



VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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

(406) 683-2327 or (800) 221-8271

Web site: www.vec.coop

E-mail: contact@vec.coop

Remembering Don Jones . . .

It is with great sadness that we inform our membership about the passing of our friend, retired Trustee Don Jones.

For many of you, Don's presence with our organization and other organizations statewide is well known. For those of you who didn't know Don or have the pleasure of meeting him, Don was a soft-spoken, kind and giving individual. Don was, in every way, a true gentleman.

When Don announced his retirement from the board of trustees at Vigilante Electric Cooperative, I had the great fortune to listen to him reflect on his time with us. When we had concluded our discussion, I couldn't help but marvel at his commitment to us, as well as many other organizations.

Don didn't merely sit on the board of trustees at Vigilante Electric; he was an active leader. Over his tenure, he served as president twice, vice president and secretary/treasurer. He was also on the Western Montana Generating & Transmission board, as well as on the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association board for 30 years, serving on its executive committee for 11 years as vice chairman.

While Don's demeanor was reserved and quiet, many people in our industry took notice of him. He was honored twice by our statewide organization. In 1992, he received the Hard Ridin' Award, which is presented to a co-op trustee or employee who has demonstrated exceptional character and perseverance amidst extraordinary difficulties. In 2011, Don received the Cooperative Spirit Award, which recognizes personnel and trustees who embody the highest principles of cooperation, promote through daily example the cooperative ideal, and champion the ideal of harmony and solidarity among cooperatives.

Two facts set Don's career as a trustee with Vigilante Electric apart. First, at the time of his retirement, he had served 54 years as a trustee, making him the longest tenured trustee in our organization's history. Second, Vigilante Electric was founded in



1937, and has had five general managers to date. Don served with all five.

What drives a man to give so much of his time and energy to one organization? With Don, it seemed quite simple: he was a humble man who wanted the best for his family, and this desire translated into action. Vigilante Electric just happened to be one of the benefactors.

Don's impact on our organization cannot be overstated. His legacy and example will continue on at Vigilante Electric Cooperative. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Don's family, and we would like to thank them for sharing such a wonderful man with us.

The following is the loving tribute from Don's family:

Obituary for Donald Harvey Jones

WISE RIVER – Donald Harvey Jones, 86, of Wise River, passed away New Year's Eve, December 31, 2018, at St. Patrick Hospital. He was born March 22, 1932, in Butte, MT, to Robert (Leslie) and Louise Jones.

He lived his entire life on the family ranch in Wise River. He attended grade school in Wise River, riding his horse

Continued on page 4

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

VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Remembering Don ...

Continued from page 3

to and from school every day, and attended Beaverhead County High School in Dillon. He was drafted into the Army in 1953, and was based in Alaska. After his time in the Army he returned home to the family ranch in 1955. He married Elizabeth Pilling, June 5, 1960, and for more than 58 years they ranched side by side, raised their family and were involved in several organizations within their community and Beaverhead County. Donald became a director on the Vigilante Electric Co-op board in 1961, and was an advocate of bringing quality service to rural areas for 53 years when he retired from the board in 2015. He also served on the state board of rural electric cooperatives, Western G&T and Northwinds Publishing. He served on the school board in Wise River for several years, was a superintendent for the Beaverhead County Fair in sheep and hogs, and was instrumental in getting a new fire hall in Wise River by donating the land and helping to get the building off the ground. Don was a member of the Elks in Dillon since 1962, and enjoyed the many membership benefits of being an Elk. He also belonged to the Masonic Lodge of Wisdom, was a member of Stockgrowers and the Montana Woolgrowers. In his early years, he owned a small plane and often would be found flying in the fall looking for lost cattle on the forest permits.

Don was a third-generation rancher, following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, who came here in 1910. Hereford Cattle and sheep were always a part of the ranch and Don raised many fine registered and commercial Hereford cattle over the years. In 2002, he was named commercial man of the year by the Montana Hereford Association. Don was a true steward of the land and worked and managed his ranch tirelessly. In 2010, he and Liz celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, along with celebrating 100 years of the ranch being in the Jones family. Don took a lot of pride in those two accomplishments. Don loved



to travel and spent a lot of time traveling with Liz and their special friends Jay and Jean Nelson. He also was an avid reader, and in his later years he always had a book in hand. He is survived by his wife Elizabeth Jones, his children, Keith Jones (Wendy) and children Nora and Nathan, Yvonne Jones, and Jodi Pauley, with her children Dalton and Jesse. He is also survived by his two sisters, Retha (Loren) Sigman and Lynn (John) Mugaas, along with several nephews, nieces and cousins. He was preceded in death by his parents, Robert and Louise Jones, and his son, Karl Jones.

