

F E R G U S

FEATURES

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

2023 LUCK OF THE DRAW SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

EACH of the 33 students who received a \$1,000 scholarship at our 2023 Annual Meeting are starting college and are anxious and excited about their futures. In early 2022, it was announced that the personal representative of deceased co-op members Susan Knedler and Charlie Guinn had chosen to generously donate the entire estate capital credits to Fergus Electric Co-op for the purpose of using approximately \$70,000 to help support scholarship opportunities for

students within our area.

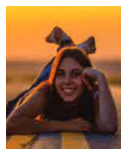
To date, 31 scholarships have been credited to the Guinn/Knedler account. The Guinn/Knedler account scholarship donations are in addition to the annual 10 Luck of the Draw scholarships Fergus Electric Cooperative has donated each year.

As founders and owners of Hi-Heat Industries, Charlie and Susan were supporters of and job creators within our local economy. We join the students in expressing our gratitude for the kind

and generous donation of the personal representative of the Guinn/Knedler estate. Their donation has led and will continue to lead to many scholarship opportunities to support continuing education of our youth for years to come.

As the students begin classes this month, we wish them the very best in their studies and hope their dreams come true. We want to take this opportunity to share parts of the students' letters and resumes. RM

Denton High School



Callie Donaldson is attending Montana State University – Bozeman and will study Occupational Therapy. "I would like to become an occupational therapist and move back to rural Montana.

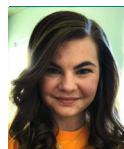
This would allow me to offer care to a small community and give back." Callie wrote, "Thank you so very much for allowing each one of us at the dinner to be given a scholarship. I know that both my brother and I were very thankful to be given one. I truly appreciate it."

Epperson Homeschool Academy

Caden Epperson is attending Montana State University – Bozeman with his sights on University Studies. "I aspire to be in

a leadership position one day. Through continuous learning and a good work ethic I believe I'll do well in college, and in whatever lies ahead!"

Fergus High School



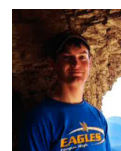
someday and

Jacy Ayers is attending Montana State University – Bozeman to continue her education in Animal Science. "My goal and dream have always been being a vet. I want to run my own practice give back to my community."



Carson Barta is attending the University of Montana – Western to study Business. "After college, I would like to open a charter fishing business somewhere. I would prefer deep-sea or the Missouri. I plan to keep my ties to my local community."

Levi Boyles is attending West Coast Baptist



College studying Church Ministries. "I would like to be able to help and encourage others who need help. Also, I want to be able to supply my needs and those around me. I have not yet decided on a career direction."



Allison Denton is attending Montana State University to study Agricultural Education. "Once I successfully complete my Bachelor of Science degree, I will work to earn my masters in Ag Ed. I will serve as an agricultural educator and FFA Advisor in the state of Montana."



Abram Friesen is attending Tabor College and will study Biology. "I want to pursue a career in the biology field and hope to return to Montana someday."

SCHOLARSHIPS continue on page 7



MANAGER'S MESSAGE

From Carson Sweeney

UPCOMING RATE STRUCTURE CHANGE

AS discussed at our June 8th, 2023 annual meeting, Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Fergus) recently completed a cost-of-service analysis to review our existing rate structure as compared to our monthly business expenses.

Fergus has been able to sustain 12 years without a rate increase, and we do not expect a rate increase in 2023. Fergus continues to maintain strong margins with consistent capital credit retirements, and investments in our equipment and infrastructure. To better align monthly wholesale power expenses to our monthly revenues, we are modifying the rate structure we offer to our members, effective January 1, 2024.

Revenue Neutral

Our intention to implement a revenue-neutral rate structure change is occurring at a time when Fergus' finances are stable and there is no need for a rate increase. Our team has reviewed our rate restructuring plan in a

diligent and serious manner. We understand that these decisions will impact our membership for many years to come.

Three-Part Rate Structure

The new rate structure will include a monthly base charge, a lower energy charge (kilowatt hour), and a peak demand charge (killowatt). The rate changes will be revenue neutral to Fergus Electric yet may increase or decrease your monthly bill based on your usage profile. Our goal for fair and reasonable rates is a top priority. Many electric cooperative utilities in Montana have successfully implemented three-part rate structures such as this. Strategic and intentional changes like this will help a strong electric cooperative maintain fair and stable rates long into the future.


Peak Demand (kW) Hours

Our team is thoroughly reviewing historic metering data to identify specific hours of the day for when our

entire electrical system hits peak load. Once this information is reviewed by our Board of Directors, we will be able to communicate which hours of the day we will be assessing the peak demand kW charge. We are hoping to narrow this window down to just a handful of hours each day to give our members the best opportunity to help normalize the peak and reduce their monthly costs.

