

F E R G U S

FEATURES

Member Newsletter ♦ Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc., Lewistown, MT ♦ www.ferguselectric.coop



Artist's rendering of the south-facing elevation with overhead garage doors and covered material area on the west side of the new Roundup facility to be built this year. | **COURTESY PHOTO**

ROUNDUP FACILITY TO BE BUILT IN 2023

Story by **JANINE RIFE DIDIER**

Soon, there will be a flurry of activity east of Roundup as one of the co-op's long-awaited goals becomes a reality. When Fergus Electric Cooperative purchased the 5.7 acres of land 1.6 miles east of Roundup on Highway 12 nearly 22 years ago, it was with the intent to eventually add a shop building with office space to meet our operational requirements as well as our members' needs. That time has finally

arrived.

KE Construction is scheduled to begin construction in early April, and to have the facility ready to occupy by the first of October 2023. We received the metal for the building in March. We have received the plans from the mechanical, electrical and civil engineers. The plans will be submitted to the state of Montana for a permit and to the contractor, KE Construction, based in Billings.

Last year, during our 2022 annual

meeting, the membership was given an official ballot and were asked to vote whether they were in favor of Fergus Electric constructing a new facility in Roundup. We continue to thank our membership for their overwhelming support and vote of confidence (112-9) in our proposed Roundup facility. The construction of the 126-foot by 100-foot metal building will accommodate offices, storage for vehicles, and stor-

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MANAGER'S MESSAGE

From Carson Sweeney

SPRINGTIME IS THE SEASON OF NEW ACTIVITY

I have several exciting topics to inform you about this month. First we have implemented a new billing format that each of you will see this month. We hope you appreciate the additional information we are providing on your electric usage. We want you to be an informed member, with complete control and understanding of how and when you consume electrical energy. Please let us know if you have any questions about your new bill and give us a call if you would like to provide us with a description for your meter's location. As a reminder, we have not adjusted our rates. Rates have not increased since 2011 and we are striving to keep that streak going.

Partners with Generac

Next we are proud to announce that Fergus Electric has partnered with Generac Power Systems to become a wholesale distributor of home standby generators, industrial/commercial generators, portable generators, ecobee thermostats and other Generac products. Please contact our Engineering team to begin a discussion on your current electrical consumption details



Fergus Electric Cooperative has partnered with Generac Power Systems to become a wholesale distributor of generators. | COURTESY PHOTO



Fergus Electric Cooperative linemen are working on an irrigation service. Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 18. | **FERGUS ELECTRIC PHOTO**

to help you properly size a backup power system to meet your needs. Our Operations and Engineering staff can order the necessary equipment and help put you in touch with a local qualified electrician to complete the installation. The Fergus Electric team works relentlessly to provide reliable power 24/7/365 but power outages in rural Montana are inevitable. For members interested in a backup power source, please contact us at 406-538-3465.

Overhead line project

Our Engineering team has also been busy preparing contract bid documents for our new 50 kilovolt Overhead

Transmission line project from Hilger to Winifred (24 miles). Construction for this project is expected to commence in September 2023, with an anticipated completion date of April 2024. Contractors will construct the new line and, upon completion, they will remove the existing line. We appreciate each landowner who worked with Melanie throughout the last year as we collectively identified a route for the new line. We expect you'll see surveyors along the route as they mark locations for future poles and guy wires. This new line is a significant investment

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Artist's rendering of the office entrance on the east side of the new Roundup building to be built. The tan colored section is the board/community meeting room. | **COURTESY PHOTO**

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age of equipment and material. Within the building, there will be a meeting space, which will be well-suited for holding board meetings and small events for members of the Roundup community.

"I am excited to get this project started. It will give me great assurance to know our trucks and materials are safe, secure and ready for use no matter what weather conditions exist," said Dale Rikala, line superintendent. "In addition to having a building large enough to store all the trucks and equipment, the Roundup line crew will appreciate the material being in one location. It will be a timesaver not having to make a separate stop to load poles."

