

Big Skylights



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

A report from your Chief Executive Officer Dave Wheelihan

January 19, 2012

METSPool ends year with near-record low losses

METSPool's loss ratio in 2011 was one of the lowest in the pool's 17-year history and easily the best in the past three years.

METSPool, which provides self-insured workers' compensation coverage for more than 40 electric and telephone cooperatives and related companies, ended the year with a loss ratio of 16.70 percent. That compares to losses of 45.09 percent in 2009 and 32.20 percent in 2010. Only in the pool's first two years of operation were losses lower than in 2011. Losses were 9.09 percent in 1994 and 13.66 in 1995. Of significance is that those loss ratios are the current figures for those policy years, reflecting reductions in losses for those years that have occurred as claims have been settled.

This past year's low loss ratio helped make it possible for METSPool to issue another substantial dividend to its members in 2011, the second year in a row that has occurred. Dividend checks for 2011 are expected to be issued in the next few weeks.

Walk-in registrations needed for fast-track NRECA course series

Walk-in registrations are welcome for the NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) Fast Track Course Series. The series is being offered by MECA the week of Jan. 23-27 at the MECA statewide building in Great Falls. During this week, all five CCD courses in the curriculum will be offered.

A director may take all five courses or only the course(s) needed to complete that person's CCD Certificate. These courses include:

2600	Director Duties and Liabilities	\$550	Monday, January 23 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
2620	Board Roles and Relationships	\$350	Tuesday, January 24 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
2640	Financial Decision Making	\$775	Tuesday, January 24 1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 25 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
2610	Understanding the Electric Business	\$550	Thursday, January 26 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
2630	Strategic Planning	\$550	Friday, January 27 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

The LaQuinta Suites has confirmed that the hotel is offering an additional \$10 per night discount to fast-track attendees staying five nights or more during the week of Jan. 22.

If you have any questions, you can contact Sharon McDonald of our staff. Our phone number is (406) 761-8333. Sharon's e-mail is sharonm@mtco-ops.com.

Co-op transparency issues topic of April course

MECA will hold a director's class on April 3 in Great Falls in conjunction with the MECA spring board meeting. The topic will be "Under Scrutiny: The Board's Role in the Age of Consumer Activism and Transparency." The class is 945.1 in the director's course series. Cost is \$275.

The class instructor will be **Pat Mangan**. According to the course description, everything that the board or the organization does sends a message. Directors must be prepared to deal with increased scrutiny from members, the public, news media, legislators, regulators and others. This scrutiny can come from any direction, and a failure to address it only produces more. This course will help directors discuss and analyze how to best position their system at a time of public demands for accountability, ethics and transparency.

Getting your house in order, identifying strategies to strengthen and communicate your position and why it's harmful to demonize those who challenge you or ask questions are among the specific topics for the course.

For more information, please contact **Sharon McDonald** of our office via email or telephone. Her email address is sharonm@mtco-ops.com. Her phone number is (406) 761-8333.

MECA offers three-day lineman basics course

Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association is pleased to offer a Lineman Basics Training School. The school will be held Feb. 7-9 in Great Falls. The three-day course will cover the topics of Lifting and Rigging, Meters and Metering, Transformer Connections and Theory, Maintenance and Inspection of Bucket Trucks and Wire Connections.

The courses will run 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. the first and second days and 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. the third day.

There will be a charge of \$225 per person for this course for MECA Safety & Loss Control Clients or \$250 per person for non-MECA SLC Clients. Lunch will be provided all three days.

The registration deadline is Friday, Jan. 27. To register or for more information on this course, please contact **Lea Potoczny** at (406)761-8333 or meca@mtco-ops.com.

Job Market

Journeyman Lineworker

Glacier Electric Cooperative, headquartered in Cut Bank, Mont., is currently accepting applications for a full-time journeyman lineman for the co-op's Cut Bank crew.

Qualified applicants must hold a journeyman lineman certificate or have completed an accredited apprenticeship training program. They must have a current Montana driver's license with class A Commercial Drivers License endorsement or be able to obtain one within six months of hire date. Other requirements include, but are not limited to: experience working on energized overhead and underground lines, experience with operation and maintenance of substations, transmission, and distribution systems. Preferred applicants will have a minimum of five years of experience and knowledge of RUS standards and specifications.

Glacier Electric Cooperative serves 5,000 members through 212 miles of transmission line and 1,625 miles of distribution line. GEC's service territory includes part of Glacier National Park and the area offers hunting, fishing, hiking, and golf.

GEC offers a competitive salary, an excellent benefits package which includes medical insurance, a defined benefit pension plan, and a 401K plan. The successful applicant will be required to reside in close proximity to GEC headquarters. Salary will depend on the individual's qualifications and experience.

Applicants for this position will need to send a completed application for employment, resume with salary history, and three professional references to: Glacier Electric Cooperative 410 East Main Street, Cut Bank, MT 59427. Applications for Employment are available at the Main Office in Cut Bank and on the co-op's website, www.glacierelectric.com. March 1 is the deadline for applications.

Journeyman Lineworkers

Roughrider Electric Cooperative, based in Hazen, N.D., is accepting applications for two qualified journeyman Line workers at the co-op's Dickinson office.

The successful applicant must have experience in OH/UG electric distribution, including all phases of line construction, maintenance and troubleshooting. A valid Class A Commercial Drivers License is required. An excellent benefit package is offered which includes health, dental and vision insurance, a defined benefit pension plan, 401K contribution, vacation, sick leave and holiday. Housing may be negotiable.

An application form is required and can be downloaded from the corporate website, www.roughriderelectric.com or contact the Human Resources Manager at 701-748-3110. Applications and resumes must be received at hr@roughriderelectric.com or Roughrider Electric Cooperative, Inc., Attn: Human Resources, 800 Highway Drive, Hazen, ND 58545 before February 15, 2012.

CALENDAR

January

23-27 NRECA CCD Fast Track Courses Great Falls, MT

February

1 MECA Line Superintendents' Group Meeting Great Falls, MT
 2 MECA Managers' Group & Line Superintendents' Group Meeting Great Falls, MT
 7-9 Lineman Basics Training School Great Falls, MT
 7 MECA-Sponsored Candidate Training School Great Falls, MT
 8 MECA-Sponsored Candidate Training School Missoula, MT
 9 MECA-Sponsored Candidate Training School Bozeman, MT
 10 MECA-Sponsored Candidate Training School Billings, MT
 24 Vigilante Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting Dillon, MT

March

5-7 NRECA Annual Meeting San Diego, CA
 17 Flathead Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting Kalispell, MT
 17 Missoula Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting Missoula, MT
 20 Yellowstone Valley Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting Billings, MT
 24 Lincoln Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting Eureka, MT
 29 Central Montana Electric Power Cooperative Annual Meeting Great Falls, MT
 30 Sun River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting Fairfield, MT
 30 Upper Missouri G&T Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting Sidney, MT

April

3 NRECA Course 945.1: Under Scrutiny: The Board's Role in the Age of Consumer Activism and Transparency Great Falls, MT
 4-5 MECA Spring Board Meeting Great Falls, MT
 14 Glacier Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting Cut Bank, MT
 17-18 Leadership Boot Camp Great Falls, MT
 20 Marias River Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting Shelby, MT
 25 Mission Valley Power Annual Meeting Polson, MT