

# 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

## Communicating our plans proactively and transparently

**W**ITH the recent news of our wholesale power supplier increasing costs beginning in 2025, the Fergus Electric Board of Directors and I, along with other Montana electric cooperatives, advocated on behalf of our members for the upcoming increases to be spread across multiple years instead of a larger single year increase. Our message was well received, and we were recently notified that Basin Electric Power Cooperative's rates will increase approximately 6.8 percent in 2025, as compared to the 9.5 percent I shared last month.

For our electric cooperative members, I am expecting between a 4-5 percent rate increase beginning Janu-

ary 1, 2025.

The new rates will be presented to our Board of Directors in October and, upon approval, I will share them with our membership in next month's *Rural Montana* magazine. For members who are wondering how the new rates will change their monthly bill, please call our office. Our team will be able to look up your meter(s) to let you know what to expect in 2025.

I want to assure our membership that we are efficient and prudent with your electric cooperative as we consider investments in reliability, hazard mitigation, proactive line maintenance, replacement of our fleet and the retirement of capital credits. Our

target is to produce annual financials that are consistent year after year. I will continue to communicate our plans proactively and transparently to maintain an engaged and informed membership.

The entire organization of Fergus Electric is working together to provide reliable electric service at a reasonable cost. We have an exceptional culture that provides a rewarding work experience for our employees, many of whom have spent their entire careers with us. I am proud to lead this group of talented professionals. As we navigate the waters ahead, please feel free to share your thoughts or concerns with me or our team. RM

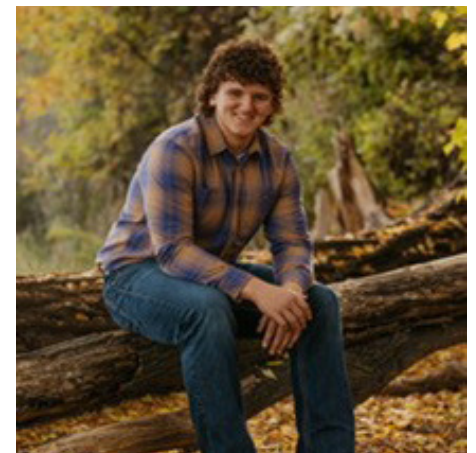
## Tyler Icard awarded 2024 MECA/Fergus Scholarship

**W**E are pleased to congratulate Tyler Icard, Fergus Electric Cooperative's representative for the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association Memorial district scholarship. Fergus Electric awarded Tyler a \$1,000 scholarship.

Tyler has signed with the Rocky Mountain College football team to play defensive line. A Shepherd High School graduate, Tyler said that his community and the people around him have played a big role in influencing his goals and career choice.

They have pushed him to accomplish his goal of becoming a college football player. As he played football throughout high school, the support he received from the community, along with his hard work, allowed him to become one of the best players in Class B football in Montana, for which he received a 2023-2024 Class B football All State selection.

Tyler has set some lofty goals for himself. He said that for starters, he



See ICARD, page 8

# October is National Cooperative Month

Enter membership drawing, win \$50 electric credit

**N**ATIONAL Cooperative Month is celebrated in October each year. The theme for National Co-op Month in 2024 is “The Future is Cooperative”. This theme was chosen by the National Cooperative Business Association, and is intended to raise awareness of cooperatives as a trusted and proven way to build communities and do business. It also provides an opportunity to envision a cooperative future and engage the public, customers, employees and co-op members.

Cooperatives are businesses that are owned by their members, who also have a voice in how the business is run. Cooperatives are democratic, locally autonomous and internationally integrated. They can help achieve social, environmental and economic goals, such as overcoming poverty, securing employment and encouraging social integration.

National Co-op Month is celebrated every October and has been observed nationally since 1964. The 2025 International Year of Cooperatives is also approaching, which provides an opportunity to highlight the role of cooperatives in communities and economies.