Cremation has taken place and per Don's request there will be no funeral services, but a family celebration of life will take place in the summer of 2019. A special thank-you from the family for all his care at Barrett Hospital and St. Patrick Hospital and by Dr. Loge.

Memorials can be made to the Wise River Volunteer Fire Company, Beaverhead County 4-H Foundation, Friends of the Beaverhead County Fair, Barrett Hospital Foundation or donor's choice.

Capital Credits 101

Did you know that your cooperative is, by law, a non-profit organization and that YOU (a co-op member) are part owner? Yep, you read that right! Vigilante Electric Cooperative is owned by those we serve. While there are many unique features of an electric cooperative, there is one subject that we receive several questions about and that each member is entitled to – Capital Credits.

Vigilante Electric's capital credit system was adopted at the 1947 annual meeting, and provides a method for allocating each individual member's share of excess revenues, or net margins. The term "capital credits" is used because the actual money, which is classified as net margins, is invested in cooperative capital. This money belongs to the members, but they have agreed to its use for capital purposes by accepting the capital credit provisions in the bylaws. This business model prevents us from having to take out additional loans and assists us in keeping our costs low for our members.

Capital Credit statements are sent out to our members annually, notifying them of their allocation of margins for

the previous year. When financial conditions permit, a general retirement (or refund) of capital can be made. These retired capital credits are then paid back to the individual member in the form of a check. While the entire process between the allocation and the refund takes time, it is our policy to retire (pay) the oldest capital credits first. In December 2018, we paid out the remaining credits from 2002 and all of 2003.

To date, Vigilante Electric has returned more than \$16 million back to our members, and over the past three years, the average annual amount of capital credits retired is \$812,752.

One challenge that we often encounter is keeping track of every member we owe. Due to the amount of time it takes between the allocation process and the general retirement, some people move and we lose track of them. If you have earned capital credits and leave our system, please be sure to keep us informed of your current mailing address so we know where to find you when it comes time to pay you.

Vigilante Electric Cooperative

81st Annual Meeting of Members

Organizations like ours, a cooperative, are different because we adhere to a set of core principles. One core principle is that we function as a democratic organization controlled by our members. Member participation guides a cooperative and as a member, there is no better opportunity to participate than our annual meeting. We are currently making preparations for our annual meeting of members and would like to invite you to attend.

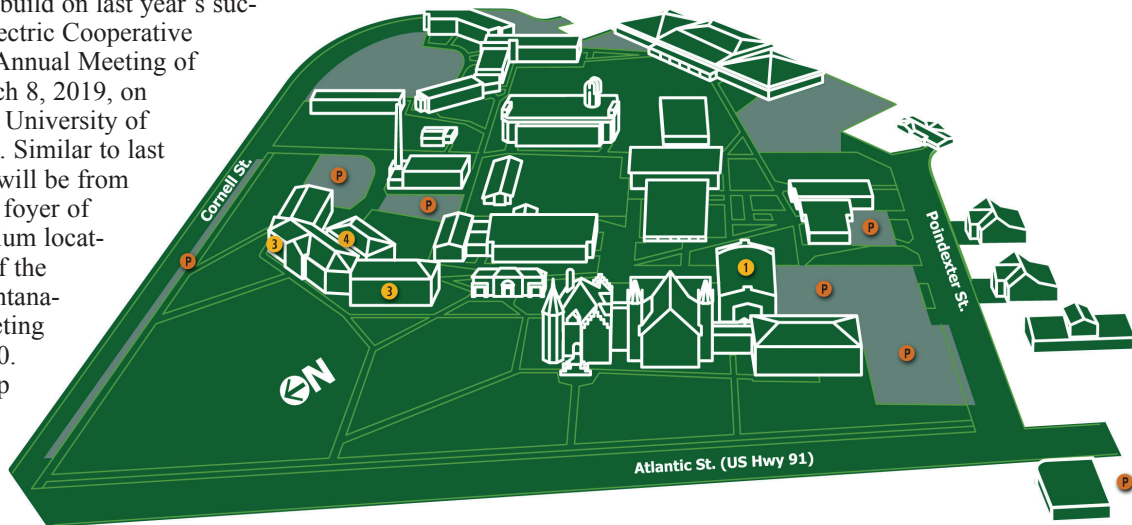
In 2018, Vigilante Electric Cooperative made some changes to our Annual Meeting format that were well received by our membership. Parking was drastically improved, the registration process was much quicker, and the change in location allowed all of our members to be seated comfortably and in a location where they could see and hear well.

