



*Nelson*



*Rauschendorfer*



*Thiessen*

## Nominating Committee to meet in March

The Nominating Committee will meet Tuesday, March 7, at Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative's office. The purpose of the Nominating Committee is to select candidates for the board of trustees. The cooperative members will have an opportunity to vote for the candidates during the June 1 annual meeting.

The Nominating Committee will consist of two members from District 5, District 6 and District 7. The committee will nominate one or more candidates from District 5, 6 and 7. The present trustees holding seats in these districts are Dennis Nelson, District 5, Greg Rauschendorfer, District 6, and Allen Thiessen, District 7.

The 2017 Nominating Committee consists of:

- Representing District 5, Roger Bearce and Christine Brookman
- Representing District 6, Mike Fisher and Neil Turnbull
- Representing District 7, Brian Ligon and Susan Torgerson

If you are a member of Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative, reside in District 5, 6 or 7 and are interested in running for the board of trustees, contact one of the Nominating Committee members and ask to be considered for nomination.

If you have a joint membership (memberships in more than one name), either member on the account can run for the board of trustees. If only your spouse's name is on the account, your spouse is the only one eligible to run for the board of trustees. A joint membership is entitled to one vote at any meeting of the cooperative. ■

## Youth Tour essay winner named



*Rice*

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative on the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., in June 2017. Soda will be one of the 20-plus Youth Tour winners from across Montana.

Soda Rice, a student at Savage High School and the daughter of Staci and Park Rice, has been selected to represent

Soda participates in volleyball, basketball and track. She is also secretary of the student council and the National Honor Society. Soda is currently employed part time with the Savage school. Through the summer, she works on a ranch and is also a hostess at a restaurant in Sidney.

The Washington, D.C., Youth Tour is more than a trip to the nation's capital to sightsee. It is a prominent event in which thousands of high school students from across the United States join together in Washington,

D.C. This trip helps youth understand our nation's history and the freedoms we enjoy, as well as the many costs of those freedoms.

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative believes in investing in today's youth. We are investing in our – and your – future. We know we have some of the brightest students right here in our state, and we want to give them the opportunity to experience the past, present and future of our county.

Congratulations, Soda! (Meter No. 22707) ■

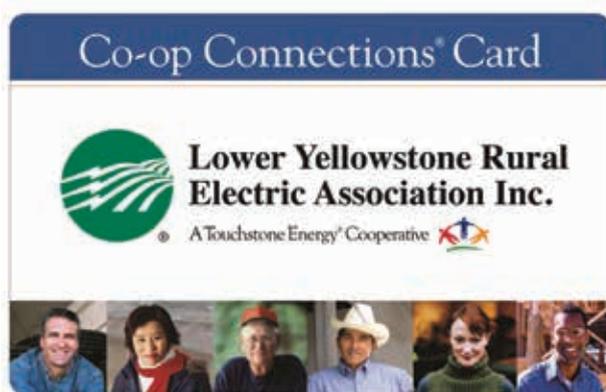
## Help with heating is available



If you or someone you know needs help this heating season, funds are available. If you reside in Montana, you can contact Energy Share at 800-227-0703. If you reside in North Dakota, contact Community Action at 701-572-8191. Montana residents may pick up an application at Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) or Energy Share.

Once you submit your application, it can take up to two months before receiving assistance. If you are finding yourself in a financial bind, please pick up an application today. ■

## Co-op Connections Card offers savings



Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) distributed the Co-op Connections Card to all of its members at the end of 2011. Since the card was distributed, LYREC members have saved more than \$30,000 on prescriptions alone. The prescription portion of your card is not to be used in conjunction with your medical insurance, but it is for members without insurance or for medications your insurance will not cover. There are no forms to complete and it costs you nothing! Simply provide your card to the pharmacist when you are getting your prescriptions filled.

The Coop Connections Card just got better. LYREC, along with area businesses, are joining forces to help members save even more money.

So far, the Best Western Golden Prairie Inn and Suites, Richland Inn and Suites, Tap House Bar & Grill, Wingate by Wyndham and the Microtel are accepting the Co-op Connections Card for special savings. Go to [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop) to see details. ■

# Legislative dinner outlines issues

**G**oldenwest, McCone, Sheridan and Lower Yellowstone electric cooperatives hosted a legislative dinner in Sidney Dec. 15, 2016. The purpose of the legislative dinner is to discuss cooperative issues for the upcoming legislative session.

Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) Assistant General Manager Gary Wiens spoke about four of the issues that will likely be considered in 2017. The issues include: net metering, updating Montana's One Call law, right of first refusal on new transmission and sage grouse conservation funding.

