



news & views

from **Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.**

Right of Way Maintenance

Critical to system reliability

How does Lincoln Electric help to maintain our system reliability and reduce outages? We perform routine maintenance of our facilities. These range from replacing poles, underground cable, overloaded transformers, and maintaining an acceptable right of way corridor.

Having a clear and open right of way is essential to helping reduce tree-caused outages. By limiting tree growth within and on the edges of the power line corridor, we can prevent some outages to save our members time and money.

At Lincoln Electric, every mile of our overhead power line corridor is completely maintained at least every eight years.

What does this mean for you, our members? Most important is the positive effect it has on service reliability for our membership as a whole. Beyond that, there is an impact to individual members who have overhead power lines on, or adjacent to, their property.

In order to maintain a sufficient right of way, the contractor will remove all trees and brush within the overhead power line corridor. They will also look outside the right of way for any potential dangers, like trees with branches encroaching the right of way. These will typically be trimmed, but if this cannot be done safely, the tree will be felled.

Dead or dying trees outside of the right of way that can reach the power line and pose a fire hazard or outage threat will be cut down.

The contractor is responsible for the debris. Brush and limbs within 50 feet of vehicle access to a property will be chipped. Brush and limbs will be scattered or piled if they are more

than 50 feet from vehicle access. If you prefer a different debris treatment, please contact LEC's Right of Way Coordinator after you receive your notification letter.

Regular right of way maintenance is a typical operations expense for electric companies with overhead power lines. However, keep in mind that our members also have a responsibility for the right of way corridor on their property. Any planted vegetation, structures, or other obstructions encroaching the right of way or safe minimum distance of the power line will be removed or moved.

Encroachments in the right of way or safe minimum distance pose a serious (potentially lethal) safety hazard to the member, Lincoln Electric employees, and the public. If the obstruction cannot be removed or moved, the landowner will be financially responsible for the relocation of the power lines.

Lincoln Electric's easements for overhead power lines specify that the landowner(s) agree to not unduly interfere with the corridor. This includes planting trees within or encroaching the right of way corridor.

Each time Lincoln Electric crews must perform right of way maintenance

beyond the normal rotation, as in the case of landowner-planted trees, it adds additional costs to our system expenses.

Typically, operational expenses are collected from the entire membership via their electric rates. However, if a landowner requests tree(s) remain within the right of way on their property, they will be directly charged for the additional trips and labor to maintain their corridor.

The landowner may also choose to hire a certified line clearance tree trimmer to maintain those trees on a regular basis. This expense would be borne by the landowner.

As a member-owned cooperative, we do not believe the expenses for an action to benefit a single landowner should be shared by the entire membership. Billing the individual landowner helps keep our maintenance costs as low as possible, while still providing excellent service to our members.

Our vigorous right of way maintenance program has been, and will continue to be, essential to the reliability and safety of our overhead power line system. We appreciate our members' continued support and cooperation with this program.

GENERAL AREAS FOR 2020 RIGHT OF WAY CLEARING

This list is NOT exhaustive; it is only an attempt to define the general area. Per Montana Code Annotated, Title 69, Chapter 4, Part 1, you will receive a certified letter if your property is scheduled for right of way maintenance.

MT Highway 37
Airport Rd
River Dr
Tobacco Breaks Rd

Douglas Hill Rd
Sophie Lake Rd
Iowa Flats Rd
Tetrault Lake Rd

Mill Springs Rd
US Highway 93
Lindsay Rd
Burma Rd

COVID-19 Response

We're here for our members



**Manager's Notes
by Telly Stanger**

Covid-19 has presented us with challenges we have never seen before. Even in these uncertain times, Lincoln Electric remains here to serve our members with reliable energy. Nothing changes our end goal or what we do each day as a critical business - to keep the lights on and power flowing to you.

To help our members who have been financially impacted by COVID-19, we temporarily suspended

disconnects and the assessment of late fees. This suspension is not a bill waiver. Members will still need to pay for the electricity they used during this time.

You've probably heard and read many times that Lincoln Electric is a not for profit electric cooperative. What exactly does that mean? First and foremost, it means we are owned by the members we serve, which is why we return margins to our members as capital credits. We set our rates to cover our expenses and provide a small buffer, instead of trying to earn a profit.

One factor many people don't consider is that although we are a non-profit cooperative, we are also a business. We have bills such as wholesale power, maintenance, outage restoration and taxes. The way we pay these bills is by collecting revenue from our members for the electricity they use.

