

Sheridan Electric Cooperative

LiveWire

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

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Electricians within the ranks

BY SCOTT WESTLUND

Sheridan Electric Cooperative's electrician team consists of three individuals who support the area's need for electricians in the area. They support the region, where there is a shortage of electricians, and the cooperative supports new electricians coming into the area, or electrician businesses.

This electrician group was created as a service to the membership and communities in the area. Yes, they do charge an hourly rate to pay for equipment and supplies, but Sheridan Electric Cooperative is not looking to make any more money than what it takes to be at "net zero" at the end of the year.

These folks are highly trained and licensed. They abide by all state electrical code rules, and stay up-to-date with current technology.

The shop contains inventory that is managed at a level that supports the activities of this group, and yet also has items that are needed by the membership in case of an

emergency, like pivot parts or cord ends.

Not only does Sheridan Electric have the manpower and the inventory, the cooperative also have these folks on staff to answer questions when asked.

Some of the services offered by this group includes:

- Trenching
- Shop wiring
- Residential wiring
- Electric heat installations
- Service calls
- Troubleshooting
- Grain bins

In past years, electric heat installations have been the topic of many jobs completed by this group. At this point in time, propane is cheaper than electric heat, but that is not necessarily the case all the time. Most folks install dual-fuel systems so they can make a choice when necessary.

The beauty of electric heat in this service territory is that members will receive a heat rate from October to April that is approximately half of the residential rate (4.75 cents per kilowatt-hour).

Call the cooperative and ask for Josh, Tom or Tristan for information on any type of electrical job you may have. They are here to serve. ■

Energy Share benefits of Montana

Energy Share of Montana is a private nonprofit organization whose primary purpose is to help Montanans who are faced with energy emergencies to meet their needs and move to self-reliance. In the past 34 years, Energy Share has distributed \$19 million in emergency bill assistance to nearly 57,000 families.

Often, your neighbors experience a financial emergency when an unexpected expense occurs and they are unable to pay their home energy bill(s). By donating

to Energy Share, you help them stay warm. When an application is approved, payment is made directly to the energy provider on behalf of the client.

There are other programs available, but this is the one most commonly used. If you have further questions about this program, or any other programs that we may have, please give us a call.

The information that you collect may help a family in need and give them that helping hand. ■

Washington, D.C., Youth Tour winners chosen

BY SCOTT WESTLUND



Walker Ator was selected for the Youth Tour.



Ashtyn Ator was selected for the Youth Tour.

Through a tough selection process and from among some good candidates, two have been selected to represent Sheridan Electric Cooperative on a trip to Washington, D.C. Nick Oelkers and Scott Westlund performed intensive interviews with 13 candidates to find the best. Interviews were coupled with an essay topic, “What would a day without electricity look like to you?” Oelkers and Westlund found this year’s candidate selection the toughest thus far, as they all performed well. Some of these folks went through the process last year and remembered the feedback on how to become a better candidate.

They remembered.

In two instances, the candidate sat down and described what they learned last year in this process, listing the five important points to remember during an interview tailored to augment their performance. My response was direct and to the point, “Show me.”

And they did.

We would like to congratulate Walker Ator and Ashtyn Ator on a job well-done through this process.

They are cousins, but from different schools, and were chosen only by merit. To choose any other candidates just so the names do not match would be a discredit to our pure selection process.

We would like to thank all candidates for their performance and will continue to provide life skills for the future.

This process was born through a desire for this cooperative to invest in the future with our young folks in this area. If we have the talent within the cooperative walls to assist these folks to become professionals, we will be there.

We have dedicated a large portion of our direction toward developing leadership within this region. We know that these young people will someday be the next CEO’s, IT specialists, accountants, lineworkers or electricians.

We would not be doing our jobs if we were not training our replacements.

This is your cooperative.

The process unfolded

As our membership knows, we not only facilitate the selection process for our representatives through the essays they write, we also provide them with a real-life professional interview. Our process is simple. In late October, I travel to all of the schools in the service territory and either personally drop off the material or meet face-to-face with the sophomores and juniors. In most cases, the school welcomes the interaction that we provide to speak directly with these young folks, but in a few cases, they just want the material. Of the applications that we do get back, the school has embraced what we are trying to give them and supply a life skill to the future leadership of the region. The topic of the essay is then given to the English department, with the department incorporating it into the curriculum. This year, I was in front of more than 130 kids from nine schools, and although we received only 10 percent of the applications back, we have planted a seed for the future of the rest of the schools to participate.

While we have stated who our representatives will be, these are some snippets of the essays that we saw, some answers from the interview process, with the general questions we asked.

