



## Frost on power lines causes havoc

**B**lizzards and high winds aren't the only threats to our electrical grid in the winter. Several days of fog, mist and little sunlight can create a buildup of hoar frost on power lines. Hoar frost is a feathery coating of ice that forms when ambient humidity meets a surface below the freezing point and solidifies into crystals with contact.

Hoar frost is picturesque, but also wreaks havoc on power lines. As the hoar frost continues to build, it can lead to breaks in the lines. With enough weight, it can also bring down poles. Just half an inch of ice can add as much as 500 pounds to a power line, and damage can begin when accumulations exceed a quarter inch.

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative's (LYREC) members in the Lambert, Girard and Sioux Pass areas had a minimal interruption of power due to the frost. Some members experienced blinks,

which are typically caused from the frost itself falling off the line or the wires slapping together. LYREC's neighboring cooperatives had far more damage from the hoar frost. For example, Burke-Divide Electric Cooperative, Columbus, had over 1,000 meters off at times during an eight-day restoration period. LYREC, along with two other North Dakota cooperatives, sent line crews and equipment to aid in the restoration process.

Cooperation among cooperatives is one of the cooperative principles. Cooperatives have a collaborative goal to help all cooperatives succeed. Cooperatives knew from the beginning the most effective way to strengthen cooperatives was to work together. Eighty years later, we still follow these principles, which help keep LYREC and all cooperatives strong. ■



**Jessica Berwick**, Operation Round Up trustee, presents **Tanya Wilson**, from the Bainville Public School athletic department, with a check for \$500. The funds will be used toward a basketball rebound trainer.



Operation Round Up Trustee **Angie Olson** presents **Don Smies**, from the Richland County Health Department, with a check for \$1,000 to help promote Battle of the Belts (BOTB).



Operation Round Up Trustee **Jen Boyer** awards ABATE of Montana LYC chapter \$500 to use toward its 2023 toy drive. ABATE has been collecting/purchasing new toys to distribute for the past 28 years.

## Operation Round Up gives back to community

**O**peration Round Up is a program made possible by the generosity and compassion of Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) members. It raises funds for LOCAL nonprofit and community organizations by rounding up members' monthly energy bills to the next dollar. On average, a member donates 50 cents per month, but no more than \$11.88 a year.

In 2022, the Operation Round Up trustees granted a total of \$4,900 to these nonprofit and community organizations in LYREC's service territory:

- Savage Public School
- Zion Lutheran Church
- Savage Sunrise Manor
- Lambert Public School
- Richland County Health Department injury prevention
- Bainville Public School athletic department
- ABATE of Montana chapter

LYREC's Operation Round Up is not just a way to give back to our community, but it's also a way our members show their hearts and spirits. We are all in this together, and we thank you for continuing to make our community a great place to live. If you would like to

enroll in Operation Round Up, please call our office at 406-488-1602. ■

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Washing windows and screens is a great way to practice energy efficiency during spring cleaning. Clean windows and screens make your home brighter by allowing more sunlight in, reducing the need for lamps and fixtures. Clean screens also allow more fresh air in the home when the windows are open to recycle indoor air. Natural light and clean air are energy savers, and they enhance overall health and productivity.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)





## Play it safe when using portable generators



Position portable generators at least 25 feet outside the home, away from doors, windows and vents that can allow carbon monoxide to enter the home.

**S**torm season is upon us, which means greater potential for power outages. If you're planning to use a portable generator in the event of an outage, Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative reminds you to play it safe.

With proper use and maintenance, portable generators can provide great convenience during an outage. However, when generators are used incorrectly, they can be extremely hazardous. In a 2022 report, the Consumer Product Safety Commission estimated 85 U.S. consumers die every year from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gasoline-powered portable generators.

Here are 10 do's and don'ts to keep in mind when using portable generators:

1. Install backup CO alarms.
2. Keep children and pets away from portable generators at all times.
3. Position generators at least 25 feet outside the home, away from doors, windows and vents that can allow CO to enter the home.
4. Ensure your generator is properly grounded. Use a portable ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to prevent electric shock injuries.
5. Use three-pronged extension cords that are rated to handle the load of the generator. Inspect extension cords for cuts, frays or other damage before use.

6. Do not operate a generator inside your home or an enclosed (or partially enclosed) space. Generators produce high levels of CO, which can be deadly.
7. Do not open windows or doors while the generator is running.
8. Do not rely on generators as a full-time source of power. They should only be used temporarily or in emergency situations to power essential equipment or appliances.
9. Do not overload generators. They should only be used to power essential equipment. Make sure your generator can handle the load of the items you plan to power.
10. Do not connect generators directly into household wiring unless you have an appropriate transfer switch installed. If a generator is connected to a home's wiring without a transfer switch, power can backfeed along power lines and electrocute utility lineworkers making repairs.

While generators provide convenience during power outages, they can quickly become hazardous, even deadly, if improperly operated. Before you operate a portable generator, be sure to thoroughly read the owner's manual for important safety information and tips.

If you have questions about proper use of portable generators, we're here to help. Give us a call at 406-488-1602 or contact us at [lyrec@lyrec.coop](mailto:lyrec@lyrec.coop). ■

# Winter storms pile on electrical safety hazards

**M**arch “Madness” can also refer to winter snow or ice storms. Are you prepared for Mother Nature’s worst? Keep these tips in mind:

- When cleaning your yard, don’t pile the snow near the power lines. Children might want to play on these large snow piles and would be too close to the wires. Keep your equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines, too.
- If snow or ice conditions bring down power lines, stay away from them. Just like during a summer storm, downed lines can still be energized.
- When the power goes out, it may come back on in spikes. This can damage electronics. Keep your electronics safe by unplugging them when the power goes out. Leave one lamp or switch on as a signal your power has returned.
- In the case you do lose power and heat, watch your pipes to prevent freezing. Keep faucets turned on slightly, so water drips from the tap to prevent frozen pipes. Know how to shut off water valves in case a pipe bursts.
- If you have underground power line cabinets (the green boxes) in your yard, know where they

are located, so you don’t damage one when moving snow. Instead, carefully clear the snow around underground cabinets with a shovel. This also helps the electric co-op crews find it if they need to service the equipment inside it.

- If you use a portable generator, use it safely. The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that 50% of all portable generator-related carbon monoxide deaths occur during the winter months. Never use a generator inside a house or garage; make sure to have working carbon monoxide detectors present. ■



3200 W. Holly - Sidney, MT 59270

Phone: 406-488-1602

Fax: 406-488-6524


Website: [www.lyrec.com](http://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 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 

## Operating report

Year to date:	December 2021	December 2022
Total miles energized	2,141	2,149
Total number of meters	6,218	6,235
Kilowatt-hours sold	281,628,951	323,200,811
Revenue	\$29,724,687	\$34,231,112
Total expenses	\$28,073,017	\$31,410,288
Operating margins	\$2,709,784	\$3,663,764