



Students watch as the Van de Graaff generator begins to create static electricity through another student.

The Story Behind the Switch

In January, Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative area elementary schools were visited by Basin Electric Power Cooperative (BEPC). Elementary students ranging from third grade to sixth grade had the opportunity to hear what electricity is, how it is made, how it gets to where it's going, how it has become part of our everyday lives and, of course, safety with electricity.

Kim Kranz travels throughout BEPC's service area teaching elementary students all about electricity. She began working with "The Story Behind the Switch" program four years ago and covers 138 member cooperative systems in nine states. Her interaction with children and getting them excited about electricity is a fantastic sight.

"The Story Behind the Switch" program was established in 1983

to help electric cooperatives teach students about the importance of electricity. The program lasts about 45 minutes and students get to see things from a piece of transmission and distribution line, coal, rubber lineworkers' equipment and even get to participate in demonstrations.

A volunteer comes to the front of the room to touch a plasma ball to show how electricity likes to use a person's body because it is made



of mostly water. Then, students are shown how electricity can radiate further than where a line shows. Kim takes a light bulb and places it just outside of the plasma ball and the bulb lights up. Children are amazed and it proves to students how dangerous electricity can be. This example is used to educate the students on how electricity can travel and that it is invisible to the human eye.

Before receiving questions from students, Kim asks for two more volunteers. One of the volunteers stands on a rubber stool while touching a Van de Graaff generator. A Van de Graaff generator generates an electrical charge on a metal globe. Students see the hair of the volunteer begin to rise while static electricity is generated through his or her body. Another volunteer then comes up and touches the hand of the first volunteer, which creates an electric shock. All the students can see and hear the shock that is created and transferred from one student to another. Also, the students are told to watch the hair of the first volunteer as it deflates then inflates again, showing the transfer. This portion of the program is really enjoyed by the students.

The program also lets students see where their electricity comes from and how it works. Students learn about five different sources of power: coal, nuclear, solar, wind and hydro. North Dakota has an abundance of coal which is the most used power source for the state. Students get to see a piece of coal and hear how it is mined and then ends up as a source of their power. They are also taught about what happens to the land after an area is mined. Kim shows the

Kim Kranz shows elementary students how electricity can power a light bulb outside of the source you can see.



Kim Kranz shows students how linemen check their safety gear.



Kim Kranz shows a student how electricity will follow you.



An elementary student shows other students what lineworkers wear for safety.



A student shows the effects of the Van de Graaff generator.

children the reclamation process and how our electric cooperatives care about the environment.

MWEC would like to thank the area schools, the students and staff

who allowed us to come in and teach them about their electric cooperative.

If you know of an elementary school that is interested in "The Story Behind the Switch"

program, please contact Jessica Martin at 701-577-3765 or jessicam@mwec.com. ■

Jessica Rosencrans wins Youth Tour essay contest

Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative congratulates this year's Youth Tour essay winner, Jessica Rosencrans of Powers Lake. Jessica is the daughter of Brian and Lynn Rosencrans and is a sophomore at Powers Lake High School.

Jessica will join other participating North Dakota students on an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. The students from North Dakota will travel with the Montana youth delegation in the day-to-day touring of

the sites, attractions, monuments and congressional offices in the Washington, D.C., area. The students will learn about electric cooperatives and discuss issues facing their communities and the nation.

The students who participated in the Youth Tour contest submitted an essay on the question:

Pick one of the four values of innovation, accountability, integrity and commitment to community and describe how you see this value in action at your local cooperative."

Here is Jessica's winning essay:

Picking just one of the Touchstone Energy core values – innovation, integrity, accountability and commitment to community – to write about is so hard because they are all demonstrated so well by Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative, but commitment to community is more clearly seen from the customer's point of view. They show their commitment in three main ways: keeping customers supplied with electricity, having affordable services, and giving back to the members of the cooperative.

Commitment by definition is the state or quality of being dedicated to a cause or activity (Oxforddictionaries.com). This being said, commitment is a very important part of a cooperative since they are owned by the members whom they serve. Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative demonstrates this commitment to its community very well. They never hesitate to go out and install new cables, or fix any problems that might arise no matter the time of day, weather, or length of time the project might take.

