

# F E R G U S

## FEATURES

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

## K-M Scout Ranch is a boys' paradise



Boy scouts from all over Montana (and elsewhere) dressed in their field uniforms gather in formation at the K-M Scout Ranch last July.

Story and photos by

Charlie Denison  
Contributing Writer

**T**rustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent.

These are the values posted on the sides of the gravel road on the way to the K-M Scout Ranch, 20 miles north of Lewistown in the North Moccasin Mountains, a spot reminiscent of The Shire in J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* trilogy.

An administrative cabin, office and sleeping quarters come into view from the parking lot, as do green, welcoming vistas and a vast campground.

It's hard to know what all it offers from first glance.

Stopping into the admin office, I met Gerald Penn, the assistant camp director, who led me on a tour with Program Director Peter Jones.

"Take a look around," Penn said.

"There is a lot to see."

Driving around, Penn and Jones were as giddy as the Boy Scout campers, excited to show off each and every part of the camp.

"Have you been here before?" Penn asked.

I hadn't.

"If you had, you'd hardly recognize it," Jones said. "We've redone the road, put in shower houses, upgraded the welcome center and lodge, added a parking lot, a new well, new pipes and all new electrical. Every campsite now has running water and power. They also have bathrooms and showers."

There are many more changes to come, Jones said, including a new dining hall.

Tom Mazanec, a scout leader involved with the K-M Ranch since 1988, has one of the longest histories with the camp. He shed light on the K-M Scout Ranch then and now.

Established in 1971, the camp has grown considerably, but it's always been a place for scouts to enjoy them-

selves while also picking up some merit badges. It's a place for all scouts.

"We've had 30 Eagle Scouts over the time, we've had boys who don't have handicaps and boys who are severely handicapped," he said.

Mazanec said he's continually impressed with the growth he's seeing at K-M. In the last 30 years, the ranch has added a zip line, a renowned ATV course, a ropes course and a climbing wall.

A former K-M camp director, Mazanec said he is enthused with the direction of the camp. He's especially pleased to see the scouts share his enthusiasm, especially now that there are toilets and showers at the campsites, at least that's the case for Zach Lee, a member of Mazanec's Helena Troop.

"This is my second year here and it's a lot nicer this time," Lee said, "But the staff is always great. I have enjoyed it very much."

Lee said he isn't just here to gain

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# MANAGER'S MESSAGE

From Scott Sweeney

## Solar array is energized

Independent Power Systems completed the installation of the inverters and energized the Cooperative Solar Project array on August 4. To date, 59 members have purchased 221 of the total 324 solar panels. Each of the 330-Watt solar panels is projected to produce 450 kilowatt hours (kilowatt-hour) per year. The co-op will credit 10 cents per kilowatt, which makes an annual credit on your electric account of about \$45 per year.

Fergus Electric Cooperative members can purchase a solar panel or multiple panels at a cost of \$595 each. A deposit of \$250 each will reserve your panel(s).

We are pleased at how well the panels have sold and are eager for the solar panels to produce energy. The solar panels are sold on a first-come, first-serve basis, and as there are not too many panels remaining, I urge you to contact the office or download the Participation Application and Purchase Agreement from our website.

A ribbon-cutting commemorating the 100 KW Cooperative Solar Array being energized is in the works for all members of Fergus Electric Cooperative to attend the afternoon of Thursday, September 14 at Fergus Electric Cooperative's Lewistown headquarters.

## Metering system old and antiquated

From 2005 through 2010, Fergus Electric Co-op's line crews worked to install Turtle meters throughout our service territory. The automated metering system was a vast improvement over our previous metering system as it permits us to pull in member's meter readings via a computer program.

Installing the Turtle meters brought us into the 21st century and introduced us to the advantages of modern technology.

Although we have been satisfied with our current metering system, it is obsolete, which makes it difficult to maintain as we must work harder to locate replacement meters.

We will be taking steps to update our

metering system soon. We are teaming with Powder River Energy Cooperative (PRECorp) to obtain bids on a new metering system. By working together, our co-ops will benefit from economies of scale. We hope to begin installing a new metering system in 2018 or 2019.

