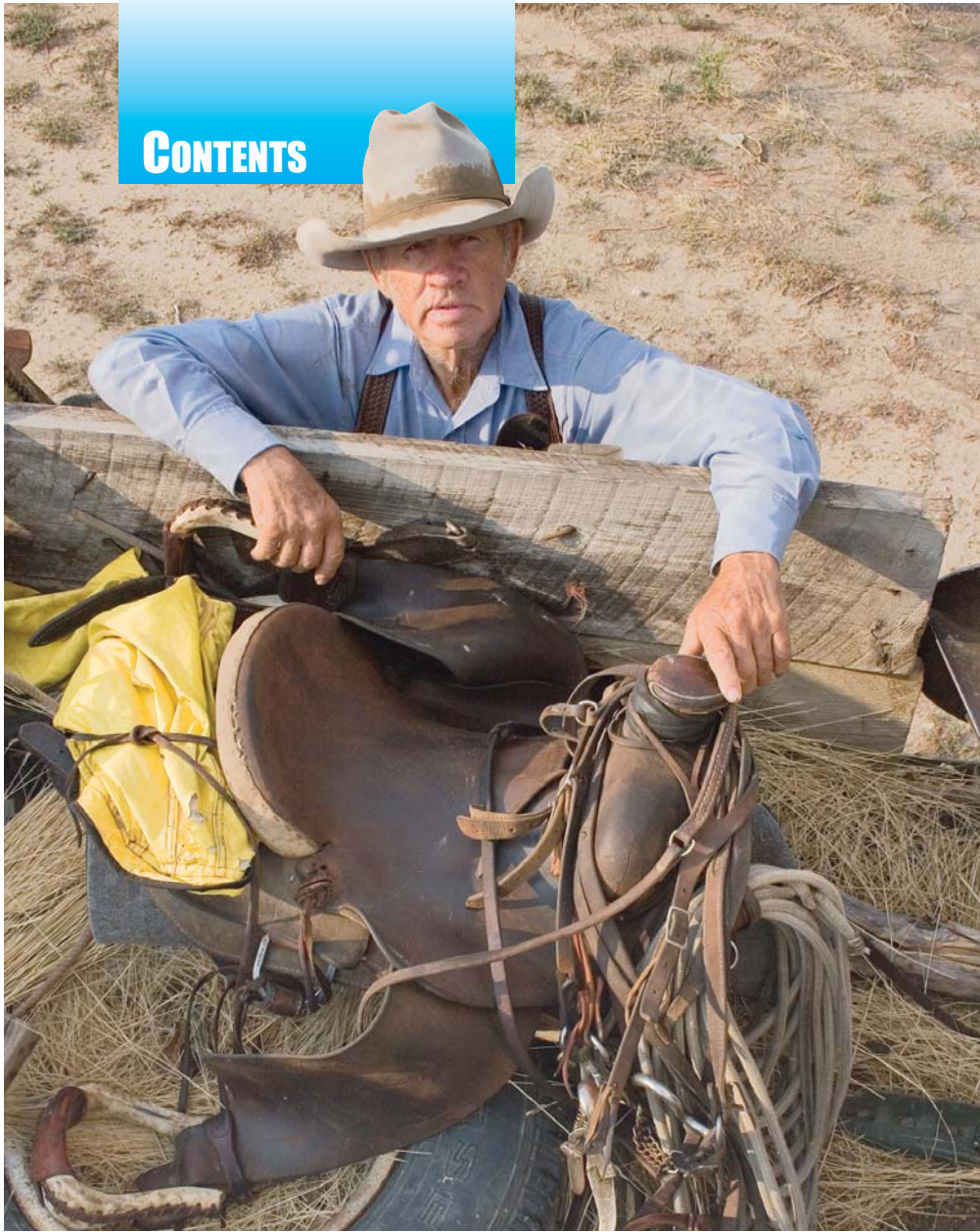


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A vanishing breed

Charles Patten remembers what too few of us comprehend — burning coal in winter to heat the home. A pioneer in wind energy more than 50 years ago, before wind farms became all the rage, he's a co-op trustee who's forgotten more about energy issues than most of us know. But he's never forgotten how to appreciate co-ops. What he can teach us about co-op principles in this, National Co-op Month.



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Solve this shocker

Lightning struck this home in Vigilante Electric territory. Four times. Any theories about why? Ideas welcome.



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Co-ops cope with fire

How co-op workers restore your service after a fire. Scott Randles, a line clearance tree trimmer at Missoula Electric, is one example.



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A trustee speaks

We asked your trustees to address your energy issues. First up: Dee Mobley of Ashland's Tongue River Electric.

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About our cover ...

We heard about Charles Patten on a trip down Broadus way. He was said to have traveled the vast range on horseback signing up co-op members. "Well I did ride some," he allowed, "but not all that much." In the tone of, *Look around — you got any idea how long it'd take to sign up people on a horse?* End of story? Hardly. He's got a million tales, many of them printable.

Photo by James V. Smith, Jr.