Keeping the power on isn't the only way Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative shows its commitment to its communities. Keeping electricity affordable while so many other companies have had to raise the prices of their services drastically is an amazing feat that shows just how committed they are. Having affordable services not only attracts new customers, it keeps old members loyal to the cooperation. If parents are loyal to a cooperative, their children will learn the many benefits of them and are more likely to join when they are older. This ensures the survival of the cooperative. They also provide their members and customers with the knowledge and skills of how to save energy, benefitting not only their members' wallets, but their communities and the globe as well.

Finally, Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative treats its members like the family they are. They give them the respect they deserve and make sure that they know they are appreciated by giving back to their members during the holiday seasons. They know how

important family is, because they have their own family within the cooperative.

Not only this, but they offer many jobs for hardworking, aspiring community members who are interested in the field and working in an environment where their work can affect so many people. Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative not only cares about the state of their community right now, but the future of it as well.

In conclusion, Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative shows their commitment to communities in several ways. As a customer, you can count on them to provide you with the best services possible and to give you the knowledge to save energy, therefore saving you money. It is for these reasons that I chose to explain how Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative demonstrates commitment to community.

Cooperatives rely on their members and Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperation is no different. They treat their members like they should; like a family. ■

Reasons why I love my electric cooperative

1. Member/owners – Cooperatives are voluntary organizations open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination. Each member is an owner and has a voice in their cooperative.

2. Capital credits – Capital credits are monies available

to cooperatives in excess of operating costs and expenses. Any excess revenue is allocated back to the membership.

3. Board of directors – Cooperative directors are your neighbors and understand your needs/concerns because they live where you live.

4. Local offices – Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative

has local offices to better serve you. Main offices are not located out of state. We are here for our membership.

5. Innovation of systems – With new technologies always emerging MWEC continues to improve its transmission and distributions systems, safety, substations, dispatching systems and everyday use equipment to better serve its membership. ■

Stanley office supports Commercial Club



On Jan. 22, the Stanley Commercial Club held its annual meeting and banquet at the Mountrail County South Complex. The banquet included guest speaker Ryan Taylor, state director for U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development North Dakota. Taylor discussed changes occurring in the area and how the communities where people come together will be successful in the future.

Each table for the event was decorated by a local business or organization. MWEC employees from the Stanley office got involved in decorating a table for attendees. The staff chose to decorate the table while keeping with an electricity theme. They decorated the tables with coffee mugs, light bulbs and donated a Keurig coffee maker to “power your day.” Burlap and lace bows were also placed on the chairs and candy filled the mugs and jars.

Thank you to our Stanley staff for taking time to continue MWEC’s commitment to community. ■

Spring into \$AVING\$

We'll soon be celebrating the first day of spring. With the start of a new season comes a fresh opportunity to find ways to save energy and money.

Here are a few simple tips from Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative to improve the energy efficiency and comfort of your home as warmer temperatures arrive:

1. **Service your air conditioner.** Easy maintenance, such as routinely replacing or cleaning air filters, can lower your cooling system's energy consumption by up to 15 percent. Also, the first day of spring could serve as a reminder to check your air conditioner's evaporator coil, which should be cleaned annually to ensure the system is performing at optimal levels.
2. **Open windows.** Opening windows creates a breeze, allowing you to naturally cool your home without switching on air conditioners. This is an ideal tactic in spring when temperatures are mild.
3. **Use ceiling fans.** Cooling your home with ceiling fans will allow you to raise your thermostat four degrees. This can help lower your electricity bills without sacrificing overall comfort.
4. **Cook outside.** On warmer spring days, keep the heat out of your home by using an outdoor grill instead of indoor ovens.
5. **Install window treatments.** Energy-efficient window treatments or coverings such as blinds, shades and films can slash heat gain when temperatures rise. These devices not only improve the look of your home but also reduce energy costs.
6. **Caulk air leaks.** Using low-cost caulk to seal cracks and openings in your home keeps warm air out – and cash in your wallet.
7. **Bring in sunlight.** During daylight hours, switch off artificial lights and use windows and skylights to brighten your home.
8. **Set the thermostat.** On warm days, setting a programmable thermostat to a higher setting when you are not at home can help reduce your energy costs by approximately 10 percent.
9. **Seal ducts.** Air loss through ducts can lead to high electricity costs, accounting for nearly 30 percent of a cooling system's energy consumption. Sealing and insulating ducts can go a long way toward lowering your electricity bills.
10. **Switch on bathroom fans.** Bathroom fans suck out heat and humidity from your home, improving comfort.

