

Join LYREC June 5 for annual meeting

The 2024 Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) annual meeting is set for Wednesday, June 5, at the Richland County Event Center. If you are unable to attend the in-person meeting, there is also an option for you to join virtually. For a link to register for the virtual meeting, go to www.lyrec.coop or to LYREC's social media pages.

Dinner and registration will be from 5 to 5:45 p.m. The business meeting will begin at 6 p.m. Jessie

Veeder Scofield will be our special guest for the evening. She will be regaling us with her stories and songs about her life in western North Dakota.

Several college scholarships will be awarded throughout the evening. Also, each member account joining either in person or virtually, and staying throughout the business meeting, will receive a \$50 bill credit. ■



Discounts offered for Medora vacation

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.

SIGNS OF AN

ENERGY SCAM

High-Pressure Tactics

Scammers will pressure you, creating a sense of urgency. Claims that your power will be disconnected without immediate payment are common with utility scams.

Sketchy Payment Methods

Scammers may ask for unusual payment methods like gift cards or cryptocurrency. In these cases, it's likely a scam.

Dodgy Communication

Whether an email, text message or letter, utility scams typically include poor grammar, spelling errors or unusual email addresses. These are common warning signs of a scam.



Energy scams unmasked

Consumers with water, gas and electricity connections have long been targets of utility scams. But in today's digital world, every swipe and click increases the risk of potential scams.

Scammers are more sophisticated than ever before and they understand our increasing reliance on technology. With their sharpened digital knives, scammers have adapted their tactics to trick unsuspecting consumers through a variety of methods.

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) wants to help you avoid energy scams, whether it is a financial loss or a leak of your personal information. This month, we share updates on some of the latest utility scams, as well as tips to help you stay safe from even the craftiest scammers.

Recent utility scams

Scammers typically disguise themselves - either

physically or digitally - as utility employees or representatives to steal consumers' money or personal information. A common trick is to claim a consumer's bill is past due and threaten to disconnect service if payment isn't received immediately. Scammers approach consumers through a variety of means, including phone calls, text messages, emails and even in-person visits. However, the digital line of attack is increasingly more common.

For example, new capabilities disguising caller ID or "spoofing" can make the phone number you see on caller ID appear to be from a trusted source. Spoofing makes it easier for scammers to deceive you, because it's more difficult to immediately verify the call. Another recent scam uses fraudulent websites identical to a utility payment webpage. What's worse, these pages are often promoted on search engines to trick consumers into clicking and making a payment.

Another recent scam involves phone calls, text messages or emails claiming you overpaid your electric bill and will receive a cash or banking refund. This offer may seem too good to be true, and it is. It's likely a scam aimed to steal your personal information.

Spotting a scam

You can watch for several red flags to identify an energy scam.

Scammers often use high-pressure tactics to create a sense of urgency, like claiming your electricity or other services will be disconnected if a payment isn't made immediately.

Additionally, scammers may ask for unusual payment methods, such as gift cards or cryptocurrency. If someone is pushing for an unusual payment method, it's likely a scam.

You've probably noticed many digital scams, like emails or text messages, include poor grammar, spelling errors and odd email addresses. These are red flags, so when you see these dodgy forms of communication, consider it a potential scam.

What LYREC will (and won't) do

LYREC will never demand an instant, immediate payment and threaten to disconnect your service without prior notice or warnings. We strive to resolve challenging situations and work with our members to avoid disconnects.

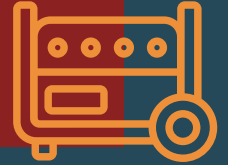
LYREC will never ask for your Social Security number or banking details over the phone or through email. We offer several secure payment options, including in-person, ACH, interactive voice response, through our website and by using the SmartHub app.

Avoiding scams

Whether in-person, over the phone or online, always be suspicious of an unknown individual claiming to be a LYREC employee requesting banking or other personal information. We will only send you text messages if you have opted for important alerts like bill alerts or past-due notices.

