



Restoring power safely and efficiently

We do our best to avoid outages, but there's no way around it: Power outages occasionally happen.

For most Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) members, outages are rare and only last a few hours. But when major storms occur, like the one in April, extended outages are unavoidable. The storm that blew in on April 23 took out approximately 2,100 meters. The wet and heavy snow, high winds, low visibility and impassible roads made the restoration process much more difficult. The line crew got the power restored to all residential meters the evening of April 26.

So, when the power goes out, how do LYREC crews know where to start working? How do you know if your outage has been reported? We have answers to these questions and more, and it all starts with a safe, efficient plan for power restoration.

When the lights go out and it's safe for our crews to begin the restoration process, they start by repairing power lines and equipment that will restore power

to the greatest number of people in the shortest time possible.

This process typically begins with repairs to the larger main distribution lines that service a great number of homes. After those repairs are made, crews work on tap lines, which deliver power to transformers, either mounted on utility poles (for above-ground service) or placed on pads (for underground service). Finally, individual service lines that run between the transformer and the home are repaired.

We can't control the weather, but we can prepare for it. LYREC keeps a supply of extra utility poles, transformers and other equipment on hand, so we can quickly get to work in the event of an outage. When widespread outages occur, multiple crews will be in the field simultaneously, working to repair damage at multiple locations. Often, we coordinate with nearby co-ops to bring in additional crews. However, during the April storm, LYREC did not have that option, as neighboring cooperatives were also hit with the storm.

A proactive approach to maintenance helps minimize the chance of prolonged outages; this is why you see LYREC crews periodically trimming trees and clearing vegetation near rights-of-way. We love trees, too, but it only takes one overgrown limb to knock out power for an entire neighborhood. Trimming improves power reliability for our entire community. In addition to managing vegetation, we regularly inspect utility poles, power lines and other critical equipment to maintain a more reliable system.

If you experience a power outage, don't assume a neighbor reported it. It's best to report the outage yourself, and we make it easy to do. You can call our dispatch center 24/7 at 406-488-1602 or toll-free at 844-441-5627.

When reporting an outage, you will need your meter number. LYREC suggests having a list of your meters, so you can let LYREC's dispatch know which meter is affected by the outage. Adding a description to your meters is also helpful. If you would like to label your meters, please call our office.

If you have a medical condition that requires

electrical equipment, please let us know, and always have a backup plan in place. This plan could include a portable generator, extra medical supplies or moving to an alternate location until power is restored. If you plan to use a generator for backup power, read all safety information and instructions before use.

Mother Nature can be unpredictable, but as a member of LYREC, you can feel confident knowing we're standing by, ready to restore power as quickly and safely as possible. ■



CO-OP 101:

What is a cooperative?

The state's electric cooperatives are continually involved in the communities they serve, from delivering power to offering scholarships for college-bound students. But what is a cooperative?

Electric cooperatives are owned and democratically controlled by their members – the people who use the electricity.

They operate on the principle of “one member, one vote.” So, each member of a cooperative has the same voting power. As a member, you have a voice in how your co-op operates, by electing directors to represent you.

And, cooperatives are nonprofit entities, returning profits to members proportionate to their use of the cooperative's service.

Cooperatives are shaped by the specific needs of the

communities they serve. This local, member-driven structure is one reason why cooperatives enjoy the highest consumer-satisfaction scores within the electric industry. Electric cooperatives, on average, score higher than all other electric companies, according to the 2021 American Customer Satisfaction Index.

Electric cooperatives are built by and belong to the people they serve. They are led by members from the community and are uniquely suited to meet local needs.

Cooperatives have strong ties to the state's history – and the state's future. Rural electrification was born 85 years ago in the spirit of cooperation, and electric cooperatives play a vital role in developing the state today. ■

7 COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES:

- Voluntary and open membership
- Democratic member control
- Members' economic participation
- Autonomy and independence
- Education, training and information
- Cooperation among cooperatives
- Concern for community

Capital credits returned to members

Did 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 LYREC is receiving capital credits.

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

Allocations are based on the dollar amount each member contributed during the year by paying their 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 \$750,000, which will be returned in 2022 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 2004, 2005, 2007 or 2020, you may receive a 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. ■

Schepens and Bell join line crew

Trey Schepens and Jory Bell are Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative's (LYREC) new apprentice lineworkers.

Schepens previously worked at LYREC through a high school program and as summer help. He attended Northwest Lineman College, graduating in February. He is the son of Rob Schepens and Lacey Nevins.

Bell attended Northwest Lineman College, graduated in 2020 and moved back to Sidney, Mont., to work on the family ranch. He joined the line crew in April. He is the son of Ryan and Nicki Bell. ■



Trey Schepens



Jory Bell

Community safety demonstration

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) hosted a safety demonstration for the community on April 5. During the presentation, LYREC shared the best procedures for handling the most common electrical safety situations.

The lineworkers built this safety demonstration trailer in 2017 and LYREC has used it to help educate our communities on how to stay safe around electricity. ■



Budget billing Sign up through August

Are you having trouble budgeting your monthly bills? If so, 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).

To determine your budget billing amount, LYREC will

average your current and last 11 months of bills. So, 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 apply before Aug. 31. ■



Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) is able to offer its members a discount by being a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative member. Simply call 1-800-MEDORA-1 and give the discount code of “Touch 2022” for a 15% discount on any of the following during any night of the season:

THINGS TO DO:

- Medora Musical
- Pitchfork steak fondue
- Bully Pulpit Golf Course

LODGING AT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Elkhorn Quarters
- Badlands Motel
- Rough Riders Hotel

Operating report

Year to date:	March 2021	March 2022
Total miles energized	2,127	2,127
Total number of meters	6,213	6,233
Kilowatt-hours sold	71,643,699	80,495,990
Revenue	\$7,232,527	\$8,213,542
Total expenses	\$7,170,134	\$8,469,098
Operating margins	\$845,251	\$356,133

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