



# Vigilante Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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## Beautiful Day, Great Meeting

### 2020 Annual Meeting of Members

**M**ARCH 6th marked our 82nd annual meeting of members. Members from across our service territory convened in Dillon on the campus of the University of Montana – Western. On a day where the weather was glorious, attendees had the opportunity to interact with trustees and staff, hear a wealth of information about their cooperative and, as always, were treated to a wonderful meal.

One of our goals for this year's meeting was to create more interaction with the attendees. To accomplish this, we set up stations in the foyer to the auditorium where members could engage with staff. Members could learn more about electrical safety, emerging technologies, our SmartHub application and Safety Roundup.

If you were to ask members what their most anticipated part of the meeting is, they may say they look forward to what Trustee Norm Tebay does for the invocation. This year he sang a Delmar Pepper poem called *Gone Fishing*, partly as an invocation and partly as a salute to retiring Trustee Jim Petersen.

After the procedural components were completed, President Tom Helm continued the meeting with his report to the membership. He spoke about the cooperative founders' vision in creating Vigilante Electric Cooperative, and how essential electricity has become in all of our lives. He concluded, as many did, by thanking Petersen for his 42 years of dedicated service.

The financial report was delivered by Office Manager Raquel Reno-Morast. Vigilante Electric's financial position remains strong and stable. Raquel reported that operating revenue was up 4 percent, non-operating revenue was up 27 percent, and operating expenses were up 5 percent compared to 2018. Plant value increased by \$1.5 million, and Vigilante Electric Cooperative's equity ratio is now 48 percent.

General Manager Rollie Miller's report emphasized the



importance of the theme of this year's annual meeting – safety. Safety is priority one for Rollie. Vigilante Electric has made tremendous strides when it comes to safety, and Rollie reported that we had zero recordable accidents for the past three years.

Rollie continued his safety related message by talking about Vigilante Electric's new safety demonstration trailer, and all of the efforts Vigilante Electric has engaged in to create awareness of the hazards of high-voltage electricity.

One of the best moments of the meeting happened during Rollie's discussion of our Safety Roundup program. This program allows members to round up their bill to the next whole dollar. The funds generated by the round-up are then donated to organizations that keep our communities safe. After explaining the safety roundup concept, Rollie presented representatives of the Jefferson Valley Rural Ambulance with a check in the amount of \$500. This is the third donation Vigilante Electric has made through this program.

Rollie continued with a discussion of our alliance with Rocky Mountain Supply in the co-ownership of Montana Energy Alliance. He concluded his report with an explanation of the proposed bylaw changes, and invited questions.

Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) CEO

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# Annual Meeting

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Gary Wiens provided information regarding two important issues currently facing Montana and regional electric cooperatives. The first was Montana Governor Steve Bullock's formation of a Climate Change Council. MECA was granted a seat at the table, and Gary assured members that MECA will do everything possible to make sure that cooperative concerns are addressed.

The second issue was the potential breach of the Lower Snake River dams. This could potentially impact the rates for all Bonneville Power Administration customers, including Vigilante Electric. These dams generate enough reliable, carbon-free electricity to power 800,000 homes. Gary commented that there is strength in numbers and encouraged Vigilante Electric members to vote, reach out to the Climate Change Council and sign up for MECA's Grassroots team.

Next was discussion and a vote on four proposed bylaw changes. Motions to accept the four proposed changes passed.

The meeting continued with trustee elections for District 3 serving the Townsend-Toston area, District 8 serving Dillon south, and District 9, serving Dell-Lima. Nominations for trustees are made at the district meetings, and can also be made from the floor at the annual meeting.

