD W	
FORD, LENARD W	
FROST, KIMBERLY A	
GARRIS, H S	GARRIS, PATTI
GARRISON, PAULA F	
GOODIN, LINDA R	
GOODMANSON, DANIEL R	
GRAHAM, GREG	GRAHAM, MORIAH C
GREENTREE, KEN	
GROB, MONTE L	
HAFNER, CORKY	HAFNER, P J
HAMMOND, JIM E	
HANLON, ROBERT J	HANLON, JENNY R

Member Name	Joint Name
HANSON, LARRY H	
HAWKINS, JUANITA	
HERMAN, SANDRA J	
HERNANDEZ, RHONA K	
HERRON, JACK R	HERRON, BONNIE L
HUESCHER, BARRY M	
HIGGINS, JO E	
HILLER, LESLIE	
HOLZAPFEL, JOE P	
HOPPNER, JOHN W	HOPPNER, MARILEE A
HOUCHIN, JAMES R, JR	HOUCHIN, TINA M
HOWE, JANET M	
HUBBLE CHILDREN TRUST	
HUGHES, ROBERT A	HUGHES, AMY L
HULL, BRIAN F	STONE, SARA V
HULL, KATHLEEN	TOLMIE, CLAUDIA L
HULLUN, DAVID J	
JACOBS, BLAINE C	
JAGGARD, MEGAN N	
JENSEN, VICKI A	
JETT, CARMEN D	
JOHNSON, ALVIN D	JOHNSON, SHIRLEY A
JOHNSON, BRAD E	JOHNSON, KATHLEEN M
JOHNSON, CHAROLAIS	
JOHNSON, KIMBERLY	
JOHNSON, R M	BUSCH, DABETHA K
JONES, ORRIE	JONES, HELEN
JOSEPHSON, WAYNE L, SR	
KANE, WALLACE E	KANE, MOIRA
KEELER, ARTHUR E	
KJENSRUD, PAUL	KJENSRUD, BRENDA
KOOTENAI LOG HOMES	
LEAVER, RICHARD H	LEAVER, MELINDA C
LEE, JASON C	LEE, LISA S
LEWIS, GENE E	LEWIS, KATHIE J
LOPER, JERRY L	LOPER, JANET R
LUCY, DANIEL R	
MAHON, DANIEL L	
MARTHE, SHARON G	
MARTIN, CAROL D	MARTIN, SAMUEL A
MARTIN, RONALD S	
MARTIN, RULON E	
MATELLI, STEPHEN E	MATELLI, LEEANNA
MAXIE, ROBERT L	
MCCAIN, H O	
MCCASLIN, STEVE A	MCCASLIN, JANA K
MCCOY, MARK R	
MCMUNN, DEBRA	
MEIER, KYLA M	

