

Sheridan Electric Cooperative

LiveWire

Sheridan Electric Cooperative - Medicine Lake, Mont. 406-789-2231

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New faces in new positions

BY SCOTT WESTLUND

In early August, the cooperative was faced with filling open positions. These were the superintendent position, foreman position and sub-foreman position in Westby. The first, the superintendent position, had a few inquiries, but after some discussion, Kory Opp was elected to be the most qualified candidate.

The second was the foreman position, which was filled by Brian Lenz.

Brian Lenz, a foreman from our hired contracting group, did a phenomenal job stating objectives and a vision for the department and was selected as the new foreman for the line department.

Our third objective was to fill the sub-foreman position for the outpost in Westby.

Steve Augustine, from our hired contracting group, was hired for that position after showing some interest in working for the cooperative full time.

Please welcome these three individuals to their new positions within your cooperative.

Meet Brian Lenz

Brian was born and raised in Ashton, Idaho, farming with his father for many years. Brian started in construction line work at the age of 30 and has continued ever since. Brian and his wife, Brooke,



Brian Lenz, left, and Steve Augustine, right.

have a large family consisting of three sons (Trystan, Justin and Tyler), and two daughters (Jacey and Jaydin).

Meet Stephen Augustine

Steve has worked in the construction end of the electrical field since 1988. He is a journeyman lineworker and brings to Sheridan Electric 28 years of experience and knowledge of power line construction. He has been in eastern Montana for the past several years, working on the Sheridan Electric system with a contractor.

Steve is from Island Park, Idaho, 20 miles south of West Yellowstone,

Mont. He enjoys woodworking, snowmobiling, the outdoors, big game hunting and roasting hogs. He has recently enjoyed pheasant hunting and fishing in the Medicine Lake area.

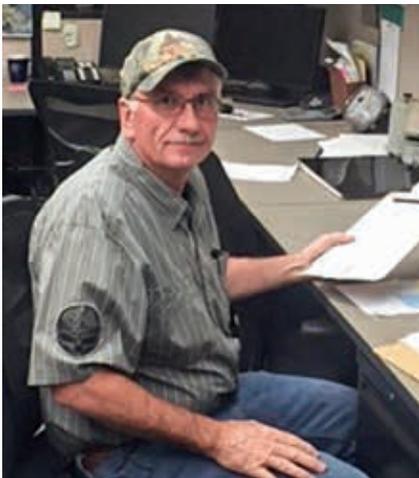
Steve and his wife, Laurie, have two children, Ryan and Kylie. His greatest passion is his four grandchildren, Reese Nicole, Pyper Gale, Marley Lyn and Travis Stephen. "Grumpy" enjoys every minute he can spend with them.

He is looking forward to working with Sheridan Electric and will bring with him a professional, friendly and safe surrounding. ■



Changes within the line department

BY SCOTT WESTLUND



The line department has been part of a continuous process to get the right people into the right positions for many years. Recently, Kory Opp has been promoted to the line superintendent position to replace promoted Max Beach.

Kory started at Sheridan Electric Cooperative as an apprentice

lineworker, then worked as a journeyman lineworker for many years. Kory then became the lead lineworker, foreman, substation technician, then staking engineer before accepting this role as line superintendent.

I have had a chance to watch Kory assume the responsibilities and start to build his team, and have been pleased with his approach.

Starting with one-on-one visits with the group, Kory started to establish communication with his team by seeking problem areas and concerns, and sharing his expectations with each one of them.

This not only starts communication, but also starts to identify goals for the future.

Kory states that he will take the department into the future by learning some old practices that made us a great communicative cooperative. He also states that in the past five years, we have had a

need for the progressive programs that have been put into place to get us through the larger projects like the transmission build, but now is a time for some old practices to be resurrected. When asked what the old practices may be, he says that knowing the membership gives him the ability to schedule for the department by knowing what the needs of the member may be. This is invaluable to him going forward.

The second item worth mentioning is that the foreman will now be a working foreman, in the field at all times of the day. With a small need of office work from this position, Kory will assume all responsibilities that have not been in this position in the past, thus reducing the footprint of office space for the individual.

Kory has demonstrated that he has a plan and is executing that plan. ■

The electrical service department

BY SCOTT WESTLUND

As communicated in earlier publications, the electrical service department has conducted an overhaul of the system of both billing and inventory control. The control of both components is critical to any business anywhere, and your cooperative's electrical service department is no different. These two areas of this department have been internally and externally audited to create the best practices and secure a good solid foundation for the future.

This type of reconstruction took a talented team of people to analyze every component of the department, and break it down into manageable tasks for correction. Starting in early 2014, this team has taken this project nearer and nearer to completion, which should happen in late 2016.

The first of the areas we looked at was the billing. This area had seen changes throughout the years that warranted additional training for our billing specialist. This training and a rework of the system gave us the opportunity to clean up old problems and clear the outstanding invoices we faced. We completed this portion of the project in 2014 and into early 2015.

The second of these projects was the inventory control and accurate tracking. This particular project was less linear than the billing process and

had many different directions. This led to a special team of individuals to seek the best practices, root out the problem areas and establish a new system to take us into the future.

