

It's a matter of (co-op!) principles

BY ANNE PRICE



ACE Hardware, State Farm, REI, Land O'Lakes and Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) all share something in common: We're all cooperatives.

We may be in different industries, but we all share a passion for serving our members and helping our communities thrive. In fact, all cooperatives adhere to the same set of seven principles that reflect our core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater community good. October is National Co-op Month, so this is the perfect time to reflect on these principles that have stood the test of time, but also provide a framework for the future. Let's take a look at the first three cooperative principles.

Voluntary and open membership

Just like all co-ops, LYREC was created out of necessity – to meet a need that would have been otherwise unmet in our community. A group of neighbors banded together and organized our electric co-op so everyone in our community could benefit. For a modest membership fee of \$10, farmers could get electricity brought to their farms. Neighbors came together to tackle a problem they all had, but couldn't solve alone. They worked together for the benefit of the whole community, and the newly established electric lines helped power economic opportunity in our community. The first pole was set between Sidney and Fairview on Dec. 18, 1937, which energized 200 members; LYREC was the first co-op in Montana to energize a line.

While this history may be forgotten, key parts of

that heritage remain – the focus on our mission and serving the greater good. In this, we include everyone to improve the quality of life and economic opportunity for the entire community. Membership is open to everyone in our service territory, regardless of race, religion, age, disability, gender identity, language, political perspective or socioeconomic status.

Democratic member control

Our co-op is well-suited to meet the needs of our members, because we are locally governed. Each member gets a voice and a vote in how the co-op is operated, and each voice and vote are equal. LYREC's leadership team and employees live right here in the community. Our board of directors helps set long-term priorities for the co-op and directors live locally on co-op lines. These board members have been elected by neighbors just like you. We know our members have a valuable perspective, and that's why we are continually seeking your input and encourage you to weigh-in on important co-op issues and participate in co-op elections. In 2021, due to not having an in-person meeting, LYREC mailed ballots to the entire membership; LYREC had a record number of votes this year.

Members' economic participation

As a utility, our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to our members. But as a co-op, we are also motivated by service to the community, rather than profits. Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of LYREC. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for co-op programs, initiatives, capital investments and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

Because we are guided by seven cooperative principles, it's not just about dollars – it's about opportunity for all and being fair when engaging with our members. The cooperative way is a values-based business model.

LYREC is a reflection of our local community and its evolving needs. We view our role as a catalyst for good and making our corner of the world a better place. ■



Co-op participates in 4-H sales

Albert Belmont Graham started a youth program in Clark County, Ohio, in 1902, which is considered the birth of 4-H in the United States. The first club was called “The Tomato Club” or the “Corn Growing Club.” Theodore August Erickson, known as the father of 4-H, started local agricultural after-school clubs and fairs that same year. Jessie Field Shambaugh developed the clover pin with an H on each leaf in 1910, and by 1912, they were called 4-H clubs.

Today, the organization has over 6 million members in the United States. Members are 5 to 19 years old, in approximately 90,000 clubs. The goal of 4-H is to develop citizenship, leadership, responsibility and life skills of youth through experimental learning programs and a positive youth development approach.

Four-H empowers young people with the skills to lead for a lifetime. Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) has supported the 4-H sales for many

years. This year, LYREC purchased a hog from Kiawna Eide and a steer from Shane Waltner at the Richland County 4-H Sale. LYREC also purchased a hog from Charles Butikofer at the Roosevelt County 4-H sale.

An integral part of being part of the co-op is giving back to the community. LYREC’s participation in the sale is a way to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the 4-H members. ■

New District 3 director named



Tim Franzen

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) announces the appointment of Tim Franzen. The staff and current board of (LYREC) are happy to welcome Tim to the board. Tim was appointed in August after longtime trustee, John Redman, retired.

Tim was born and raised in Sidney and ranches across the river. Tim, and his wife, Rochelle, have a 7-year old daughter and 5-year old son. ■

JUNE 19 TO 24, 2022



WASHINGTON, D.C.

**AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP
TO WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**TOP 3 REASONS
TO ENTER THE ESSAY-
WRITING CONTEST**

- To enter the essay-writing contest, you must be a sophomore or junior in high school.
- You and your parents or guardian must be served by Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative.
- If you have any questions, please contact Jami Propp, LYREC, at 406-488-1602 during regular business hours.
- The deadline is Nov. 29, 2021. You can email entries to Jami Propp at jamip@lyrec.coop or mail a hard copy to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, P.O. Box 1047, Sidney, MT 59270.