## Identifying usage variations

The information pulled from the current metering system is straight forward and unsophisticated — it provides us with meter readings. Although obtaining readings from the Turtle system is a slow process, hence the name, the computer-generated report shows if a meter does or does not show usage for the report period. If a meter does not show any usage, we can check the meter location and see if it is an account that typically uses electricity. If previous months' readings showed usage, we can visit with the member and investigate to determine whether there was no usage due to an outage, faulty equipment or some other issue, which the member could potentially help us determine. Likewise, if there is a meter showing a large amount of usage, the member can typically shed some light on why.

Any new metering system we install will likely be comparable to our current system. The new metering systems will permit us to pull in meter readings near real-time, which will benefit us by quickly identifying and locating power outages. It will also be a benefit if a member calls about a high bill, as we can pull in their meter readings to show real-time usage, which can help the member pinpoint what was plugged in, i.e., extra heaters, air conditioners, etc. at their residence on a specific date or timeframe to help determine the increase in usage.

I will provide updates on the new metering system in future Manager's Messages. Stay tuned.

# Mark your calendar for Sept. 9 - 10

## Chokecherry Festival, Lewistown, Sept. 9

On the day of the festival, Lewistown closes its Main Street and it is lined with 250-plus vendor booths full of items ranging from specialty foods, baked goods, retail and art, to wood products, garden-fresh produce and other unique items.

Early morning begins with a pancake breakfast, served by the local Kiwanis club, featuring plenty of chokecherry syrup. The morning's 5k run/walk and 10k run offer opportunities to work off the tasty breakfast.

The festival continues with the chokecherry culinary contest, featuring a variety of chokecherry cuisine. Seasoned veterans of the chokecherry-spitting contest line up to display the skill with which they make the little seed fly. Each year, the contestants who spit their seeds the farthest are crowned king and queen.

Lewistown's Chokecherry Festival is a fun time for anyone looking to

experience a one-of-a-kind small-town celebration.

## Utica Day Fair and Montana Bale Trail, Sept. 9-10

On Sept. 9 from 6 to 7 p.m. the Utica Rod and Gun Club's roast beef dinner, raffle and auction will take place at the Utica Community Hall. Then on Sept. 10, breakfast will be served by the Masons from 7:30 – 10 a.m. in Hobson.

The Utica Fair continues with crafts, food, homemade pies and a quilt raffle from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 10. The Montana Bale Trail – a 21-mile loop — runs along state highways 239 and 541 with the eastern end being in Hobson, the western end at Windham, and Utica (home of the famous Oxen Yoke Inn) being the halfway point.

A hay-mazing hay maze is located between Hobson and Utica, and museums are open in both towns.

## 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.

**Account 99100**  
**Account 389740**  
**Account 271100**

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

*\*Numbers are drawn monthly.*



L to R: Boy Scouts line up in the ATVs following a lesson from Jeff McLaughlin. The ATV course is the most popular course K-M Scout Ranch offers. Troop leader and former K-M camp director Tom Mazanec, right, visits with troop members Zach Lee, center, and Hunter Borrer. Lee, of Helena, and Borrer, of California, both enjoyed all the K-M Ranch had to offer.

## K-M Scout Ranch

*Continued from page 3*

merit badges — although he said they are easy to get at K-M — he’s here because he wants to learn and grow.

“I’ve learned a lot here about how to really be a part of a group,” he said. “Boy Scouts has also really boosted my confidence.”

Lee said he plans to stay involved in the program and eventually be a leader.

“I want the boys who are younger than me to have the same opportunity as I’ve had,” he said.

Back on the tour, Jones said the 200-plus scouts who come out each week have an experience of a lifetime.

There are countless amounts of activities and adventures that take place during their week stay, but perhaps none are more popular than the ATV course.

“We’ve got two five-mile loops of ATV trails on the property,” Jones said. “We have ATV Safety Instructors who take the kids through a six-hour training class. They have a skills course, too, where they learn how to control the ATVs before going onto the trails.”

Jeff McLaughlin, an ATV safety instructor at K-M Ranch the past three years, loves working with the scouts.

“It’s a great deal for them,” he said. “Most of these kids have never been on a four-wheeler before, and may never be on one again. To see their growth

and their confidence is terrific. By the end of the course some of them look like they’ve been riding 10 years.”

The scouts who ride always take a great deal of pride in the course, and that pride is noted by others.

“When the kids walk back to camp in their ATV jerseys they are kind of a big deal,” McLaughlin said. “It’s kind of a status symbol.”