Under the theme “The Future is Cooperative,” this year’s Co-op Month is also a chance to envision a cooperative future. With the 2025 International Year of Cooperatives on the horizon, now is the time to lift up the people-centered businesses at the heart of our communities and economies.

America’s electric cooperatives supported approximately 623,000

## October is Co-op Month

### SPREAD THE WORD

Help celebrate Co-op Month! Complete this form and return it to Fergus Electric Cooperative, 84423 U.S. Highway 87, Lewistown, MT 59457 by October 31. Your name will be entered in a drawing for an electric credit of \$50. **Three winners will be contacted in November.**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

American jobs and contributed \$111 billion annually to the gross domestic product (GDP) from 2018 through 2022, according to a report released October 10, 2023. Many of these impacts occur within the local communities served by co-ops, including 424,000 jobs and \$75 billion annually in GDP. Yet these activities also have far-reaching impacts across the country – even in areas where co-ops do not serve consumers directly.

The country’s approximately 900 consumer-owned, not-for-profit and democratically governed electric co-ops deliver power to 42 million Americans in 48 states across 56 percent of the nation’s landmass, including 92 percent of the country’s persistent poverty counties.

The report, *Economic Powerhouses: The Economic Impacts of America’s Electric Cooperatives*, details the economic impacts of a range of activities

conducted by cooperatives, through the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity, as well as capital investments, additional operations and maintenance expenses, and the disbursement of excess operating revenue returned to cooperative members as capital credits.

Viewed alongside their commitment to providing safe, affordable and reliable electricity to their consumers, the business activities, capital investments and operational expenditures made by co-ops drive sizeable and enduring economic benefits across their communities, adding value for local, statewide and national economies.

The analysis was carried out on behalf of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (NRUCFC) by

**See CO-OP, page 8**

# WIN A FREE TRIP TO D.C.

## Youth Tour Essay Contest applications due Dec. 2

**A**TTENTION current high school sophomores and juniors whose parent or guardian is served by Fergus Electric Cooperative.

Here is your chance to win a free trip to Washington, D.C., June 14-21, 2025.

More than 1,500 students from across America take part in the Youth Tour experience each year, and so can you! This unique trip will give you the opportunity to watch history come alive as you explore the museums, memorials and monuments with students from Montana.

Students who are selected by their co-ops will travel to D.C. in June for a week of activities. Every Youth Tour includes meetings with Montana's U.S. senators and representatives, as well as visiting all the famous monuments and memorials, and the Smithsonian Museums.

Additionally, past Youth Tours have included a Washington Nationals baseball game, the International Spy Museum, a Broadway-style show, Ford's Theater, the Gettysburg Battlefield, the Naval Academy, the Marine Corps Museum, and countless other stops and attractions.

There is also a riverboat cruise and dance with students from other states. One thing we can guarantee from past experience is you will have fun, and you will make friendships with students from across the state and country that will last a lifetime. You will be part of a group that has more than 50,000 alumni in every walk of life.

Enter the essay contest, due December 2.

### The contest rules

The student must be a junior or senior in high school in the fall of 2025.



32 students from around Montana went to Washington, D.C., in 2024 as part of the Youth Tour.

## Youth Tour alumnus are eligible for the Glenn English Leadership Scholarship

As an alumnus of the Youth Tour, you are eligible for the Glenn English Leadership Scholarship. Each year, one \$10,000 (distributed in two \$5,000 installments) and four \$1,000 scholarships are awarded to students working on their first undergraduate degree program. These scholarships are only available to those who have been on the Youth Tour to D.C.

The student cannot be a prior winner of the Youth Tour.

The student and/or parent or guardian must be served by Fergus Electric Cooperative.


The student must author an essay on the topic: *What was the most important event to have occurred in our nation during your lifetime? How did it affect you?*

**Essays and applications are due to Fergus Electric by December 2, 2024.**

Essays should include a cover page with the student's name, address,

telephone number, the cooperative's name and a copy of the Youth Tour application.

