

# F E R R I G U S

## FEATURES

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

## Sawyer Jack's: a family-friendly eatery

Story and photos by

Charlie Denison  
Contributing Writer

Lynyrd Skynyrd's *Simple Man* plays on the radio as Jake Barth gets Sawyer Jack's ready on a warm Sunday morning in June.

Cleaning the renovated bar area, looking out at Western art and a rustic ambiance, he smiles, knowing this is the life he wanted.

"I'm the happiest I've been in a long time," he said. "Moving here to Roundup has given me my life back. I get up, go to work and laugh."

A Tacoma, Washington, native, Jake has found what he's been looking for: a tight-knit community reminiscent of Mayberry that takes him back to the basics of life: family, friends, community and a good place to eat.

Rachel, Jake's wife of 23 years, works by his side. She comes in and out from the redone kitchen. A big day lies ahead, as they've got to open their restaurant and cater an event in their food truck.

Since opening in 2015 – originally as Dirty Oscar's Annex – their signature meals have caught on: the Dead Elvis Burger (candied bacon, peanut butter, banana chutney, easy egg, split-top bun), the Down and Dirty Burger (white cheddar, caramelized leek, garlic mayo, hickory bacon, pretzel bun) and their Tasso Tacos (pulled pork, white cheddar, pickled apple, green chile creme, cilantro, pico de gallo and flour tortillas).



From left, Bruce, Jake, Rachel and Antonia Barth stand behind the bar before a big day in June at Sawyer Jack's. Bruce is Jake's father, and Antonia is Jake and Rachel's daughter. All four enjoy living in the Roundup area and working together as a family.

Like their lifestyle, the meals are also simple.

"We don't want to overcomplicate," Jake said. "We want our customers to know what they're getting, and know how it's made."

The meals are "something familiar with a twist," and most come from Tacoma-based chef Aaron Grissom. Seasoned in the kitchen, Grissom has been featured on Guy Fieri's Food Network show, *Diners, Drive-Ins & Dives*. Grissom's Parmesan Tots are also a big hit, and they are receiving some national attention in *Plate Magazine*.

Jake said Grissom has helped him evolve from a "meat-and-potato" guy. He still is, but his idea of food has evolved.

"I've really opened my eyes to food," Jake said. "I want to experience something different. That's why I like the Ma-and-Pa places."

That's what you get when you go to Sawyer Jack's, Jake said, and it's an easy stop to make while traveling Highway 87. The restaurant stands out, located 16 miles south of Roundup and 30 miles from Billings, where there is little else around.

People know the location, but they don't know the new name yet, as it just changed the first week of July.

"We thought Sawyer Jack's had more of a Montana feel," Jake said. "Plus the name honors my grandfather. He is the reason we are able to do what we are doing."

### All in the family

It's important to Jake to have a name with a family tie, as there are three generations of Barths working at Jack's. Jake's father, Bruce, helps out, as do Jake and Rachel's kids: Antonia, Cislee and Rosie.

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# MANAGER'S MESSAGE

From Scott Sweeney

## Solar set to begin generating

Thank you to the members who purchased solar panels even before the solar array was constructed. We appreciate the interest shown in the Cooperative Solar Program. To date, we have sold 172 of the 324 panels. By the time you receive your August 2017 issue of *Rural Montana* magazine, Independent Power Systems will have completed the installation of the inverters and the solar panels will be generating electricity. Although the solar array sets back from the highway, the three

rows of solar panels are easily visible from the road.

## Pole testing

Regular testing of power poles can determine a pole's strength and how long it may last. Line crews conduct visual tests on poles and use a handheld device that drills into the pole to check for rot and decay. A rotted pole could create a safety issue if climbed by a line worker, and during a storm it can be the weak link in a stretch of power line, potentially causing an outage.

So far in 2017, Fergus Electric

Cooperative line crews have tested 1,773 transmission power poles for rot and decay. The areas in which poles have been tested include from Carter to Hilger, Hilger to Roy, Roy to Grass Range, Hilger to Winifred and Winnett to Grass Range. We have replaced 35 poles and stubbed 15 transmission poles that failed the test and were rejected. We have not used our device to test the newer transmission poles. The average age of the poles tested is 42 years old.

## Fire danger

At this writing, much of the area in and around central Montana is extremely dry. We would all welcome some rain, but thunderstorms are worrisome. Although we have no control over the weather, we can do our part to use caution and care to prevent fires during the dry conditions we are experiencing.

# TIMELY TOPICS

## Harvest workers urged to be safe

Vangie McConnell, Editor



**H**arvest can be an exciting and exhausting time; the culmination of a season of hard work. However, the rush to harvest can also yield tragic outcomes. Each year, dozens of farm and ranch workers are killed — and hundreds are injured — in accidents involving power lines and electrical equipment.

"Things people see every day can fade from view and in the busy-ness of harvest time, it's easy for workers to forget about the power lines overhead," said Richard MacCracken of the Safe Electricity Advisory Board. "But failure to notice them can be a deadly oversight."

Activities that take place around power lines should be reviewed by inspecting the height of equipment to determine clearance. Equipment should be at least 10 feet away from power lines — above, below and to the side — a 360-degree rule.

"Always lower grain augers before moving them, even if it's only a few feet," says Bob Aherin, PhD, CSP and University of Illinois Professor and

Agricultural Safety & Health Program leader. "Variables like wind, uneven ground, shifting weight or other conditions can combine to create an unexpected result. Also, use extreme caution when raising the bed of a grain truck."

