



# news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.



Members begin to filter in for Lincoln Electric's Sixth Annual Member Appreciation Barbecue on Jun 26. Food, games and safety demonstrations were highlights of the event. | **LEC PHOTOS**



Lineman Ryan Cameron demonstrates electric current with the help of some hot dogs.

## MEMBER APPRECIATION BBQ

# Lincoln Electric Co-op hosts 6th annual event

**O**N Thursday, June 26th, Lincoln Electric Co-op proudly hosted its 6th Annual Member Appreciation Barbecue on the North Lawn, bringing together members, families and staff for a day of food, fun and gratitude.

The day began bright and early as the LEC team set the stage. Bucket trucks were raised high, proudly displaying the American and Montana flags, while tables and chairs were arranged across the lawn. The mouth-

watering scent of hamburgers and hot dogs on the grill soon filled the air as members began to arrive.

Children played freely in the grass, tossing footballs and enjoying toys they won at the always-popular Plinko game. Others gathered for friendly games of cornhole under the summer sun, creating a festive and relaxed atmosphere for all.

A highlight of the event was the debut of the new safety demonstra-

tion trailer, led by Member Services Manager Shayna Sharron alongside Linemen Ryan Cameron and Brendan Nichols. They captivated the crowd with powerful demonstrations on electrical safety. Using aluminum poles to represent irrigation pipes, they showed how easily arcs can form from electrified lines. Branches burst into flames to simulate fire hazards,

*See **BARBECUE**, page 8*

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW	YEAR TO DATE MAY 2025	YEAR TO DATE MAY 2024
KWh SALES	65,811,398	65,714,513
REVENUE	\$7,018,337	\$6,623,580
COST OF POWER	\$3,141,603	\$3,074,103
OPERATING EXPENSE	\$2,395,253	\$2,244,923
MARGINS	\$710,221	\$565,858
NUMBER OF MEMBERS	5,321	5,228
NUMBER OF METERS	6,747	6,616
MILES OF LINE	1,021	1,016
TOTAL UTILITY PLANT	\$42,425,404	\$39,942,437
MEMBER EQUITY	\$16,217,628	\$14,993,321
MAY AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL USE (KWH)	928	1,038
MAY AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL BILLING	\$132.08	\$135.31



## BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS

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

- Approved policies 204, 205, 209, 213, 401, 406, 407, 408, 410, 414, 418, 504, 505, and 514 as presented, and to delete policy 516
- Approved Mark Hash to attend the NRECA Legal Seminar
- Approved Dave Purdy to attend the NRECA Region 9 meeting to serve as LEC's voting delegate
- Approved the donation of \$3,000 to Kidsville
- Approved the donation of \$1,500 to TFS Fire Department
- Approved the donation of \$5,000 to the Tobacco Valley Rodeo Association
- Approved the donation of \$500 for Feed Eureka
- Approved any board member interested in attending the economic luncheon and the Western MT Public Power Forum
- Approved Tina Taurman to attend the PNGC Annual Meeting in Boise ID.
- Approved Rick Peterson and Sandi Mason to attend the MECA summer meeting

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE** at [www.lincolnelectric.coop](http://www.lincolnelectric.coop) for information on member services, billing, outages and safety, job postings, energy efficiency, community and general cooperative updates.

### REMINDER:

Bills not paid by the 10th of the month will be charged a \$10 late fee.



**PAY  
BILLS  
ONLINE  
WITH**



### LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

#### CONTACT

1-406-889-3301  
[info@lincolnelectric.coop](mailto:info@lincolnelectric.coop)  
[www.lincolnelectric.coop](http://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

**Rick Peterson**  
 President

**Joel Graves**  
 Vice President

**Sandi Mason**  
 Secretary-Treasurer

**Myra Appel**  
**Rodney Kane**  
**David Purdy**  
**Marianne Roose**  
**Tina Taurman**

**Matt 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 4 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, AUGUST 18, 2025**



**Lincoln Electric  
 Cooperative, Inc.**

#### HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

**SEND YOUR IDEAS TO:**  
[memberservices@lincolnelectric.coop](mailto:memberservices@lincolnelectric.coop)



# Montana Auto Shop success story

*Revolving Loan Fund – Empowering our communities with financial solutions*

**I**N 2021, Matt Sieler decided it was time to combine his love of auto mechanics with his educational background – a Business degree from BYU and a Master's in Business from the University of Montana – and open his own mechanic shop: *Montana Auto Shop*.