1. All-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., compliments of Lower Yellowstone REC
2. A whole week to visit unforgettable historic monuments, museums and the U.S. Capitol
3. A learning experience you'll never forget

ESSAY QUESTION:

What does the second cooperative principle mean to you and your community?



CHECK OUT THE ESSAY CONTEST GUIDELINES AT
www.lyrec.coop

Need assistance with the cost of heating?

If you have difficulty paying your heating bill, there is help. The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) of Montana and the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) of North Dakota are accepting applications. These programs help Montana and North Dakota residents with their heating bills through the winter months.

Eligibility is based on your

household income and resources. If you reside in Montana, you can contact Energy Share at 800-227-0703. If you live in North Dakota, you can contact Community Action at 701-572-8191. You may also download an application at www.lyrec.coop or call Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative for more information. ■

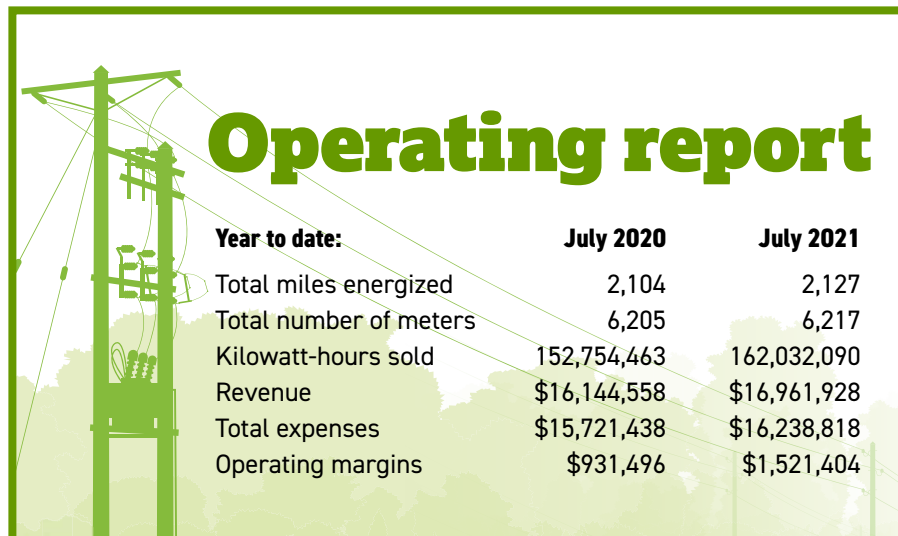
Tune your furnace for fall

You can save energy this fall and winter by having your furnace serviced. Electric, gas and propane furnaces can go approximately three to five years between service calls and longer, if you change the filters regularly. Oil furnaces need to be serviced once a year, because they get dirty and need annual adjustment.

Changing filters regularly is one of the key maintenance tasks to keep any type of furnace running efficiently. Make sure you know where your furnace's filter is located and what size it is. Inspect it periodically, and replace it when it is dirty. How frequently you need to change the filter depends on

the amount of dirt in the house and around the furnace and also how much time the furnace runs.

Duct air leakage is one of the largest energy-wasters in your heating system. Heating contractors can check your ducts for air leakage, and seal the largest leaks. Contractors start by sealing the larger joints near the furnace, and then work out toward the branch ducts as access allows. Believe it or not, duct tape is not a good choice for sealing ducts because its adhesive usually fails after a short time. Duct mastic, available in cans or buckets, is an effective and permanent material for sealing air leaks in ducts. ■



Operating report

Year to date:	July 2020	July 2021
Total miles energized	2,104	2,127
Total number of meters	6,205	6,217
Kilowatt-hours sold	152,754,463	162,032,090
Revenue	\$16,144,558	\$16,961,928
Total expenses	\$15,721,438	\$16,238,818
Operating margins	\$931,496	\$1,521,404



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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
 Blade Jankovsky Journeyman Lineman
 Tanner Roth Journeyman Lineman
 Ryder Peterson Journeyman Lineman
 Cole Jankovsky Journeyman Lineman
 Lee Delp Journeyman Lineman
 Preston Long 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

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