

# F E R G U S

## FEATURES

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



## MANAGER'S MESSAGE

From Carson Sweeney

## Completing projects for 2024 and planning projects for 2025

**W**ITH the arrival of cooler fall temperatures, employees at Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. are busy completing projects budgeted for the 2024 fiscal year. Crews have been installing new circuit protective devices throughout the Grass Range, Winnett and south Roundup areas. We are expecting NorthWestern Energy crews to complete a project in their Roundup Substation, which will improve reliability for all members between the areas of Grass Range – Winnett – south Roundup. Our team has already tested the structural integrity of 5,000 wood poles this year, with another 2,500 to go before the end of the year.

### Drone survey

Skyline Aviation from Lewistown has been throughout our service territory flying its drones to capture high-definition video footage of our powerlines for our annual line patrol program. If you have any questions or concerns relating to our drone activity, please call our office. Our linemen review this footage and create maintenance and vegetation management tickets as needed. We ask our after-hours dispatch team, located in Bismarck, ND, to create automated messages that are sent out prior to flying drones in your area. If you'd like to stay informed, be sure not to ignore a call, voice message, or text message from 1-800-858-3487.

### Underground electric services

Crews will be installing new underground electric services until the ground is frozen, and then they will finish the year replacing poles that failed during our 2023 wood pole structural integrity testing. Our engineers are planning and budgeting projects for 2025, as we continue to invest in infrastructure and reliability improvements throughout the system.

### Rate increase

In October, our Board of Directors reviewed the 2025 expense budget and approved a 5.5 percent rate increase

### 2025 GENERAL SERVICE RATE SCHEDULE

#### RATE PER MONTH - BASED ON MONTHLY PEAK DEMAND

#### 0 kW ≤ 30 kW:

- Base Charge: \$34.00
- Energy Charge: \$0.094/kWh
- Peak Demand Charge: \$4.50/kW

#### > 30 kW ≤ 60 kW:

- Base Charge: \$47.00
- Energy Charge: \$0.092/kWh
- Peak Demand Charge: \$8.50/kW

#### > 60 kW ≤ 90 kW:

- Base Charge: \$60.00
- Energy Charge: \$0.084/kWh
- Peak Demand Charge: \$12.50/kW

#### > 90 kW ≤ 1,000 kW:

- Base Charge: \$73.00
- Energy Charge: \$0.077/kWh
- Peak Demand Charge: \$16.50/kW

#### PEAK DEMAND (kW) BILLING WINDOWS:

- **October 1 - May 31:** 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- **June 1 - September 30:** 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

due to the rising cost of wholesale power. As communicated previously, the two entities that provide power to Fergus Electric are increasing rates beginning January 1. The last time Fergus Electric Cooperative members experienced a rate increase was July 2011.

Our office staff is equipped to review historic electric usage with you to help explain how this rate increase will impact your electric meters. If you have any questions about the rate changes, please call our office or stop by in person. We would be happy to cover the details with you. Using historical electric usage data, we can provide a month-by-month breakdown of how this rate increase affects you. The rate increase includes a monthly base charge increase, an energy charge decrease and a demand charge increase. Please refer to the graphic above for the rate changes specific to each rate class.

Have a wonderful fall and a Happy Thanksgiving. 

# Let us give thanks!

It shouldn't be only a once-a-year thing

Column by **JANINE RIFE DIDIER** | *Fergus Electric Cooperative*

**E**VEN as pumpkins are being made into Jack-O-lanterns, many of us have already begun thinking about or have made plans to travel or receive guests for Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is one of the few remaining holidays during which we try to step away from our screens and gather with our families and friends to get together face-to-face, visit, and give and receive overdue hugs. We gather with our people, hike, hunt, eat, watch football and express thanks for all the good things in our lives.

As a holiday, Thanksgiving is a favorite for many reasons. It is a much quieter holiday than most. It is not commercialized. It doesn't commit us to buying presents. We simply come together to enjoy each other's company, dine on amazing food, look beyond the tough stuff in life, and reflect on the abundance of love, joy, friendships and good fortune that we have been given — and count our blessings.

