



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



FAMILY DOLLAR

THE WAIT IS OVER

Popular retailer opens in Lewistown

Story by CHARLIE DENISON | contributing writer

On the east end of town, across from Ace Hardware and next door to SCL Health, a new store has opened, one that has come with much anticipation.

As a Chamber of Commerce employee, I can attest to this. The calls have been coming in for months.

“Are we getting a Family Dollar?” people have asked. “Is it true?”

The answer has revealed itself.

On Wednesday, April 28, Family Dollar opened its doors in Lewistown, followed by a grand opening Sunday, May 16.

Lewistown Family Dollar Manager Karen Butler said she couldn’t be happier with how the store is coming along, and the response from the commu-

nity is greater than she imagined.

“People are really excited,” she said. “Everybody seems to pretty much love it here.”

This goes for her employees, as well.

“It’s a great store,” said employee Tammy Landano. “I love the variety, the prices and familiar faces.”

“It’s been great to be a part of this from the ground up,” added Assistant Manager Steve Knox. “After 32 years as a wildland firefighter, retail is new to me. It’s been a nice change.”

A central Montana native, Knox said one of his favorite parts of the job is seeing so many people he knows, and he’s grateful to see them enjoying their experience.

This also thrills Butler, who says customer satis-

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MANAGER'S MESSAGE

From Carson Sweeney

Fergus Electric's 83rd Annual Meeting a success

THANK you to those who were able to make it to our 83rd annual meeting at the Trade Center in Lewistown on Thursday, June 10th. We were delighted to see everyone in person. Outside, we had a line of spectators watch those who were brave enough to take a bucket truck ride and enjoy the view from 40-plus feet above the ground.

We had 114 registered members in attendance. Prior to our business meeting, we enjoyed a delicious lunch provided by the Montana Cattle Women. Thank you to the entire team of adults and kids who helped with the lunch!

Board President Paul Descheemaeker conducted the meeting and gave a speech on the current state of affairs at the cooperative. I spoke in detail on the amount of work that was completed in 2020, including: 100 new services, of which 35 were in the Roundup area, 21 miles of new line, 229 pole replacements, 1,400 meter replacements and the installation of 500 AMI communication stations. In 2020, we partnered with CJZ Tree Service to trim back trees in the Grass Range and Roy areas.

Roundup's 113-year-old shop, warehouse showing its age

One project that has been on the docket for nearly 20 years is a new facility in our Roundup area. At the annual meeting we provided pamphlets with pictures and information on our current facility in Roundup, which was built in 1908. The existing property is small, and the building is showing its age. The shop and warehouse, once a railroad depot, are inadequate in size and unable to house the material and equipment



Fergus Electric's 83rd Annual Meeting took place at the Trade Center in Lewistown on Thursday, June 10. The event had 114 registered members. | **FERGUS ELECTRIC PHOTO**

that our membership invests in. We continue to see strong member growth in the Roundup area, and hope to invest in their future with a facility to meet their needs going forward.

Several years ago, Fergus Electric purchased 5.7 acres of property with plans to construct a new shop 1.6 miles east of Roundup. We are not intending to break ground anytime soon, but we would like to hear from our membership on whether they would be supportive of a new building in Roundup. Please let us know your thoughts on this project. Call the office at (406) 538-3465. With your feedback, we will bring our well-thought-out plan before the membership, for your approval, at an annual meeting in the future.

Lucky Luck of the Draw Scholarship winners

To those students who did not attend our annual meeting, you

certainly missed out. The Fergus Electric Board of Directors asked all 12 of the students in attendance to come forward and introduce themselves. After which, each of them was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship. We are excited for each of them. Congratulations!

Fergus employees assist co-op after extreme storms

The day after our annual meeting, we heard news that a neighboring electric cooperative, McCone Electric, in Circle, sustained significant system damage from a windstorm. Five Fergus Electric employees stepped up to head that way to help with the restoration efforts. We are proud to have sent such fine individuals to represent Fergus Electric. We hope the restoration efforts go smoothly.

