



news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

WARM HEARTS, WARM HOMES

SUPPORTING THOSE IN NEED THROUGH WINTER

As the holiday season approaches, many of us are filled with joy, wonder, and anticipation. However, for some, this time of year brings added stress as colder temperatures heighten concerns about heating costs and keeping their families warm. Thankfully, there are resources available to provide relief.

CAPNM, LIHEAP, Energy Share

The Community Action Partnership of Northwest Montana (CAPNM) offers two key programs to support households with heating expenses: the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Energy Share of Montana. CAPNM's 2023 statistics highlight the critical impact of these programs, with 6 percent of all households in Flathead County and 19 percent in Lincoln County receiving much-needed support.

For ongoing heating assistance, CAPNM provides the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Applications for LIHEAP are accepted from October 1 through April 30, with eligibility based primarily on income and resources. According to the CAPNM website, LIHEAP serves approximately 4,670 households annually across Flathead, Lake, Lincoln and Sanders Counties.

For households facing a heating

emergency, CAPNM also offers the Energy Share of Montana program, designed as a last-resort option for those dealing with unforeseen situations that impact their ability to pay heating costs. To check eligibility or to apply for either program, please contact CAPNM directly. Their contact information is available at the end of this article.

CAPNM also accepts donations from those who want to help their neighbors. Your donation will be applied to the county and program of your choice. If no program is specified, it defaults to the one with the greatest need. All donations to CAPNM are tax-deductible. It is a private, tax-exempt charitable organization under IRS section 501(c)3. To donate, contact CAPNM or go to its website.

For members who have applied for CAPNM programs but still need additional support, Lincoln Electric Cooperative offers an internal assistance program, partially funded by Operation Round Up donations. To apply for Lincoln Electric assistance funds, please reach out to us directly.

Operation Round Up

Operation Round Up is a community-driven initiative that Lincoln Electric members can choose to join. By enroll-

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CAPNM Lincoln County

933 Farm to Market Road,
Suite B
Libby, MT 59923
Phone: 406-293-2712
Fax: 406-299-9072

CAPNM Flathead County

1820 Hwy 93 South
Kalispell, MT 59901
P.O. Box 88
Kalispell, MT 59903
Phone: 406-752-6565
Toll Free: 800-344-5979
Fax: 1-406-205-7971



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

Tina Taurman
President

Joel Graves
Vice President

Sandi Mason
Secretary-Treasurer

Myra Appel
Rodney Kane
Rick Peterson
David Purdy
Marianne Rose

Matthew Quinn
General Manager

Lincoln Electric's Board of Trustees holds regular monthly meetings at the boardroom in the cooperative office. These are typically scheduled on the third Monday of each month at 6 p.m. 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, DECEMBER 16, 2024



**Lincoln Electric
Cooperative, Inc.**

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

SEND YOUR IDEAS TO:

memberservices@lincolnelectric.coop

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW	YEAR TO DATE SEPT 2024	YEAR TO DATE SEPT 2023
kWh SALES	96,537,321	92,991,078
REVENUE	\$10,635,452	\$9,713,781
COST OF POWER	\$4,432,407	\$3,740,978
OPERATING EXPENSE	\$3,937,434	\$3,561,640
MARGINS	\$851,441	\$1,262,524
NUMBER OF MEMBERS	5,266	5,183
NUMBER OF METERS	6,661	6,514
MILES OF LINE	1,019	1,012
TOTAL UTILITY PLANT	\$40,045,882	\$39,176,537
MEMBER EQUITY	\$15,239,144	\$14,234,227
SEPTEMBER AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL USE (KWH)	802	824
SEPTEMBER AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL BILLING	\$119.05	\$113.81

BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS

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

- Approved Manager Quinn to sign contracts for the Stateline wind for up to .259aMW.
- Approved Resolution 2024-15, approving Manager Quinn to purchase up to .75aMW in any short-term purchase.
- Approval for any trustee who would like to attend the Western Montana Manager meeting at LEC in November.
- Approved Tina Taurman as the METSPool board member representing LEC.
- Approved a donation of labor and materials for installing 5 new poles for Fortine School.

