

# F E R G U S

## FEATURES

Member Newsletter ♦ Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc., Lewistown, MT ♦ [www.ferguselectric.coop](http://www.ferguselectric.coop)

## Proud to serve

### Don Bost reflects on service, self-discipline and the American Legion

Story and photos by  
Charlie Denison  
Contributing Writer

*"A man who has nothing which he cares about more than his personal safety is a miserable creature and has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself." – John Stuart Mill*

Fergus Post 16 Commander Don Bost keeps this quote in mind often.

"It's the quote my father gave me before I took off for Vietnam," he said.

Sitting at the American Legion Club on Main Street last month, Bost said it's this quote that helps inspire him to recruit the many veterans in central Montana.

A 49-year member of the Legion, Bost has taken it upon himself to see the establishment soar, and he's exceeded all expectations.

"We are the second-largest post in the state," he said proudly. "When I signed on as post commander, national set our goal at 214 members. We finished last year with 467 members."

Bost said he brought in 250 of these members.

"Someone just had to go talk to the veterans around here," Bost said. "They're out here, and there's no good reason not to be a Legionnaire. The American Legion is the largest supporter of veterans' rights, veterans' programs and veterans' health. We are the largest organization in the United States in support of veterans."

As far as Bost is concerned, he



*Post Commander Don Bost proudly stands by a statue of a naval officer at Veterans Park, which he oversees. Bost, a former Navy Seabee, said he takes great pride in his service and encourages others to take the military path.*

wouldn't be the man he is today if he didn't sign up for the military, and he knows others feel the same. Recruiting more members to the Legion is a way to celebrate the camaraderie involved as well as use the skills he attained.

"I learned the value of hard work," Bost said. "Personal responsibility and accountability is taught by the military. That's what keeps me pushing the

Legion forward."

This drive has helped propel Bost's success his whole life, be it starting his own construction business, running Lewistown's Chamber of Commerce or running the American Legion, which includes overseeing Veterans Memorial Park and the veteran memorials at Symmes Park.

"I've been the chairman of Veterans Memorial Park for over 10 years," Bost said. "I can tell you this park wouldn't be here if it wasn't for Fergus Post 16."

Beyond developing personal responsibility and accountability, Bost loves the military because it's made him part of a fraternity, a family. He takes this seriously, looking out for the men and women who also served.

"We take care of our own," Bost said, "whether they are Legionnaires or not."

#### **Like father, like son**

Bost said he always wanted to follow in his father's footsteps and join the military.

"I was raised in a family where people went to the military," he said. "When I was a senior in high school, I just always thought that's what I was going to do: my dad did it and I'm going to do it."

However, when Bost was a senior, it was 1968. Tensions were on the rise nationally and internationally. People were getting drafted, including some of his friends.

"That was the year of the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, which is when the war really deteriorated for us," Bost said. "We thought we were winning,

*Continued on page 5*

## Assistant Manager's Message

By David Dover

### Carter to Hilger transmission line

Rocky Mountain Contractors continues to rebuild the seven miles of 50 kilovolt line between the Carter Substation and Hilger. The updated line will greatly improve reliability to our members in the Hilger/Roy/Winifred areas. We want to thank the landowners for allowing Fergus Electric Cooperative to utilize the existing right-of-way to rebuild the line. As we have shared previously, there will be several outages in the Hilger and Winifred areas that will enable contractors to complete the rebuild. Tentatively, the three outages are scheduled for early November, December and January. The outages may be up to eight hours in duration. We are aware of the inconvenience these will cause our members. Fergus Electric will only schedule these outages if temperatures are forecast to be greater than 35 degrees Fahrenheit. Affected members will be notified.

### Cold weather power usage

Colder weather is upon us in central Montana. Typically as the weather turns, our members' usage goes up, which increases power bills. Although there is value in plugging in vehicles, keeping livestock water ice-free and preventing waterlines from freezing, Fergus Electric wants our members to be aware of the additional cost and to make wise decisions in their

use of electricity.

There are numerous ways to conserve power, which include weather-stripping, timers, furnace inspection, smart thermostats, etc. Other ideas include lowering the thermostat setting on your water heater, cleaning condenser coils on freezers/refrigerators and unplugging unused electronics. To check usage and temperature comparisons, Fergus Electric members can go to [ferguselectric.coop](http://ferguselectric.coop) and click



on "bill pay options" and then click on "SmartHub."

### Fergus Electric Board of Directors

Fergus Electric serves approximately 3,800 members and 6,400 meters in parts of 14 counties. Fergus Electric's footprint is divided into seven districts. Each district has one board member elected by the entire membership, which comprises the Fergus Electric Board. Your Board of Directors has many important roles including planning, policy development, rate setting, oversight of management, etc. Each Fergus Electric Board member takes part in education, training and planning to serve your interests and the future of your electric cooperative.

## TIMELY TOPICS

### We're thankful for your membership

Vangie McConnell, Editor



“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.”

