

F E R G U S

FEATURES

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

DESIGNING *dreams*

Local woman thrives by creating custom kitchens

Story and photos by **CHARLIE DENISON** | contributing writer

"KITCHEN Designs."

That's how Lori Peterson answers the phone during a busy Friday noon hour. Her tone was pleasant and perky. She looked over at me, smiled and gave me a kind shrug, which politely indicated she'd be right with me. I had just walked in, so I took a look around her showplace of counters, cabinets and more.

Be it countertops, cabinets, door styles, or even bathroom and home-office products, Lori's selection is wide, regardless of customer budget, hence why her business card includes the motto, "We turn dreams into reality."

Lori has been making her customers' dreams come true in central Montana for 21 years – from her location on the Truck Bypass since 2014. Business has gradually picked up at Kitchen Designs through the years, but, now, after 2020, she's more in demand than ever.

"When the pandemic hit, everybody was home, and a lot of people thought, 'oh, let's remodel,'" Lori said.

That's what Lori likes to hear. It brings joy to her to remodel or help someone design a kitchen for a new home they're building.

Lori was instantly drawn to kitchen design while at the North Dakota



Lori Peterson, owner of Kitchen Designs by Lori, stands by a recent countertop and cabinet display in her showplace. | **PHOTO BY CHARLIE DENISON**

State School of Science drafting school.

"There was an opportunity to specialize on the kitchen side of things, and that's how I got started," she said. "I feel like you can make the kitchen a little more personable than perhaps other areas of the house, and it's also less stressful to focus solely on the kitchen."

Lori currently has a variety of new

homes and remodels she's working on, and she said she puts her all into each one.

"I'm pretty hands on," she said. "I'll go out and measure countertops. I'll stay after business hours if I have to, and even take home designs at night and work on them."

Lori coordinates the entire space,

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MANAGER'S MESSAGE

From Carson Sweeney

Installing new metering system is top priority

ELECTRIC Cooperatives and their members have a long history of supporting each other. The next few months will provide us an opportunity to once again be there for one another.

For the last two years, the Fergus Electric Cooperative team has been steadily replacing our legacy metering system. We were informed that eventually the old system would no longer communicate meter reads to our headquarters, and would ultimately quit on us.

In late October 2021, the time had come. The communication system between the individual meters, our substations and our billing system is no longer functioning. Historic automated processes are now requiring manual entry.

We are currently executing our plan to expedite the final phase of installation of the new metering system, but this will come at the cost of a significant reduction in the scheduling of new construction work. New construction growth on our system is currently double what we installed

just two years prior.

The Fergus Electric team has always worked diligently to meet member expectations and schedules. With this fall being warmer than average, we have been able to complete new construction installations beyond the date that winter normally allows.

The increase in new construction requests, positive as it may be, has delayed the installation of the new metering system. Temporarily, we need to prioritize the installation of the AMI system above new member growth. We already have two-thirds of the system installed, and plan to complete the final one-third of the AMI system installation by the end of February.

Our first goal is to minimize the number of member accounts we estimate. Another goal of ours is to work with each of you who are in the new-construction queue to better understand your needs and to complete the work on a prioritized and as-needed basis. For our existing members, if we do not contact

you, there is no additional follow-up required. If we do contact you, we hope that you will graciously help us through these busy few months.

We may ask you to help us read your individual meter. We hope not to ask more than your patience to allow us to complete this important work for the entire membership.

We have partnered with local electricians to help us replace the existing meters while Fergus Electric crews continue installing the pole-mounted meter communication system. If you see us out working, please cheer us on as we hustle to meet the high expectations we set for ourselves.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

The staff, Board of Directors and I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We enjoyed meeting your electric service needs in 2021, and look forward to serving you in 2022. 

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

FROM EVERYONE AT FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Fergus Electric's offices in Lewistown and Roundup will close December 23 and 24 for Christmas, and December 30 and 31 for the New Year's holiday.

KITCHENS

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she says, from cabinet design to countertop selection and beyond.

Ultimately, for Lori, it's imperative her customers get what they want at the best deal. It's also important for Lori to follow trends and share them with her customers. Lori does a lot of research on what's hot and what's not. She even goes to Kitchen and Bath shows in Las Vegas and Florida about every other year.

