



news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

ANNUAL MEETING

Join us for the 78th Annual Meeting April 12, a day of community, connection and prizes!

MARK your calendars and make plans to attend the 78th Annual Meeting of the Members on Saturday, April 12, at the Lincoln County High School auditorium. This annual gathering is more than just a meeting, it's a chance to connect with your community, enjoy a delicious breakfast from local restaurants and stay informed about the latest updates regarding your cooperative.

Registration will open at 8 a.m., followed by the business meeting at 9 a.m. As a registered member, you will receive \$20 in Eureka Chamber of Commerce Bucks, which can be spent just like cash at participating businesses throughout town. Your registration also enters you into our prize drawings, where you could walk away with gift certificates, tools, propane


and other fantastic prizes. And for one lucky member, the grand prize is a \$150 credit toward their electricity bill each month for an entire year!

Beyond the excitement of prizes, this meeting is an opportunity to hear important updates, review financial reports and engage with fellow members about the future of your cooperative. We encourage you to bring your Notice of Meeting, which contains a unique QR code, to streamline the registration process. If you have not received your notice by April 7, please call us at 406-889-3301 to verify your membership status and mailing address.

For those representing an organization, please remember to bring the completed delegate certificate, which can be found on the back of

your Notice of Meeting, to present at registration.

This year, we are excited to award \$20,000 in Luck of the Draw Scholarships during the annual meeting! If you or your dependent have applied, keep an eye on your inbox — you'll receive a confirmation email the week of April 7. To be eligible for the drawing, you must register at the Luck of the Draw table by 9:15 a.m. on the day of the meeting. For more details about the scholarship program, check out this month's edition of *Rural Montana* (page 7), or visit our website under the Community tab.

We hope to see you on April 12 for a morning of connection, information, and celebration. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out at 406-889-3301. We look forward to welcoming you! 



Lincoln Electric
Cooperative, Inc.

78th

Annual Meeting of the Members

As a member of Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc., you are invited to attend the 78th Annual Meeting of the Members.



Date: Saturday, April 12, 2025



Time: Registration starts at 8:00 a.m. Business session starts at 9:00 a.m.



Location: Lincoln County High School (340 9th Street East), Eureka, MT 59917

Registered memberships can win!

- All registered memberships receive \$20 in Chamber Bucks
- Registration also provides the chance to win various prizes at the meeting
- Registration also enters you to win FREE electricity for a year up to \$150 per month for 12 months

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW	YEAR TO DATE DEC. 2024	YEAR TO DATE DEC. 2023
kWh SALES	134,041,027	133,003,134
REVENUE	\$14,625,763	\$13,505,184
COST OF POWER	\$6,138,818	\$5,389,737
OPERATING EXPENSE	\$5,359,728	\$4,833,965
MARGINS	\$1,307,512	\$1,692,201
NUMBER OF MEMBERS	5,298	5,216
NUMBER OF METERS	6,709	6,529
MILES OF LINE	1,023	1,013
TOTAL UTILITY PLANT	\$40,246,637	\$39,246,795
MEMBER EQUITY	\$15,685,928	\$14,489,078
DECEMBER AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL USE (KWH)	1,886	2,050
DECEMBER AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL BILLING	\$187.59	\$183.40

KEY REMINDERS



FIND AND FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM under Lincoln Electric Cooperative, to stay up to date on breaking news, LEC events, promotions and local news.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE at www.lincolnelectric.coop for information on member services, billing, outages and safety, job postings, energy efficiency, community and general cooperative updates.



TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR ELECTRIC ACCOUNT WITH SMARTHUB.

You can pay your electric bills; set up and cancel reoccurring payments; set up notifications; obtain electronic copies of your bill, and view your monthly and yearly usage. Download the app from the Play Store for your Android or the App Store on Apple Devices.

BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS

The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted on January 22. All trustees were present, and the board took the following action:

- Approved CFC Emergency Line of Credit up to \$5,000,000. (This is to be used *only* in the case of an emergency that requires additional funding to recover)
- Approved to retire 2.4 percent of total equity.
- Approved \$20,000 in Luck of the Draw Scholarships. (Luck of the Draw Scholarships are funded by unclaimed capital credits)
- Approved board member Marianne Roose to attend the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association PowerX-Change in Atlanta, GA.

LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

CONTACT

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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 Roose

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:
TUESDAY, MARCH 18, 2025



Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

SEND YOUR IDEAS TO:
memberservices@lincolnelectric.coop

LUCK OF THE DRAW SCHOLARSHIPS

A LIFE-CHANGING OPPORTUNITY

FOR students and families in Lincoln County, an exciting opportunity is once again on the horizon. Lincoln Electric Cooperative's Luck of the Draw Scholarships are returning for the 15th consecutive year, offering students a chance at financial support for their education – all determined by a random drawing.