Driving back to camp headquarters, it was clear Jones was at home at the K-M, yelling out the window to 649 — his Boy Scout unit — while acknowledging every passerby, some more loudly than others. Wanting the tour to be as interactive as possible, he even picked up fellow camp director Paul Tiede, relieving him from the heat. Tiede, an Eagle Scout with a military background, is enjoying his first summer at the K-M.

“It’s a cool camp, and it’s getting cooler,” he said. “Scouts have a great opportunity for advancement and adventure. It’s rockstar stuff.”

Scout law — the values written on the way into camp — is as relevant today as it was 100 years ago, Tiede said. That goes for forming relationships, as well, which he said is what the K-M is all about.

“We are selling memories,” he said.

“We are selling friendship amongst boys, the other scouts and their families.”

For more information, go to <http://www.montanabsa.org/scout->

[programs/camps/camp-rental/k-m-scout-ranch](http://www.montanabsa.org/scout-) or call the Council Service Center at (406)761-6000.

### Directions

From Lewistown, turn north onto U.S. Highway 191. After 9.2 miles, turn left onto MT Highway 81. After two miles, turn right onto North Kendall Road, (a Boy Scouts flag indicates the road). Go up the road and follow signs to the camp. The drive is approximately 20 miles.

### Activities

Camping, cooking, first-aid training, shooting sports (including cowboy action), mountain biking, climbing wall, ropes course, a zipline, swimming, boating and an ATV course.

### Scout Oath

*On my honor I will do my best  
To do my duty to God and my country  
And to obey the Scout Law;  
To help other people at all times;  
To keep myself physically strong,  
mentally awake, and morally straight*

# Annual Meeting Scholarship Winners

Students vying for a “luck of the draw” scholarship at the June annual meeting were pleasantly surprised. Thirty students registered for a chance to win one of 10 \$1,000 scholarships. However, they learned that 20 scholarships would be offered. That was exciting news — two-thirds of the participants would win a scholarship. But as board member Mike Vlastelic prepared to draw names, he announced that because of a generous

donation from the Strand Ranch Estate, each student in attendance would receive \$1,000. For the 30 college students and soon to be college students, this was welcome news. The young people represented towns from throughout Fergus Electric’s service territory — Buffalo, Denton, Grass Range, Hobson, Lewistown, Moore, Roundup, Roy, Ryegate, Shawmut and Winnett. Not pictured is Emily Bergum.



Cole Ayers



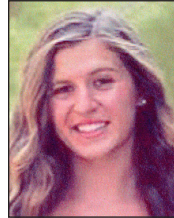
Danielle Birdwell



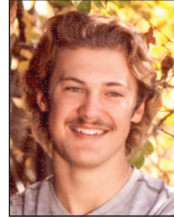
Mary Birdwell



Haiden Collins



Carrie Cota



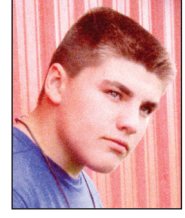
Tanner Crawford



Taylor Dahl



Addie Donaldson



Lucas Eickoff



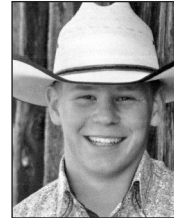
Jadan Flugge



Abigail Gatz



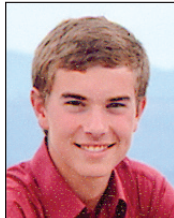
Chase Gerer



Lane Hathaway



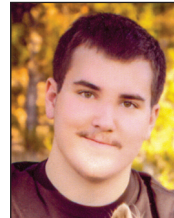
Anthony Hofer



Kai Krumwiede



Kodi Myhre



Benjamin Naylor



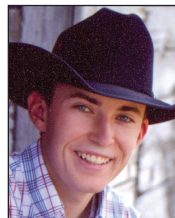
Franny Obert



Elizabeth Pennell



Mariah Siroky



Clay Sluggett



Cole Sluggett



Logan Sluggett



Sarah Speer



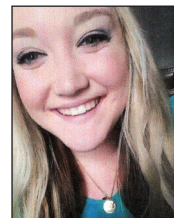
Keelan Tabor



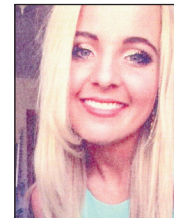
Whitney Weeden



Nora Weichel



Ashley Wickens



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**Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc.**  
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**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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Monte Obert.....	406-425-1288
Melanie Foran.....	406-462-5650

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