



# Vigilante Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Vigilante Electric Cooperative's 83rd Annual Meeting was held on March 5. | PHOTO BY PAIGE GARRISON.

## 83rd Annual Meeting A SUCCESSFUL ROAD TRIP

**O**n March 5, members from across our service territory met for Vigilante Electric Cooperative's 83rd Annual Meeting. This is the culmination of a lot of work, and the most important event of the year for us. For many reasons, planning this year's meeting was very different, and for a day that started with some apprehension, the event turned out wonderfully and provided some much-needed normalcy.

The meeting was called to order by board President Tom Helm, who welcomed everybody to our first annual meeting in the Townsend area. It is a tradition for us to start our annual meeting with an invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. This year's invocation was again done by Trustee Norm Tebay, who lead the attendees in the singing of *God Bless America*.



Vigilante linemen Chase White and Clint Begger prepare the flag during Vigilante Electric's 83rd Annual Meeting. | PHOTO BY PAIGE GARRISON.

See **MEETING** next page

### VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND GENERAL MANAGER

**Cheyenne Garrison,**  
President

Dist. #5  
Wise River/Silver Bow/Melrose

**Andy Johnson,**  
Vice President

Dist. #6  
Dillon North/Glen

**Tom Mitchell,**  
Sec./Treas.

Dist. #8  
Dillon South/Grant

**Norm Tebay,** Trustee  
Dist. #1

Cardwell/Whitehall/Three Forks

**Dean Hanson,** Trustee  
Dist. #2

Silver Star/Waterloo

**Tom Helm,** Trustee  
Dist. #3

Townsend/N. Helena/  
Lump Gulch

**Colt High,** Trustee  
Dist. #4

Twin Bridges/Point of Rocks

**Dean Peterson,** Trustee  
Dist. #7

Jackson/Wisdom

**Allen Martinell,** Trustee  
Dist. #9

Dell/Lima

**Rollie Miller,**  
General Manager

# MEETING

*Continued from previous page*

Tom continued with the president's report. He started by asking for a show of hands of how many people were attending their first annual meeting. We estimate that about two-thirds of the attendees raised their hands. Tom introduced the board of trustees and thanked everybody that had a role in making this meeting happen.

The meeting continued with the financial report given by board Secretary/Treasurer Cheyenne Garrison. She noted that Vigilante Electric's financial position remains strong, with higher margins in 2020, which allowed us to provide a rebate to our residential, commercial and irrigation rate classes. The 2020 financial report is available on our website ([vec.coop](http://vec.coop)) under the publication section.

Next, General Manager Rollie Miller spoke about this year's theme of "Let's go back to simpler times," highlighting our annual meeting brochure containing reports and photos from 1955. Rollie continued with the following comparison, highlighting our growth between 1955 and 2020:

In 1955, we had total assets of \$2.028 million and total equity of merely \$187,262. Those numbers for year end 2020 are total assets of \$45.65 million and total equity of \$21.507 million. In 1955, we had total annual revenues of \$267,564; in 2020, we had \$14.780 million. The average consumption per month was 404 kWhs in 1955; in 2020, the average was 1,518 kWhs. Total services in place in 1955 were 1,330; there were almost 10,600 services in place in 2020. In 1955, we had 1,330 miles of power lines and 20 employees. Today we have 2,781 miles of line and 23 employees.

Rollie also emphasized our organization's commitment to safety. He pointed out that for the past four years, Vigilante Electric has not had



General Manager Rollie Miller presented a \$1,000 Safety Roundup award to Eric Crusch of the Broadwater County Search and Rescue. | PHOTO BY ROD SIRING

a lost-time accident, and that our Safety Roundup program has provided safety-related grants to area organizations. To highlight this program, Rollie presented Broadwater County Search and Rescue with a check for \$1,000 to be used for supplies for its first-aid kits.

The next business on the agenda was trustee elections. Trustees serve three-year terms to ensure at least six experienced trustees are on the board at all times. Nominations occur at the district meetings, with the election taking place at the annual meeting. This year's nominees were, from District #4, Sharon Lasich (incumbent) and Colt High; from District #5, Cheyenne Garrison (incumbent); and from District #7, Dean Peterson (incumbent).

