




# VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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OWNED BY THOSE WE SERVE

*A Message from Your General Manager*



Rolie Miller  
General Manager

VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

## Co-op leaders share concerns with delegation

Recently approximately 35 board members, managers and staff from Montana's electric cooperatives went to Washington, D.C., to meet with our elected representatives at the federal level. Each year our national association, the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (NRECA), located in our nation's capital, sponsors a two day fly-in for the purpose of organizing an effort to relay electric cooperative concerns from across the country. All electric cooperatives across the country have prepared a common theme, which is presented to all of the congressmen and senators during the fly-in. We met specifically with Senator Tester and some of his staff, Senator Daines and some of his staff, and staff from Congressman Zinke's office.

This year there were three main themes that were present-

ed. The Montana delegation heard from us on all three issues described below:

### 1) Support the Ratepayer Protection Act.

Because of congress's inability to come up with legislation in a bipartisan fashion, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed regulations related to the Clean Air Act that will fundamentally change how electricity is generated, distributed and consumed in the United States. Electric cooperatives and others are deeply concerned that the EPA is no longer just regulating emissions from a power plant as intended in the Clean Air Act. NRECA and electric cooperatives have joined governors, regulators, electric reliability organizations and others in filing extensive comments raising numerous concerns with their proposal. We are concerned with the legality of the proposed regulations, in addition to their impact on our fundamental ability to distribute electric power in an economic fashion. We urged our delegation to co-sponsor and support the Ratepayer Protection Act to protect electric cooperative members from the uncertainty of the Clean Power Plan while the legal challenges work their way through the courts.

2) Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS). We have significant concerns with the rules proposed recently by the EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to revise the definitions of the WOTUS of the Clean Water Act. The proposed rule would expand the Corps' and EPA's regulatory reach by including isolated ponds, puddles, ditches and other areas that only rarely have water, dramatically expanding the land subject to federal regulations. These proposed regulations would again drive up the cost and add delays in getting distribution and transmission power lines installed. I was tasked with leading the discussion with our representatives on this particular issue. We requested Congressman Zinke's staff to co-sponsor or support House Resolution 1732 the Regulatory Integrity Protection Act, and requested Senator Daines and Senator Tester to co-sponsor or support Senate Bill 1140, the Federal Water Quality Protection Act. Our delegation expressed concern about the proposed rules and also expressed interest in getting this right, which was encouraging.

3) Coal combustion residuals legislation. Coal ash is a by-product of burning coal for the generation of electricity. It is used for the manufacture of concrete, gypsum drywall and other construction products. Recently, the EPA classified it

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# Getting to know the Vigilante Electric Board



Allen Martinell

**Name:** Allen Martinell

**Family:** Allen and his wife Yvonne, have been married for 41 years. They have one son, Heath and his wife Kiley. They have two daughters, Macie and Taryn and a son Kalen. Allen and Yvonne have two daughters. Carlen and husband Brett Keaster, who have two daughters, Maren and Blair and live near Belt; and Kristen and husband Ryan Bailey have two sons, Rowen and Keegan.

**Occupation:** Yvonne and Allen, along with Heath and Kiley and Kristen and Ryan and their families operate a cow-calf/yearling ranch at Dell with pasture land in the Centennial Valley.

**Education:** He attended Montana State University-Bozeman and received a BS degree in animal science.

**District:** Allen represents District #9, which is southern Beaverhead County south of Clark Canyon Dam and a small part of Clark County Idaho.

**Years on Board:** 34

**Position on Board:** In March Allen was elected vice chairman.

**Current challenges:** Vigilante is in the process of changing all the meters on the system to the new TWACS meters, which will enable management to provide more reliable and efficient service to the membership. Vigilante receives its power from Bonneville Power Administration and it is important that we represent the needs of our members in the many issues that involves. Rate cases every two years involve conservation issues, fish costs, developing equitable rates and many other issues.

Vigilante is very fortunate to have sincere, intelligent and dedicated employees. We have good employees and strive to retain them, and to acquire good replacements to fill vacancies when they occur.