To those who were unable to attend this year's annual meeting, we hope to see you next year. **RM**



Marilynn Cady of Red Lodge hands some peanut M&M's to Assistant Manager Steve Knox at Family Dollar in early June. Cady said she's happy for her Lewistown family that they have a Family Dollar now. "We've loved ours in Red Lodge," she said. |
PHOTO BY CHARLIE DENISON

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faction is what Family Dollar is all about.

"We make it our goal to have a welcoming atmosphere," she said.

According to www.familydollar.com, the chain (one of the fastest-growing retailers in the nation) has a business model to "deliver value on family essentials in a convenient neighborhood location."

Butler said the feedback she's receiving from Lewistown customers indicates this mission has been accomplished, especially when it comes to the inventory.

Items people can find at Family Dollar includes: household cleaners, food, health and beauty aids, toys, apparel, home fashions, air mattresses, bedding, home decor, laundry soap and much more.

"People have been impressed with our freezer selection as well as our card selection," Butler said. "I've also heard a lot of good things from people about having availability for socks, underwear, towels, pillows and bedding," she said, "and I've heard a lot of good things about how we offer items people typically wouldn't expect. For example, we have a lot of seasonal surprises. Right now we have birdhouses, bird baths, solar lighting, fans and items for gardening. We encourage people to come in and see what we have to offer as the weather turns, and when the holidays get closer."



Family Dollar is open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday, and 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Sundays. For more information, call the store at (406) 968-6000.

Family Dollar became a member of Fergus Electric in March 2021.

There are already a lot of return customers, Butler added, "sometimes twice in one day."

Although brand new to Lewistown, Butler has been familiar with Family Dollar for almost four years.

"I originally started at Family Dollar in Watford City, North Dakota," she said. "I started as an assistant and worked my way up to manager. I'm grateful to be here [in Lewistown] now – back in Montana."

Originally from Forsyth, Butler said she has always loved the Treasure State and is ecstatic to be in the Fergus County area, where she's been overwhelmed by the generosity of the community.

Butler said people can expect the same kind of hospitality when they stop and see her at the new store.

"I like people and I like customer service," she said, "and Family Dollar emphasizes the importance of assisting shoppers with its G-E-T system: Greet them, Exceed their

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Lewistown Family Dollar Manager Karen Butler is pleased with the response the store has seen from the community. | PHOTO BY CHARLIE DENISON

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expectations and thank them. I think it's really important to make eye contact with the people coming in the store, help them in any way possible if they need help, and just go above and beyond."

Butler said her fellow Family Dollar employees share this motto.

"I'm really impressed with their natural ability to be cordial. They're genuinely friendly. I haven't had to talk to any of them about how to be courteous to customers. It's wonderful."

From 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Butler said there's no way to predict who is going to walk through the doors, but the people who do come in (people of all ages and all walks of life), she said, can expect to be treated kindly. And they can really expect to find items available for just a buck.

"We have specific 'dollar stop areas' where all items in that designated space are only \$1," she said. "That kind of deal is hard to find, and people are grateful. Say someone is a little low on money at the end of the month, it helps people to have that option."

That's the kind of satisfaction Family Dollar wants to provide, Butler said, and she's enthused to be a part

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– Karen Butler,
Manager of Family Dollar in Lewistown

of bringing one to Lewistown.

Of course, Butler is aware there are other businesses in town who offer similar products, but she is not concerned.

"I think this is great for Lewistown, and great for the economy," she said. "This is growth. Lewistown is growing. It's not staying the same, and it's a good thing. It's healthy competition, and we can all co-exist."

Ultimately, for Butler, and for her Family Dollar employees, what matters most is having the opportunity to make a difference.

"As long as we can provide something great for the people here...that's what makes me happy," she said. 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 391437, Account 395784
Account 61600, Account 362610
Account 379264, Account 321486**

CONGRATULATIONS!

Gene Horyna of Roy, **Floyd Forbes** of Hobson and **Thomas Cummings** of Lewistown were last month's winners.

*NUMBERS ARE DRAWN MONTHLY

Fergus Electric Cooperative, Inc.
LEWISTOWN, MT

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 Nellermoe (Roundup).....	406-939-0636
Carson Sweeney	406-366-0971
Melanie Foran.....	406-462-5650
Scott Olson.....	406-366-5822
Dan Balster.....	406-366-0975

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Fergus Features is an award-winning newsletter.