The 2025 Youth Tour Required Application, Resource Guide and Contest Rules are available by calling (406) 538-3465 or on Fergus Electric's website at: <https://www.ferguselectric.coop/youth-washington-essay-contest>

Mail essays and applications to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc., 84423 U.S. Highway 87, Lewistown, MT 59457. 



# CO-OP

Continued from page 6

Strategen Consulting, an energy strategy professional services firm.

“This report quantifies what many American families and businesses know well — electric cooperatives are powerful engines of economic development in their local communities,” NRECA CEO Jim Matheson said. “Affordable and reliable electricity is a key ingredient for a successful economy. Electric co-ops are focused on the long-term success of local communities as they keep the lights on and power economic growth.”

“We’re seeing electric cooperatives expand their community investments and foster opportunities beyond traditional poles and wires — from creating business incubators to building broadband networks and attracting new employers,” CFC CEO Andrew Don said. “These endeavors are further advancing the billion-dollar economic impact of electric cooperatives locally and nationally.”

The study finds that cooperatives contributed \$1.1 trillion in total U.S. sales output and \$257 billion in labor income over the five-year period. Resulting federal tax revenues totaled

\$40.6 billion over this period, or \$8.1 billion annually. State and local tax revenues totaled \$94.5 billion, or \$18.9 billion annually. RM

The report can be accessed at: <https://www.strategen.com/strategen-blog/economic-powerhouses>. RM

### About NRECA

*The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association is the national trade association representing nearly 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation’s landscape. As local businesses built by the consumers they serve, electric cooperatives have meaningful ties to rural America, and invest \$15 billion annually in their communities.*

### About CFC

*Created and owned by America’s electric cooperative network, the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) — a nonprofit finance cooperative with \$34 billion in assets— provides unparalleled industry expertise, flexibility and responsiveness to serve the needs of our member-owners. CFC is an equal-opportunity provider.*

*Content excerpted from: coopmonth.coop, nca.clusa and NRUCFC’s websites.*

# ICARD

Continued from page 5

plans to make it all the way through and graduate college with the best grades possible. Afterwards, he hopes to pass the MCAT and go to medical school to become a doctor.

Amy Farris, Tyler’s precalculus and AP calculus teacher at Shepherd High School, said that “Tyler is extremely goal driven and strives to thoroughly understand every concept.” She added that Tyler is one of the hardest-working students she has ever known.

Tyler said that school influenced this big goal in his life through pushing him to always do his best in school, and to have the best grades possible to succeed in college and get it paid for.

Tyler said, “It influenced me to become a doctor, since I was able to do well in school, I believed I could succeed in medical school and get a job as a doctor. Being a doctor is the career I believe I would enjoy the most and be happy with throughout my life.”

Amy Farris added, “I look forward to seeing what his future holds.”

Fergus Electric serves power to the Icard ranch in the Roundup area. RM

## IDENTIFY ACCOUNT NUMBER\*

### WIN A \$32.50 CREDIT

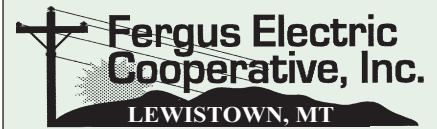
If one of the following account numbers is yours, call Fergus Electric (406-538-3465) and identify yourself and your account number, and you will receive a \$32.50 credit on next month’s statement.

**Account 320960, Account 395414  
Account 387222, Account 396415  
Account 395971, Account 319884**

### CONGRATULATIONS!

**Mike McCandless** of Roundup, **Barbara Stolz** of Lewistown, and **Gary Lee** of Roundup 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.

84423 US Hwy. 87, Lewistown, MT  
59457-2058  
Tel: 406-538-3465

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

Website: [www.ferguselectric.coop](http://www.ferguselectric.coop)

E-mail: [ferguselectric@ferguselectric.coop](mailto:ferguselectric@ferguselectric.coop)

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.

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*Fergus Features is an award-winning newsletter.*