

## Join LYREC June 7 for annual meeting

The 2023 annual meeting is set for Wednesday, June 7, at the Richland County Event Center. If you are unable to attend the in-person meeting, there is also an option for you to join virtually. For a link to register for the virtual meeting, go to [www.lyrec.coop](http://www.lyrec.coop) or to Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative's (LYREC) social media pages.

Dinner and registration will be from 5 to 5:45 p.m. There will be bucket truck rides (weather-permitting)

and a chance to see LYREC's electric vehicle prior to the business meeting.

The business meeting will begin at 6 p.m. During the business meeting, there will be kids' activities and several college scholarships awarded. Each member account joining either in person or virtually, and staying throughout the business meeting, will receive a \$100 bill credit. ■

## Preparing to serve you better

Providing reliable power to you is always a top priority for Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC). And power reliability seems to be making news now more than ever.

As the energy industry continues to transition, and more segments of the economy, such as vehicles, machinery and even lawn equipment, are becoming electrified, additional pressures are being placed on our nation's electric grid.

With summer storm season upon us, we thought it would be a good time to tell you about a few measures LYREC takes to ensure our members continue receiving the reliable power they depend on and deserve.

While trees provide shade and add beauty to our area, you may be surprised to learn that overgrown vegetation accounts for a large portion of all power outages. That's why we strive to keep the co-op's power lines clear in right-of-way (ROW) areas. A ROW area is the land a co-op uses to construct, maintain, replace or repair underground and overhead power lines. This ROW enables LYREC to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder distribution power lines. The overall goal is to provide reliable power to our members, while also maintaining the beauty of the area.

### Vegetation management

Generally, healthy trees don't fall on power lines, and clear lines don't cause problems. LYREC spends many hours proactively trimming and pruning trees to keep lines clear to improve power reliability.

Members who have concerns about trees within



close proximity to power lines are encouraged to contact our office.

### Planned outages improve reliability

Although it may seem counterintuitive, we also maintain power reliability through planned, controlled outages. By carefully cutting power to one part of our service territory for a few hours, LYREC can perform system repairs and upgrades, which ultimately improves electric service. Rest assured, we notify you in advance of a planned outage, so make sure we have your correct contact information on file to receive the updates.

Through vegetation management and system repairs and upgrades, we are better able to keep the power lines clear and secure the reliability of the grid. ■

# Energy-saving projects for the weekend warrior

**A**re you a weekend warrior? If you're considering home improvement upgrades to save energy and money, we have a few project ideas for you, all of which can be completed in a day or less!

Here are three energy-saving projects you can easily tackle, whether you're a weekend warrior pro or a DIY dabbler.

## Get smart about home cooling and heating

Cooling and heating your home typically accounts for a large portion of energy bills. Smart thermostats can help keep your cooling and heating costs in check, with ENERGY STAR®-certified models saving about 8% on annual energy costs.

Now that smart thermostats are more affordable (as little as \$70), this simple upgrade makes for a fun, efficient weekend project. Smart thermostats offer a variety of bells and whistles, but the average model will allow you to set custom temperature schedules, adjust the settings from anywhere (from your phone) and learn your cooling and heating preferences over time.

Your new smart thermostat will come with step-by-step instructions, but this project typically involves shutting off your HVAC at the breaker panel, disconnecting/removing the old thermostat, installing the new smart thermostat and connecting it to your home's Wi-Fi.

Play it safe: Remember to carefully read the installation instructions before you get started.

## Go green with a rain barrel

If you have a green thumb, you already know rainwater is the best water for your outdoor plants. Rainwater is free of minerals, salts and treatment chemicals found in tap water or groundwater. It also contains helpful macronutrients to foster healthy plant growth.

Installing a rain barrel is an easy way to harvest large amounts of rainwater and reduce home water use. It's a win-win. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, one rain barrel can save a homeowner 1,300 gallons of water annually.

Most residential rain barrels range in size from 50 to 90 gallons, so the size you purchase will depend on your watering needs.

The simplest way to install a rain barrel is positioning a plastic or wooden barrel directly under your gutter downspout. Basic piping may be required, but this is an easy way to harvest rainwater, and the barrel won't take up much space. Consider a cover for the top of

your rain barrel to keep insects and small debris out of your harvested water.

## Create fresh savings with a clothesline

If you have enough outdoor space available, installing a clothesline is a great way to save energy. Not only will you save on dryer costs, you can also save on cooling costs during the summer, since unwanted heat from the clothes dryer won't be added to your home (which makes your air conditioner work harder). Additionally, air drying is much gentler on fabrics and will keep your clothes and linens looking fresh longer.

You can create your own clothesline with two T-posts, wire and hook-and-eye turnbuckles. Depending on your soil, you may need a small amount of Quikrete to set the posts. Another option is installing the line between two trees. A typical load of laundry requires about 35 feet of line, so keep this in mind as you're determining the best location.

If an outdoor clothesline isn't an option, no sweat! You can easily create an indoor drying rack that folds to save space. Home improvement websites like [www.thespruce.com](http://www.thespruce.com) and [www.hgtv.com](http://www.hgtv.com) offer step-by-step tutorials for a variety of indoor clothes racks.

These are just a few simple ideas to help you save energy and money. So, get out there, roll up those sleeves and tackle a few projects. ■



# Capital credits returned to members

**D**id you know you get certain benefits as a member of Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC)? One of the benefits of being a member of the cooperative is receiving capital credits.

LYREC is a cooperative, which is a nonprofit organization. Instead of profits, we have margins. Margins are any revenue above the expenses each year. The total yearly margins are allocated to all members who are billed during the year.

