



86th annual meeting held

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative's (LYREC) 86th annual meeting was held June 1 at the Richland County Event Center, with an option for virtual attendance. The evening started with an opportunity to partake in bucket truck rides or check out the high-voltage safety demonstration trailer. Greg Mohr catered the evening meal. There were 119 members in attendance, along with their guests.

Co-op news

CEO Jason Brothen updated the membership on the unique challenges LYREC faced in 2021. Brothen described the challenges with the Brockton fire and the June 2021 windstorm. He reported LYREC is increasing its inventory to account for supply issues. Brothen stated that LYREC will continue to collaborate with other cooperatives to share

equipment and materials when needed. Brothen also reported LYREC is now sharing services with five other cooperatives.

President Allen Thiessen reported on LYREC's financials. He stated LYREC returned \$945,000 in capital credits this year and the board will reassess the cooperative's financial condition to determine if additional capital credits will be paid at year-end. Thiessen conveyed LYREC does not anticipate a rate increase in 2022. He reported on Basin Electric Power Cooperative (BEPC) and Western Area Power Administration (WAPA); WAPA has announced a rate increase for 2023.

Guest speaker

Brothen and Thiessen interviewed guest speaker Chris Christensen, who is the current president of



Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative's Board President **Allen Thiessen**, left, and CEO **Jason Brothen**, right, interview NRECA President **Chris Christensen** during the annual meeting.

the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). He is the first Montanan to lead the national association. He discussed his role at NRECA and the role NRECA plays with the cooperatives.

Directors elected

Attorney Jean Faure reported the Nominating Committee consisting of two members from each of the two districts nominated Tim Franzen for District 3 and Dennis Schmierer for District 4. As there was no need for an election, Franzen and Schmierer became trustees by acclamation.

Scholarships

Greg Rauschendorfer announced the 20 scholarship winners. Congratulations to Ali Merritt, Andoni Idoate, Keela Kary, Kiawna Eide, Taryn Hagler, Alexa St. Pierre, Liliana Johnson, Jesse Selting, Alyssa St. Pierre, Brett Mullin, Charles Nevins, Parker Mindt, Jade Emly, Adriana Beyerle, Abby Hecker, Aden Graves, Jace Vitt, Brielle Gorder, Ryan McGinnis and Lacie Selting. The applicants were required to submit a photo collage by May 24 that displayed moments in their life that have made an impression on who they are today and their goals for the future. These scholarships are funded with the unclaimed capital credits, which may only be used for educational purposes.

Jami Propp announced the John Redman scholarship formed in memory of LYREC's former director. A scholarship will be awarded during Co-op Month in October. An account has been set up at the Stockman Bank for those who would like to contribute.

Thank you to our members for joining the meeting in-person or virtually. The next annual meeting is scheduled for June 7, 2023. ■



Valuable rebates offered by co-op

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) has several rebates available for members, including:

Electric water heaters:

- At least a 40-gallon tank.
- \$2.50-per-gallon rebate, not to exceed \$200.
- Insulation factor of R12-13, EER (at least) 0.9.
- At least a six-year warranty (as of May 17).

Electric heat:

- Rebate amount of \$25 per kilowatt of installed load of electric heat.
- It can be used for the initial installation of electric

baseboard, electric plenum heaters or heat pumps.

- Space heating is the only use for the heater.
- The member may put the heaters under the electric heat rate program. (Contact our office for more information about the electric heat rate program.)

Heat pump:

- Rebate amount of \$150 per ton of installed heat pump.
- The heat pump can be either air-to-air or ground-source.

Grain drying:

- LYREC agrees to rebate its member \$30 per horsepower for an initial electric natural air grain drying setup on a grain bin.
- The cooperative retains the right to specify brand, size and manufacture of its choice. The member must provide proof of purchase for any of the above rebates. For more information on rebates, please call LYREC. ■

Help us help you

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) is constantly striving to improve our efficiency so we can provide the most reliable electric service possible for our members.