This year, Tom Helm was nominated by District #3 and Allen Martinell by District #9. Each was cast a unanimous ballot. With the retirement of Jim Petersen from District #8, there were two nominees: Mark Boka and Tom Mitchell. Each candidate was granted the opportunity to address the meeting. Attending members then voted for one of the candidates. Ballots were collected and tallied, with Tom Mitchell

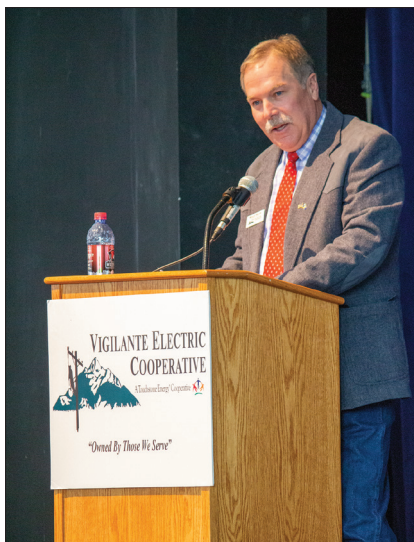
receiving the majority of the votes.

While the votes for trustee were being tallied, Secretary Cheyenne Garrison introduced the 2019 Youth Tour participants, Kassidy Broere and Sarah Welborn. Kassidy worked the registration table and greeted members during the luncheon. Sarah addressed the audience about her favorite experiences on the tour, and what those experiences meant to her.

Overall, the meeting was a success. We would like to thank the staff of the University of Montana - Western for the wonderful venue and delicious meal. We would also like to thank Kassidy, Sarah and Gary for their contributions to our meeting. Finally, we would like to thank our members who took time out of their schedules to attend.



Rollie Miller presenting our third Safety Roundup award to Sue Pullman and Jenny Scott of the Jefferson Valley Rural Ambulance.



# 2020 Leadership Awards

*The winners are . . .*

**E**LLEN Ochoa, American astronaut and the first Hispanic woman to travel in space and former director of NASA's Johnson Space Center once said, "I tell students that the opportunities I had were a result of having a good educational background. Education is what allows you to stand out." At Vigilante Electric Cooperative we have long supported the aspirations of area students wanting to further their education and have their opportunity to stand out.

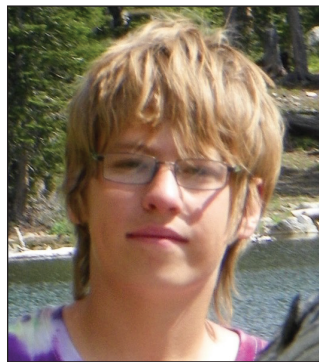
Each year Vigilante Electric provides scholarships to students who are dependents of members and have distinguished themselves in the classroom and in their communities. This year's applications continued the tradition of academic achievement, hard work and commitment to school and community.

For the 2019-2020 academic year, the Board of Trustees of Vigilante Electric has decided to award 15, \$500 scholarships. This year's Leadership Award recipients are:

*Braden Anderson, Beaverhead Co High School*  
*Darbey Holland, Beaverhead Co High School*  
*Madison King, Beaverhead Co High School*  
*Kole Lappe, Beaverhead Co High School*  
*Shylee Ledbetter, Beaverhead Co High School*  
*Katelyn Pape, Beaverhead Co High School*  
*Kylee Pittman, Beaverhead Co High School*  
*Ashlyn Sandal, Beaverhead Co High School*  
*Sarah Welborn, Beaverhead Co High School*  
*Nate Hill, Broadwater High School*  
*Taylor Noyes, Broadwater High School*  
*Peyton Vogl, Broadwater High School*  
*Reata Crafton, Lima High School*  
*Macie Martinell, Lima High School*  
*Asha Noyes, Whitehall High School*

The unique feature of our Leadership Award is that we pair it with the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association Memorial Scholarship. Students can fill out one application and have the opportunity to win two scholarships. The top application received is forwarded to our statewide association for consideration for one of four Memorial Scholarships. This year the application we forwarded to the statewide was: **Kylee Pittman**.

On behalf of Vigilante Electric Cooperative, I would like to congratulate this year's scholarship winners and wish them the best in their future endeavors.