The safety of our employees, especially our line crews, is a major concern of the co-op, and we strive to keep them as safe as possible while on the job.

**Long term:** Long-term issues facing Vigilante Electric are keeping a reliable, low-cost power supply through dealing with future rate cases and implementing TIER 2 power. Dealing with federal mandates resulting from the Clean Air Act and the Endangered Species Act will also be of concern.

**Hobbies:** When there is time, he also enjoys reading or listening to historical books and stories. Allen values relationships with God, family, friends and animals. He said he is very fortunate to be able to live his dreams in enjoying kids, grandkids, horses, cows, dogs and life.

# A Washington, D.C., Adventure



McKenna Jones

Starting on June 13th, McKenna Jones and Wesley Armstrong will represent Vigilante Electric Cooperative as participants in the 2015 Youth Tour to Washington D.C.

McKenna attends Beaverhead County High School in Dillon, and is the daughter of member Kim Martinell. Wesley attends Twin Bridges High School and is the son of member Lori Harshbarger.



Wesley Armstrong

The Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., is organized by the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association. Over the years this program has evolved and grown from 400 students from 12 states in 1964, to more than 1,600 students and 300 chaperones from 44 states last year.

During the week, participants tour the city and many of its historical treasures, visit with their state's congressional delegation and participate in youth rallies and socials.

This is the 13th year that Vigilante Electric Cooperative has sent a representative to the Youth Tour. We would like to congratulate McKenna and Wesley on their selection and wish them a wonderful trip. We look forward to hearing about their adventures. It will be an experience that they will not soon forget.





# Generation gap versus generation bridge

*Co-ops with the right attitude can bridge the gap!*

By Adam Schwartz

There are so many things we can say about youth, young people and age. There is a quote from legendary baseball pitcher Satchel Paige, “Age is a case of mind over matter. If you don’t mind, it don’t matter.”

Recently I was speaking with the Cooperative Trust, an organization comprised of young professionals under 30 years old who work for cooperative businesses. The organization’s mission is to ensure that cooperatives continue as socially responsible businesses. While this group of young professionals realizes it can’t predict the future, it does want to help build it.

Several years ago, one of its leaders asked who would be a mentor to the organization and to the individuals make it up. It was one of those bittersweet moments that life provides. While it was flattering that others thought I had wisdom to share, the voice in my head said, “Mentor? Me? That is for old people!”

After a moment of thought, I replied, “I will be your mentor under one condition. You also agree to be my mentor.” The deal was struck and now, more than three years later, I can report that it has been an extremely rewarding experience. Throughout the years, I’ve learned the most effective thing you can do to persuade people is to listen to them. Genuinely listen with an open mind and open heart. In my

experience, once you do that, young people will listen back.

The cooperative business model has been around in its modern form since 1844. It predates stock markets, LLCs, S corporations and many other forms of business. It continues to thrive, and interest in co-ops as a real solution to society’s challenges is growing rapidly — co-ops are cool again! While the co-op business model may not be taught in schools all that much, cooperative knowledge is passed from generation to generation.

Vigilante Electric Cooperative has been serving members for 77 years. Every co-op has a sacred obligation to help the next generation prepare for leading their co-op. The young have much to teach us. They are unburdened by the thoughts that plague so many organizations such as, “that’s not the way we do it around here.” Their naiveté refreshes us and challenges us to see things in a new light so that our community can continue to be attractive to young people.

So the next time a young person asks you to be a mentor or for some advice, please be sure to ask the same in return. We can turn what is often viewed as a generation gap into a generation bridge.

*Adam Schwartz is the founder of The Cooperative Way a consulting firm that helps co-ops succeed. He is an author, speaker and a member-owner of the CDS Consulting Co-op. You can follow him on Twitter @adamcooperative or email him at aschwartz@thecooperativeway.coop.*

## Co-ops in D.C.

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as nonhazardous, and it should be regulated as such. We support that position by the EPA, but also want to make sure that it continues to be classified as nonhazardous. As you may expect, with hydropower as Vigilante Electric’s major source of generation, this issue does not impact us greatly. However, it impacts other Montana electric cooperatives directly and significantly.