Some highlights of the essays;

- “I step outside my door and am instantly reminded of the disappearance of electricity as the looming power lines seem to mock me.”
- “Each day when it’s finally dark out, and I am finished with all my plans or activities, I like to unwind on the couch with a favorite movie or show. But without electricity, I wouldn’t be able to do so. Instead, I would take this opportunity to spread some blankets and pillows in the back of the old Ford, and look at the beautiful Montana sky.”
- “After playing Solitaire for the 25th time, my hands start to cramp and freeze because of the lack of heat inside the house. Suddenly, like God said in the Bible, “Let there be light,” the power turned on and the heat kicked in and I felt instantly warmer. Good thing we have electricity, or else I would not be here writing this essay today.”
- “My home on Smoke Creek depends on well water for our water needs. Without electricity, the water in my family’s home would not work, including the toilets. This would prove to be a problem, especially in the winter.”

Next year, we will be incorporating resumes into the program. The student will not only provide an essay,

but will submit a professional resume to accompany the essay. This will also be incorporated into the interview process.

This idea was provided by Nick Oelkers for next year, but goes hand-in-hand with the work I have been doing in the Bainville School District in regards to resume training, and “being the interviewer” training which we provide.

The interview we do for these students is behavior based. This means that an answer you provide may dictate several follow-up questions. While the questions we will be asking are provided ahead of the interview to the candidates, they have no idea what order they will be asked or how their answers may dictate another question. This process is not to confuse or embarrass a young person, but rather to help them stray from their comfort zone by driving them to the next level of professionalism. When all is complete, we give a frank feedback session designed to have them work on areas for improvement. In some cases, I have seen these young folks for the second time, and they remember, and have worked on, what I told them the previous year with outstanding results.

These are our questions:

- What are your goals after school? Tell us about yourself.
- How would you benefit from a trip of this nature?
- How would the school benefit from a trip of this nature?
- Describe a situation where you went above and beyond the call of duty to get a job/task completed.
- Give two examples of things you do to demonstrate your willingness to work hard.
- List three strengths you have that would apply to this position.
- List three weaknesses you have overall.
- Why should we send you?

We take this program seriously and see it continue to grow every year. The students we face know who we are, and what we stand for. They all know that Sheridan Electric is dedicated to the development of young leaders for our region, and will continue to develop programs to enhance their success into the future.

We are Sheridan Electric, and we are a member service company dedicated to the region. ■

Lighting to be given away



In the spirit of efficiency, Sheridan Electric Cooperative is giving away light-emitting diodes (LEDs) each month. Each month's winner will receive 12 new LED bulbs.

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 **Curtis Kleppen** for winning this month's light bulb giveaway.*



Sheridan Electric Cooperative STATISTICAL REPORT

	December 2017	December 2018
Total miles of line	2,831	N/A
Consumers billed	3,100	N/A
Kilowatt-hours purchased	13,975,106	N/A
Kilowatt-hours sold	123,72,034	N/A
Average KWH per residential consumer	1,665	N/A
Average bill per residential consumer	\$135.81	N/A
Cost of purchased power	\$673,893	N/A
Margins year to date	\$4,174,361	N/A

LINE DEPARTMENT STATS

	December 2017	December 2018
Weather	9	8
Age or deterioration	1	2
Animals and public	0	0
Power supplier	0	0
Equipment	0	0

SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED

	December 2017	December 2018	Year to date
Pole installations	8	38	380
New construction	92 ft.	8,852 ft.	60,396 ft.
Miles driven	18,690	18,118	25,629
New accounts	2	3	39
Accounts retired	5	0	10

SHERIDAN ELECTRIC CO-OP

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TRUSTEES

Rod Smith, President Dagmar, Mont.
 Rick A. Hansen, V. President Froid, Mont.
 Rob Rust, Sec. Alkabo, N.D.
 Kerrey Heppner, Treas. Plentywood, Mont
 Alan Danelson, Trustee Scobey, Mont.
 Andrew Dethman, Trustee Brockton, Mont.
 Harlan Skillingberg, Trustee Plentywood, Mont.
 Jody Lagerquist, Trustee Westby, Mont.
 Sherl Shanks, Trustee Brockton, Mont.

EMPLOYEES

Rick Knick Manager
 Riley Tommerup Office Mgr./Accountant
 Scott Westlund Marketing/Member Service Manager
 Jamie Ator Accountant
 Lisa Salveold Office Assistant
 Tasha Ronnes Customer Service Representative
 Torie Waller Work Order Clerk
 Kory Opp Line Superintendent
 Bryan Lenz Line Foreman
 Nick Oelkers Staking Tech
 Tim Ereth Operator/Utilityman
 Josh Johnson Electrical General Foreman
 Tom Hinds Electrical Foreman
 Steve Augustine Line Sub Foreman
 Dan Roeder Journeyman Lineman
 Shawn Sansaver Journeyman Lineman
 Josh Marottek Journeyman Lineman
 Josh Ming Journeyman Lineman
 Bill Baillie Apprentice Lineman
 Nolen Drury Apprentice Lineman
 Tristan Ereth Apprentice Electrician
 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