

F E R G U S

FEATURES

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

Judith Mountain Lodge — a welcoming destination

Story and photos by

Charlie Denison
Contributing Writer

“Nicole, what did you do?” That’s what Wally Wines, Nicole’s husband, asked when he first set foot in the Judith Mountain Lodge, formerly known as the Duvall Inn Bed and Breakfast, eight miles north of Lewistown by the Lime Kiln Trail.

“When we first got it, the place was in bad shape,” Nicole admitted, “but I saw potential right away.”

In March 2016, Nicole Wines purchased the place at a Shobe Auction, sight unseen. She knew she was taking a risk, but she also knew the property was a log lodge in the pines with a spectacular view.

That was enough for her to make the bid and start the journey.

From then until now, Nicole has worked tirelessly, turning the abandoned Duvall Inn into the Judith Mountain Lodge, a treasure next door to the Lewistown Scenic Overlook hike, complete with 10 hotel rooms, a conference room and a restaurant that’s growing in popularity.

Open every Thursday, Friday and Saturday evening, Judith Mountain Lodge’s restaurant features sirloin, salmon, shrimp scampi and other nightly



Judith Mountain Lodge is located eight miles outside of Lewistown. It has 10 hotel rooms, a restaurant with a full bar and a conference room.

specials, including appetizers such as mussels, calamari and oysters. The restaurant also has a full bar and a wait staff that takes pride in their presentation of entrees.

The steaks available often depend on the night.

“We mix it up,” Nicole said, adding that ribeye steaks and prime rib are always options. Other steak specials are subject to change.

“The steaks are pretty big and are all fresh cut,” she said. “Also, all grilling is done outside on an infrared grill. The staff loves cooking outside. It’s like a barbecue.”

This is exactly what Nicole had envisioned when she came up with the idea of having a restaurant at the lodge, and it’s taken off right away. In May, the restaurant had its grand opening and around 250 people came out.

Expansion underway

Currently, the lodge restaurant can seat 35-45 people, but that won’t be the

case next summer, as a major expansion is underway.

“We are going to build a patio,” Nicole said, “which will double the amount of people we can serve.”

Nicole said the proposed patio is larger than the current dining room, and she can’t wait to see it come to life.

“It’s going to be a remarkable outside eating area,” she said. “I really can’t wait. The expansion will include an outdoor ordering window. We will also extend the deck already in place and pour some concrete to create even more patio space.”

Part of Nicole’s excitement to expand comes from the restaurant’s high demand. The place fills up on a nightly basis.

“If you’re thinking about coming, you’re going to need a reservation,” she said.

This is sometimes shocking for Nicole, as she’s hardly done much



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MANAGER'S MESSAGE

From Scott Sweeney

Strategic check-up meeting

In November, the Board of Directors, key staff and I attended a productive two-day strategic planning check-up meeting, which was facilitated by Will Lutgen of Symbios Consulting. On day one, the group examined the list of goals we made in 2015 during the 2016 Strategic Planning Session, and assessed our accomplishments. During the day, we spent considerable time identifying present and future challenges, and opportunities for the co-op. Some of the topics covered included pole changes, new metering system, power supply and power production, capital credits and vehicle replacements.

On day two, the Board and I met with Will and tackled the challenge of succession planning, which is becoming increasingly necessary, with many of our co-op employees reaching retirement age soon.

Periodically, it is essential for the board and staff to engage in meaningful discussions outside the boardroom to monitor and evaluate the direction, requirements and scope of work necessary for our co-op to provide the best possible service to its members.

Identify Account Number*

Win a \$32.50 credit

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You will receive a \$32.50 credit on next month's statement.

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Capital credit general retirement increase

Last month, I reported that the board of directors approved a general retirement for members who received power from Fergus Electric Cooperative during 1984 and 1985. At its November board meeting, the board approved including 1986 in the capital credit general retirement, which brought the total 2017 distribution of capital credits to nearly one million dollars. This is a sizeable retirement of capital credits! As the co-op is member-owned, it is a pleasure to return the margins earned by Fergus Electric to our members. The IRS requires us to obtain a Form W-9

from those who were issued a check greater than or equal to \$600, as we will issue them a Form 1099 MISC. The co-op mailed out 444 Form W-9s to members whose capital credit retirement check is for at least \$600. That is a remarkable number!

Merry Christmas

On behalf of the co-op's board and staff, I want to wish all of you a very merry Christmas. Remember that it does a heart good to reach out to others, and there is no better time to express the sincere gift of giving than during the Christmas season. God bless all of you!



TIMELY TOPICS



The importance of loved ones — of all ages

Vangie McConnell, Editor

This is the season! The holidays often mean family get-togethers with lots of extended family. You may see babies, preteen nieces and nephews, and your 95-year old great aunt — all at the same time.

While this may feel like a source of holiday stress, it can also be a powerful gift. Loved ones of all ages can bring something positive into your life — and you to theirs. As reported in Mayo Clinic's newsletter *Embody Health*, here's what researchers have learned about relationships across generations.

Kids who are close to their grandparents are less likely to feel depressed in their teen years and early adulthood.

Playing with children helps older adults relax and feel less stressed.

Children who play with their adult family members are often more creative than those who don't. They also often have better language and problem-solving skills than those who play only with other children.

Relationships with brothers and sisters help shape how you feel about yourself. They can also affect how you adjust to life as you get older.

For adults in their late 40s, 50s and 60s, relationships with family members of all ages become even more important.

So, support from a wide network of loved ones can help you cope with life's stresses. Cherish these relationships and look for ways to strengthen them this holiday season.