Each year, LEC's Annual Meeting brings the community together, not only to discuss the cooperative's future but also to celebrate its members. And for some lucky students, this meeting could mean a significant step toward achieving their educational dreams. On Saturday, April 12, 2025, at Lincoln Electric's Annual Meeting, names will be drawn at random, awarding a total of \$20,000 in scholarships to eligible students.

Unlike traditional scholarships that focus on academic achievements or extracurricular involvement, this unique program ensures that every eligible applicant has an equal chance of winning. The 2025 Luck of the Draw Scholarships include two \$5,000 awards, one \$3,000 award, one \$2,000 award, and five \$1,000 awards—providing meaningful financial assistance to students pursuing higher education.

A Legacy of Support

Since its inception in 2010, the Luck of the Draw scholarship program has provided more than \$169,000 in funding to students who are members or dependents of Lincoln Electric Cooperative. What makes this program even more special is that it does not impact electric rates or require additional funding from members. Instead, the scholarships are funded through unclaimed capital credits, which are placed in an interest-earning

account. LEC makes every effort to return unclaimed funds to members before allocating them to the scholarship program, ensuring that the money is put to good use within the community.

Who Can Apply?

Students eager to participate in the 2025 Luck of the Draw Scholarship must meet a few key eligibility requirements:

- Either the student or their parent/legal guardian must be an active LEC member receiving electric service.
- The student must submit a completed application by Wednesday, April 2, 2025.
- Attendance matters! The student and/or their applicable LEC member must attend and register at the Luck of the Draw table by 9:15 a.m. on Saturday, April 12, 2025, at the Annual Meeting. The student must also be present for the drawing.
- The student must be enrolled or planning to enroll full-time in a two-year, four-year, trade or vocational institution for the Summer or Fall 2025 term.
- This scholarship is designed for students pursuing their first undergraduate degree or certificate.

If you or your dependent meet the eligibility criteria, don't miss this chance to win one of nine scholarships that could help lighten the financial burden of tuition. Make sure to apply by April 2, 2025, and attend the Annual Meeting on April 12 for your shot at being a Luck of the Draw winner!

For more information visit our website under the Community tab. We look forward to seeing you at the 2025 Annual Meeting!

Landscaping to save energy

By **MIRANDA BOUTELLE**
For *Lincoln Electric*

Q: How can landscaping help lower my energy bill?

A: There's a lot going on in the space around our homes. Competing factors of aesthetics, safety, energy efficiency, water conservation and increasing risk of wildfires are a lot to consider. Thoughtful planning and good design can address these factors and result in year-round energy savings.

Carefully positioned trees can save up to 25 percent of a typical household's energy use, according to the United States Department of Energy (DOE). When selecting the right trees and other foliage, research what is best for your local climate. Select native species naturally adapted to your location for lower maintenance.

Strategically placed deciduous trees allow for summer shade and passive solar heat gain in the winter, when leaves have fallen. This can lead to energy savings in the summer and winter.

Slower-growing trees might take longer to provide maximum shading benefit, but their roots are typically deeper, and branches are stronger. These factors can make them less likely to be damaged by wind, snow or ice, and be more drought resistant.

Be sure to plant large trees far enough away from your home to prevent damage from falling branches or root damage to your home's foundation.

Keep in mind, if you have a rooftop photovoltaic solar system, even a small amount of shade can significantly reduce energy production. Consider smaller plantings closer to the home to shade walls, windows or hardscaped surfaces, such as driveways and sidewalks.

Windbreaks are another landscap-



ABOVE: Plant trees that provide shade during the heat of the summer. | **PHOTO CREDIT: MOHAVE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**
BELOW: Strategically placed trees shade your home during the summertime, which can lower your energy bills. | **PHOTO CREDIT: PEXELS**



ing strategy that can be beneficial for energy savings in windy areas. The DOE says windbreaks reduce wind speed by as much as 30 times the windbreak's height. That, in turn, reduces wind chill near your home and can lower heating costs. The DOE recommends planting two to five times the mature tree's height away from your home.

Plant evergreen trees and shrubs for windbreaks and consider adding fences or earthen mounds to help lift the wind up and over your home. In cold climates, they offer the added benefit of acting as a barrier to keep snow from piling up against your home.

Keep landscaping clear of dryer vents, heat pumps and air-conditioning units to ensure access for maintenance and airflow around those locations.

If you live in an area at risk of wildfire, create a defensible space around your home. Consider hardscaping with gravel, bricks, pavers or stone shaded by fire-resistant awnings or covers. Plant fire-resistant plants with proper spacing of plants and trees from your home and other structures on your property.

When landscaping, always consider safety first. Call before you dig to ensure you know where any underground power, gas, water or sewer lines are located.

The national 811 Underground Service Alert program routes you directly to your local resources. Call 811 or go to call811.com before you dig.

Be mindful of overhead powerlines, too. Look up and check the surroundings before setting up ladders. Be thoughtful when planting new landscaping that could encroach on powerlines. Utility equipment should have at least 10 feet of clearance, when possible. 