

VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

P.O. Box 1049, Dillon, MT 59725-1049

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OWNED BY THOSE WE SERVE

Reflection on a Wonderful Journey

By Dan Snellman

I was born and raised on a ranch in Medicine Lake, Montana. While growing up, Mom and Dad taught us kids that with a lot of hard work you can achieve just about anything, and that has held true in my career. My dad was a lineman for Sheridan Electric for 30 years, working his way to the foreman position. By watching my Dad and listening to him tell stories about what linemen do, I decided that was what I wanted to do.

When I got out of high school, I decided to go to lineman school in Bismarck, North Dakota. That turned out to be a really good decision because that is where I met my wife of 42 years, Jane. I knew from the beginning I wanted to work at for a co-op, so while going to school I started sending let-



Dan Snellman

ters to a few co-ops in Montana, and got an offer with Big Flat Electric in Malta. Two weeks before I was supposed to start, their manager called me and said they had a huge ice storm and about half their system was laying on the ground. So in May 1974 I headed to Malta to start my 42-year career.

I learned a lot in a short period of time from Smock Mann, Jay Southwick and Bill Henderson while trying to get the system back up. We worked 16 hours a day, 7 days a week for as long as we could take it. What a way to start. Even back then I knew I had made the right decision going to work for a co-op. I made \$4/hour and Jane worked as a LPN at the hospital for \$2/hour. That was a lot

of money back in those days.

I got laid off in February of 1976, and got a job at Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative in Sidney in March, when the oil boom was in full swing. However, we made a few trips out to Missoula to visit an uncle of mine and fell in love with the mountains. We decided we wanted to live out west, so in May 1978 I applied for a lineman job at the Townsend outpost for Vigilante Electric Cooperative. Within a week General Manager Wilbur Anderson called and offered me the job.

Boy was I surprised when I got to Townsend by how old and outdated the equipment was compared to the other two co-ops I had worked for. We had no bucket trucks and just some old highway digger trucks. We finally got our first bucket truck for Townsend in 1985, when Foreman Dick Evans retired. Bob Curtis and I asked Dave Alberi, the engineer at the time, if we could get a bucket truck instead of hiring another lineman. Dave agreed, so Bob and I took care of the Townsend area until we hired John Moos.

I really enjoyed being a lineman, but in the back of my mind I always wanted to be the line superintendent. In 1993, when Heine Richardson decided to retire, I applied for the job. That was a tough decision. We had

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“Your dedication and loyalty to this organization clearly is a benchmark for all of us to follow.

It has been a pleasure working with you, Dan! Your leadership and integrity in leading the operations staff will be missed. A new chapter is starting at Vigilante Electric and in your life, and we wish you and Jane all the best in your retirement.”

— Rollie Miller, VEC Manager

Outage Notification Numbers

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

Dillon

After Hours Mon. - Thurs.
Justin Bair925-1540
Gary Ferris.....683-6321
Cody Tarter.....925-3326

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

Whitehall

After Hours and
Weekends
Marty Simons287-3950
Chuck Romerio....491-5466
Zach
Maershbecker...701-290-9265

Townsend

After Hours and
Weekends
John Moos266-3605
Chase White459-3892
Marty Simons287-3950

Looking at Lighting (Again)

Small Business LED Promotion

The amount of resources and money that is being committed to the reduction of energy usage through efficiency is quite remarkable. Three years ago, I used these pages to educate our members with small businesses about high-efficiency fluorescent light, and the incentives available to help with upgrades. Today we are doing the same thing; however the incentives are improved and the technology is LED (light-emitting diode).

LED is an electronic device that emits light when an electrical current is passed through it. The energy-efficient nature of LEDs allows them to produce brighter light than other types of bulbs while using less energy. The LED is one of today's most energy-efficient and rapidly developing lighting technologies. Quality LED light bulbs last longer, are more durable, and offer comparable or better light quality than other types of lighting.

Currently, there is an effort being put forth to encourage the adoption of LED technology in the commercial sector. Working in conjunction with Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), our Small Business LED promotion will pay 100 percent of installed costs up to 23 cents per kilowatt hour of the estimated first-year savings on qualified projects.

If you are a small business owner, you probably do not give much thought to your lighting. However, think about why your lights are on, how long they are on and what the effect is on your electric bill. Lighting is an essential part of your busi-



In the foreground is a fixture with new LED lamps, the background has fixture standard T8 fluorescent lamps.

ness that it is costing you more than you think, and a lot more than necessary.

According to the Small Business Administration, lighting could be 20 percent to 50 percent of your annual bill. It is estimated that with upgrades and good lighting design, energy consumed by lighting could be cut in half, while maintaining or improving lighting quality. Proper lighting also supports the buildings' occupants. Studies indicate that a building's lighting directly affects the comfort, mood, productivity,

health and safety of its occupants.

