

Sheridan Electric Cooperative

LiveWire

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

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Common questions about outages and how we prioritize repairs

BY SCOTT WESTLUND

During major storms that come through the area causing damage, questions are always asked about how we prioritize repairs to get everyone's power restored.



Where is my substation located?

We have 18 substations serving this service territory. Each substation branches out into areas labeled on the map. If your home is located within the substation tie-ins, that would be the sub to which you are connected.

How can my neighbor have power and I do not?

It all depends on where your power is coming from and the circuit they are on versus the one you are on. For instance, you could have a tree down on your section, and the breakers operate, thus cutting off continued

service to your home and protecting the system. The power will still be available up to the point the breaker tripped. Another reason could be that the circuit you are on is completely down, while your neighbor's is not. It can be frustrating, but safety of personnel and the system are No. 1. Once this has been established, then we work very hard to restore power as soon as we can.

Why didn't my generator automatically turn off when my power came back on?

I would assume that the generator and transfer switch you have purchased does not have this capability. It all depends on what you have within this generating system and whether or not it will do as you have stated. This is also dangerous for our lineworkers. If a generator is backfeeding a section of line and they do not know it, injury and death could occur. This is why their gear, from clothing to grounds, are always used for protection.

What is backfeed? Is this harmful to my appliances? What should

I do to deter anything happening to them?

Let me answer this with an example. If the lineworker needs to work on a line and turn the power off, you start your generator. The generator is feeding the home, and also putting electricity back through the utility lines that have been turned off for the lineworkers to work on them. So, the one-way feed has been disconnected, and now we have another feed back into the lines from your generator. This is backfeed.

Another example is when a circuit goes down. We can isolate it and backfeed the utility lines from another power source. This keeps your lights on when there is a power outage.

If, for some reason, a neighbor's generator is running and backfeeds down the utility line to your home, it typically does not run at 120 volts, but maybe comes in at 80. This is harmful to appliances. You may also be victim to a phase dropping out of your utility service to your home. This will almost certainly cause what we call a "brown out." This means that the voltage to your home is under the normal 120 volts. This is also harmful to appliances. When you experience these events, turn everything off. ■

The lingo that your cooperative may use to describe outages

Have you ever wondered about some of the reasons your electric cooperative gives you for an outage that may not make any sense? Have you ever wondered about the words they use so fluently, and yet mean nothing to you?

Well, here are 14 commonly used terms that we use within these walls to describe outages.

Animal contact: Outage term to define the cause of an interruption due to birds, squirrels and raccoons that use the primary distribution systems as travel paths or landing spots.

Brownouts: Drop in voltage in electrical power supply, so named because it typically causes lights to dim.

Arc: The flow of an electric current across a gap between two conductors, terminals or contacts. An arc can result in sparks, a loud noise and a momentary or sustained outage as protective equipment operates.

Backfeed: The ability to route power from an alternate direction.

Blinks: A momentary outage usually lasting less than two seconds

Cable fault: When the insulation of a power cable deteriorates enough that it's no longer able to contain the voltage, causing a short. Basically, it's a hole, or crack, burning through the cable.

Flicker: A slight fluctuation in the voltage of AC power lines in which a directly visible change in brightness of a light source is noticed.

Lineworker: A person who builds and maintains electric lines.

Substation: An electrical facility containing equipment for controlling the flow of electricity from supplier to user.

Transformer: A device used to raise or lower voltage within electrical distribution and transmission lines.

Galloping: Overhead lines that sway extraordinarily under high wind conditions.

SCADA: Acronym for substation control and data acquisition. Technology that monitors and controls distribution and transmission systems.

Switch: A device for making, breaking or changing connections in an electrical circuit.

Voltage: The pressure from an electrical circuit's power source that pushes charged electrons (current) through a conducting loop, enabling them to do work such as illuminating a lamp. It is measured in volts. ■

Capitalize on opportunities

BY SCOTT WESTLUND

What is opportunity and how is it defined?

op-por-tu-ni-ty

NOUN

1. a set of circumstances that makes it possible to do something. "We may see increased opportunities for export."

Yes, I Googled "opportunity," as it may mean something different to all sorts of people.

Opportunity is a circumstance that makes it possible to do something. These "somethings" can mean many things to many people. To me, opportunity means finding ways to empower people to become more than they currently are.

So, what does this mean? It means that we value people. People are the most valuable resource of this cooperative. When an opportunity arises for people to improve themselves, we do everything in our power to help them. This is true with employees, the membership and the entities within the service territory.

This also means finding opportunities to assist other co-op entities, when we can. From your local co-op, to co-ops across the state and the statewide association, we are there when needed, as they are for us.

