



# VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

## 2018 Annual Meeting of Members

On March 2, 2018, Vigilante Electric Cooperative commemorated its 80th annual meeting. This year we implemented a new format and time for our meeting and, despite the weather, members from across our service territory convened on the campus of the University of Montana – Western for what turned out to be a great meeting.

After concluding the procedural requirements, Board of Trustees President Allen Martinell provided a brief report highlighting some of the 2017 financial milestones. Allen noted that, due to steady growth and a strong financial position, we were able to retire and distribute \$822,174 of capital credits in 2017, and more than \$3.4 million in the last five years.

This year for our legislative update we were joined by Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association Assistant General Manager Gary Wiens. Gary typically presents a broad view of the legislative challenges facing electric cooperatives, but this year he focused on one. He discussed MECA's efforts to end the extra fees hydroelectric providers and users currently pay to fund Montana's aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention programs.

Following the legislative report was the 2017 financial report by Office Manager Raquel Reno-Morast. Raquel reported that operating revenue and operating expenses were up slightly from 2016, plant value increased by \$1.7 million and Vigilante Electric's equity ratio is now 47 percent. Overall, there were no significant changes from 2016, and Vigilante Electric remains in a strong financial position.

The meeting continued with the general manager's report by Rollie Miller. Rollie started with a discussion on our current power supply contact with Bonneville Power Administration, and how environmental and special-interest



Rollie Miller  
General Manager



Gary Wiens

groups can impact rates. This transitioned into some commentary about our 2018 rate increase. Rollie noted that even with this increase, our rates remain the lowest in the state and among the lowest in the country.

Rollie continued with brief status reports on a variety of topics, including our proposed community solar project, new load potential, system projects and equipment replacement. He encouraged members to visit our Facebook page, discussed the benefits of SmartHub, and encouraged attendees to sign up for Vigilante Safety Roundup.

In closing, Rollie talked about the seven cooperative principles, emphasizing principle seven — Concern for Community. Vigilante Electric, its trustees and employees are deeply committed to our communities. We provide financial support for the Youth Tour, scholarships, and donations to rural schools and rural fire departments. We provide safety training to schools and emergency responders, and our employees volunteer countless hours to make our communities better.

The next item on the agenda was the election of trustees. Nominations for trustees are made at the district meetings. This year, Sharon Lasich was nominated for District #4 (serving Twin Bridges and Point of Rocks), Cheyenne Garrison was nominated from District #5 (serving Melrose, Divide, Ramsey and Wise River), and Dean Peterson was nominated from District #7 (serving the Big Hole and Grasshopper Valley). With no additional nominations from the floor, each was cast a unanimous ballot.

The meeting concluded with guest speaker Harleigh Johnson, a junior at Beaverhead County High School. She spoke about her experiences as part of the 2017 Youth Tour and as the Montana representative for the Youth Leadership Council. This past year she traveled to Washington, D.C., twice and attended the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association annual meeting in Nashville, Tennessee.

Overall, this year's meeting was a great success. We would like to thank the staff of the University of Montana – Western for the wonderful venue and meal. We would like to thank Harleigh and Gary for their contributions to the meeting. Finally, we would like to thank our members who took time out of their schedules to attend. It is our honor to serve you.



# 2018 Leadership Award Winners

*“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.”*

— Benjamin Franklin

At Vigilante Electric Cooperative, we believe in the value of education and support the aspirations of area students wanting to expand their horizons through further schooling. This is why we offer the Vigilante Electric Cooperative Leadership Award.

Each year Vigilante Electric provides scholarships to students who are dependents of members, and who have distinguished themselves in the classroom and in their communities. This year’s applications continued the tradition of academic achievement, hard work and commitment to school and community.

For the 2017-18 academic year, Vigilante Electric’s board of trustees has decided to award 20 \$500 scholarships.

## This year’s Leadership Award recipients are:

- Clay Allison, Beaverhead Co. High School (BCHS)
- Baylee Bair, BCHS
- Kia Coon, BCHS
- Brynley Fitzgerald, BCHS
- Hailey Garrison, BCHS
- Blake Goody, BCHS
- Claire Helle, BCHS
- Rhiannon Murdoch Kalsta, BCHS
- Makaila Marsh, BCHS
- Heidi Martin, BCHS
- Kyndall Petersen, BCHS
- Luke Peterson, BCHS
- Paige Rouse, BCHS
- Jessica Wasser, BCHS
- Lainee Hill, Broadwater High School
- Tyler Noyes, Broadwater High School
- Katlyn O’Brien, Butte High School
- Kyeli Ostler, Whitehall High School
- Garrison Shaw, Whitehall High School

We again paired our Leadership Award with the Montana Electric Cooperatives’ Association (MECA) Memorial Scholarship, giving students the opportunity to win two scholarships while filling out only one application. The top application was forwarded to our statewide association for consideration for one of four Memorial Scholarships. This year we selected Blake Goody’s application. At the time of this article, the winner of the MECA scholarship had not been announced.

Vigilante Electric Cooperative would like to congratulate this year’s scholarship winners and wish them the best in their future endeavors.