Additional Information

I hope that through proactive and transparent communications such as this, Fergus will continue to uphold the trust that we have established throughout our member-owned cooperative to provide reliable, safe and affordable energy services to the members we serve. We will provide additional information on our rate structure change in upcoming issues of the *Rural Montana* magazine.

If you have additional questions, please contact our office at (406) 538-3465. 

WRITE AN ESSAY, WIN A TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

WRITE an essay, win a trip to Washington, D.C. Plans are underway for the 2024 Youth to Washington Tour and Essay Contest. The dates for the Youth Tour are June 14-21, 2024, including a pre-trip orientation session in Great Falls. One student from Fergus Electric Cooperative, as well as one student selected by the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association from all essays submitted, will win an all-expenses-paid trip on the Youth Tour.

Participants will visit monuments and historic sites throughout Washington, D.C., participate in the cooperative Youth Day, and meet Montana's federal

senators and representatives.


Contest rules are:

- The student must be a junior or senior in high school in the fall of 2024. (Currently a sophomore or junior)
- The student cannot be a prior winner of the Youth Tour.
- The student and/or parent or guardian must be served by a rural electric cooperative that is a member of the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association.
- The student must write an essay on the following topic: *"If you could have*



dinner with one prominent Washington, D.C., figure, whether from the present or past, who would that person be and why? What would you ask them?"

• Essays should include a cover page with the student's name, address, telephone number, and the cooperative's name and a copy of the application.

Essays and applications are due December 1, 2023. Mail them to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, Fergus Electric Cooperative, 84423 U.S. Highway 87, Lewistown, MT 59457. 

LUCK OF THE DRAW SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS CONTINUED

Tessa Gatz is attending Great Falls College MSU and studying Respiratory Therapy. "My goals are to succeed academically while being able to apply my skills and knowledge to the bettering of our community."



June LePage is attending Carroll College and will study Biology and Spanish. "I intend to finish school at Carroll College before attending medical school. I want to become a physician and practice medicine in Montana."



Megan Maxwell is attending the University of Jamestown where she will study Pre-law. "I want to have a deep understanding of the laws that govern the American people, and I want to use this understanding to help people in the justice system."

Travis McAlpin is attending Minnesota State Community and Technical College and will study Plumbing. "I aspire to own my own business within the community I grew up in. It would mean a lot to provide service to my community."



Evelyn Miller is attending Laramie County Community College and will study Radiography, Sonography and Paramedics. "I plan to complete my radiography program and then continue my education and complete the sonography and paramedic programs offered at my college. I will then return to central Montana to serve my community through diagnostic imaging and emergency medicine."

Ashton Moseman is attending Montana State University and studying Mechanical Engineering Technologies. "I want to create something more advanced, but simpler and efficient. Something that can be utilized in almost every industrial setting."



Brooke Weinheimer is attending Montana State University – Bozeman and will study Nursing. "I want to become a nurse and then eventually become a nurse practitioner. I want to come back and help serve the rural community. I also want to provide care for people like my grandpa got."

Grass Range High School



Layton Tucek is attending Montana Tech and will study Safety Health and Industrial Hygiene. His career goal is "Investigating workplace incidents while having a job that means something. I want to get people home to their families."

Hobson High School



Dakota Auck is attending Dickinson State University and will study Nursing. "I plan to receive a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and eventually further my education to become a Nurse Practitioner or Nurse Anesthetist."



Ashton Deegan is attending MSU – Bozeman and will study Ag Business. "I am majoring in Ag Business with a focus on precision Ag. I am interested in GPS and technology. I hope to bring my knowledge back to my family farm." Ashton wrote, "Thank you for your generous scholarship in the amount of \$1,000. I wanted to express my sincere gratitude for helping me go to school. I am attending Montana State University. I am studying ag business with a minor in precision ag. I really want to study ag technology and bring it back to Hobson. I enjoy working with GPS and many other forms of technology. My family has been on the farm/ranch for many years, and I am excited to come back and bring all the knowledge that I can. Your scholarship will help me reach my dreams. Thank you so much for supporting me and my dreams."

Carter Derks is attending MSU Northern and will study to be a diesel technician. Carter said his goal is to start up his own shop or take over the family ranch.



Elizabeth Hickey is attending Montana State University – Bozeman and is studying Secondary Education – Broadfield Science. "I hope to return to the greater Central Montana area to teach high school science. Future plans of school administration in a small school." Elizabeth wrote, "Thank you so much for awarding me with a 2023 Luck of the Draw scholarship."

