

Sheridan Electric Cooperative

LiveWire

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

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Cooperative strives for sustainability

by Scott Westlund

Sustainability is the ability to sustain what is important to the membership and the future. We have talked about this in the form of recruitment, education and regional needs. We have talked about this in the form of cross-training employees for the future, and we have even talked about this in the form of operating your cooperative lean, but we have never talked about sustaining the programs we create for you and the longevity of cooperative education for the future.

Recently, I was asked about the sustainability of the program we were creating. It all boiled down to if I took another job or was hit by a bus today, would the programs continue? It was a great question that spanned all employees of the cooperative.

The answer can only be “yes.” If we are conducting ourselves in a manner of educating our backups throughout the processes, it can only sustain itself. If changes happen within the walls of the cooperative, we work harder to sustain

programs until we have a fix in place.

I find it difficult to plan for the “what ifs” for any program. If you really look at it, planning for the “what ifs” will only bog you down, thus hampering the forward movement of the agenda the manager and board have set.

A good example would be planning for a retirement and hiring someone a year before the retiree is even eligible. It’s good planning, but what if that person decided to stay for another year or two? Now, you are stuck. Do you lay off the person you hired as the replacement or do you go along until the retirement day happens?

In the cooperative world, you go along until the retirement happens. The trick is to never get into that position. It only adds cost to the membership, has people in place without much to do, and can lead to personnel problems along the way.

So, back to sustainability. Every position within the

cooperative walls should receive their expectations from their leadership, form ways to meet the goals, and always hold themselves accountable for the best results. Some of the best leaders I have ever met overloaded themselves to reach high-achieving results and always strived for the goals set. Thus, the making of a strong leader sets the tone for results, and sets an example for the rest of the team.

If there are changes within the ranks, we work harder until we have all the people in place to achieve sustainability. We work harder until the replacements can meet expectations. We do not plan for “what ifs” and add costs. We continue to do our jobs to our fullest potential, until the day we must adjust.

Not before. ■

Changes at your cooperative

by Scott Westlund

June saw many changes at your cooperative, with the retirement of Rick Knick. Once announced, the board quickly swung into action by updating the job description and expectations of the board. It was clear that the board was looking inside for the next general manager, and solicited resumes from employees within its walls.

The timeframes were short, compared to other representations of this action within the cooperative world. Notice to the board from Rick was Feb. 25, with the job description posting the following week. Applications closed March 17, and interviews were to be March 24, but a pandemic got in the way, postponing the selection

process. However, the board created a way for the process to continue as the retirement day approached. By the end of April, a new manager had been announced for the cooperative.

It was a quick process, but it tells you a whole lot about Rick Knick's work on developing manager-style candidates within the cooperative's walls. He has not only worked with several folks to fulfill this role well into the future, he has also earned the trust of the board by producing results in this area.

It seems that Rick's only real concern is that once a person is chosen, that there are no hard feelings amongst the group.

Let's put that into perspective, which again will attest to the job Rick has done for this cooperative for many years.

Hard feelings will really never exist, as we all could work for one another at any time. Not only that, but we trust each other. All of us have strengths as well as weaknesses. Through these years with Rick Knick at the helm, we have learned to offset each other's weaknesses with our strengths, thus a formidable team of people was formed. From the janitor to the manager, we have been and always will be a family working for you. Titles mean nothing when it compares to the membership and your needs. Some titles only move bigger obstacles, and augment other titles within the organization.

Titles of every nature, all of the employees of this cooperative are here for you. ■

New manager named

Scott Westlund was selected by Sheridan Electric's board to succeed Rick Knick as general manager beginning July 1. Scott has been the member service manager for Sheridan Electric since 2011.

Prior to coming to work for Sheridan Electric, Scott served

in various managerial roles in the timber industry in western Montana and Oregon. Scott resides in Froid, Mont., with his wife, Tina, and grandson Ryder. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting, fishing, trapping and spending time with his grandkids. ■



Scott Westlund



Wow, a nation weathering a storm

by Scott Westlund

Wow, as I sat here March 18, I looked at a news situation worse than 9/11, when a nation came to a halt due to the attacks in New York. Schools were closed, businesses closed to foot traffic, and banks limited everything to the window for transactions. And still, we were all wondering if it is enough, or just panic? No way to tell.

It is apparent that our systems in place are fragile if we are not prepared properly. We live in a great nation, but all so fragile.

While we live in a rural area, I agree that the best defense is a good offense. Closing buildings, businesses and gatherings are a good start to a proactive approach.

And as the head of the

household and providing for my family, I have prepared for these types of things, although not as prepared as some.

Canned goods from the garden, wild meat both canned and frozen adorn my shelves at home. This has always been my way of providing, just in case things go wrong. My wife, grandson and son can hunt and process wild meat. My grandson can trap many species of animals. I have made it a priority to prepare them for a time when we will need it and when I am not there to provide.

Are we in that time now? I don't think so. In fact, I believe this will pass, we will develop cures, and life will go on. But it is a test of the fortitude that makes

up the United States of America. It is a test that measures our reactivity, and durability. I have always said that a crisis will define the people we are and hope to be. This can be true in any situation, from small to large. These types of things define our character and ability to sort out the most logical approaches to any problem. It forces us to discard the emotion and deal with straight facts that will determine outcomes.

I recently listened to a young lady who had to make some tough decisions during this time to protect people. She weighed the facts, made a few assumptions based on additional facts, and made a decision. When the decision was made, she received all sorts of grief from other folks. When I was informed, my response was, "To heck with them. If they cannot see the wisdom that was displayed in this decision, discard their input."

This is a great example of a crisis defining character. The facts were sorted out without emotion, and a decision was made.

There might be a message in this example for all of us to see. As heads of households, wives, students, teachers, business leaders, we all need to make decisions based on fact. Fact is the basis for the best possible outcomes in decision making.

Protect your households and families by planning ahead, look out for your neighbor and help when you can, and above all, do not panic. Level heads determine outcomes. ■

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. ■

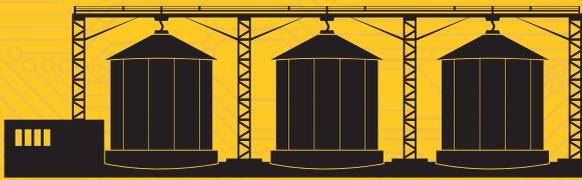
Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Account number: _____

Congratulations to **Matt Summers** for winning this month's light bulb giveaway.



Sheridan Electric Cooperative STATISTICAL REPORT

	April 2019	April 2020
Total miles of line	2,836	2,835
Consumers billed	3,097	3,169
Kilowatt-hours purchased	11,089,785	11,061,755
Kilowatt-hours sold	10,542,620	10,475,899
Average KWH per residential consumer	958	936
Average bill per residential consumer	\$93.59	\$91.47
Cost of purchased power	\$454,775	\$538,308
Margins year to date	\$1,641,382	\$1,478,666

LINE DEPARTMENT STATS

	April 2019	April 2020
Weather	66	6
Age or deterioration	4	1
Animals and public	4	2
Power supplier	0	0
Equipment	0	0

SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED

	April 2019	April 2020	Year to date
Pole installations	0	21	532
New construction	11,657 ft.	24,299 ft.	26,399 ft.
Miles driven	26,440	28,406	92,810
New accounts	4	6	11
Accounts retired	5	9	37

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

Scott Westlund.....Manager
Riley Tommerup..... Office Mgr./Accountant
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 Engineer
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
Jake Backman..... 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