Kyie Salerno



Samuel Konen

## A Washington, D.C., Adventure Awaits

**S**TARTING June 19th, Kyie Salerno and Samuel Konen will be representing Vigilante Electric Cooperative as participants on the 2020 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. Both young men are students at Twin Bridges High School. Kyie is a junior and Sam is a sophomore.

The Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., is organized by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Over the years this program has evolved and grown from 400 students from 12 states in 1964, to more than 1,500 students and 250 chaperones from 44 states last year.

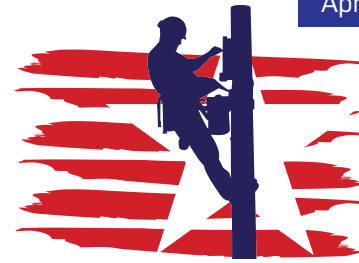
During the week, participants tour the city and many of its historical treasures, visit with their state's congressional delegation and participate in youth rallies and socials.

This is the 19th year that Vigilante Electric Cooperative has sent a representative to the Youth Tour. We would like to congratulate Kyie and Samuel 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.

You can read through the essays these young men submitted in their entirety on our website.



# Remember to Thank a Lineworker on April 13



**L**INEWORKERS serve on the frontlines of our nation's energy needs, and on April 13, 2020, Vigilante Electric Cooperative, along with other electric cooperatives across the country, will honor the brave men and women who work hard to keep the lights on.

Line crews work around the clock, sometimes in difficult and dangerous conditions, to keep power flowing to our local communities. Whether they're restoring power after a major storm or maintaining critical infrastructure to our electric system, lineworkers are at the heart of our co-op.

When a storm hits, they set aside their personal priorities because Mother Nature doesn't work around holidays, vacations and birthdays. A service-oriented mentality is one of the many admirable characteristics of an electric lineworker.

General Manager Rollie Miller adds, "We have some of the

best linemen in the industry. They are as safe, dedicated, loyal and hard working as they come. Thank you for your continued efforts to make Vigilante Electric a great place to work."

Vigilante Electric is proud to honor the 12 linemen who maintain more than 2,780 miles of power lines in our service territory. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Tyler Arnio, Clint Beggar, Jess Davidson, Andrew English, Vance Forsman, Zach Maershbecker, John Moos, Austyn Paulsen, Chuck Romerio, Cody Tarter, Charles Wharton and Chase White for their safe work practices and dedication to our organization.

Vigilante Electric invites all co-op members to take a moment and thank our linemen for the important work they do.

## 2020 Administrative Professionals Day

**A**LFRID 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 22nd, we will join businesses across the country in celebration of Administrative Professionals Day, and 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.

Every day, these individuals display the work ethic and skill to keep our office organized and running smoothly. We would like to publicly thank Jackie Clark, Joy Britton, Emily May, Chelsey Hutchison and Paige Garrison for their devoted, valued work.

General Manger Rollie Miller adds, "We have an awesome group of administrative professionals. They work very well together, and will pitch in and help each other with anything. I am so blessed to work with such a great group of people."

Vigilante Electric invites our members to take a moment to thank these individuals for their time and dedication to our organization.

## On the Clock

### Paige Garrison



Paige Garrison

**S**INCE the retirement of Barb Delano, Vigilante Electric Cooperative has completed a very thorough search for her replacement, and we feel that we have found the perfect fit for our organization. We would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to our newest employee Paige Garrison.

Paige will be working in our Dillon office as the receptionist/accounting clerk. Paige is a Montana native who grew up in a cooperative environment. Her mom has worked for 3 Rivers Communications for 31 years, and her dad has worked for Sun River Electric Cooperative for the past 30 years.

Paige is a graduate of Fairfield High School, and completed her bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Montana - Western. Prior to working for us, she worked at Parkview Elementary as a kindergarten paraprofessional and reading teacher.

Paige and her husband Holden have a daughter, Mesa, and live on a ranch in the Glen area. In her time off, Paige enjoys helping out on the ranch, skiing, camping and riding horses. She also enjoys watching her husband rodeo, spending time with her family and traveling.

We would like to welcome Paige and her family to our organization, and we look forward to a long association.