One other item that we thanked our delegation for was the unanimous support from the Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana congressmen and senators for a letter written to President Obama supporting action on the Columbia River Treaty. The president was urged to start negotiations with Canada on the treaty this year. It has been almost a year and a half since the start of the 10-year period for changes to the treaty without any action taken. Hopefully we can get something started by the State Department this year.

The meetings with our delegation were very well planned and presented, and we fully felt our delegation is concerned by the issues we presented. We are so highly subjected to the

decisions made in Washington, D.C., concerning generation of electric power. We must stay engaged with them and ensure they hear our concerns and the cost impacts those decisions have on you, the members of Vigilante Electric Cooperative and members from electric cooperatives across the state and country.

Please feel free to contact me with any comments or concerns you may have. I am here to serve you. I can be reached at the office at (406) 683-2327, via email at [rol-lie@vec.coop](mailto:rol-lie@vec.coop) or on my mobile phone at (406) 925-1085.



# You Have Some Options

Many of you may not give a lot of thought as to how you pay your bills. You get your bill, you write a check and you mail it off. At Vigilante Electric Cooperative, we provide several payment options as a service to our members. All options are easy to navigate, convenient to use and — most importantly — secure.

**E-Bill**, which can be accessed at [www.vec.coop](http://www.vec.coop), is an Internet-based option that gives you access to a surprising amount of account information. Registering and using this service is quick and easy — simply follow the prompts. Once registered, you can review your billing and capital credit information, payment history, billing history and past statements. You can also opt for paperless billing.

E-Bill will notify you after bills are calculated and posted. Payments can be made using a Master Card, Visa or through a savings or checking account. Credit cards can only be used for residential and low-usage accounts (Rate Schedules A & B). All account balances can be paid that are linked to bank accounts.

Several members have multiple accounts; E-Bill accommodates this, too. When you register you have to provide one account number. After submitting your information, all accounts that are linked to your membership will appear for your review and payment.

The best part of E-Bill is that you are in

control. Access is available 24/7; you choose how you pay, when you pay and how much you pay. You also can opt not to store your credit card or banking information. This prompt also has an option to set your accounts for recurring monthly payment.

**Direct Payment Plan** - This allows you to have payments made automatically from your checking, savings or bank card. You simply fill out an authorization card providing the bank account or card information. Payment will be deducted on the first banking day after the 24th of each month. Direct Payment Plan authorization cards are available by contacting us, or through the E-Bill site.

**Pay By Phone** - The ability to pay your bill by phone, wherever you are, is a convenient way to stay on top of payments each month. With Vigilante Electric's Pay by Phone System, you can pay your bill, check your balance and update your account information over the phone, 24 hours a day. To access, you simply dial toll free (855) 385-9904. Using your account number, voice commands will guide you in accessing your information.

This is not to say that the old school ways of paying bills is antiquated. We gladly accept checks or cash, and it is perfectly OK to mail in your payment or drop it by our office. This being said, in today's hectic world, isn't it nice to know that you have options?

## Outage Notification Numbers

M-F 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
**683-2327 or**  
**(800) 221-8271**

### Dillon

After Hours Mon. - Thurs.  
 Dan Snellman.....683-6222  
 Gary Ferris .....683-6321  
 Cody Tarter .....925-3326  
 Charles Wharton 660-1878

### Weekends

**683-2327 or**  
**(800) 221-8271**

### Whitehall

After Hours and  
 Weekends  
 Marty Simons .....287-3950  
 Chuck Romerio.....287-3144  
 John Moos .....266-3605

### Townsend

After Hours and  
 Weekends  
 John Moos .....266-3605  
 Justin Bair .....266-3351  
 Chase White .....459-3892  
 Marty Simons .....287-3950



## Affordable. Innovative. Member Focused.

It's hard to predict the future, but one thing seems certain — **new government regulations will increase the cost of electricity.**

We want to work with you to keep your electric bills **AFFORDABLE**. We're controlling costs and no matter what the future holds we'll continue to put you, our members, **FIRST**.



Find out how we're Looking Out for You at  
[www.vec.coop](http://www.vec.coop)

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