If you're ever in doubt about a potential energy scam, give us a quick call at 406-488-1602 so we can assist. LYREC wants to help protect you and our community against utility frauds, and by notifying us about potential scams, you can create the first line of defense. We encourage you to report any potential scams so we can spread the word and prevent others in our community from falling victim. ■

What to do before using a PORTABLE GENERATOR



Prepare

Install battery operated carbon monoxide (CO) alarms throughout your home; ensure they are working properly.

Position

Place a portable generator at least 20 feet from windows and doors; do not use one in a garage or carport.



Read

Carefully review and then follow all manufacturer's instructions.

Protect

If it is wet outside, keep it dry by placing it on a tarp. Position it under a portable canopy (not a carport).



Refuel Safely

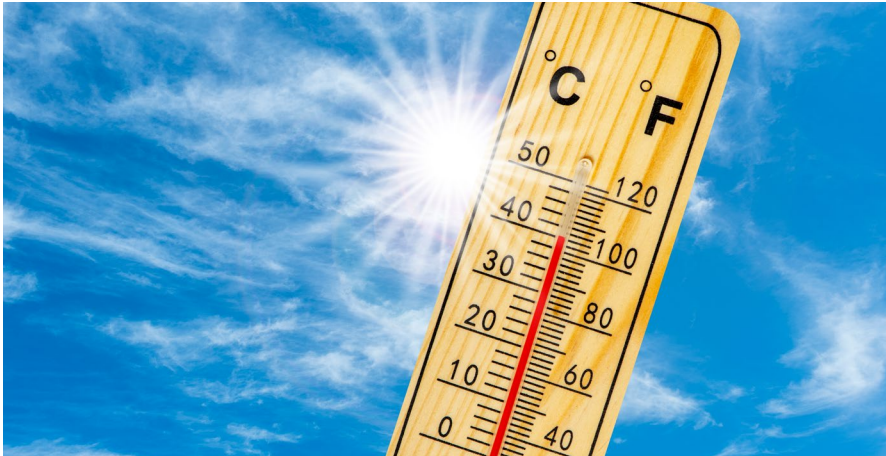
Turn off your portable generator and let it cool down before refueling.

Inspect and Maintain

Inspect a portable generator before each use and make sure it is properly maintained.



Using a portable generator can be useful during an outage; however, use one correctly to prevent CO poisoning and to stay safe.



Prepare your home to beat the summer heat

During the sweltering summer months, people nationwide crank up their air conditioners to stay cool. Be sure your house is ready to beat the heat this year by following a few guidelines.

Most of these suggestions require little effort or cost.

- **Check the insulation.**

According to Energy Star, insulation is usually measured using the R-value. R-value is a measure of the insulation's ability to resist heat traveling through it. The higher the R-value, the more effective it will be to beat the heat. The level of insulation recommended for the area can be found at www.EnergyStar.gov. If you are lacking the recommended insulation, you can add more right on top of the old insulation. However, don't put a vapor barrier between the layers. Be sure the insulation doesn't block vents or cover exhaust fans.

- **Ventilate the attic.** When the outside temperature is in the 90s, your attic can easily reach 140 degrees. Adequately sized vents and/or an attic fan can help keep hot air from accumulating.

- **Get the air conditioner ready.** Shut off power to the unit before cleaning it. On the inside, wash or vacuum cleanable filters; replace disposable ones. Outside, clear leaves and other debris away from the condensing unit. Hose off any accumulated dirt.
- **Put a timer or programmable thermostat on your air conditioner.** Leave it on a higher temperature while you're away and set it to cool the house half an hour before you return home.
- **Close blinds, shades or drapes during the hottest part of the day.** Consider planting fast-growing trees and shrubs near your home to provide shade.
- **Consider installing ceiling fans.** On moderately warm days, fans can circulate enough air to keep you comfortable without air conditioning.

If you're shopping for a new unit, check the efficiency rating or SEER. The higher the SEER number, the more efficient the air conditioner. Consider buying an Energy Star-approved unit, which uses about 14% less energy than traditional air conditioning units for central air and at least 10% less for room units. ■



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