We are thankful to connect and spend time together, no doubt, but our thankfulness goes deeper during a year when throughout our nation snow, fires, wind, rains, tornadoes and hurricanes have burned mountainsides, ripped homes from their foundations, and cost people their livelihoods and their lives. It is during these times that we are truly thankful for the many people who are willing to give of themselves to fight fires, work to clean up after storms and help search for those who are missing. If we cannot help in person, we are thankful to be able to send money that will be used to purchase larger items such as generators or small items such as blankets,



While most of us take time at Thanksgiving to be thankful for our family and friends, we should be more aware year-round of the countless people, events and heroics happening around us every day for which we should be thankful.

food and water — those things we often take for granted until a horrendous storm or fire takes it all away. We are thankful for those who have willingly left the security and safety of their own homes and families to travel to unfamiliar places, putting their own lives in danger to fight fires during the hottest months of summer. We are thankful for those who traveled across the country to do whatever was needed in the aftermath of two back-to-back hurricanes along the East Coast in October. Volunteers arrived from all over the United States and joined forces to help clear trees that flood waters uprooted and toppled onto isolated, backcountry roads. Clearing the roads was necessary, so necessities such as

to local families who had neither. In a time when our country is divided, it was heartwarming to see people come together to offer help in any way they could and let their light shine before others.

We are thankful for our members, employees and board of directors. Our members are active and retired ranchers, farmers, teachers, nurses, doctors, pastors, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, merchants, clerks and the list goes on. We are thankful for their contributions to our communities and for the kindness and appreciation they show to Fergus Electric. The storm that hit our area last spring was a testament to the goodness, patience and understanding of our members as they endured multiple days without power.

# ★ THANK YOU ★ VETERANS

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED



Fergus Electric Cooperative will be closed  
Monday, Nov. 11, in observance  
of Veterans Day.

In the spirit of giving thanks, let us remember Veterans Day is November 11. Veterans willingly and unselfishly chose to put their personal plans on pause while they served our country. They enlisted not knowing where they would be stationed. On Veterans Day, we honor and thank all those who served honorably in the military, whether in wartime or peacetime. We are thankful to our veterans for volunteering their service to protect our country and defend our rights. Fergus Electric Cooperative thanks each one of you for your dedication to our country. God bless you!

## *Continued from previous page*

They have a knack for making our team feel like superstars with their generosity of kind words and homemade goods that expressed their gratitude.


Our employees are second to none, and we are thankful for each one of them. Among them there are coaches, firefighters and volunteers. This group of people are capable, kind and generous. When they are called after hours, they are prepared to brave the storm and restore power. Members are famil-

iar with the dedication of all of the co-op's employees, no matter their role. We are thankful to employ this wonderful group of individuals who arrive at work ready to work as a team.

We are thankful for our board of directors. They care about the co-op they represent and continuously work to stay current on the developments and changes that occur in the industry. They care about the employees, and want them to work in a safe and friendly environment.

It is easy to feel especially sentiment-

tal this time of year. We may be missing a loved one who is no longer with us, or our hearts might be filled with joy as we look forward to meeting our newest family member in person for the first time on Thanksgiving Day.

Thanksgiving does not need to be celebrated just one day a year. No matter our circumstances, we have lots to be thankful for, and it is good to humbly remind ourselves to take a moment to appreciate those things and give thanks. We wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving! 

# SCHOLARSHIPS

GET YOUR APPLICATIONS IN BY JANUARY 24

**T**o qualified students whose parents are cooperative members: If you are a high school senior planning to attend college or are a student continuing an undergraduate education, you could win a \$1,000 scholarship from Fergus Electric Cooperative, and have a chance to win a \$500 scholarship from the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA).

Scholarship applicants 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 no later than **January 24**, 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 MECA in 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 Debby at 406-538-3465. In addition, the application and guidelines are posted on Fergus Electric's website [www.ferguselectric.coop](http://www.ferguselectric.coop) and on the MECA website at [www.mtco-ops.com](http://www.mtco-ops.com).

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 391173, Account 320585  
Account 380474, Account 395911  
Account 395374, Account 398631**

### CONGRATULATIONS!

**Donald and Jody Simmons** of Hilger, were last month's winners.

\*NUMBERS ARE DRAWN MONTHLY



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

### FERGUS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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Office Hours: 7 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. M-Th.

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Facebook: [www.facebook.com/ferguselectric](http://www.facebook.com/ferguselectric)

**Carson Sweeney.....General Manager**

**Dale Rikala..... Line Superintendent**

**Sally Horacek ..... Office Manager**

**Janine Rife Didier..... Editor**

Fergus Electric is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District 1: Paul Descheemaeker, President, Lewistown, 428-2417

District 2: Brett Maxwell, Lewistown, 538-9002

District 3: Brad Arntzen, Hilger, 462-5555

District 4: Cathy Kombol, Roundup, 428-2202

District 5: Terry Frost, Vice President, Roundup, 323-3415

District 6: Jason Swanz, Sec./Treas., Judith Gap, 473-2462

District 7: Bob Evans, Jr., Geysers, 735-4476

*Fergus Features is an award-winning newsletter.*

# HAPPY



## CLOSURE

Fergus Electric Cooperative will be closed Thursday, November 28 and Friday, November 29.