Allocations are based on the dollar amount each member contributed during the year by paying his or her electric bill. For example, if you contributed 1% of our total yearly revenue, you would be allocated 1% of

the total margins for that year.

The LYREC board of trustees approved the retirement of \$1,040,000, which will be returned in 2023 to our current and former members. The retired capital credits will be an 80/20 split between the oldest and newest contributions. This benefits more members and ensures that newer members better understand the power of cooperatives.

If you were an active member in all or part of 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2010, you may have received credit on your bill the first part of June. If you are no longer an active member, you may receive a check in the mail the first part of June. ■



Dennis Fine

## Fine joins LYREC as summer help

**D**ennis Fine, the son of Tim and Molly of Sidney, began working part time at Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative in April. Fine enjoys playing baseball and basketball in his free time. Fine will be beginning his senior year in the fall of 2023. He is planning on attending lineworker school following graduation. ■

## GET YOUR HOUSE IN SHAPE FOR SUMMER

As warm weather approaches, many of us find ourselves working a little harder to get in shape for the lake. Now is a great time to get your house ready for the heat as well. These measures will help trim your summer energy bills.



**Is your roof getting up there in age? Replace it with a cool roof. Cool roof materials reflect solar heat, keeping it from radiating into your home.**

**Check for attic air leaks – around recessed light fixtures, pipes, wiring and flues – and seal with expandable foam or caulk.**

**Make sure your walls and attic are insulated to levels recommended for your climate zone. A qualified insulation contractor can help.**

**Consider installing a whole-house fan. The fan draws cool air through open windows and pulls hot indoor air into the attic and outdoors.**

**Don't spend your energy dollars outside. Seal windows with caulk, and install weatherstripping around exterior doors.**

**Install ENERGY STAR® certified ceiling fans. Ceiling fans make your skin feel cooler, reducing the need for air conditioning.**

**Hire a qualified professional to inspect and clean your air conditioning system. This will help ensure that the system is operating at peak efficiency.**

**Install a programmable thermostat to save energy by adjusting temperatures based on your schedule.**

**Now your home is fit to handle the hottest summer temperatures. The payoff is lower energy costs and increased comfort. Just sit back and enjoy the savings.**



## Discounts offered for Medora vacation

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) is offering its members a discount by being a Touchstone Energy® member. Simply call 800-MEDORA-1 and give the discount code of “Touch 2023” for a 15% discount on all of the following during any night of the season:

### THINGS TO DO:

- Medora Musical
- Pitchfork steak fondue
- Bully Pulpit Golf Course
- Gospel Brunch tickets
- Old Town Theater shows

### LODGING AT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Elkhorn Quarters
- Badlands Motel
- Rough Riders Hotel
- Medora Campground

## Operating report

| Year to date:          | March 2022  | March 2023   |
|------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Total miles energized  | 2,127       | 2,149        |
| Total number of meters | 6,233       | 6,240        |
| Kilowatt-hours sold    | 80,495,990  | 99,877,854   |
| Revenue                | \$8,213,542 | \$10,090,736 |
| Total expenses         | \$8,469,098 | \$9,897,271  |
| Operating margins      | \$356,133   | \$2,504,959  |

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### TRUSTEES

|                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Allen Thiessen .....      | President           |
| Greg Rauschendorfer ..... | Vice President      |
| Dennis Schmierer .....    | Secretary/Treasurer |
| Colin Gartner .....       | Trustee             |
| Tim Franzen .....         | Trustee             |
| Dennis Nelson .....       | Trustee             |
| Jim Vitt .....            | Trustee             |

### EMPLOYEES

|                        |                                   |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Jason Brothen .....    | General Manager                   |
| Brenda Bond .....      | Chief Financial Officer           |
| Jami Propp .....       | Member Service Manager            |
| Kyle Kavanagh .....    | IT Coordinator                    |
| Margo Zadow .....      | Billing Coordinator               |
| Pam Wilcoxon .....     | Plant Accountant                  |
| Tiffani Hentges .....  | Customer Service Representative   |
| Melissa Buckley .....  | Customer Service Representative   |
| Chris Hillesland ..... | Chief Operations Officer          |
| Rich Gorde .....       | Journeyman Lineman                |
| Eric McPherson .....   | System Controller                 |
| Kevin Goff .....       | Operations Assistant              |
| Kelly Keyser .....     | Operations Manager                |
| Aaron Eide .....       | Journeyman Lineman                |
| Bryan Franck .....     | Journeyman Lineman                |
| Jesse Obergfell .....  | Journeyman Lineman                |
| Tanner Roth .....      | Journeyman Lineman                |
| Ryder Peterson .....   | Journeyman Lineman                |
| Cole Jankovsky .....   | Journeyman Lineman                |
| Lee Delp .....         | Apprentice Lineman                |
| Preston Long .....     | Apprentice Lineman                |
| Trey Schepens .....    | Apprentice Lineman                |
| Jory Bell .....        | Apprentice Lineman                |
| Brandon Mueller .....  | Master Electrician                |
| Mike Eberling .....    | Mechanic                          |
| Dan Gieser .....       | EMS                               |
| Lee Alvstad .....      | Mechanic/EMS                      |
| Richard Tremblay ..... | EMS                               |
| Bo Kindopp .....       | GIS/Easement Technician           |
| Corey Candee .....     | Chief Information Officer         |
| Jeremy Reese .....     | Information Technology Technician |
| Edwin Gatzke .....     | Line Locator/Groundsman           |
| Justin King .....      | Warehouse Supervisor              |

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative