



## 88th annual meeting celebrates cooperative

**I**n the heart of every community lies its cooperative spirit, where neighbors come together to celebrate past achievements and plan for a brighter future.

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) held its 88th annual meeting June 5 at the Richland County Event Center.

One of the cherished traditions is the annual meeting meal. Jerry and Judy Foss catered a fantastic pork dinner, bringing together members from all walks of life. From young families to seasoned retirees, everyone had a seat at the table, symbolizing the inclusive nature of the cooperative.

### CEO report

Following the meal, CEO Jason Brothen emphasized the importance of LYREC's mission statement and highlighted how LYREC fulfills its mission statement regarding commitment to safety, reliability and affordability.

Brothen spoke about the many avenues LYREC uses to educate its members on the hazards of electricity.

"The cooperative employees must put safety at the

very top of the list every day and I am proud of how our employees have prioritized safety measures while serving our members," he said.

Brothen also reported LYREC has finished the Hunter substation. The new substation will support growth and allow LYREC to update numerous circuits and devices, which will increase LYREC's reliability by giving a backup option when outages occur. Brothen reported on the numerous improvements made to the system which strengthen LYREC's service territory.

Affordability was the final piece of the mission statement Brothen spoke about. Brothen assured the membership the board and staff work hard to ensure the cooperative's costs stay compatible with the rates. He also reported there is an attack on baseload generation, putting affordability at risk. He encouraged the membership to work together to make sure the approach to the future baseload generation is an "all-of-the-above" solution for the country.

Brothen introduced the staff and presented

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several service awards. Journeyman Lineworker Cole Jankovsky, Apprentice Lineworker Lee Delp and IT Tech Jeremy Reese received their five-year service awards. Line Locator Edwin Gatzke, Journeyman Lineworker Ryder Peterson, Warehouse Supervisor Justin King and Journeyman Lineworker Tanner Roth received their 10-year service award. Directors Jim Vitt and Dennis Nelson also received awards for serving for 10 years on the LYREC board.

### **President's report**

President Allen Thiessen reported the audit has been completed and the cooperative's financial accounting measures meet the recommended practices. Thiessen gave an overview of the financial statements. He reported LYREC's financial condition will be assessed later in the year, with the plan to retire capital credits at the end of the year.

Thiessen spoke about some of the legislative issues, such as the ever-changing rules the government is placing on power plant emissions. The government's rules would affect certain baseload electric generation plants, but the plan doesn't include providing the backup generation to provide power when the sun doesn't shine or the wind doesn't blow. Large-scale changes to the generation mix will decrease reliability and increase rates for everyone.

Thiessen also reported on the deal the Biden Administration made with the western states to remove the Snake River Dams, so the fish can swim upstream. This would remove hydroelectric power generation from all the cooperatives west of us. If this happens, it may put pressure on the existence of other dams along the Missouri River, impacting LYREC members.

Thiessen introduced Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) Director of Government Relations Mark Lambrecht to speak to the membership about

the importance of joining the MECA Grassroots Action Team. By joining the grassroots team, you will receive emails when key issues arise, asking you to send an email to Congress. If you would like to have your voice heard on important issues, call LYREC to enroll in the Grassroots Action Team.

Thiessen reported on the shared service agreement LYREC and Mid-Yellowstone Electric Cooperative have had for eight years. As of November 2023, Goldenwest Electric Cooperative, Wibaux Mont., also joined the shared service agreement.

### **Entertainment**

Guests were treated to a performance by Nashville recording artist Jessie Veeder Scofield, who captivated the audience with her guitar strumming and soulful voice, blending country and folk melodies. Between songs, she shared comical stories of ranch life, North Dakota's beauty and the personal moments that inspired her music.

### **Director election**

Attorney Jean Faure announced the Nominating Committee consisting of Bob Albin, Mike Kjos, Ben Larson and Scott Greenwood met on March 5. The committee nominated one candidate for each district. Accordingly, the election of trustees was by acclamation.

Jim Vitt was reelected for District 1 and Colin Gartner was reelected for District 2.

### **Scholarships**

Member Services Manager Jami Propp announced the names of the twelve Superhero Scholarship recipients. The following were awarded \$1,000: Adriana Beyerle, BayLee Schlothauer, Brie Mullin, Cloey Eide, Dalton Bouchard, Drae Nelson, Ella Norby, Lauren Kjos, Lexi Morlock, Parvina Eshonqulova, Seth Beyerle and



Taylor McPherson.

LYREC's 88th annual meeting had a great turnout. Thank you for taking the time to be part of your electric cooperative. For those of you who missed the meeting, the recording of the meeting is on LYREC's website under the "2024 Annual Meeting" tab. If you would like to be part of the Grassroots Action Team, call 406-488-1602.

The annual meeting is more than just a gathering; it is a celebration of community strength and collaborative planning for a sustainable future. It embodies the essence of cooperation - working together for the betterment of all. ■



Some of the Superhero Scholarship winners were present at the annual meeting.

## Electricity provides powerful value

If you are like most people, aspects of your life become sort of a daily routine. You get ready for work, get in the car and drive to the coffeeshop on the way to the office. At lunchtime, you drive to the nearest fast-food location to grab a quick lunch. Maybe you stream an episode or two of your favorite show before bed.

As we all look for ways to save money in this age of increasing inflation, we begin to think about our daily routine and how much value it provided us compared to the money we spent. A morning latte costs about \$6, a fast-food combo sets us back about \$10 and a Netflix subscription is about \$15 a month. All these daily expenses total about \$85 a week or about \$340 a month. And what was the real value - short-term satisfaction and a larger waistline? Even if we start packing our own lunch, the latte will still cost about \$120 a month. Is this the best value for our money?

