

Sheridan Electric Cooperative

LiveWire

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

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Facing the needs of the region and beyond

by Scott Westlund

During the November board meeting, there was a discussion about scholarships and a new direction. The need for this region and beyond has the trades showing a considerable need, and nobody to fill these needs. If you look around our region, you find it hard to find plumbers, carpenters or electricians.

If you do research on this topic, you will find that, throughout the nation, there is a tremendous shortage of these people to fill the positions, even in Montana. Montana has 35,000 openings for people to work the trades, but nobody to fill the needs.

During this discussion, we talked about the six, \$2,000 scholarships that we give out every year. I suggested that we trim that down to two, \$2,000

scholarships, and move the balance of the money to helping young folks, who have an interest in the trades, to start their journey in that direction.

For many years, college for higher learning into the professional arena has been pushed. I would say that 30 to 40 years ago, that was the case, as these jobs did not have the people to fill the needs. Now, this has changed and the shift is being felt in all regions of the United States.

After the board meeting, I went to the school superintendents for their advice.

I asked them if we were to shift the course on scholarships, would we have anyone interested. I await their answer.

The framework will still be constructed and presented at a board meeting. ■

Pondering moments

by **Scott Westlund**

As I sit at my desk this morning, I look up at the clock at 5:45 a.m. on a Tuesday. This day, one other teammate and I interviewed 17 young folks for the Washington, D.C., Youth Tour. These young folks were the first group ahead of many more to come. Some were single interviews within the schools, while some were multiple, but all were intent on the goal. The goal is to find the best two representatives to go to Washington, D.C., and represent this cooperative.

However, we take it so much deeper than that. Our plans are to teach real life skills to young folks.

So, who taught you your life skills? Did you have to learn the hard way through trial and error? In some cases, I did. Were there any folks in your past who had the skillsets you needed to succeed? Were they offered?

In my past, I learned from my father to always work hard. Let the employer only see focus, and the backs of your elbows as you work hard. Above all, remember that employers gave you the opportunity to work for them when you needed a job, so give them everything you have to help them achieve their goals. It is never the other way around. If you hope to succeed, never complain about your employer, offer solutions to problems and become a value-added asset for them.

I also learned this from a

manager I had in Libby, Mont., but also learned a whole lot more. Fred Sturgess was a one-in-a-million leader of people. Born into the timber industry, Fred looked like the typical timber worker. He was tall, wore jeans with suspenders, spoke loudly, and was rough and gruff,

But under all of that exterior was the leader of men and women. His manner was one of listening before speaking, but when he did speak, it was with force and direction. More times out of 10, he would listen, not say much, but guided you to what you knew was right all along. Above all, this man, along with my father, prepared me for real life experiences.

He stated what the goals were beyond the mills, taught me the meaning of leading, and taught me the value of people, and doing what was right no matter what the obstacles were.

I take these teachings from both of them and apply them to everyday life. They taught me that confronting issues quickly and decisively are the only ways to solve them. They taught me that if someone has a skillset beyond what I had already learned, capitalize on it, and learn all you can.

This brings me to the man I work for today. Rick Knick is a different type of leader who is always looking for the next future leader. He grooms from within, and grooms for the membership. He has a skillset that I have capitalized on and I find this style more in tune with what I am.

I have always said that cooperatives are about people. It will start with people and end

with people and all the stuff in the middle is just stuff.

So, with all of this meandering, where does this take us? It takes us to the moral of the story: Capitalize on all opportunities to learn from anyone you can about life skills.

It is no secret that we spend a whole lot of time within the schools with projects, Business Professionals of America, FFA and teaching life skills. However, some of the schools may not know what we do and how we do it.

In all experiences, I personally look for opportunities to teach something every time I step into the districts.

Our recent Washington, D.C., Youth Tour project is a great example of the many we do every day. The project is not about the trip so much as it's about learning a life skill that will stay with the student for a lifetime. We teach introductions, and we teach interview skills.

As a school district, would it not benefit your students to have all the skills necessary to succeed in life beyond your walls?

As I described above, I have several people who have taught me so much, which I remember to use now and later in life.

Look back at who taught you any life skills, from handshakes, to interviews, to public speaking. Who made the most impactful statement that you use in life today?

It could be a teacher, a mentor, your father, your mother or grandparents. Whomever it may be, remember that all that is taught is taught with experience. ■



Membership search

Do you know the whereabouts of these former members? We have lost track of them and need your help locating them to mail their capital credit checks. If you know them or have a contact, please contact the office at 406-789-2231.

Bighorn, Channon
Buck Elk, Carson
Dodge, Bill
Garrett, Dale T.
Hagen, Daniel C. and Dulcy J.
Haugen, Brian

Lizotte, Alfred Jr.
Niemeier, Donald
Powers, Steve E. and Lynnette C.
Smith, Valarie
White Bear, Maynard
Young Bear, Dorine

Thanks for your help.

Miss Montana to visit this region and your cooperative

January will mark another visit from the reigning Miss Montana to film a public service announcement for the cooperatives in eastern Montana. Contributions from McCone Electric, South East Electric, Lower Yellowstone Electric, Goldenwest Electric and Sheridan Electric consist of a \$1,250 donation to the Miss Montana scholarship program. This also comes with the added benefit to film a public service announcement about co-ops, filmed at co-op locations, and about your co-ops.

This year's topic is "Stay involved in your local cooperative."

While in the area, Miss Montana will visit local schools to talk about pressing issues that school-aged children face.

You met Miss Montana, Mo Shea, at your annual meeting this past October, and we anticipate her return to film this very important topic for the membership. ■



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 **Luke Mahlen** for winning this month's light bulb giveaway.



Sheridan Electric Cooperative STATISTICAL REPORT

	December 2018	December 2019
Total miles of line	2,831	2,835
Consumers billed	3,085	3,153
Kilowatt-hours purchased	14,471,673	15,826,960
Kilowatt-hours sold	13,297,874	14,733,405
Average KWH per residential consumer	1,615	1,738
Average bill per residential consumer	\$135	\$143
Cost of purchased power	\$629,422	\$746,386
Margins year to date	\$4,898,034	\$4,050,948

LINE DEPARTMENT STATS

	December 2018	December 2019
Weather	8	7
Age or deterioration	2	5
Animals and public	0	1
Power supplier	0	0
Equipment	0	0

SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED

	December 2018	December 2019	Year to date
Pole installations	38	26	125
New construction	8,852 ft.	1,304 ft.	49,988 ft.
Miles driven	18,118	22,958	262,391
New accounts	3	2	44
Accounts retired	0	4	28

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.
Sheri Shanks, Trustee..... Brockton, Mont.

EMPLOYEES

Rick Knick Manager
Riley Tommerup..... Office Mgr./Accountant
Scott Westlund.....Marketing/Member Service Manager
Jamie Ator Accountant
Lisa SalveoldOffice Assistant
Tasha Roness Customer Service Representative
Torie Waller Work Order Clerk
Kory OppLine 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 