To illustrate, let's start with some terminology and then provide a simple example. Many businesses have linear fluorescent lighting. You might have heard the term "T8 with electronic ballasts." T8 indicates the lamp diameter, measured in eighths of an inch (a T8 measures one inch). The ballast is the component that controls the starting and operational voltage of the fixture.

Say your business has 10 T8 light fixtures. Each fixture

has four 32-watt lamps that are four feet long. For this example, the fixture wattage (ballast and lamps) is 118 watts. The business is open seven days a week for 10 hours a day, making the electrical consumption for the lights 11.8 kilowatt hours per day or 354 kilowatt hours over a 30-day billing cycle.

If we replace these with 15-watt LED T8 replacement lamps, the fixture wattage comes down to 60 watts per fixture. Under these conditions, the monthly kilowatt hour usage would be 180 kilowatt hours, a 49 percent reduction.

To qualify, your business must be served by Vigilante Electric and be less than 20,000 square feet. A review of the project specifications and business site is required prior to any work being done. Only prequalified LED lights are eligible, and this incentive ends March 15, 2017. For questions regarding this program, or to have a free lighting audit of your business call our Dillon office at 683-2327 or (800) 221-8271.

Women and Cooperatives

By Adam Schwartz

In honor of Women's Equality Day on August 26, let's take a look at the roles women play in cooperatives across the globe. Even though women in the U.S. and U.K. were not allowed to vote until the early 1900s, women were granted equal voting rights in the first modern era cooperative, The Rochdale Pioneers Equitable Society. Established in 1844 in Rochdale, England, the

co-op's founders agreed that women should have equal voting rights. So you see, treating women equally has been baked into our cooperative DNA right from the start. And the cooperative business model continues to champion women's equality across the globe.

According to a 2015 global study conducted by the Committee for the Promotion and Advancement of Cooperatives, co-ops have an increasingly positive

impact on women and their inclusion in the labor force, and enhance women's ability to achieve positions of authority (both within and outside of the co-op).

In developing countries — where women have long suffered due to biased cultural norms, government policy and lack of opportunities — the role cooperatives play in the lives of women, as well as the role women play in cooperatives, is now more

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Journey

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three boys in school, we had a lot of really good friends and Bob and I had become best of friends. As it turned out it was a great decision.

When I came over to Dillon I was overwhelmed on how big the area was and how much I had to learn. Heine was really helpful in showing me the area and he knew everyone and the history of the area. Dave taught me a lot about surveying lines and other engineering.

Dave and I worked together for many years and had a

“ I have worked with Dan for his entire career at Vigilante Electric. Dan is the perfect example of a ‘company’ man, or in our case a ‘cooperative’ man. He has always put the interest of the members first. His work ethic is exemplary, the likes of which will be hard to equal. I wish him the best as he journeys into this new phase of his life. See you on the golf course, my friend. ”

– Linda Meine, VEC staff assistant

great working relationship and became very good friends. I was fortunate to have area foremen Bill Hugulet in Whitehall and Bob Curtis in Townsend, and when they retired, Marty Simons and John Moos took over those areas respectively and have done a great job.

There have been a lot of changes over the last 38 years at Vigilante. We have grown in size as an organization, we have newer and better equipment, and the line crews are great. In fact, we have almost the same number of employees as we did 30 years ago. It is amazing how much hot work our linemen

do now, how good they are at it and how safely they do it. We have really improved on our safety program and work every day on making it better.

The technology has also changed, from handwritten staking sheets and mapping to computerized sheets and maps; from physically reading meters to new automatic reading meters, and from mechanical oil circuit reclosers to electronic.

We have always had a



New Line Superintendent Justin Bair, Dan Snellman and General Manager Rollie Miller.

great office staff, a really good Board of Trustees and good managers. Rollie Miller and I have worked well together, and he will keep VEC moving in the right direction. VEC has a very low turnover rate, which is a testament to how great a company we have. Linda Meine and I have worked together for more than 38 years, and she’s still going. I think she will have more than 40 years when she retires.

I would also like to thank all of the linemen’s wives, my wife included, for all the after-hour phone calls they take during power outages — day and night. Great job gals!

Over the years I’ve gotten to work with a lot of great co-workers, suppliers and contractors, and have made many new friends from other co-ops around the states.

Looking back over the years I can’t think of anything I would do different. For the most part I looked forward to going to work every day. I’m sure I will miss going to work a little bit, but it’s time to do some traveling, fishing, hunting, golfing and especially seeing our kids and grandkids more. I wish Justin Bair and his family the best of luck in their new journey, and am confident he will do a great job.