## Are you ready to irrigate?

As another irrigation season approaches, Vigilante Electric Cooperative would like to remind members in the farm and ranch community to exercise extreme caution when preparing to irrigate.

The biggest danger we see is irrigation pipe that is stored or used near overhead power lines. The pipe (hand line, wheel line and pivot pipe) is an excellent conductor of electricity, and making contact with an overhead power line can be fatal.

Please consider the following when working with irrigation pipe near power lines:

- Never have your pivot setup to where any part of the pivot can be parked under an overhead power line.
- Do not store pipe near power lines.
- Flush small animals out of the pipe with water. Do not tip the pipe on end. Doing this puts you at risk of contacting a power line. Plus, the obstruction may be so bad that it won’t dislodge even if the pipe were perpendicular to the ground.
- Do not assume that everybody knows the location of power lines just because you do. If you or others will be handling pipe or moving tall equipment, take the time to remind your staff of the location of power lines and the dangers of making contact with them.

Another danger is when livestock or rodents damage the electrical service. Livestock love to rub against poles, guy wires and electrical panels, and rodents can nest in the electric panel. Both can create a potentially dangerous situation when you start your pumps. We strongly recommend looking over your equipment prior to energizing the system to make sure everything is in proper working order.

Finally, burning is the easiest and quickest way to eliminate vegetation from canals that might impede water flow or clog pump intakes. Before you start burning, review your surroundings and identify all potential hazards. Be especially careful when burning around power poles because they can catch fire and burn. When this happens, the property owner is responsible for all costs associated with repairing that facility.

As with any project, you have to keep the cost of a mistake in mind. As this article indicates, the costs can be more than financial. If you have any questions, contact us at our Dillon office. At Vigilante Electric Cooperative, we want you to be safe when working around electricity.



# The power behind your power

Vigilante Electric Cooperative strives to provide reliable electricity to our members and one of the biggest challenges to keeping the power on is Mother Nature. When the power goes out, most of us can ride out a storm from the comfort and convenience of our homes. However, there is a group of professionals that spring into action when the weather takes a turn for the worst — co-op lineworkers.

Listed as one of the 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S., lineworkers have to be available to work at any time day or night, work in the worst possible conditions and potentially work around the clock to restore power. At Vigilante Electric, our linemen are responsible for maintaining 2,710 miles of lines across 10 counties.

Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 9th. During the

month, if you see a lineworker, please take a moment to say thank you to the power behind your power. Let them know you appreciate the hard work they do to keep the lights on, regardless of the conditions.

“Electric linemen do not often receive the recognition they deserve,” said Rollie Miller, general manager. “They work all hours of the day, often in hazardous conditions to restore power to our communities. Our linemen, as well as linemen from across the nation, truly deserve this special day of recognition.”

We would like to thank John Moos, Travis Jensen, Chuck Romero, Jess Davidson, Charles Wharton, Cody Tarter, Chase White, Vance Forsman, Zach Maersbecker, Austyn Paulsen and Tyler Arnio for their service to our membership and our organization.



## Administrative Professionals Day

Alfred North Whitehead once said, “No one who achieves success does so without acknowledging the help of others. The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude.” On April 25th, we will join businesses across the country in celebration of Administrative Professionals Day to express our gratitude to our administrative professionals.

Like most organizations, our administrative professionals work behind the scenes and their roles within our cooperative are vital. They keep us organized, and their willingness to take on any necessary task makes work easier for all of us.

“In my time at Vigilante Electric Cooperative, it has been an honor working with the Administrative Professionals in our office,” stated Rollie Miller, general manager. “Their individual qualities, dedication and ability to work as a team create a wonderful work environment. If you get the opportunity, please take time to thank these people when you see them next.”

Raquel Reno-Morast, office manager, said, “I would like to recognize the great group of women we have working in our office, and thank them for their service to Vigilante Electric. They all bring something unique, which makes for a great team. It’s a pleasure to work with them all.”

We would like to recognize — and thank — Barb Delano, Jackie Clark, Joy Britton, Emily May and Chelsey Hutchison for their devotion and valued work to our organization.

### Board of Trustees & General Manager

Allen Martinell, President – Dist. #9  
Dell/Lima

Tom Helm, Vice President – Dist. #3  
Townsend/N. Helena/Lump Gulch

Sharon Lasich, Sec/Treas. – Dist. #4  
Twin Bridges

Norm Tebay, Trustee – Dist. #1  
Cardwell/Whitehall/Three Forks

Dean Hanson, Trustee – Dist. #2  
Silver Star/Waterloo

Cheyenne Garrison, Trustee – Dist. #5  
Wise River/Silver Bow/Melrose

Andy Johnson, Trustee – Dist. #6  
Dillon North/Glen

Dean Peterson, Trustee – Dist. #7  
Jackson/Wisdom

Jim Petersen, Trustee – Dist. #8  
Dillon South/Grant

Rollie Miller – General Manager

# HELP THE LINEWORKER REACH THE SUBSTATION



Lineworkers work in dangerous conditions to restore electricity after major storms and other types of power outages. Many times, lineworkers make substation repairs to get the power back on.

**Can you help the lineworker get to the substation?**