He added, "It will be a huge improvement for the crews to work on the trucks parked inside the building, where it's warm and dry. And the shop



will include a wash bay, which will get a lot of use."

Bret Nellermoe, assistant line superintendent in Roundup, added, "When the linemen get called out in the middle of a night that is 30 degrees below zero, it will be nice to know that they won't have to use space heaters to

thaw out the trucks. Hydraulics do not want to work when it's cold."

The Roundup lineworkers are anxious for the new building to be built. They look forward to working in a shop and office with sufficient

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toward long-term reliable power for our members in the Hilger/Winifred area. For those of you in the Hilger/Winifred area, we have sure appreciated your patience across the last few years as outages plagued our aging infrastructure.

Lineworker Appreciation

I'd like to end with a sincere thank-you to the reliable and respectful linemen at Fergus Electric Cooperative. We are blessed with a dedicated and hard-working group that sets a high

bar throughout our region. On the second Monday in April, we will be celebrating National Lineman Appreciation Day. We have an excellent and professional group that works to expand and maintain our system each day. Thank you for your strong commitment to our members. For those interested in becoming a lineman, Fergus Electric offers a scholarship to attend an accredited line technician school. Applications can be found through the Central Montana Foundation Scholarships.

I hope you are enjoying the warming temperatures and changing scenery. Happy Spring! 

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space. Even though moving day is several months away, Bret, Owen, Brock, and Andrew will tell you that they are grateful for this project. They are anxious and ready to pack up and move. The old railroad depot has given the co-op its best, but it has reached its limit.

At Fergus Electric's 2021 annual meeting, we told the membership about the co-op's plan to build a new facility on our ground east of Roundup on Highway 12. Our members were given information and photos showing the condition of the existing Roundup office and shop, in the old 1908 railroad depot. We told the members that the depot has indoor parking for two small service trucks and said that the line trucks, bucket trucks and other pieces of equipment, which are valued at nearly \$2 million, are parked outside each evening.

We reported that Fergus Electric continues to see strong growth in the Roundup service territory, and we propose to invest in our employees and the community by providing a building that meets our current and future

needs. Since roughly 2003, the co-op has used the land to store our wood power poles, but we always had bigger plans for the property.

During that 2021 annual meeting, we asked our membership to provide written and verbal input on the plan to develop and build a facility on the acreage. We were pleased with the response. Membership feedback was positive, and the proposed project was strongly supported.

At last, in April 2023, the project is getting underway. This project is not being done in haste. In fact, several of the co-op's employees who first envisioned building a new facility at this location have retired. It has been a long wait. We are pleased that construction of Fergus Electric's new Roundup facility is set to begin soon.

Nellermoe put it well, saying, "I am excited Fergus Electric Cooperative is providing this for our employees and members in the Roundup area. Having the ability to house our valuable assets inside will help with the longevity of the tools we rely on. Also, once the facility is built, I'm hoping our members in the area will feel welcome to stop by for a visit and check it out."



IDENTIFY ACCOUNT NUMBER*

WIN A \$32.50 CREDIT

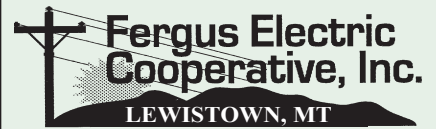
If one of the following account numbers is yours, call Fergus Electric (406-538-3465) and identify yourself and your account number and you will receive a \$32.50 credit on next month's statement.

**Account 386154, Account 95601
Account 396090, Account 318446
Account 397020, Account 385944**

CONGRATULATIONS!

Thomas Wickens of Lewistown and **Edward Timpano** of Lewistown were last month's winners!

*NUMBERS ARE DRAWN MONTHLY



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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
Bret Nellermoe (Roundup).....	406-939-0636
Carson Sweeney	406-366-0971
Melanie Foran.....	406-462-5650
Scott Olson	406-366-5822
Dan Balster.....	406-366-0975

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Fergus Electric is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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Fergus Features is an award-winning newsletter.