With Cheyenne Garrison and Dean Peterson running unopposed, unanimous ballots were cast for each. For District #4, both candidates were provided an opportunity to speak at the meeting, after which the balloting committee collected and counted votes. Colt High was declared the winner.

Attendees were then treated to a well-delivered speech from Montana Lt. Gov. Kristen Juras. She discussed Gov. Gianforte's plans for job growth, marketing Montana and our rural

communities, expanding broadband service, growing trades education, raising new teacher salaries and regulatory reform.

Our meeting concluded with comments from Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) Chief Executive Officer Gary Wiens. With the Montana Legislature currently in session, Gary provided some details on issues MECA has been working on. He discussed current house and senate bills pertaining to co-op interests, including remote annual meeting attendance, protecting rates, limiting irrigator liability and power supply options.

This ended up being a spectacular meeting, and we feel blessed to have pulled it off. This wouldn't have been possible, however, without having a great team to deal with the logistical issues, vendors that got us our supplies for the meeting in a timely fashion, and an incredible venue and staff for the meeting and luncheon.

We would like to thank Gayle Watson and her staff for all their efforts. We would also like to thank Lt. Gov. Kristen Juras and MECA CEO Gary Wiens for taking the time out of their busy schedules to join us. Finally, we would like to thank all the members who attended this memorable meeting. RM

# Thank a Lineworker on April 12

**I**F you were asked to associate an image or a person with Vigilante Electric Cooperative, chances are you would picture one of our linemen. Lineworkers are generally the most visible employees of the co-op, and they work tirelessly to ensure that the communities we serve have a safe and reliable source of power.

“Lineworker” is listed as one of the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S. This is understandable, as they perform detailed tasks near high-voltage power lines. Regardless of the time of day, the weather and other challenging conditions, our linemen repeatedly demonstrate the skill and fortitude to keep the power on, and to do it safely.

Being a lineworker, while rewarding, is not for everybody. It takes years of specialized training, education, a dedication to the trade and a sense of service. This is why we join utilities across the country in saying thanks and recognizing the men and women who work around the

clock to keep the lights on.

General Manager Rollie Miller said, “I would like to personally thank each and every lineman here at Vigilante Electric. The safety record of no recordable incidents/accidents for the last four years has been very commendable! It takes all of us working together to be able to make that happen, and I’m proud to be associated with this group of guys. Great job!”

We would like to recognize Tyler Arnio, Clint Begger, Jess Davidson, Andrew English, Vance Forsman, Zach Maershbecker, John Moos, Austyn Paulsen, Chuck Romero, Cody Tarter, Charles Wharton and Chase White for their dedication to our members and our organization. They truly deserve all the appreciation and accolades that come their way on Lineworker Appreciation Day.

On April 12, and anytime you see a lineworker, I hope you’ll join us in thanking them for their exceptional service.

## Sharon Lasich, thank you for your years of service

**A**S reported in the annual meeting story, there has been a changing of the guard for trustee in District #4 - Twin Bridges/Point of Rocks. As an organization and as friends, we would like to recognize and thank Sharon Lasich for her service to Vigilante Electric Cooperative.

Sharon was elected to the board of trustees in 2003. Over the years, Sharon served as vice president and secretary/treasurer of our board, and represented our organization on the Montana Electric Cooperatives’ Association (MECA) Audit Standing Committee and the Montana Council of Cooperatives.

“Sharon was an excellent Board member and she will be missed,” said Vigilante Electric General Manager Rollie Miller. “She was always a leader in efforts into acquiring



Sharon Lasich

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) education and training classes, and used that education in advising other board members on various electric cooperative topics. Thanks again Sharon for the commitment and dedication ensuring a successful outcome for all of us here at Vigilante Electric.”

In the history of Vigilante Electric, very few women have served as district trustee. During Sharon’s tenure, she served with honor and always worked diligently to stay up on topics that could impact our organization. Her disposition was always inviting and fun, making her easy to work with. We benefited from her presence on our board. Sharon, on behalf of Vigilante Electric, thank you. RM

### ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONAL'S DAY

## Vigilante Electric expresses our gratitude

**W**E want to recognize and pay tribute to a remarkable group of women whose efforts are vital to the success of Vigilante Electric Cooperative: our administrative professionals. While their contribution to our organization is valued every day, on April 21, 2021, Vigilante Electric joins businesses across the country in celebration of Administrative Professional’s Day.

“During my career I have yet to find a better group of employees to work with, and the office staff are a major part of that. They work very well together, respect each

other and all have unique talents that complement each other. Thank you, ladies, for making VEC an exceptional organization and place to work. It couldn’t happen without you,” said Vigilante Electric General Manager Rollie Miller

While they may work behind the scenes, their work ethic and skill set are key to our organization. We would like to take this opportunity to publicly recognize and thank Jackie Clark, Paige Garrison, Chelsey Hutchison and Emily May for their commitment to our organization. We strongly encourage our members to join us in saying thanks to these ladies.

# 2021 VEC Leadership Award winners

## 2021 VIGILANTE ELECTRIC LEADERSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS:

**Kassidy Broere,**

Beaverhead Co High School

**Nicole Lessley,** Lima High School

**Jace Fitzgerald,**

Beaverhead Co High School

**Walker Nygren,** Lima High School

**Donald Johnston,**

Beaverhead Co High School

**Darby Perenoud,** Lima High School

**Malcolm Peterson,**

Beaverhead Co High School

**Allyson Kamps,**

Three Forks High School

**Erin Huffman,** Broadwater High School

**Tate Smith,** Twin Bridges High School

**Wade Leachman,**

Broadwater High School

**Macee Patriitti,** Whitehall High School

**Zachary Wickens,**

Broadwater High School

**F**ORMER first lady of the United States of America Abigail Adams once said, "Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and diligence." At Vigilante Electric Cooperative, we couldn't agree more, and we want to help those who are putting in the effort to further their education. This is one of the reasons we offer the Vigilante Electric Leadership Award.

One of the more fulfilling aspects of our job is reviewing the applications we receive through our youth programs, especially our scholarship program. Since the early 1990s, Vigilante Electric has supported member youths with opportunities to further their education. This year's applications and personal statements were exceptional. These individuals represent their communities and schools well, and are the type of young adults we want to support.

For the 2020-2021 academic year, Vigilante Electric is proud to award 13 \$500 scholarships.

The unique feature of our leadership award is that we pair it with the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) Memorial Scholarship. Students can fill out one application and have the opportunity to win two scholarships. The top application received is forwarded to MECA for consideration for one of four memorial scholarships. This year, Vigilante Electric Cooperative is proud to have chosen Kassidy Broere's application to send to MECA.

On behalf of Vigilante Electric Cooperative, we would like to congratulate this year's scholarship winners and wish them the best in their future endeavors. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the teachers in the schools within our service territory for your commitment in these trying times. RM

## Trustee Martinell marks 40 years of service

**I**n the February edition of this publication, we honored Trustee Allen Martinell for completing all three parts of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) director education program. For this, Allen received his Director Gold credentials. Today we would like to recognize and congratulate Allen on another milestone with Vigilante Electric.

Allen, who is the longest tenured trustee on the Vigilante Electric board, was voted in to serve the areas of Dell, Lima and Monida at Vigilante Electric's annual meeting in 1981. Allen has served our membership, as well as our statewide organization, with honor for 40 years.

You could describe Allen as a servant leader. Servant leadership is a leadership style in which you lead by putting the needs of your team first. Regardless of the

capacity that he has served us in, Allen's thoughtful and supportive nature has helped our organization thrive over the years.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Allen over the last several years. He is a trusted and respected board member not only for the members and employees, but also at the statewide level as the representative of VEC on the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) board. Congratulations Allen on this major milestone and thank you for your service to VEC!" Vigilante Electric General Manager Rollie Miller said.

The management and staff of Vigilante Electric would like to express our gratitude to Allen for his faithful service to our organization and membership. We look forward to many years to come. RM



Vigilante Electric Trustee Allen Martinell just celebrated 40 years of service to the cooperative and statewide. | **PHOTO BY ROLLIE MILLER**