Workers should take these steps to ensure a safer harvest season:

- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines. Do not let the spotter touch the machinery while it is being moved anywhere near power lines.
- As with any outdoor work, be careful not to raise equipment such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember, non-metallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, ropes and hay will conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- Don't use metal poles to break up bridged grain inside bins. Know

where and how to shut off the power in an emergency.

Operators of equipment or vehicles must also know what to do if the vehicle comes in contact with a power line: 1) stay on the equipment, 2) warn others to stay away and call 911 and 3) do not get off the equipment until the utility crew says it is safe to do so.

"If the power line is energized and you step outside, touching the vehicle and ground, your body becomes the path and electrocution is the result," Aherin said. "Even if a power line has landed on the ground, the potential for the area nearby to be energized still exists. Stay inside the vehicle unless there's fire or imminent risk of fire."

If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together, without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to get back on or even touch the equipment. Some electrocutions have occurred after the operator dismounts and, realizing nothing has happened, tries to get back on the equipment.

It is very important that all farm and ranch workers, and seasonal employees, are informed of electrical hazards and trained in proper procedures to avoid injury.

For more information on electrical safety, visit [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org).

# Sawyer Jack's

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"It's a family operation," he said. "That's what I love about it, and that's what I love about life in Montana. It's not about money; it's about this time we get together."

Aside from family, the Barths also have Roundup residents working for them.

"It's fun to have locals who know the area and know what people like to eat," Rachel said. "They've been great."

It's very important to Jake and Rachel to stay involved with the Roundup community and to promote it. If people stop in from out of town, they regularly encourage them to check out other bars or restaurants, or take in the rodeo or another event.

"We love the area," Jake said.

"And we love the people," Rachel added. "That's our favorite thing about it."

## Time warp

Jake and Rachel want Sawyer Jack's to feel like stepping back in time. Walking in, customers see a blown-up newspaper page announcing the end of Prohibition. This fits Jack's 1919 theme. Jake said he has always been fascinated by that era and by easier times, whether it's the early '20s or the early '80s.

"I like to look back on the days with no cellphones," he said.

Brands from ranchers of the surrounding counties also decorate the restaurant, as has always been the case for the location, which many knew as



Jake and Rachel Barth take a moment in front of Sawyer Jack's food truck, which regularly makes its way around Roundup and Billings.

The Branding Iron. All the brands together bring a feeling of connectedness, and that's what Jake and Rachel want to bring to the table with Jack's.

So far, so good for Sawyer Jack's, Jake said, as the summer has been picking up. They credit a lot of this to the food truck, which they park from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. every Tuesday in front of the Arcade Sporting Goods and Bar in Roundup.

Jake encourages fans of the food truck to come to their place, sit down and get the full Sawyer Jack experience. Those who come in are not just customers, but part of a community.

"We want this to be a comfortable, welcome environment where everyone knows your name," Jake said. "We want

to have the kind of atmosphere that is fitting both for families and for someone stopping in to have a beer."

*Simple Man* continues to play, and Jake takes another look around, proud. It's going to be a busy day, but not too busy, and that's alright with him. He's where he wants to be, surrounded by the people he cares about the most, living in the place he's glad to call home.

*Sawyer Jack's is open every Wednesday to Sunday from noon until 9 p.m. It is located 90 miles from Lewistown on Highway 87, 16 miles south of Roundup. For more information, call (406) 323-8388.*

## Lineman hired

Jacob Grensten graduated from the Northwest Lineman College in Oroville, California, and comes to Fergus Electric Cooperative with a wealth of experience. He started his career in line work with River City Construction in Virginia Beach, California, and then worked for High Voltage, Inc. and Higher Power, LLC in North Dakota. He most recently worked for PAR Electric in various locations throughout Montana.

When asked what he likes best about his career choice, Jacob said, "I enjoy being outside every day and working with my hands. I also feel I'm contributing positively to customers, espe-

cially in storm-related outages." His line work has included repair of lines and power restoration following hurricanes, tornadoes, snow, ice, wind and thunderstorms.

When not working, and true to his preference for the outdoors, Jacob, who is single, likes to hike, camp, fish, hunt, golf and ski. He is happy to be back in Lewistown, where he graduated from Fergus High School.



Jacob Grensten

## Familiar faces in new places

Louie Hould has moved from a Lineman's position to become a serviceman. Some of his new responsibilities include changing meters, working collections and monitoring voltage issues. Louie will continue to be part of a three-man crew maintaining power lines and taking outage calls.



Louie Hould

# Record Youth Tour Crowd Hits Nations Capitol

*Messages of safety, hope and activism resonate in D.C.*

**A**lyssa Thomas was part of a record-setting crowd of 1,800 students on this year's National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Tour.



Alyssa Thomas

Students from 46 states descended on Washington, D.C., in June, including 28 from Montana and 16 from North Dakota traveling together.

In addition to the usual monuments and memorials, groups met with mem-

bers of Congress, some ready with timely messages. One student was quoted as saying, "When people think of America, they think of big cities with lots of people. Rural areas are the heart-beat of America."

NRECA CEO Jim Matheson told participants during the Youth Day program, "You bring a voice that wants to engage with people and talk about your community and what matters to you. It's up to all of us to support it, nurture it, hold it accountable and make it work. That's the approach of NRECA and that's the approach you will help us pursue."

Alyssa and her parents, Chantelle and Dan Thomas, are at home in rural Hobson.

## Is the grass really greener on the other side of the fence?



*This mule deer buck was not startled when Fergus employee Sue Werdin snapped his picture. He apparently thought the grass was greener on the earth-bermed portion of Fergus Electric Cooperatives' headquarters building in Lewistown.*

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