"It's important to stay on top of the trends because my customers are also following the trends," she said, "Some trends, however, really don't reflect central Montana. I don't think the avocado-like green is going to catch on in kitchens around here. Some of the latest trends are what I call 'the Jetson era.'"

Trends are always changing, she said. Currently everybody wants gray or white countertops, and there is more of a push for modern than rustic, but, what it really comes down to, Lori said, is personal preference.

"The main thing for me is that I want people to be happy when the work is done," she said, "and, unfortunately, I don't usually get a chance to see the finished product. I sell the product and leave it to the homeowner to find their own contractor. I usually only see it if there's a problem."

Lucky for Lori, however, visits to assess problems are few, and her customer satisfaction rate is high.

"Recently a customer told me I came highly recommended by several people, which is a good feeling," she said. "It makes you feel like you're doing things right."

It's also a good feeling to hear the phone continue to ring, largely as a result of word of mouth.

"I haven't advertised in a while because I stay busy enough," she said. "It's nice."

Although grateful for the increased business the last year has brought, there are also additional challenges.



KITCHEN DESIGNS BY LORI

Open Monday - Friday:
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
3108 TRUCK BYPASS

Call Lori at (406) 535-5000 or email her at kbylori@gmail.com to schedule a complimentary initial appointment, or to arrange an evening or weekend appointment.

For more information, go to www.kitchendesignbylori.com.



One example of the many cabinets Lori has to offer at Kitchen Designs by Lori.

Lori Peterson of Kitchen Designs by Lori has seen business boom since the pandemic hit. "Everybody was home, and a lot of people thought, 'oh, let's remodel,'" she said.

| PHOTOS BY CHARLIE DENISON

It takes Lori about two and a half months to get product in from the time it's ordered, partly because of demand and partly because the companies she works with are short-staffed.

"Before the pandemic hit it'd take about 4-6 weeks to get product," she said. "The delays are frustrating, and it's a struggle, but, it's this way all over."

Lori encourages her customers to be patient and understanding, and she said they've been wonderful.

"They know it's worth the wait," Lori said.

What all does Lori offer?

Walking through the showroom, one of the first things I noticed was Lori's selection of countertops. Her granite selection was particularly eye-catching.

"Granite countertops are kind of coming back," she said. "Seals on the countertops are guaranteed for 25 years, so you don't have to maintain them as much."

Much of the granite Lori sells comes from Clearwater Granite in Helena. Her quartz — another impressive array — comes from Fabricators, located in Billings.

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Co-op Month drawing winners

On November 8, Susan Hinkley, Erika Mattaliano and Sue Werdin were given the honor of drawing three entry forms from the 28 forms submitted in the “October is Co-op Month” drawing. The drawing was part of a “Help Celebrate Co-op Month” promotion.

Congratulations go out to Kory

and Kandis Nielsen, Lewistown; Lori Kinsey, Big Timber; and Dale Keyser, Laurel (service location is Roundup). An electric credit of \$50 will appear on their next month’s billing statement. Thank you to all the co-op members who entered the drawing.

RM



KITCHENS

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But when it comes to countertops Lori said her laminates – which are built locally by Dan Jorgenson – are her biggest sellers.

“Laminate is still your most economical choice,” she said. “I would say it’s pretty much a toss between quartz and granite anymore when it comes to the second most popular option.”

Lori may have her own preference for a countertop, but, again, it’s entirely up to the customer to choose granite, quartz, laminate or another option, which include samplings of WilsonArt, Formica, Pionite and

Nevamar.

“Everybody has their preference,” she said. “For example, I personally like the plywood-sided cabinets, but choice depends on peoples’ budgets. You can get a decent cabinet with a particle board side if you upgrade the door glides and the drawers.”

Lori carries three cabinet lines: Showplace, Mid-Continent and Frameless Line by Showplace.

“I have several choices and am excited to help suit your needs for your dream kitchen,” she said. “It’s my goal to help you find a comfortable fit between quality products and reasonable prices that will meet your budget and design needs.”

Lori has been a Fergus Electric member since 2013.

RM

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 366438, Account 71430
Account 319605, Account 77316
Account 396862, Account 396390**

No winner to report for last month.

*NUMBERS ARE DRAWN MONTHLY

Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc.

LEWISTOWN, MT

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
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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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