In the spirit of this quote by author William Arthur Ward, I'd like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for your membership in our electric cooperative. Because of your connection to Fergus Electric Cooperative, we can make our community a better place.

During this season of giving thanks, I think it's important to let you and other consumer-members of Fergus Electric Cooperative know just what an impact you have on our co-op and the greater community, likely in ways you may not even realize.

As part of the cooperative business model, one of our core principles is "Concern for Community." While our priority is always to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy, we view our role in the community as a catalyst for good.

We work closely with our service-area schools to provide safety demonstrations, award college scholarships and participate in the annual Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.

When you attend co-op annual meetings, alert us to problems, or provide suggestions online or to our employees, you help us improve operations and thereby better serve the

larger co-op membership.

Because we are locally governed by a board of directors representing you, we can get a first-hand perspective on community priorities, thus enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments, such as community solar programs and metering systems, along with equipment and technology upgrades.

We are thankful that our co-op's board members carve out time to attend important training sessions, participate in planning meetings and keep abreast of industry trends. This investment in time results in better informed advisors who serve the co-op's interests in a way that our consumer-members expect and deserve.

On a more personal note, we appreciate the countless acts of kindness our line workers and other employees receive when they are working in severe weather and dangerous conditions. Our employees are thankful for your patience and consideration when we are trying to restore power during challenging situations and prolonged periods.

Together, let's continue making our corner of the world a better place. We can't do it without you, and for that, we're thankful for your membership.



*As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.*

— John F. Kennedy

Fergus Electric Cooperative will close to honor Veterans on Mon., Nov. 12, and for Thanksgiving Nov. 22 & 23, 2018.

## Proud to serve

*Continued from page 3*

and, then, suddenly...that wasn't the case."

Bost knew what was at stake. He signed up anyway, eager to respond to the call.

"I enlisted with the Navy in April, and left in September," he said. "Three of us from Lewistown went together. We got on the bus in front of the Gem Café, and we were off."

Although he's proud of his service now, he admits it was no picnic at the beginning.

"We went to boot camp with enthusiasm, and we woke up the next morning thinking, 'what the hell did we get ourselves into?' But by the time we got out of boot camp, we were so frickin' proud of ourselves. You feel so good because you start to evolve...it was really good for me," Bost said.

During Vietnam, Bost was a Seabee, or a member of the United States Naval Construction Battalion.

"I was an equipment operator in the Mobile Construction Battalion 58," Bost said. "I enjoyed it, but it was tough. If you didn't toe your line, you were gone, so it came down to discipline. If you weren't on the ball, you weren't tolerated."

Most of Bost's service took place in Chu Lai, where each day consisted of physical training, classroom, running equipment and more physical training. It was hard work surrounded by hard realities.

"Ninety-five percent of the people in Vietnam were living in poverty," he said. "They lived in terrible conditions."

There were certainly challenges during his time overseas, but Bost said he came home a better man, particularly thanks to a more profound commitment to self-discipline, a drive he believes many in society lack today.

"Self-discipline is something we don't push anymore," he said.

However, Bost has a solution.

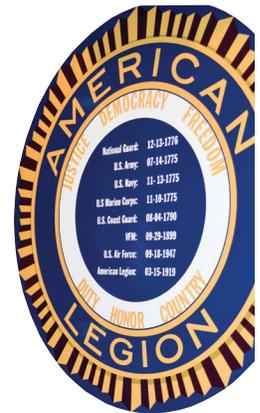
"You can go to college, you can do whatever you want, but you should have

to serve," Bost said. "That's my personal opinion."

Serving in the military was invaluable for Bost, and he makes it known whenever he gets the opportunity.

Every Veterans Day and every Memorial Day, Bost delivers a

speech at the center of Veterans Park, where the Mill quote his father gave him is prominently displayed on a copper sign. When he looks at the quote, he smiles, grateful for his father's wisdom, and grateful he responded to the call to serve.



*The American Legion emblem showcases the dates various branches of the military were established.*

## Employees Honored

Fergus Electric Cooperative's employees were honored at the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association's annual meeting in Great Falls. Office Manager Sally Horacek (right) received an award for 40 years of outstanding service to Montana's rural electric cooperatives and to the national rural electric program.

Vangie McConnell, benefits and communication administrator (left), was awarded first place for her print advertisement titled, "We Have a Special Connection" and a second place for her monthly member newsletter Fergus Features.

Fergus Electric Cooperative was also recognized for a five-year accident-free record.



## MECA and Fergus offer scholarships

If you are a high school senior planning to attend college or are a student continuing an undergraduate education, you could win a scholarship. Four \$500 scholarships will be awarded to qualified students whose parents are cooperative members.

To qualify for the scholarships, the applicant must: 1) Be a member of Fergus Electric Cooperative, 2) Be a graduating high school senior with plans to attend a university or vocational/technical school, or be an undergraduate college student, 3) Submit a completed application to Fergus Electric that includes school transcripts, ACT/SAT scores, a personal statement and one letter of recommendation, and 4) Submit entries to Fergus Electric postmarked no later than January 25, 2019, to MECA/Fergus Scholarship Committee, Fergus Electric Cooperative 84423 U.S. Highway 87, Lewistown, MT 59457.