Capital Credits

Vigilante Electric Cooperative is currently trying to locate the following individuals for payment of Capital Credits. If you have any information regarding names on this list please contact us.

Vigilante Electric Coop., Inc. • PO Box 1049 • Dillon MT 59725 • MT Toll Free 800-221-8271 or 683-2327

Allen, Dan W./Lisa S.
Eugene OR

Armenta-Day, Antonia
Stockton KS

Baker, Josh
Helena MT

Bartle, Steve
Three Forks MT

American Gen Finance
Helena MT

Arrigoni, Jennifer
Dillon MT

Baldock, Carol
Whitehall MT

Bauman, Jack/
Mooney, Robyn
Great Falls MT

Anderson, Liz
Dillon MT

Austin, Bill/Grace, Sherie
Fargo ND

Ball, Claudia
Manhattan MT

Becky, Robert
Butte MT

Andrews, Tina
N Las Vegas NV

Avila, Diane
Hanford CA

Barth, Greg
Dillon MT

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Capital Credits

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Beebe, Brent
c/o Daryl Brassfield
Townsend MT

Benales, Mick
Lima MT

Big Iron Equip
c/o Dave Moody
Whitehall MT

Billmayer, Dean
Townsend MT

Blake, Shawn
Helena MT

Blaskovic, Branko
Townsend MT

Bomar, William
Buffalo WY

Bousquet, Jessica
Seeley Lake MT

Boyce, Margann
Flasher ND

Boyles, Debra
Boise ID

Braesch-Robinson, Victoria
Prairie City OR

Brant, Steven
Boise ID

Brower, Bev
Dillon MT

Brown, Gary/Kelli
Grand Rapids MN

Brown, Micky
Kalispell MT

Brundage, Kevin
Dillon MT

Bryant, Sharon
St Joseph MO

Bunyard, Warren
Butte MT

Carroll, Douglas/Carol
Dillon MT

Carson, Joe / Guin
Dillon MT

Carte, Grace
Ennis MT

Cassero, Tima
Belgrade MT

Chevalier, Melissa
Rangely CO

Chichester, Isreal
Clearfield UT

Christensen, Johnny
Cheyenne WY

Christiaens, Tassie
Conrad MT

Clark, Cody
Dillon MT

Clark, Nathaniel / Joy
Seeley Lake MT

Clay, Loretta
Fields OR

Clos, Tamara
Helena MT

Coburn, Tami
Missoula MT

Cole, Michael/Judy
Three Forks MT

Collins, Steve
Butte MT

Colucci, Vince
Missoula MT

Comeau, Elaine
Livingston MT

Conrad, Raymond
Townsend MT

Cooper, La Dale
Dillon MT

Cox, Brandi
Southern Pines NC

Cox, Kenneth/Karen
Las Vegas NV

Crowe, Dale
Bozeman MT

Day, Cory M.
Hood River OR

Deborde, Inc
Helena MT

Delaney, Rick
Fruita CO

Denny, Terri/
Winstead, Charles
Dillon MT

Detner, Kevin
Choteau MT

*CAPITAL CREDITS
Continued next month*

Prescription Discount Tracker

Total Paid Claims YTD	509
Total Savings YTD ..	\$16,983.88
Total Savings	
Percentage	39.62%
June Paid Claims	5
June Savings	\$686.21
June Savings	
Percentage	78.24%



Women

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meaningful than ever.

In Paraguay, a South American country bordered by Brazil and Argentina, gender equality has transformed the Manduvira Sugarcane Cooperative.

This fair-trade sugar co-op has seen a dramatic increase in the participation of female members and leaders. Manduvira is a multi-service co-op with two types of operations: organic, fair-trade sugar production, and savings and credit. In both of its operations, Manduvira has seen a significant increase in its success as women's participation

grows.

According to several co-op leaders in Manduvira, female members are generally more likely to apply what they learn in trainings and adopt new farming techniques compared to their male counterparts. Because women are more likely to adopt new technologies and the co-op has seen a higher percentage of women in leadership roles, the co-op has become stronger and more stable.

This is just an example from one cooperative. In South Africa, women make up 60 percent of co-op members from nearly all sectors. In Japan, women make up 95 percent of co-op members in consumer coopera-

tives and hold key governance positions. And globally, more women join savings and credit cooperatives, giving them increased access to financial resources.

Right here at Vigilante Electric Cooperative, two women serve on our board (Cheyenne Garrison and Sharon Lasich), one serves in a leadership position (Raquel Reno-Morast) and five work hard to help make the co-op run smoothly (Joy Britton, Jackie Clark, Barb Delano, Emily May and Linda Meine). Treating everyone equally and ensuring folks have fair opportunities is the cooperative way of doing business.