If we stop receiving funds for services provided, we no longer have the resources available to pay our bills. Even during a crisis, we do not have the luxury of waiving anyone's

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FINANCIAL OVERVIEW	Year to Date 02/29/2020	Year to Date 02/28/2019
kWh Sales	25,853,353	29,523,200
Revenue	\$ 2,359,495	\$ 2,525,658
Cost of Power	\$ 1,132,125	\$ 1,251,489
Operating Expense	\$ 765,955	\$ 669,698
Margins	\$ 195,151	\$ 361,128
Number of Members	4,711	4,639
Number of Meters	6,094	6,011
Miles of Line	972	967
Total Utility Plant	\$ 32,779,430	\$ 32,615,089
Member Equity	\$ 10,053,261	\$ 9,621,793
February Average Residential Use (kWh)	1,706	2,106
February Average Residential Billing	\$161.11	\$183.18

BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS

The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted on March 16, 2020. A quorum of trustees was present and the board took the following action:

- Approved postponing the 2020 Annual Meeting and all associated agenda items, including the election of the vacant trustee seat, in the interest of safety for the members, employees, and the public, to be rescheduled at an appropriate time.
- Reviewed and approved no changes to Policies 412 - Privacy and Security of Health Information, 413 - Retention of Cooperative Records, and 509 - Employment of Relatives (Nepotism).
- Approved a donation of \$2,500 to the Eureka Area Chamber of Commerce for the "Visit Eureka" marketing campaign.

LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

CONTACT

1-406-889-3301
 info@lincolnelectric.coop
 www.lincolnelectric.coop
 Secure Payments: 1-833-890-6258

ALWAYS REPORT OUTAGES TO:

1-406-889-3301

OFFICE

312 Osloski Road
 PO BOX 628
 Eureka, Montana 59917

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday
 7:00 AM - 5:30 PM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Wesly Loughman
 President

Tina Taurman
 Vice President

Myra Appel
 Secretary-Treasurer

Becky Evins
 Michael Garner
 Joel Graves
 Marianne Roose
 Troy Truman
 Ethel White

Telly Stanger
 General Manager

Lincoln Electric's Board of Trustees hold regular monthly meetings at the boardroom in the cooperative office. These are typically scheduled on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 pm. 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 18, 2020**



**Lincoln Electric
 Cooperative, Inc.**

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

SEND YOUR IDEAS TO:
 memberservices@lincolnelectric.coop

Democratic

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electric bill. To do so would reduce our incoming revenue, which directly impacts our ability to fulfill our obligations, including payments to our power supplier. There is no such thing as free electricity. At some point, someone will pay for it, whether it's the member who used it or the rest of the membership.

Uncollectable debt is added to our financials as an operating expense. Those expenses are factored in with each rate increase. If we have a large amount in past due or uncollectable accounts, it will be recovered in the form of a higher rate increase for the entire membership.

That's just one reason why we are trying so hard to work with the

members who are having difficulty paying their bills. There are many ways we can help. One way is providing bill assistance information to our members. We've also been trying to emphasize the importance of energy efficiency during this time. Please visit our website for links to resources for bill assistance programs and energy efficiency measures.

One of the most helpful things you can do is to pay what you can toward your electric bill. Even if you do not have the full bill amount available, paying smaller amounts when you have the funds can help you avoid a large multi-month balance when the pandemic is over.

The most important responsibility

for both Lincoln Electric and our members is open and honest communication. I will never be able to say this enough: please contact us if you cannot pay your bill. We want to help and have amazing employees here to work with you on potential solutions that may fit your unique situation.

As we brace for what appears to be a challenging year, Lincoln Electric is still dedicated to the communities and members we serve. We understand the local and regional challenges we face and we will do all that we can to continue to provide the exceptional service you rely on. Thank you for your patience and cooperation as we navigate these rough waters together.

Telly

Unclaimed Capital Credit List

As part of a cooperative, our members are entitled to a return of margins in the form of capital credits for years they had economic participation in the cooperative. However, when members move, they sometimes fail to notify LEC of their address change and the checks are undeliverable. To make every effort possible to find those former members who have capital credits due to them, we are asking our current members to lend us a hand. Please look over the 2019 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!

Name	Joint Name
ALFSON, JANICE	
ALLEE, JOHN D	ALLEE, THERESA G
ALLEN, EDWARD	
ALLEN, JONATHAN E	ALLEN, CHRISTINE M
ALLERS, SOSSITY N	
ALVERSON, JIM	
AMOS, RONALD L	
ANDERSON, NELSON A	ANDERSON, JOY T
ANDERSON, ORLAND	ANDERSON, ELIZABETH A
ANDERSON, WENDY L	
APELAND, BILLIE	
ARMSTRONG, MARGARET A	ARMSTRONG, BRIAN S
AURICH, TRICIA	
AUSTRING, LILLY I	
AVCO FINANCIAL SERVICES	
BAKER, BARBARA H	
BAKER, DENISE R	
BALDWIN, TAYLOR S	BALDWIN, STEFANIE M
BANEY, SCOTT	LEMER, LEANN
BANKUS, JACK	
BARCLAY, PAULA	
BARK, R M	BARK, DEBORAH E
BARKER, TED	
BARTLEY, WILLIAM J JR	BARTLEY, LYDIA N