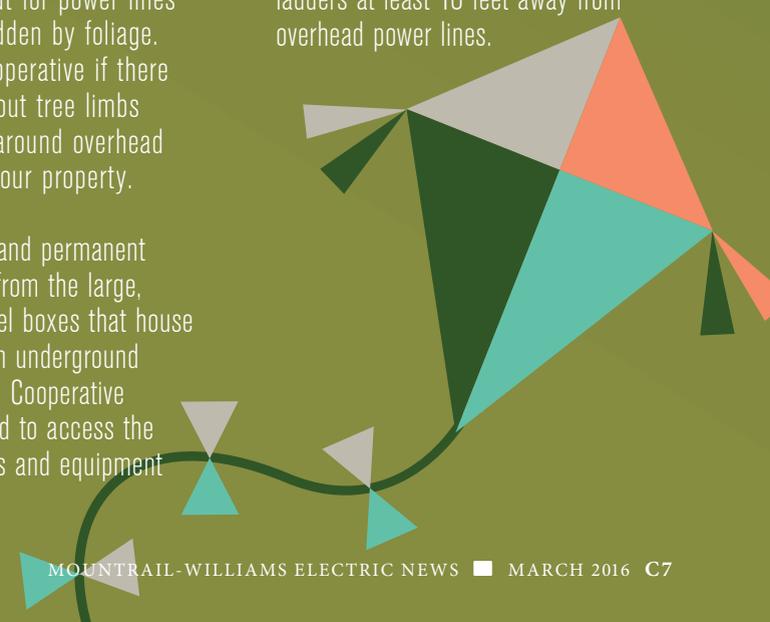


SPRING INTO SAFETY

Springtime is a great time for yard work, playing outside and many other outdoor activities. No matter what's on your agenda, electrical safety should be an important part of your plans.

Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative offers 10 tips to help you play and work safely around electricity when you're outdoors this spring.

1. Always keep power cords and electrical equipment away from water or other wet areas. Avoid damp conditions – including wet grass – when using electricity.
2. Look up and look out for overhead power lines.
3. Call before you dig.
4. Keep materials, tools and all parts of your body at least 15 feet away from any overhead power lines at all times, including during the installation of antennas or satellite dishes.
5. Never fly kites or model airplanes near power lines or radio or TV antennas. If your kite does get tangled with overhead lines, don't try to get it down yourself. Call the utility for assistance. Never use any metallic material in your kite.
6. Before every use, inspect power tools and electric lawn mowers for frayed power cords, broken plugs and weathered or damaged housings. Don't use damaged equipment until it has been repaired properly. Keep tools unplugged and stored in dry areas when they are not in use.
7. Before you trim tree limbs and shrubs, watch out for power lines that could be hidden by foliage. Contact your cooperative if there are concerns about tree limbs growing into or around overhead power lines on your property.
8. Keep vegetation and permanent structures away from the large, green ground-level boxes that house components of an underground electrical system. Cooperative workers may need to access the underground lines and equipment near these boxes during unplanned outages and routine maintenance.
9. Always use an insulated extension cord designed for outdoor use with the correct power rating for that equipment.
10. Ladders – even those made of wood – that come into contact with a power line can prove fatal. Keep all ladders at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines.



Regular board meeting of Jan. 29, 2016

Directors present: Sorenson, Johnson, Lynne, Bratvold, Jorgenson, Lalim, Haugen, Grant and Hartsoch.