Criteria for scholarship judging includes: 20 percent academic strength (as demonstrated by coursework, GPA and national testing scores); 20 percent activities in school and community, awards and honors; 20 percent employment, volunteerism and community service, and; 40 percent personal statement.

Fergus Electric will select one application to be forwarded to Great Falls for further judging. A MECA committee will choose the scholarship recipients from the pool of finalists. Fergus Electric will also award one scholarship from the applications.

For an application or for more information, contact Vangie at 406-538-3465. In addition, the application and guidelines are posted on Fergus Electric's website at [www.ferguselectric.coop](http://www.ferguselectric.coop) and on the MECA website at [www.mtco-ops.com](http://www.mtco-ops.com).

## Give thanks with a grateful heart

### Fergus Electric,

Thank you guys so much for the scholarship money: It will really help this fall in Havre, where I'm studying to become an electrician.

*Jacob Miller, Lewistown*

### Fergus Electric —

Thank you for sending me on such an amazing trip. The Montana Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., gave me the incredible opportunity to learn about America's history, make friends across the nation, and see the nation's power house in action!

*Sincerely, Anna Slivka, Winifred*

Please thank the linemen that so promptly put in a new pole on Highway 40 on a Sunday. They are great!

*Darlene Henke, Hobson*

Thank you for the donation to the Danvers Women's Club.

*Rhonda Tucek, Joyce Dahlhausen,  
Jill Morris, Susan Morris,  
Kathy Linhart, Susan Barta*

Thank you for supporting the Fergus Ag Mechanic's Contest.

*Roy FFA*

Grass Range PTO/Booster Club thanks you for donating oven mitts with utensils for our annual fundraising dinner.

*You are the best!*

### Sally —

The Montana Winter Fair Board appreciates your sponsorship of the 2018 Winter Fair.

*Thank you, Lana Papp, Secretary*

Thank you for donating goodies to our annual banquet raffle. We appreciate your support!

*Snowy Mountain Wool Pool*

### Mr. Sweeney,

Lewistown Fire Rescue and Central Montana Search and Rescue would like to thank you for allowing us to use your pond for our ice rescue training.

*Mike Davis, Senior Captain*

Please thank Bret Ophus, Don Criswell and the linemen for their hard work. Their knowledge, expertise, professionalism and assistance are very appreciated.

*Al Woock, Roundup*

## Forans are Today's Members

Every October, the Board of Directors offers a Fergus Electric Cooperative employee or member the opportunity to learn more about cooperatives and the electric utility industry. This year Melanie Foran, Fergus staking engineer, and her rancher husband Jared were selected to participate in the Today's Members Program at the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association's annual meeting in Great Falls.

Through demonstrations and panel discussions, the Forans learned about the cooperative way of doing business as well as cooperative involvement in local, state and national government. They agreed the program was informative and well put together — a little bit of something for everyone.

Melanie said, "My favorite class was the safety demonstration as it was applicable to what we do on the ranch. I also enjoyed the renewable



energy and future of the cooperative presentations."

Both Melanie and Jared liked meeting other co-op members from across the state and recommend the program to others.

Their son, 5-month old James, accompanied his parents to the gathering and was declared the youngest Today's Members.

## Identify Account Number\*

### Win a credit

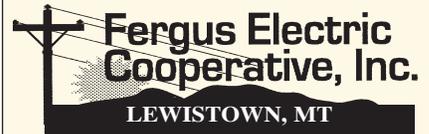
If one of the following account numbers is yours, call Fergus Electric (406-538-3465) and identify yourself and your account number.

**Account 382416 • Account 320247  
Account 394916 • Account 259800**

You will receive a \$32.50 credit on next month's statement.

*\*Numbers are drawn monthly.*

Last month's winners were **Karen Barnes Castro** of Roundup, **Gilkey Farms** of Denton and **Vic Farr** of rural Lewistown.



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

### FOR OUTAGES

**First:** Check the fuses or breakers in the building in which the electricity is off.

**Second:** Check the breaker below the meter.

**Third:** If electricity is still out, call a neighbor to see if they have electricity.

**Fourth:** Call 406-538-3465 day or night or:

Dale Rikala .....	406-366-3374
Bret Ophus .....	406-366-7523
Guy Johnson .....	406-366-9170
Scott Sweeney .....	406-538-7218
Don Criswell (Roundup) .....	406-366-3465
David Dover .....	406-366-1975
Melanie Foran .....	406-462-5650

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Scott Sweeney ..... General Manager

David Dover ..... Assistant Manager

Dale Rikala ..... Operations Supervisor

Sally Horacek ..... Office Manager

Vangie McConnell ..... Editor

Fergus Electric is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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Fergus Features is an award-winning newsletter.