NEED

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ing, members authorize Lincoln Electric to “round up” their monthly electric bill to the nearest dollar. For instance, if your bill is \$78.54, it will be rounded up to \$79, with \$78.54 applied to your electric account and the additional 46 cents contributed to the Operation Round Up fund. On average, members who participate in this program donate around \$6 annually.

Each monthly billing statement reflects the exact amount contributed to Operation Round Up, along with an annual summary provided at the end of the year. Contributions are tax-deductible, as allowed by tax regulations.

To sign up for Operation Round Up, check the “Please enroll me in Operation Round Up” box at the bottom of your electric bill. Or you can contact




Lincoln Electric for a member services representative to enroll you in the program. You may also enroll on SmartHub under “Billing & Pay>Operation Round Up.” Once you click “Enroll,” you can choose how you would like to participate in the program. You can round your bill up to the next dollar each month, add a fixed amount you designate to your bill each month, or enroll with a one-time additional donation in an amount of your choice.

If you would like to make a more significant contribution, anonymous donations are accepted for individual accounts. This works best when the

donor has a specific member they would like to assist. However, if you do not have an individual in mind, you may donate funds to be distributed to a family or families that have past-due balances.

Our billing department will randomly assign your funds to accounts that have applied for assistance programs but are waiting on funds, or to those that have not received enough assistance funds to cover their balances.

Lincoln Electric is unable to release the name(s) of these account holders. Also confidential is the amount due on an account. So those wishing to donate to a specific family must indicate the amount they wish to give.

During this season of giving, please consider how you can share the warmth and help improve the lives of those in our communities. 

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you recently made or plan to make energy-efficiency improvements to your home, you may be eligible for federal tax credits. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 empowers homeowners to save money on energy-efficiency improvements and upgrades. Homeowners can save up to \$3,000 annually to lower the cost of efficiency upgrades by up to 30 percent.

A few upgrades covered through the IRA include new exterior doors, windows, insulation, heating/cooling equipment and other major appliances. If you completed an upgrade this year or you are considering one, visit www.energystar.gov/federal-tax-credits to learn if you qualify for a tax credit.

Source: energystar.gov

LINCOLN ELECTRIC REVOLVING LOAN FUND

Empowering our community with financial solutions

FOSTERS FITNESS SUCCESS STORY

What is the Revolving Loan Fund?

The Revolving Loan Fund, established through the USDA Economic Development Program, offers low-interest, flexible financing options for business projects led by community members. Interest payments from these loans are reinvested into the fund, building resources for future projects and supporting long-term community growth.

Their Story

In 2015, Katie and Seth Foster opened the doors to Fosters Fitness, a small gym in the heart of Eureka. Their passion for fitness and community quickly transformed the space into a hub for locals, filling it with the energy and dedication of people from all walks of life. But as the gym thrived, Katie and Seth realized they had outgrown their original space. They dreamed of a larger gym – one that could serve even more of their growing community.

In 2021, they took a leap forward, purchasing property from the local church and securing a construction loan from Glacier Bank to make their dream a reality. Yet, as the project neared completion, they found themselves facing a funding gap that could prevent them from acquiring the essential equipment for the gym. That's when they discovered Lincoln Electric Co-op's Revolving Loan Fund, a flexible, low-interest loan designed to support small businesses.

Lincoln Electric Cooperative made the process simple and efficient, allowing the Fosters to secure the low-interest funds needed to purchase the equipment that would transform their space into a fully operational fitness center.

With teamwork and support from Glacier Bank, Lincoln Electric Co-op, and their community, Fosters Fitness officially opened its new doors in July 2022.

Today, the gym stands as a testament to Katie and Seth's dedication and the strength of the community that rallied around them.

Reflecting on their journey, the Fosters wholeheartedly recommend Lincoln Electric Co-op's Revolving Loan Fund to other small business owners in Eureka who need a little extra help bringing their dreams to life. RM

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We built Fosters Fitness with the strength of the community and support from our loved ones, our church and our faith in God. Lincoln Electric's Revolving Loan carried us across the finish line and allowed us to open our doors to the communities we serve.

KATIE AND SETH FOSTER,
Owners of Fosters Fitness and Karate Dojo

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