Accurate information enables us to improve customer service and enhance communication. While we do our best to maintain service, we occasionally plan outages to update, repair or replace equipment. In these instances, we can provide advance notification to affected members through a phone call if we have your updated contact information.

Keeping the co-op updated with your information also helps us when there's a question about energy use or billing.

Many of you have been members of the co-op for

years, and it's likely that your account information hasn't been updated for some time. We recognize that many members now use a cellphone as their primary phone service, and we might not have that number in our system.

Please take a moment to confirm or update your contact information by calling the office at 406-488-1602 or send us an email at lyrec@lyrec.coop. By doing so, you are helping us improve service and efficiency, so we can better serve you and all members of the co-op.

In addition to a current phone number, please keep your mailing address up-to-date. This is important even if you no longer have service with us. We will need a valid address for future capital credit check mailings. ■

Budget billing

Sign up through August

Do you lose sleep wondering what your electric bill is going to be each month? Cooler weather is on its way, and heating requires more energy than any other system in your home, typically making up about 42% of your energy bill.

Budget billing is available to all residential members who are current with their electric bill, have an "A" credit rating and have established a 12-month history with Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative

(LYREC). The member can remain on budget billing if the account remains current.

To determine your budget billing amount, LYREC will average your current and last 11 months of bills. Therefore, there will be variations each month, but the change will not be as drastic and will make budgeting easier.

If you would like to sign up for budget billing, call LYREC's office to see if you qualify. To sign up, you will need to turn in an application before Aug. 31. To get a form, stop by the office or go to www.lyrec.coop. ■

Stay safe on the farm

Overhead power lines are necessary to deliver electricity to hardworking farmers and ranchers, but those same power lines can also be deadly if not treated with respect. Fall can be a busy time for farmers, but safety, especially around electrical hazards, should always be a priority. Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative urges you to also watch for electrical hazards around the farm or ranch.

Be aware

Farmers and their equipment should always be 10 feet away from power lines on all sides. Field cultivators and sprayers can often reach as high as 12 feet in the air. Practice extreme caution and use a spotter to make sure you stay far away from power lines when you use tall equipment.

If you have purchased new equipment, be aware of antennas or other attachments that may pose new hazards. A newer, bigger piece of equipment may no longer clear a line. In addition, shifting soil may also affect whether or not machinery avoids power lines from year-to-year.

Power lines also may sag over the years. If power lines on your property are sagging, contact your electric cooperative to repair the lines. Never move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.

Overhead power lines are not the only electric hazard on the farm. Pole guy wires, used to stabilize utility poles, are grounded. However, when one of the guy wires is broken, it can become charged with electricity. If you break a guy wire, call the cooperative to fix it. Don't do it yourself.

Follow these other tips:

- Look over work areas carefully for overhead power lines and utility poles. Make sure you, your family and employees know the location of overhead power lines, and use routes to avoid the lines when moving equipment. Do this every year, as equipment sizes and soil conditions may change.
- Be aware of increased heights of equipment, especially new equipment with higher antennas.
- Avoid moving large equipment alone. Have someone watch as you move equipment to ensure you are clear of power lines.
- Be extra careful when working around trees and brush; they often make it difficult to see power lines.



The Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative office will be closed Sept 5. for Labor Day

Operating report

Year to date:	May 2021	May 2022
Total miles energized	2,127	2,141
Total number of meters	6,220	6,238
Kilowatt-hours sold	113,597,104	125,364,150
Revenue	\$11,865,304	\$13,256,396
Total expenses	\$11,516,089	\$13,113,209
Operating margins	\$1,145,185	\$768,902



3200 W. Holly - Sidney, MT 59270

Phone: 406-488-1602

Fax: 406-488-6524

Website: www.lyrec.com

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 Keysor Operations Manager
 Aaron Eide Journeyman Lineman
 Bryan Franck Journeyman Lineman
 Jesse Obergfell Journeyman Lineman
 Blade Jankovsky 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