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Member Name	Joint Name
METROPOLITAN MORTGAGE	
MILLER, CURTIS J	
MORRIS, PHILIP W	MORRIS, FRANCIS M
MOSBY, FAYE E	
MOTT, CHARLES G	MOTT, MARY L
MOUNTAIN POWER CONSTRUCTION	
MRGICH, BRETT	MRGICH, CHLOE
MUSSER, DEBRA K	
NESS, JASON J	NESS, PENNY R
NEUMAN, MATTHEW	
O'CONNOR, TRACY B	
OSLER, BRENDA J	
PEDERSEN, CHRISTOPHER P	PEDERSEN, AARAN L
PENNELL, CANDACE	
PERRY, JAMES L	PERRY, PATRICIA
PETERSON, LEONARD T	PETERSON, JANETTE F
PETZ, JASON M	
PETZ, TRALEIKA J	PETZ, BRYON W
PLUMLEY, ROBERT	PLUMLEY, JAN A
POOR, ROGER C	
POWELL, CHRISTINE R	
PRETTYMAN, STEVEN T	
PUCKETT, BRAD G	PUCKETT, CATHERINE E
PUCKEY, JAMES R	
QUIMBY, FRANCES K	STARKKA, DANIEL D
REED, MICHAEL J	REED, SUSAN E
REED, PATTI L	REED, TODD L
REIN, DOLORES R	
RICE, BURTON J	RICE, DIANE
RIGGS, JAY D	RIGGS, LORNA M
ROCHFORD, THOMAS B	ROCHFORD, SHIRLEY H
ROZELL, LATRESSIA S	
RUCINSKI, ROBERT L	
SALOMON, PETER H	MCROBERTS, MARGARET S
SANBORN, CLYDE A	SANBORN, KIMBERLI A
SCHERMERHORN, RON	
SHINING, LARRY L	SHINING, JACKIE
SHUSTER, RAY	
SLACK, YVONNE	
STABOLEPSZY, GREG J	STABOLEPSZY, MARY A
STACY, JESSICA D	
STARK, ELMO	
STEINER, D A	STEINER, SUSAN G
STEVENS, VIRGINIA A	
STODDARD, DAVID M	
STOKEN, CORY J	NELSON, BONNIE J
SULLENGER, ALAN L	SULLENGER, BARBARA J
SWANBERG, DAVID	
TALBOT, ALLEN H	EST, JUDY K
TAYLOR, ROSE	
THE PRINTER'S TOUCH	
THOMAS, STEVEN L	THOMAS, MONTA A
TICHO, HAROL	TICHO, SUZY
TIMBER CR CONSULTING GROUP INC	

Member Name	Joint Name
TROMPETER, CAROLYN	
TURNER, LESLIE	
UNDERWOOD, FRANCES V	
UPS SUPPLY CHAIN SOLUTIONS	
WARD/IWANICHA	
WATERS, REX E	
WELSH, WARREN	
WESTWOOD, CHLOE M	
WHITLOCK, RALPH E	WHITLOCK, RACHEL L
WICKLAND, ROBERT L	
WIDLOW, JERRY	
WILBER, MARC E	
WILCOX, GERALD E	
WILLARD, MARK W	
WILLIAMS, DONNA C	
WILLIAMS, JOHN R	
WISE WOMAN INC.	
WOLF, MARY C	
WOLFE, ROBERT J	WOLFE, BARBARA R
WOOD, PATRICIA F	
WORKMAN, JULIE E	
WORKMAN, RANDALL O	
WRIGHT, EDWARD W	WRIGHT, SHAWN T
WURMNEST, JULIE L	GIBBS, FLOYD
YEATON, FORREST	
ZUGEL, DAVID A	

ANNUAL MEETING

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Ellis reported a positive note from 2017 was Rural Propane Services (RPS). 2017 marked the end of the third full year of operation and the first year in the black for RPS. Those margins transferred over to Lincoln Electric.

RPS has been a successful in other areas, too. We have created local jobs and saved our propane members an estimated \$550,000 in 3.5 years.

In trustee elections, there were three positions open. Nominees were incumbents Joel Graves, Courtney Pluid, and Ethel White. Also nominated was Robert Haidle. Upon voting, the three incumbents were re-elected for new three-year terms.

We awarded 17 \$1,000 Luck of the Draw scholarships. Please see the photo on page 3 for winner information. The grand prize drawing of Free Electricity for a Year (some restrictions) was won

by Stan Pluid of Stryker.

With no further business to come before the membership, President Workman adjourned the meeting at 11:29 a.m..

SAFETY

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yourself and your community safe around electricity.

Don't attempt electrical DIY projects or overload your outlets. Stay clear of Lincoln Electric equipment. Report downed power lines, unlocked substations or facilities that look amiss.

For additional electrical safety tips, contact us or visit the Electrical Safety Foundation International online at www.esfi.org.

If you would like us to provide a safety demonstration for your school, organization or community event, please contact us. Be mindful when it comes to electrical safety. Pause and take the extra time to plug into safety.

Ray