Your contribution to my education has been substantial, and it is a blessing to have your support. I am in my final semesters of college, hoping to return to the greater central Montana area to teach high school. I love my community and hope to make an impact, much like Fergus Electric has. Thank you, thank you, thank you."

Thomas Quinn Horan is attending Montana State University – Bozeman and will study Mechanical Engineering. "Secure a degree in engineering in four years while successfully navigating my college career. I plan to join the Alpha Gamma Roe Fraternity, making connections that will successfully secure a lifelong career."



Riley Obert is attending the University of Montana to study Psychology. Riley said, "I plan to attend the University of Montana to pursue a college degree in healthcare following a psychology route. My career vision is to provide mental health services in rural communities like my own by becoming an occupational therapist or school counselor."

Reba L. Watson is attending the University of Montana and will study Forensic Chemistry and Sociology. "I plan to work in law enforcement, but I am unsure whether I want to work in a lab as a forensic scientist or on the street as a detective or K9 officer. If I go that route, one day maybe I will work in federal law enforcement. Thank you to everyone who makes these scholarships possible!"

Moore Public School



Danielle Horan is attending Montana State University and will be studying Biochemistry (on the pre-med track). "I plan to graduate undergraduate school and then attend medical school. I ultimately want to be a pediatric physician in a rural area." Danielle wrote, "Thank you so much for the generous scholarship that was given out at the annual meeting this June. I greatly appreciate it! I am so grateful for the support I have to get a higher education. I am thankful to have a phenomenal community that is willing to support so many Central Montana students. Your committee has had a large impact on furthering students' education! Thank you again."

SCHOLARSHIPS continue on page 8

SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS CONTINUED



Jessica Horan is attending Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine to become a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM). "I plan to practice mixed animal medicine in rural Montana

following graduation. My primary interests are equine and bovine medicine, but I enjoy the variety that working with several species in mixed animal medicine provides!" Jessica wrote, "Thank you for your immense generosity in funding and awarding scholarships at the Annual Meeting on June 8, 2023, of which I was a recipient. I will be in my third of four years of veterinary college this fall, and I plan to return to rural Montana to practice mixed animal medicine. Rural communities hold a special place in my heart, and I look forward to helping meet the need for large animal veterinarians in these areas. This generous scholarship will contribute greatly to funding my education so I can practice in a rural area without a large educational debt. Your support is invaluable!"

Cole Martin is attending Flathead Valley Community College to study Gunsmithing. "My goal is to return to Central Montana to open a Gunsmithing operation to service customers within our community. Many of our local gunsmiths are expressing that they truly want to 'retire' and I would like to fill that void."

Winifred High School



Asher Edwards is attending Rocky Mountain College and will study Accounting. "I plan to attend Rocky for an accounting degree, which I will use to become successful in the accounting world. I plan

to someday start my own business, and this will help me achieve that goal."



Trinity Edwards is attending Carroll College to study Secondary Math Education. "As someone who has always had a passion for teaching, I am excited to finish my last couple years of school before beginning my career teaching junior high or high school math."



Lexie Goettlich is attending Montana State University – Bozeman and will study Elementary Education. "I hope to have an impact on many students. I have always enjoyed helping the youth,

and the teachers I have had inspired me to become one."

Jayda Southworth is attending Miles Community College and will study Graphic and Web Design. "I'm working hard to achieve my goal of becoming a notable graphic designer for a large company or a business of my own."

Winnett High School



Hayley Stahl is a Winnett High School graduate. She is attending Sheridan College and studying Agriculture Business. "I plan on starting my own farm business once I return to Central Montana.

I hope to grow my business the rest of my years and eventually own my own farm."

A few more

At the time this went to press, we had not received information from scholarship recipients **Parker Donaldson, Ella Shultz** and **Amanda Sweeney**.

IDENTIFY ACCOUNT NUMBER*

WIN A \$32.50 CREDIT

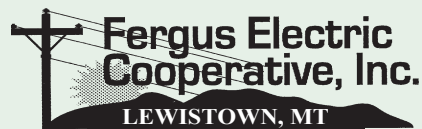
If one of the following account numbers is yours, call Fergus Electric (406-538-3465) and identify yourself and your account number and you will receive a \$32.50 credit on next month's statement.

**Account 2881, Account 395120
Account 397421, Account 321796
Account 397538, Account 356790**

CONGRATULATIONS!

Kim W. Ross of Lewistown and **Timothy A. Fritz** of Rapelje 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

E-mail: ferguselectric@ferguselectric.coop

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ferguselectric

Carson Sweeney.....General Manager
Dale Rikala.....Line Superintendent
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Fergus Electric is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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Fergus Features is an award-winning newsletter.

Labor Day CLOSURE

Fergus Electric Cooperative's offices in Lewistown and Roundup will be closed Monday, September 4