Name	Joint Name
BATCHELOR, NATHAN	BATCHELOR, ALLISON M
BAUGHAN, KYLE R	BAUGHAN, MELANIE J
BEAMER, BEAU J	BEAMER, CHRISTINA
BECKER, BRYDEN	
BECKER, JILL	
BECKETT, FRANKLIN	
BENFORD, JOSHUA D	
BERGER, SID L	
BERNEY, ED	BERNEY, CHYRAL
BERRETH, HERBERT	
BERRETH, IDA J	
BETTCHER, DONALD	
BILLSBOROUGH, JOHN E	
BIOSYSTEMS ANALYSIS INC	
BIRKLEY, NANCY	
BIRKS, ADAM D	BIRKS, GENA L
BISHOP, MIKE	
BIXLER, ROBERT E	
BLANCHARD, BRIAN G	BLANCHARD, MICHELLE D
BLANKERS, KATHRYN E	
BLAZ, GARY M	BLAZ, TWINKIE M
BLYMAN, GEORGE	
BOHMAN & SUTLEY	
BONER, PAUL H JR	

Name	Joint Name
BONTRAGER, DENNIS M	BONTRAGER, VIOLA M
BOWLAND, BRANDY L	
BOWMAN, ARTHUR R	BOWMAN, MARTHELLA R
BOWMAN, JOE	
BRAS, CLARENCE	
BRENNEMAN, BETTY A	
BRIDGES, DIANE C	
BROADHEAD, JASON	
BROOKER, WILLIAM	
BROUSSEAU, MAURICE	
BRUCE, JOE M	BRUCE, ANGIE A
BRUCE, RICHARD L	BRUCE, CAROL A
BUCKMASTER, DOROTHY J	
BURFOOT, DAN	BURFOOT, BARB
BURINGA, ADAM J	
BURKEY, JUSTIN P	
BUSCH, DABETHA K	
BUTLER, SHARRON L	
BYRD, JACKIE	
CAMM, TODD M	WAELTI-CAMM, SUZETTE
CAMPBELL, LARRY	
CAMUS, ED	
CARDANI, LISA A	
CAREY, MILDRED L	
CARLOSS, JOHN N	
CARLSON, BEN R	CARLSON, DEBBIE R
CARR, JAMES W	
CAVORETTO, BRENDA L	
CLARK, RUSSELL E	CLARK, PATRICIA
CLEMENTS, RICK	CLEMENTS, SHIRLEY
CODIZ, TANIS J	CODIZ, JOSE
COLEMAN, CHRIS M	
COLONNA, MARK P	
CONNECTOR TECHNOLOGY INC	
CONRAD, STEVE	CONRAD, NICOLE
COOK, HAROLD	
CORMIER, ERNEST	
CRELLY, PATRICIA G	
CROFT, JENNIFER M	
CROSS, JODIE	
CURTIS, COLETTE M	
CURTIS, TIM	
CURTISS, RITA	
DANIELSON, MARVIN	
DAVID, KARL V	
DAVIS, JOHN A	DAVIS, RHONDA K
DAVIS, STEPHEN	DAVIS, CHERYL
DELANEY, DAVID	DELANEY, MARY
DELONG, DORIS I	
DENTON, MELODY D	
DIERS, WILLIAM	
DILLINGHAM, RACHAEL D	
DISQUE, ALISON W	

Name	Joint Name
DORMAN, STEVE	
DRUMHELLER, JIM	
DUNCAN, EDWARD	
EASON, MARJORIE	
EBERHART, PATRICIA I	
EGLESTON, DEB	
EGLESTON, STEVEN R	
ELLIS, JAMES D	
ELLIS, ROBERT A	
ELLIS, WAYNE I SR	ELLIS, SANDRA J
ENDEMANN, PYHLLIS M	
ERETH, J O	
EVANS, TERESA	
EYERLY, ROBERT	EYERLY, LISA
FARNES, LINDA A	
FASTING, ROGER L	FASTING, LILLANA P
FEHR, DON R	
FERGUSON, WILLIAM J	FERGUSON, KERRY A
FINCH, SUTTON	
FLANAGAN, JOANNE E	RICHARD, JASON B
FLANAGAN, MICHAEL J	
FLEET MORTGAGE CORP	
FLESCH, DAN	FLESCH, DANI
FLETCHER, SUSAN	
FOLTZ, DON W	
FORNALL, DAWN R	
FORSGREN ASSOCIATES, P.A.	
FOSTER, SUSAN	
FRIGGE, JIM	
FURNISS, TREZ	
GAGE, CONNIE	
GALLOWAY, RONALD E	
GARBUTT, GORDON	
GARDNER, BENNY	
GARNER, KERRY D	GARNER, ABIGAIL F
GARRISON, BARRETT L	GARRISON, SARINA
GENTRY, RAELENE P	GENTRY, IRA N
GLACIER GOLD COMPOST INC	
GLASS, DREW	
GLENN, TAMARA L	
GODDARD, DAWN K	
GOFF, ESTHER	
GOLLAHON, ANGEL S	
GORDON, JOAN R	
GRANTHAM, SUZANNE	
GRASSLEY, M K	
GREEN, BRIAN	GREEN, MARIAN
GREENE, CHARLES	
GRILLEY, WESLEY G	GRILLEY, DOREEN
GUCKENBERG, TRAVIS J	
GUZMAN, SANDRA	

2019 list will continue in June's Rural Montana