

Big Skylights



An internal newsletter of the STATEWIDE ASSOCIATION OF MONTANA RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

March 5, 2010

Long-time former MECA president passes away

Ken Krueger, who served as president and a member of the MECA board of directors for more than 25 years, has passed away at the age of 72. He died Saturday, Feb. 27 at a hospital in Kalispell. Mr. Krueger was a long-time member of the Flathead Electric Cooperative board of directors and is a former member of National Rural Utility Cooperative Finance Corporation's (CFC) board of directors.

He also served for seven years as a Flathead County commissioner. A farmer, Mr. Krueger served on the National Barley board and was appointed to the Montana Wheat and Barley board by then Gov. **Ted Schwinden**. He also served as master for the Stillwater Grange for several years.

During his years on the Flathead Electric Cooperative board, Mr. Krueger is credited with having conceived and started the co-op's highly successful Round-up for Safety program. Roundup for Safety awards grants to non-profit groups throughout the cooperative's service area to help pay for safety-related projects. Participating members allow their monthly bills to be "rounded up" to the nearest dollar, with the extra money going into a fund administered by an independent board of directors. Since it began, the program has awarded more than \$500,000 in grant money.

Mr. Krueger is survived by his wife, **Betty**, whom he married in 1957 in Kalispell. A native of New Salem, N.D., he lived in New Salem until he was 10 years old, moving with his parents to the Stillwater area of the Flathead Valley in 1947. He attended local schools and graduated from Flathead County High School. Subsequent to graduation, Mr. Krueger worked for Skyline Dairy for many years as a route driver, then plant supervisor. He left the dairy to become a full-time farmer.

Funeral services for Mr. Krueger were held Wednesday, March 3 at the First Presbyterian Church in Kalispell.

Vigilante membership honors retiring director, continues legacy

I enjoyed attending Vigilante Electric Cooperative's annual meeting in Dillon on Friday, Feb. 26, where retiring co-op director **Gene Hanson** was honored for 36 years of service. Later in the meeting, the membership voted to continue the Hanson family legacy of co-op service by electing Mr. Hanson's son, **Dean**, to fill his seat.

In other trustee elections, re-elected to the board were **Andy Johnson** and **Norm Tebay**. About 350 people attended the annual meeting held on the campus of UM Western.

Tentative schedule set for MECA spring meetings

A tentative schedule for this spring's MECA board and committee meetings has been set for April 6-8.

On Tuesday, April 6, MECA will hold a Computer Basics Workshop. The workshop will be held from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Following is the tentative schedule for committee meetings on Wednesday, April 7: 9-10 a.m., Audit Committee; 10-11 a.m., MECA Managers' Group; 11-12 Noon, Communications Committee; 12 Noon-1 p.m., Lunch & Pre-briefing for all prospective Montana delegates to the 2010 NRECA Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.; 1-2 p.m., Climate Change Legislative Subcommittee; 2-3:30 p.m. Policy and Bylaws Committee; 3:30-4:30 p.m., Legislative Committee; 5 p.m. Cocktail Hour; 6 p.m. MECA Dinner.

The MECA board meeting will be held on Thursday, April 8, beginning at 8 a.m.

Official notices for the board meeting, agenda and committee schedule will be mailed soon. RSVP cards for the lunch and dinner, were mailed out Feb. 25 and are due at our office Wednesday, March 31.

**Hotel rooms available
for legislative conference**

Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) delegates to the May 2-5 Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. have been assigned a block of hotel rooms. A block of 40 rooms is available at The Liaison hotel located at 415 New Jersey Ave. NW. The rate is \$270 + tax for singles and doubles.

As in 2009, all conference and hotel registrations must be made through **Sharon McDonald** at the MECA office. The hotel registration form was mailed to MECA-member co-op managers and MECA board

members. These forms must be completed and returned to the MECA office no later than Friday, March 26. The room block will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Names must be attached to a reserved room by close of business on March 26.

If you are planning to attend this conference but are staying elsewhere please let Sharon know so she can prepare an information packet for you. As in past years, the Montana delegates, in addition to meeting with the Montana congressional delegation, will be assigned to meet with several members of Congress from states that do not have electric cooperatives. A complete schedule of events and team assignments will be mailed to participants in late April.

As always, if you have any questions, please call our office or e-mail Sharon. Our phone number is (406) 761-8333. Sharon's e-mail address is sharonm@mtco-ops.com.

CALENDAR

March

9	Effective Lighting Retrofits (the basics and beyond) Workshop	Missoula, MT
9-10	Tree Trimming Class	Billings, MT
9-10	Cost-of-Service, Rate Design Seminar	Great Falls, MT
10-11	Improving Your Photoshop Skills Workshop	Missoula, MT
16	Mid-Yellowstone Annual Meeting	Hysham, MT
20	Flathead Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Kalispell, MT
20	Missoula Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Missoula, MT
23	Yellowstone Valley Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Billings, MT
24	Central Montana Electric Power Cooperative Annual Meeting	Great Falls, MT
26	Sun River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Fairfield, MT
27	Lincoln Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting	Eureka, MT

April

6	Getting to Know Your Computer Better	Great Falls, MT
7	MECA Committee Meetings	Great Falls, MT
8	MECA Spring 2010 Board Meeting	Great Falls, MT