## Net metering

Net metering is the ability of members with home-based renewable generators to net their generators against power purchased from the electric utility. Currently, electric cooperatives are not subject to the net-metering requirements, but all Montana cooperatives voluntarily offer it to their member-owners.

A number of bills related to net metering will likely be considered in the 2017 Legislature.

MECA supports continuation of the existing voluntary approach to net metering for Montana's electric cooperatives, because it provides for maximum flexibility and fairness.

## Updating Montana's One Call law

The Pipeline and Hazardous Material Safety Administration (PHMSA) issued a letter in 2016 stating Montana's One Call law is inadequate. Because of PHMSA's inadequacy decision, excavators in Montana are now subject to costly federal enforcement actions.

Legislation addressing PHMSA concerns and allowing Montana to reassert state authority on this matter is nearly finalized. It is expected to be introduced in the 2017 legislative session.

## Possible transmission legislation: right of first refusal on new transmission

Some Montana electric utilities have joined a regional transmission organization (RTO). The RTO looks at its entire transmission system covering multiple states, identifies problem areas and then solicits solutions from existing transmission line owners and independent

companies. The RTO determines who will build new transmission in the selected territories.

The concern of cooperatives in Montana is that the company awarded a particular project by the RTO can be a utility or merchant company with no ties or obligations in the state and thus may not serve the best interests of consumers in the affected areas. The rules of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission permit the RTO to defer to state laws granting the incumbent utilities the right of first refusal (ROFR), allowing it to build and own these needed additional transmission facilities.

MECA is considering legislation allowing incumbent electric utilities in the state of Montana the option of building, owning and operating needed new transmission facilities. Granting these utilities the ROFR on the construction, operation and ownership of transmission upgrades would ensure that a strong local presence will be there to maintain facilities.

## Sage grouse conservation funding

In an effort to help prevent listing of the sage grouse as a threatened or endangered species under federal law, in 2014 Gov. Steve Bullock issued an executive order establishing mechanisms to guide development and address habitat threats.

In May 2015, the Montana Legislature passed the Greater Sage Grouse Stewardship Act. This law created the Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Team (MSGOT) to oversee implementation and operation of Montana's sage grouse management plan and appropriated \$10 million for the Fund Grant Program to conserve habitat and create a pool of compensatory mitigation credits.

Due to expected state budget constraints, supporters of this program are concerned the Legislature may remove this funding. Montana has the second-largest population of sage grouse in the West. MECA is supportive of retaining this funding and urges the Legislature to continue this appropriation.

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative would like to thank all of the legislators, county commissioners and grassroots members who joined us at the legislative dinner. If you would like additional information on how to get more involved in your cooperative, contact Jami at 406-488-1602. ■

## STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

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## HIDDEN NUMBERS

If you find your meter number hidden in this issue, it is worth a \$25 credit on your next statement. The meter number will appear within the four Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative pages. Give us a call during the month your meter is listed, and claim your \$25 bill credit.




### Operating report

Year to date:	November 2015	November 2016
Total miles energized	2,142	2,073
Total number of meters	6,113	6,141
Kilowatt-hours sold	248,849,865	239,429,076
Revenue	\$23,787,948	\$22,693,514
Total expenses	\$19,345,121	\$19,883,613
Operating margins	\$5,103,027	\$3,629,308



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### TRUSTEES

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

### EMPLOYEES

Jason Brothen ..... General Manager  
 Brenda Bond ..... Chief Financial Officer  
 Jami Propp ..... Member Service Manager  
 Kyle Kavanagh ..... IT Coordinator  
 Cassie Parker ..... Staff Assistant  
 Margo Zadow ..... Billing Coordinator  
 Pam Wilcoxon ..... Plant Accountant  
 Tiffani Hentges ..... Customer Service Representative  
 Chris Hillesland ..... Chief Operations Officer  
 Rich Gorde ..... Foreman  
 Eric McPherson ..... Foreman  
 Kevin Goff ..... Operations Assistant  
 Kelly Keysor ..... Operations Manager  
 Lee Alvstad ..... Journeyman Lineman  
 Richard Tremblay ..... Journeyman Lineman  
 Aaron Eide ..... Journeyman Lineman  
 Bryan Franck ..... Journeyman Lineman  
 Jesse Obergfell ..... Journeyman Lineman  
 Blade Jankovsky ..... Journeyman Lineman  
 Tanner Roth ..... Journeyman Lineman  
 Ryder Peterson ..... Apprentice Lineman  
 Brandon Mueller ..... Master Electrician  
 Dan Gieser ..... Meter Technician  
 Mike Eberling ..... Mechanic  
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 Corey Candee ..... Chief Information Officer  
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