Having worked in several other shops around town, Matt knew that with dedication and a solid business plan, he could build a successful auto repair business in Eureka. However, like many new entrepreneurs, he faced a common challenge: limited business credit. Local banks were willing to meet with him, but the loan levels and terms didn't allow for his business plan to be implemented successfully.

That's when Matt learned about the Lincoln Electric Co-op (LEC) Revolving Loan Fund.

"Once I heard about the LEC Revolving Loan, I knew I had a real chance to bring this business to life," Matt said.

He met in person with LEC's CFO, Michelle Wilbur, to ensure he understood the loan requirements. "I wanted to sit down face-to-face so I could get a clear list of what was needed. Michelle was incredibly helpful and made sure I had everything required to submit a strong application."

Even with his academic background, this was Matt's first time launching a business from the ground up.

"I did a lot of research to put my business plan together. It felt like a semester-long project that took me back to my college days," he said. "I combined my education with business planning software to develop a plan that would stand out when presented to the LEC board of trustees."

In January 2022, Matt formally presented his business plan and loan application to the LEC board. After careful review of his business plan and application, LEC approved his loan.



Matt Sieler stands outside his Montana Auto Shop. | LEC PHOTO

"I was thrilled. The loan gave my family and me the breathing room we needed to get the shop up and running. It also allowed me to hire help sooner and start serving customers right away. With the support of LEC's Revolving Loan Fund, my business is at least two years ahead of where it would have been if LEC hadn't offered these loans, and it has allowed us to be a full-scale auto mechanic shop supporting the Eureka community. It's been a real blessing for both my family and the

business."

When asked what advice he would give to other local business owners interested in the LEC Revolving Loan Fund, Matt said, "Do your homework. LEC is extremely supportive and genuinely wants you to succeed. Take the time to meet with them – you'll see it's not as difficult as it might seem."

Montana Auto Shop is open and serving customers at 132 Pinson Ln in Eureka. 



# BARBECUE

*Continued from page 5*

and a watermelon head with hot dog fingers served as a chilling stand-in for what could happen if electricity makes contact with the human body. Gasps and exclamations echoed from the crowd as the team brought these dramatic safety lessons to life.

To sweeten the day, children received certificates for free ice cream from a local restaurant, while members entered a drawing for one of three \$50 bill credits. Laughter and conversation filled the air as people — young and old — gathered around tables to share food, stories and a vibrant sense of community.

For six years running, Lincoln Electric Co-op employees have come together to host this special event — not just to serve up delicious barbecue, but to express their heartfelt appreciation for the continued support from the communities they serve. It was another successful day of connection, education and celebration. RM



Tree Trimmer Foreman Jeremy Persson manned the grill. | LEC PHOTOS



## President Trump reverses Columbia River MOU

**O**N June 12, 2025, President Donald Trump issued an executive order aimed at reversing the Biden Administration's efforts that could lead to breaching of the lower Snake River dams in SE Washington. The order seeks to undo the Columbia River Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which mandates operational changes at the dams that critics argue were designed to justify breaching them.

Outgoing MECA CEO Gary Wiens expressed strong support for the executive action, stating:

"More than 200,000 Western Montana electric co-op members stood to lose access to the affordable, reliable, carbon-free electricity provided

by the lower Snake River dams because of the Columbia River MOU. Montana's co-ops are grateful to President Trump for taking action to reverse."

Montana's congressional delegation, the governor, and the state Legislature have all taken firm positions — and actions — against both the MOU and dam breaching.

As part of its response, the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) toured two of the affected dams to investigate the impacts of the operational changes mandated by the MOU. Their findings revealed a significant reduction in power generation, along with unintended harm to the very fish populations the changes were meant to

protect. (Read more at: [www.mtco-ops.com/lower-snake-river-dam-series](http://www.mtco-ops.com/lower-snake-river-dam-series))

President Trump's executive order also directs the federal government to invalidate the agreement previously reached with the states of Oregon and Washington, along with four Pacific Northwest tribal nations. That agreement, which settled litigation over management of the Columbia River Basin, required dam operation changes and expenditures intended to reduce power output and aid fish recovery.

These hydroelectric facilities provide carbon-free, renewable energy to Western Montana and the Pacific Northwest that is critical to the energy needs in the region. RM