Others present: General Manager Haugen, attorney Eiken, in-house counsel Ellis and staff members.

The meeting was called to order at 8 a.m. at the south Williston office. The agenda for the meeting was approved as presented. Minutes of the Dec. 30 meeting were approved as presented.

Operating/financial report: Jay Lux provided the financial and operating report for the year through Dec. 31. Operating revenues are \$211,502,945, the total cost of electric service is \$185,215,497, the operating margins are \$26,287,447 and total margins are \$34,593,133. TIER is 3.35, and MDSC is 2.83, and equity is 26 percent.

Attorney report: Dwight Eiken discussed the decline in oil prices and the increased potential for business restructuring as well as an increase in the number of bankruptcy filings.

Capital credit retirements: The board approved the retirement of the following capital credit account:

- Sybil Esterby estate
- Darren Haddeland estate

Bad debts: The board approved the transfer of \$430.38 from accounts receivable to bad debts. The cooperative will continue to withhold capital credit payments and use other means to continue to try to collect these sums.

Policies: The board reviewed and approved revisions to policies governing the board of directors, financials, member relations, operations and employees.

The board also approved a motion to stop participating in the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan Program. The cooperative will continue, however, to participate in the USDA Rural Economic Grant Program.

Manager's report: The board approved a motion to establish a 125 percent deposit for residential services.

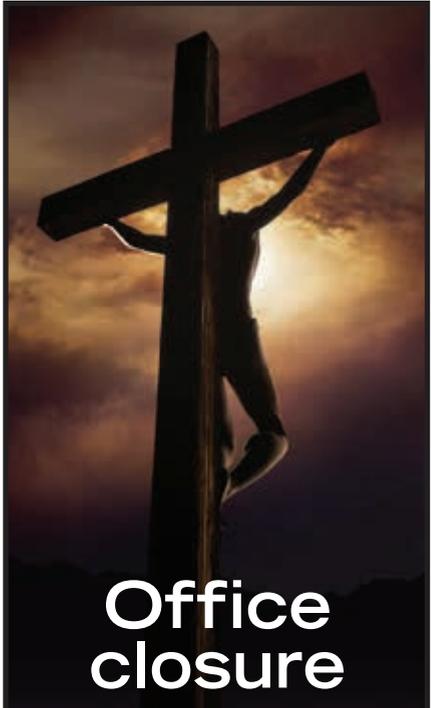
After discussion, the board approved a motion to approve a new deposit for an apartment building owner.

Guernsey, a consultant engineering company, has been assisting the cooperative with its transition into the Southwest Power Pool. The board also approved a motion to engage Guernsey to complete a new cost-of-service study for the cooperative.

The board also approved ordering steel for a proposed new building on the Williston campus. This joint building would also provide additional space to be leased to Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

Meeting reports: The board was provided with updates from Upper Missouri Power Cooperative and Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

Adjournment: There being no further business the meeting was adjourned. ■



Office closure

Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative's offices will be closed March 25 in observance of Good Friday

MOUNTRAIL-WILLIAMS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
 P.O. Box 1346
 Williston, N.D. 58802-1346
 P.O. Box 129
 Stanley, N.D. 58784-0129

DIRECTORS

Roger Sorenson President
 Robert Grant Vice President
 Blaine Jorgenson Secretary
 Cheryl Hartsoch Treasurer
 Nick Haugen Director
 Larry Johnson Director
 Warren Bratvold Director
 Aaron Lynne Director
 Garrett Lalim Director
 Neff, Eiken & Neff, PC Project Attorney
 Dale Haugen General Manager

OFFICE PHONE NUMBERS:
 Williston (701) 577-3765
 Stanley (701) 628-2242
 New Town (701) 627-3550
 WATS (800) 279-2667

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

One free, easy call gets your utility lines marked AND helps protect you from injury and expense. Safe Digging Is No Accident: Always Call 811 Before You Dig

Know what's below. Always call 811 before you dig. Visit call811.com for more information.