Now hoping to build on last year's success, Vigilante Electric Cooperative will host its 81st Annual Meeting of Members on March 8, 2019, on the campus of the University of Montana-Western. Similar to last year, registration will be from 9 – 11 a.m. in the foyer of the Beier Auditorium located in Main Hall of the University of Montana-Western. The meeting will begin at 10:30. Please see the map to the right for all the parking options available to you.

Our business meeting will be conducted as normal. Members will hear our leadership discuss cooperative issues, recap events of the previous year, participate in trustee elections and receive information

regarding our financial status. For members who attend the meeting, a ticket will be provided at the time of registration for lunch. At the conclusion of the business meeting (approx. noon) members are welcome to move over to Mathews Hall, where lunch will be served in the Lewis and Clark Room and in the campus cafeteria. Members can choose from a prime rib sandwich or lemon-butter cod, and are welcome to stay and eat at their leisure and catch up with old friends and members.

All of the elements that attendees expect from our annual meeting are still there. Attending members will receive a gift at registration, be eligible for wonderful door prizes at the end of the meeting and be treated to a delicious meal. Watch for your formal invitation in the mail. We hope to see you there.



- 1 Beier Auditorium
- 2 Mathews Hall
- 3 Lewis and Clark Room
- 4 Parking

On the Clock — Mick Paffhausen

With the departure of Ben Miller in December 2017, we had a vacancy in our engineering department. After a thorough search, we believe we found the right fit for our staking/mapping technician in Mick Paffhausen.

Born and raised on a family ranch outside of Dillon, Mick grew up working cows, growing crops, and spending all his free time in the outdoors hunting and fishing. While attending Beaverhead County High School, Mick played for and won two Class "A" State Football Championships playing for Vigilante Electric Cooperative's very own Coach Gary Ferris.



After graduating high school in 2014, Mick continued his education and playing football for Montana Tech. He has completed an associate in applied science degree for construction technology and a bachelor's in applied science degree for construction management. Mick interned with Vigilante Electric this past summer, then returned to college to complete his degree and play his last season of football.

We would like to welcome Mick to our organization, and look forward to a long association.

Why We Plan Outages

Have you ever received a notification from Vigilante Electric Cooperative informing you of a planned outage and wondered why your electric utility would intentionally cut power? The fact is that the equipment and/or material used to bring power to your home occasionally needs to be replaced, repaired or updated. When the circumstances permit, we plan an interruption to electric service to do this.

While no outage is convenient, planned outages are beneficial in the long run. System upgrades are necessary for optimal performance and can increase service reliability. With early detection of a problem, we can safely plan the work needed to correct the issue and prevent a longer/larger outage down the road.


Planned outages also allow us the opportunity to contact our members who will be impacted by the outage. We make every effort to contact those affected by using several

different methods. We mail postcards, send email notifications and, if time permits, call our members. If notifications of planned outages are important to you, please ensure that your contact information is current.

The best way to keep your account information current is through SmartHub. SmartHub is a web and mobile app that allows you to interact with us. Once you register, you have access to a wealth of information regarding your account and you can receive a variety of notifications (including planned outage notifications) from us. You can access SmartHub from our website, vec.coop, or by downloading the app to a smartphone or tablet.

Another way that you can provide this information is on the return slip from your monthly bill (see below). Or, if you prefer, you are always welcome to call and provide the information over the phone.

Return This Portion With Payment

<p>JANE DOE ADDRESS CITY, ST ZIP</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">Account Number:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">00000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Due Date:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">09/30/2015</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total Due:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$00.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Amount Paid:</td> <td style="text-align: right;">_____</td> </tr> </table>	Account Number:	00000	Due Date:	09/30/2015	Total Due:	\$00.00	Amount Paid:	_____
Account Number:	00000								
Due Date:	09/30/2015								
Total Due:	\$00.00								
Amount Paid:	_____								
<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 5px;"> <p>PHONE # _____</p> <p>Please indicate a phone number change here: _____</p> <p>Please indicate email address for outage purposes here: _____</p> </div>	<p>Vigilante Electric Cooperative PO Box 1049 Dillon MT 59725-1049</p> 								



VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Vigilante Safety Roundup Tracker

Participating members: 195
Total Contributions: \$1,752.39

To apply contact our office at
(800) 221-8271 or 683-2327

An online application is available at www.vec.coop.

Reminder!

Vigilante Electric Cooperative is now accepting written proposals for funds for safety-related projects within our services territory. A letter detailing your request must be sent to Vigilante Electric General Manager Rollie Miller and the deadline grant proposals will be March 22, 2019.

In the letter we want to know about the organization requesting a grant and their location. We want to know specifics regarding the equipment or project that the funds are being requested for, how it will improve community safety, the timeframe the funds will be used, contact information for the organization and writer of the request.