Judith Mountain Lodge

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advertising.

“The restaurant has exploded largely through word of mouth,” she said. “It’s been very rewarding to see. I’m very pleased.”

A Montana experience

Nicole has put much attention to detail into the hotel rooms at Judith Mountain Lodge.

“Every room has its own theme,” she said. “We have a Missouri room, a Charlie Russell room, a hunting room (fits 12), a fishing room, a honeymoon room and many others. In the Missouri room, you have local art from a Roy artist. The fishing room features Jack Steyer’s fishing pole and, of course, the Russell room has Russell replicas.”

Like the restaurant, the rooms have a rustic Montana feel, and much of this is thanks to Chuck Ridgeway of Benchland, a woodworker who hand-crafted the dining tables and luggage racks.

“He does incredible work,” Nicole said.

She also put some of her own handiwork into the rooms.

“The curtains are homemade, and I even made a few of the bed frames,” she said.

Many of the decorations in the rooms Nicole found somewhere in central Montana, whether at garage sales, auctions or a Pheasants Forever get-together.

“I spend a lot of time in the area shipping cattle and like taking my time visiting businesses, meeting the people and getting involved,” she said.

Although Wally and she live in Paradise Valley, Nicole said Lewistown is a second home, and she looks forward to working more with the people there as the Judith Mountain Lodge continues to grow.

This being the case, Nicole encourages local businesses and organizations



Judith Mountain Lodge owner Nicole Wines stands behind the bar. The lodge is open for dinner Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, and rooms are open seven days a week.

to get ahold of her and make use of the lodge’s conference room.

“I think businesses need to know this is available as a place to get away for a few hours,” she said, taking a look at the Judith Mountains. “It’s a perfect place to have a little meeting or do some strategic planning.”

Coming together

Nicole said she can’t blame her husband for wondering what she’d gotten herself into when he first saw the place, but he can’t deny what’s she’s doing is remarkable.

“She’s worked hard,” he said, “and it shows.”

Nicole and her staff of 10-plus will

continue to put in the time necessary to make Judith Mountain Lodge meet its potential.

So far, so good.

“It’s coming together real well and people are loving it,” she said. “Come out and see us. The restaurant is open three days a week all winter and rooms are open seven days a week. It’s a great place to have a drink after taking a hike or doing some cross-country skiing. How sweet is it to have a bar at a trailhead?”

For more information or to make a reservation or book a private event, call the Judith Mountain Lodge at 406-538-7063.

Touchstone Energy’s Co-op Connections Card

Your Fergus Electric Cooperative membership means more than just affordable electricity. With the Touchstone Energy Co-op

Connections® Card, it also means up to 85 percent in savings at hundreds of participating retailers. Just another way Fergus Electric is connecting with members on pocket-book issues.

The Touchstone Energy Connections Card network takes advantage of economies of scale to provide products and services that enhance the unique relationship between co-ops and their members. The card provides co-op members with more than 25,000 money-saving discounts, while at the same time, strengthening a co-op’s



partnership with a variety of businesses.

Today, this member-benefit card is now in the hands of members at more than 468 co-ops in 46 states. The prescription

discount alone has saved cardholders more than \$64 million to date.

Finding ways to save you money — that’s the power of your co-op membership. Learn more at connections.coop.

Plug in to the power of Fergus Electric’s Touchstone Energy Cooperative membership at www.TogetherWeSave.com. If you do not have a card or you need a replacement, call 538-3465 and ask for another to be mailed to you, or stop in and pick one up.

Judith Mountain Lodge

6300 Lime Kiln Road

Restaurant open Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Rooms open seven days a week
406-538-7063

<https://www.judithmountainlodge.com/>

MECA and Fergus offer scholarships

If you are a high school senior planning to attend college or are a student continuing an undergraduate education, you could win a scholarship. Four \$500 scholarships will be awarded to qualified students whose parents are cooperative members.

To qualify for the scholarships, the applicant 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 postmarked no later than January 15, 2018, 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 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 Vangie at 406-538-3465. In addition, the application and guidelines are posted on Fergus Electric's website www.ferguselectric.coop and on the MECA website at www.mtco-ops.com.



Basin Electric Power Cooperative offers scholarship

Fergus Electric's power supplier, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, is offering a \$1,000 scholarship to the dependent of a member/consumer.

The applicant must be a student who is enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate course of study at an accredited, two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school.

Scholarship recipients are selected based on academic record, potential to succeed, leadership and participation in school and community activities, hon-

ors, work experience, a statement of education and career goals, and an outside appraisal.

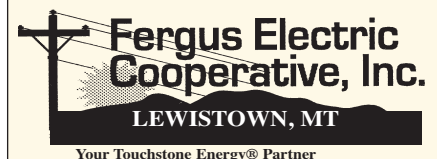
A scholarship application and essay topic are on Fergus Electric's website www.ferguselectric.coop. Contact Vangie at 406-538-3465 for more information or to request a copy of the application. Mail completed applications to Basin Scholarship, Fergus Electric Cooperative, 84423 U.S. Highway 87, Lewistown, MT 59457 postmarked no later than January 15, 2018.

Co-op Month Winners

Frank Dahlhausen of Moccasin, Dave Ward of Lewistown and Mark Gilkey of Denton each won a \$50 electric credit in the Co-op Month drawing. Congratulations! Your interest in the cooperative is appreciated.



MERRY CHRISTMAS
Our entire organization wishes you a pleasant holiday season. Fergus Electric's offices in Lewistown and Roundup will close for Christmas Dec. 25 and 26 and for New Year's Jan. 1 and 2.



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:

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Fergus Electric is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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