The average daily cost of electricity is about \$3.73, and the average monthly electric bill for members of Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) is \$112. A member could power his or her entire home every day for the price of a medium latte. Members could brew their own coffee, cook their own meals, binge a series and run on a treadmill for less than the cost of that drink. Now that's real value.

Electricity provides benefits we often take for granted. It goes well beyond short-term satisfaction by allowing us to charge devices and have cold food and hot water, all in a comfortable indoor climate. Besides the privilege it affords, electricity has also remained relatively cost-stable even amidst rising inflation.

As a member-owned cooperative, LYREC does everything in its power to ensure your costs stay reasonable and electricity remains a great value for our members. It's not always easy, as several factors beyond inflation impact the price of electricity - some within our control, but most beyond it.

The cost of electricity can fluctuate due to supply

and demand, infrastructure investment, maintenance and operational expenses. Weather patterns also contribute, affecting both demand and generation capabilities, with extreme conditions leading to heightened energy use or disruptions. Government policies, such as subsidies for renewable energy or taxes and regulations on emissions, shape electricity costs as well. Your electric co-op considers all these aspects when adjusting rates, and because we're a cooperative, we consider the impact of those costs on our members as well.

As our community continues to rely on electricity for nearly everything in our homes, schools, hospitals and businesses, we need it to be reliable and affordable. You can be assured, LYREC will always put you top of mind and works each day to ensure electricity remains the best value for your money. ■

### Budget billing: Sign up through August

Cooler weather will be here before you know it. Heating requires more energy than any other system in your home, typically making up about 42% of your energy bill.

Budget billing is available to all residential members who have an "A" credit rating and have established a 12-month history with Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC). The member can remain on budget billing if the account remains current.

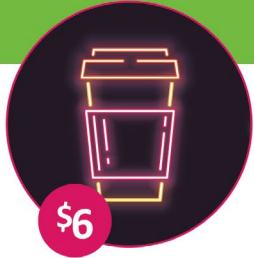
To determine your budget billing amount, LYREC will average your current and last 11 months of bills. Therefore, there will be variations each month, but the change will not be as drastic and will make budgeting easier.

If you would like to sign up for budget billing, call LYREC's office to see if you qualify. You will need to submit an application before Aug. 31. To get a form, stop by the office or go to [www.lyrec.coop](http://www.lyrec.coop). ■

# Where Do You Find Value?

Did you know the average daily cost of electricity is \$4.57, or about \$140 per month?

Electricity fuels our daily life essentials, from heating/cooling equipment to entertainment devices and appliances. Think of how vital power is compared to other everyday purchases. That's real value.



Morning To-Go Latte



Fast-Food Combo Lunch



All-Day Power

Sources: Energy Information Administration, MoneyGeek and CNET

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Phone: 406-488-1602

Fax: 406-488-6524

Website: www.lyrec.com

## TRUSTEES

Allen Thiessen ..... President  
 Greg Rauschendorfer ..... Vice President  
 Dennis Schmierer ..... Secretary/Treasurer  
 Colin Gartner ..... Trustee  
 Tim Franzen ..... Trustee  
 Dennis Nelson ..... Trustee  
 Jim Vitt ..... Trustee

## EMPLOYEES

Jason Brothen ..... General Manager  
 Jami Propp ..... Member Service Manager  
 Pam Wilcoxon ..... Chief Financial Officer  
 Melissa Buckley ..... Plant Accountant  
 Kyle Kavanagh ..... IT Director  
 Margo Zadow ..... Billing Coordinator  
 Tiffani Hentges ..... Customer Service Representative  
 Chris Hillesland ..... Chief Operations Officer  
 Rich Gorde ..... Journeyman Lineman  
 Eric McPherson ..... System Controller  
 Kevin Goff ..... Operations Assistant  
 Kelly Keyser ..... Operations Manager  
 Aaron Eide ..... Journeyman Lineman  
 Bryan Franck ..... Journeyman Lineman  
 Jesse Obergfell ..... Journeyman Lineman  
 Tanner Roth ..... Journeyman Lineman  
 Ryder Peterson ..... Journeyman Lineman  
 Cole Jankovsky ..... Journeyman Lineman  
 Lee Delp ..... Apprentice Lineman  
 Preston Long ..... Apprentice Lineman  
 Trey Schepens ..... Apprentice Lineman  
 Jory Bell ..... Apprentice Lineman  
 Brandon Mueller ..... Master Electrician  
 Mike Eberling ..... Mechanic  
 Dan Gieser ..... EMS  
 Lee Alvstad ..... Mechanic/EMS  
 Richard Tremblay ..... EMS  
 Bo Kindopp ..... GIS/Easement Technician  
 Tom Hall ..... GIS Specialist  
 Corey Candee ..... Chief Information Officer  
 Jeremy Reese ..... Information Technology Technician  
 Braden Kindopp ..... Information Technology Technician  
 Edwin Gatzke ..... Line Locator/Groundsman  
 Justin King ..... Warehouse Supervisor  
 Dennis Fine ..... Summer Help

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

# Discounts offered for Medora vacation



MEDORA

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative is able to offer its members a discount by being a Touchstone Energy® member. Simply call 1-800-MEDORA-1 and give the discount code of "TOUCH2024" for a 15% discount on all of the following during any night of the season.

### THINGS TO DO:

- Medora Musical
- Pitchfork steak fondue
- Bully Pulpit Golf Course
- Gospel Brunch tickets
- Old Town Hall Theater shows

### LODGING AT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Elkhorn Quarters
- Badlands Motel
- Rough Riders Hotel
- Medora Campground

The code is good for reservations over the phone, website or in person. A green fees discount will be applied at check-in for a tee time at the golf course.