Opportunities look different to different people and in different settings. Some will see the opportunity, while some will not.

Maybe coming from a different career background, I personally see opportunities where some will not. Rick Knick, the manager and CEO of Sheridan Electric Cooperative, also sees opportunities, but is more polished and diplomatic on fleshing them out than I am. I value that kind of personality, as he is continually smoothing out the rough edges.

From finding the best employees and empowering them to succeed, we find opportunities to enhance the business model daily. We pay to educate them for the next levels of the cooperative, and train them to be our replacements when we retire.

We never sit back and let an opportunity slip away when it can help members or employees.

The cooperative business model contains many opportunities. It is important to know that we all see them, but some people will not react to them. Maybe this is due to



comfort or complacency, or the fear to do something about it.

A previous manager in the timber industry, who has since died, stepped into a confrontation in which I was involved, with several salaried supervisors. I was confronting them about a poor decision they had made involving people. He observed the situation and was less than pleased with me, because I was so adamant that the salaried group was on the wrong track, missed an opportunity and was treating people badly. Defusing the situation, he told me to go back to work and he would find out what was happening.

The next day, I came to work and picked up my mail, which contained a letter from him. Well, I thought I was done. But when I opened it, these words were simply put on a letterhead paper from his office, “Scott, always remember, comfort the afflicted and always afflict the comfortable. Well-done yesterday. You were right and did not back off. I am impressed”.

I still have that letter from 30 years ago.

So how does this all tie together?

Finding and capitalizing opportunities sometimes means afflicting a comfortable situation with people. This will mean asking the tough questions toward an obvious goal. It is human nature to not like change, and it is human nature to push back when comfort is challenged. But when the pushback occurs, most likely complacency is in effect, as it was with those supervisors I talked about above.

A job and a career are totally different. A job is something we come to every day to do just enough to cover the bases, yet not doing anything extra to enhance the idea that is a cooperative.

A career is something that is driven by the people who are continually challenging the status quo, and driving team goals. They understand the value of progression, and often

they love what they do.

These folks accept failure as a learning tool, and drive for perfection. They state what they are going to do and do it.

These are called leaders.

Opportunities are identified and realized with these types of folks. They see the gains that can benefit their membership and bend over backward to make it a reality. These folks embrace their membership, will do anything for the members and are always looking for the next opportunity. They continually ask what they have done for the membership today.

This is what career people do.

We have the best people in the industry. We feed off of each other’s strengths and fill in on weaknesses. None of these folks just come to work to do a job that does the bare minimum. None of these folks just have a job.

Taking another step, we ask the question of all co-ops and statewide office: What have you done today for your membership? What are the opportunities?

I have met some incredible people who embrace this question every day. They take the simple message of the co-ops to the highest level they can to ensure we are always doing our best. They do this because of three simple points;

- The members’ trust
- The members’ representation
- The members’ money

These people have built careers based on these three simple points, and they are the best in the industry. They have identified opportunities within their co-ops and around the state. They are not complacent and are driven by one goal: the membership.

What are the opportunities you see today, and how will you act upon them? ■

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. ■

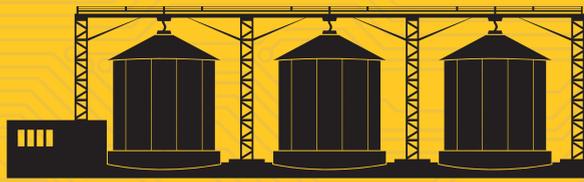
Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Account number: _____

*Congratulations to **Sharon Krogedal** for winning this month's light bulb giveaway.*



Sheridan Electric Cooperative STATISTICAL REPORT

	May 2018	May 2019
Total miles of line	2,836	2,835
Consumers billed	3,085	3,102
Kilowatt-hours purchased	8,857,013	11,018,512
Kilowatt-hours sold	8,388,824	10,183,360
Average KWH per residential consumer	751	826
Average bill per residential consumer	\$100.31	\$105.90
Cost of purchased power	\$345,930	\$493,771
Margins year to date	\$1,818,559	\$2,033,104

LINE DEPARTMENT STATS

	May 2018	May 2019
Weather	19	9
Age or deterioration	7	5
Animals and public	7	3
Power supplier	3	1
Equipment	0	0

SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED

	May 2018	May 2019	Year to date
Pole installations	1	6	12
New construction	2,970	4,404	16,167
Miles driven	24,844	21,318	100,576
New accounts	3	4	13
Accounts retired	0	1	8

SHERIDAN ELECTRIC CO-OP

Medicine Lake, Mont. 59247
406-789-2231

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 Roness 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
 Rod Luft Warehouse/Utility
 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 