It required a complete "wipe" of the old system to begin anew and establish new procedures and protocols to keep it in check. Below are some of the items that you may see if you were to look into the process that has been unfolded before you:

- Accurate physical inventory completed by the electricians.
- New numbering system to track individual items and in an organized manner within the warehouse.
- Consolidation of inventory and the disposal of dead inventory for many years. This will require a write-off of this inventory. This, along with shrinkage, which over many years has been a hit-and-miss task, required a \$261,000 write-off for the department to get it back on track.
- Rework of charge-out sheets to reflect all inventory items used on a job.
- Accountability amongst employees within the department.
- The creation of a procedure to charge the consumer for all special parts if a job has been charged in midstream by the consumer (your cooperative cannot send back special order parts).
- Complete dump of the existing inventory system and replaced by

new user-friendly system streamlined for efficiencies.

- Accurate ordering process that includes all steps in ordering. These steps have all been reassigned with training in process for these steps. This ensures best business practices for inventory control and accountability.

The above eight items are the most visual of the cleanup process, but the work went much deeper than this. From the database re-creation to the descriptions of the parts, there was a lot of work that went into this. There are several folks who worked behind the scenes to make this project a reality, people who have dedicated enormous amounts of time into making the process as perfect as possible. This required new partnerships to be created across departments and new communication thresholds to be breached, thus the thanks to all of these folks who made this happen. To Josh Johnson, Riley Tommerup, Lisa Salvevold, Jamie Ator, Victoria Waller, Travis Benton, Tristan Ereth and Tom Hinds, you have the thanks of this entire cooperative for the dedicated time and passion to make this necessary change a reality.

Excellent work!

As I stated in the beginning of this article, this extraordinary team of people has rebuilt the electrical service department from the ground up, securing a strong future within this cooperative for the membership and surrounding areas. ■

Congratulations

Congratulations to Jim and Charlotte Neilson, and Luke and Victoria Waller for volunteering to attend the Today's Members Program in Great Falls this October.

During this expense-paid trip, these folks will have the

pleasure of meeting folks from cooperatives all over the state, mingling and learning what makes a cooperative a cooperative.

We value the individuals who volunteer for this program as it gains strength every year with larger crowds to meet and talk to.

Lighting to be given away

In the spirit of efficiency, Sheridan Electric Cooperative is giving away compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) each month. Each month's winner will receive 24 new CFL bulbs. A CFL produces the same amount of light for less than half the cost. The bulbs also produce about 75 percent less heat, so they are safer to operate. They can also last up to 10 times longer than the standard incandescent bulb. You could save \$80 a year by switching to CFLs throughout your home!

So this month, take a moment to complete and mail the coupon. Maybe you'll be this month's lucky winner and save on your energy costs. Good luck! ■

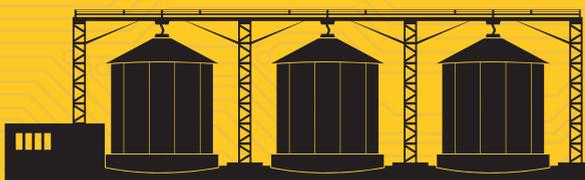
Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Account number: _____

*Congratulations to **Loren Henke** for winning this month's light giveaway.*



Sheridan Electric Cooperative STATISTICAL REPORT

	July 2015	July 2016
Total miles of line	2,849	2,833
Consumers billed	3,043	3,070
Kilowatt-hours purchased	9,351,652	8,780,896
Kilowatt-hours sold	8,686,493	8,020,122
Average KWH per residential consumer	1,013	782
Average bill per residential consumer	\$110.80	\$105.00
Cost of purchased power	\$460,847	\$450,856
Margins year to date	\$2,432,640	\$2,171,469

LINE DEPARTMENT STATS

	July 2015	July 2016
Weather	33	39
Age or deterioration	0	2
Animals and public	1	6
Power supplier	0	0
Equipment	10	2

SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED

	July 2015	July 2016	Year to date
Pole installations	6	29	78
New construction	12,029 ft.	0 ft.	44,834 ft.
Miles driven	29,964	19,811	109,623
New accounts	9	4	32
Accounts retired	0	0	24

SHERIDAN ELECTRIC CO-OP

Medicine Lake, Mont. 59247
406-789-2231

TRUSTEES

- Wayne Deubner, President..... Brockton, Mont.
- Rod Smith, V. President..... Dagmar, Mont.
- Rob Rust, Sec. Alkabo, N.D.
- Kerrey Heppner, Treas. Plentywood, Mont
- Alan Danelson, Trustee Scobey, Mont.
- Andrew Dethman, Trustee Brockton, Mont.
- Rick A. Hansen, Trustee Froid, Mont.
- Warren Overgaard, Trustee Westby, Mont.
- Harlan Skillingberg, Trustee..... Plentywood, Mont.

EMPLOYEES

- Rick Knick Manager
- Riley Tommerup Office Mgr./Accountant
- Scott Westlund Marketing/Member Service Manager
- Pam Lund Billing Supervisor
- Jamie Ator Accountant
- Lisa Salvevoid Office Assistant
- Torie Waller Work Order Clerk
- Kory Opp Line Superintendent
- Brian Lenz Line Foreman
- Nick Oelkers Staking Tech
- Tim Ereth Operator/Utilityman
- Josh Johnson Electrical General Foreman
- Tom Hinds Electrical Foreman
- Tristan Ereth Apprentice Electrician
- Ronnie Gillett Journeyman Lineman
- Dan Roeder Journeyman Lineman
- Shawn Sansaver Journeyman Lineman
- Josh Marottek Apprentice Lineman
- Bill Baillie Apprentice Lineman
- Josh Ming Apprentice Lineman
- Jim Bakken Material Specialist
- Vicky Haddix Custodian

OUTAGES • CALL 24 HOURS A DAY
406-789-2231

OFFICE HOURS: 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative