



Vigilante Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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

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2023 DISTRICT MEETINGS SET

COOPERATIVES around the world operate according to the same set of core principles. Principle number 2 states — Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Representatives (directors/trustees) are elected by the members, and are accountable to them. Prior to being elected, a candidate must first be nominated for trustee, and this occurs at district meetings.

Vigilante Electric Cooperative's service territory is divided into nine districts, each having one elected representative (trustee). Each trustee serves a three-year term, and terms are staggered to ensure that there are at least six experienced trustees on the board at all times. Nominations for the board are determined at the district meeting, with the actual elections taking place at our annual meeting.

The meetings provide a unique opportunity for district members, especially those who are unable to attend the annual meeting. District meetings serve two important functions: (1) it is where nominations are made for district trustee; and (2) it provides a forum for open discussion about the affairs of the cooperative.

This year, the following districts are up for nominations. The dates and locations for each district meeting are provided, as well as a brief bio for the incumbent trustees seeking reelection.

District #3

Broadwater Co., Gates of the Mountain, Lump Gulch and North Helena Valley

Meeting Date: January 17, 2023, at 7 p.m.

Location: Watson Irrigation Training Center

Trustee: The current trustee for this district, Tom Helm, has decided to retire and is not seeking re-election.

District #8

Dillon South and Horse Prairie

Meeting Date: January 19, 2023, at 7 p.m.

Location: Vigilante Electric Boardroom

Trustee: Tom Mitchell was elected to the board of trustees in 2020. Tom and his wife Cody reside south of Dillon, where they ranch. Tom is a retired pharmacist. He is the current secretary/treasurer of the Vigilante Electric board of trustees.



Tom Mitchell

District #9

Dell, Lima & Monida

Meeting Date: January 18, 2023, at 7 p.m.

Location: Fire Hall, Lima

Trustee: Allen Martinell was elected to the board of trustees in 1981. Allen and his wife Yvonne reside north of Dell, where they ranch. Allen currently represents Vigilante Electric on Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association board of trustees as well as the Safety and



Allen Martinell

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

See **MEETINGS**, next page

What you're missing at the annual meeting

By **ADAM SCHWARTZ**
For *Vigilante Electric*

DID you know every cooperative is required to conduct an annual meeting of the membership? The purpose is to hold the election for the board of directors, share important financial information, occasionally vote on other matters such as bylaw changes and of course – the great door prizes!

Vigilante Electric Cooperative's annual meeting is a community gathering where neighbors can meet new neighbors – or catch up with old acquaintances. As our lives get busier with the “errands of life” and more of our interactions with others are online via social media, we must renew the value of face-to-face human connections. Very few organizations are uniquely positioned like Vigilante Electric to bring together all members of our local communities.

While rural Americans probably do a better job of staying connected to our neighbors (in part because we need too), it is not something we should take for granted. The simple act of smiling,



Pictured are members that attended the 2021 Annual Meeting held at the Watson Irrigation training Center outside Townsend. | **VEC PHOTO**

saying hello and shaking someone's hand truly lifts both parties.

Our country and communities face many challenges. Our economy is stagnant and we are in the midst of a never-ending political soap opera. Overcoming these challenges will only happen if we come together.

Vigilante Electric's annual meeting is designed to take care of the important business of your co-op, and the equally important business of building a real sense of community. All cooperatives serve both an economic and social purpose. While safe, reliable and affordable electric power is crucial to our

mission, improving the quality of life for all members is at the core of what we do every day.

If you have not attended the annual meeting in the past, or if it has been a few years, we urge you to take the time to be with your fellow co-op members.

We get out of life what we put into it. Vigilante Electric is connected to our members by more than just powerlines. We are your neighbors, and we look forward to seeing you at *your* annual meeting. This year's meeting returns to the Watson Irrigation Training Center outside Townsend, and will be held on March 3, 2023. **RM**



Our elves were busy. Thanks to all who made our holiday festive. | **VEC PHOTO**

MEETINGS

Continued from previous page

Loss Control and the Education and Training MECA standing committees. Allen is also a member of the Vigilante Electric safety committee. During his tenure, he has served as president, vice president and secretary/treasurer on the Vigilante Electric board of trustees.

Members with their primary membership located within these districts will be notified by mail regarding the time and location of the district meeting. If you would like further information regarding the district meetings or running for district trustee, please call us at (800) 221-8271 or 683-2327. **RM**



Meeting attendees, clockwise around the table from center, Mark Lambrecht, Dean Peterson, Raquel Reno-Morast, Rollie Miller, Tom Welch, Ryan Lynch, Jeff Welborn, Ken Walsh, John Jackson, Tom Mitchell, and Ryan Hall. In the back of the room Justin Bair and Mick Paffhausen. | VEC PHOTO

VEC HOSTS AREA POLITICIANS

THERE is an old phrase that “all politics are local,” and while this term has been cast around since the 1930s, a true example of this recently took place in our boardroom at Vigilante Electric Cooperative (VEC). On December 5th, VEC hosted area politicians for an informal luncheon and candid discussion on national, state and local political issues.

The luncheon served as an ice breaker, where casual conversation and some light-hearted bantering made way for some great discussion. The meeting was led by Montana Electric Cooperatives’ Association (MECA) Director of Government Relations Mark Lambrecht, who set the tone for this meeting with his opening remarks. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to relay important cooperative issues to local legislators, and to listen to issues that are important to them in order to find ways to support each other.

First, they discussed matters that are currently taking place at the national level. Mark highlighted three topics of particular concern: (1) the proposed removal of the lower Snake

River dams; (2) listing of the sage grouse on the Endangered Species List; and (3) proposed rule changes impacting commercial drivers’ licenses. While these are federal issues, there may be a call for a show of support from the Montana Legislature this session.

Next, they discussed cooperative lobbying efforts for the coming session in Montana. Mark and MECA Director of Communications Ryan Hall discussed amending the state’s Move Over law to include utility workers. Additionally, cooperatives this session will request that the state study and prioritize how energy is allocated in emergency situations. We will also be leading discussion about regional transmission organizations, the development of small modular nuclear power, and net metering.

The discussion then turned to local issues of cooperative concern led by General Manager Rollie Miller and supported by Office Manager Raquel Reno-Morast, Line Superintendent Justin Bair, and trustees Colt High, Andy Johnson, Tom Mitchell and Dean Peterson. As Rollie has stated in these

pages previously, cooperatives are not immune to supply chain issues, drastic cost increases and employment issues. While the latter is not an issue for us right now, there are parts of the state where it is hard to hire employees because housing costs are either too expensive, or housing is unavailable.

The four legislators, Ryan Lynch (D) (SD 37), Ken Walsh (R) (HD 71), Jeff Welborn (R) (SD 36), and Tom Welch (R) (HD 72), along with Beaverhead County Commissioner John Jackson, led discussion regarding taxation and land use. Both topics are broad ranging and complicated issues for the state of Montana. We would like to thank these men for their participation.

It was refreshing to observe that the four legislators, from differing parties and backgrounds, know each other, like each other and are willing to work together to get things done. Meetings like this have taken place at cooperatives all across the state, and by keeping all politics local, cooperatives are some of the most effective and respected lobbying organizations at all levels of politics. RM

FIVE WAYS TO FIGHT THE WINTER CHILL *AND* SAVE ENERGY

By **ABBY BERRY** | For *Vigilante Electric*

WE all have our favorite season. Some people love crisp, cool weather and bundling up under a favorite blanket, while others prefer the warm temperatures summer brings – and all fun outdoor activities that go with it.

But there's one thing we can all agree on: high winter bills are never fun. Vigilante Electric is here to help you find ways to manage your home energy use and keep winter bills in check.

Here are five tips to help increase your home's energy efficiency this winter:

Mind the thermostat

This is one of the easiest ways to manage your home energy use. We recommend setting your thermostat to 68 degrees (or lower) when you're home. When you're sleeping or away for an extended period of time, try setting it between 58 and 62 degrees; there's no need to heat your home when you're away or sleeping.

Button up your home

The Department of Energy estimates that air leaks account for 24 to 40 percent of the energy used for heating and cooling a home. Caulking and weather stripping around windows and doors is another simple, cost-effective way to increase comfort and save energy. If you can feel drafts while

standing near a window or door, it likely needs to be sealed.

Use window coverings wisely

Open blinds, drapes or other window coverings during the day to allow natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep the cold, drafty air out. If you feel cold air around windows, consider hanging curtains or drapes in a thicker material; heavier window coverings can make a significant difference in blocking cold outdoor air.


Consider your approach to appliance use

When combined, appliances and electronics account for a significant chunk of our home energy use, so assess how efficiently you're using them. For example, if you're running the dishwasher or clothes washer, only wash full loads. Look for electronic devices that consume energy even when they're not in use, such as phone chargers or game consoles.


Every little bit helps, so unplug them to save energy.

Think outside the box

If you're still feeling chilly at home, think of other ways to warm up – beyond dialing up the thermostat. Add layers of clothing, wear thick socks and bundle up under blankets. You can even add layers to your home! If you have hard-surface flooring, consider purchasing an area rug to block cold air that leaks in through the floor.

Winter months often bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. By being proactive about saving energy, you can increase the comfort of your home and reduce monthly bills. Visit our website at vec.coop for additional energy-saving tips. 



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Vigilante Safety Roundup Tracker

Participating members: 785

Total Contributions: \$17,567.46

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

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