

# May your holiday season be merry and bright

by **Jason Brothen**

**T**he holidays are a time of year that many of us eagerly anticipate. The season is marked by special foods, seasonal decorations and lots of festivities. In many communities, we look forward to the annual celebration of lighting the town, a parade and other festive activities.

We cherish carrying on old family traditions and enjoy creating new ones. I personally look forward to more time spent with family and friends.

However, given the hustle and bustle of the season, the holidays can also offer an opportunity to slow down and reflect. All of us at Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) are grateful for you, the members of the cooperative.

You see, one of our founding principles as a cooperative is “concern for community.” While our main focus is providing safe, reliable and affordable energy, we want to give back. We want to help our community thrive.

In looking back, I’m grateful that we have been able to positively impact our community through programs such as Operation Round Up, Youth Tour and numerous other events in which we participate across our service territory to educate and inform members on safety and electrical-related topics.

We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with local schools to educate and raise awareness of electrical safety by demonstrating with the safety trailer. We are proud of the electrical safety trailer that our lineworkers and electricians built.

LYREC continues to work closely with the schools to offer scholarship opportunities for the youth in our service territory. This year, due to the restrictions from COVID-19, we used the power of social media to promote scholarship opportunities. We were pleased to see the creativity which the youth displayed through the unique scholarship process.

Our electric cooperative world is distinctive when it comes to what bonds us together. Cooperatives are connected by common core principles. Cooperation among cooperatives is the glue to our cooperative family. The cooperative model gives and receives, just as we do personally around the holiday season, only this is year-round with the co-ops.

LYREC continues to work with our neighboring cooperatives on all sides to form ties that benefit all members of the electric co-op family. This ranges from operational to technical services that help control costs and yet offer the highest form of service possible.

The shared service agreement that Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative and Mid-Yellowstone Electric Cooperative entered four years ago has been beneficial to both co-ops. The two co-ops have formed a relationship where sharing of employees has grown to many areas. On a daily basis, the two co-ops work together for problem-solving and strategy that allows us as a group to serve the members. We also have a great working relationship in the field and can back each other up in a time of need. This has played out during storms, when we combine people, material and equipment to restore power quickly. There are so many ways we can keep expanding this relationship and prove that cooperation among cooperatives is a solid principle that keeps us strong.

Looking ahead to 2021, we know the world around us is changing and we are changing with it. However, our members will always have peace of mind when it comes to their electrical needs and our commitment to community.

As we prepare for next year, we look forward to the opportunity to serve you and the greater community. On behalf of the LYREC family, we hope your holidays are indeed merry and bright! ■



Operation Round Up Director **Jessica Berwick** presents **Kim Riding** from the Savage Sunrise Manor a check for \$1,699 to replace the fridge at the assisted living facility.



Operation Round Up awarded Crimestoppers of Richland County \$1,200. The funds will be used for its annual software subscription to keep tips anonymous.

## Small change changes lives

**T**he Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Trust's Operation Round Up (ORU) started in 2017 and has raised approximately \$11,000 a year in support of a variety of charitable, educational, community and youth-related programs and events. The concept behind the program is to extend the principle on which electric cooperatives were built over 80 years ago - neighbors helping neighbors. As a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative, we follow one of the core principles, which is concern for community. ORU has granted over \$30,000 to nonprofit and community organizations in our communities.

In September, a \$1,699 grant was awarded to Savage Sunrise Manor for the purchase of a new fridge. Savage Sunrise Manor is an eight-bed assisted living

facility in Savage, Mont.

The ORU board also granted \$1,200 to Crimestoppers of Richland County. In 2012, a group of Richland County residents concerned for the safety of our community restarted Crimestoppers, which was originally started in the 1980s. The grant will go toward the cost of software that enables the communication between members and law enforcement to remain anonymous. You can reach the tip hotline at 433-6666 or online at Crimestoppers of Richland County.

The Operation Round Up program is possible due to our members' generosity. Each month, their bill gets "rounded up" to the nearest dollar. The maximum amount any member can donate per year is \$11.88. ■

## Scholarship opportunities offered

**L**ower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) is accepting applications for the Basin Electric Power Cooperative (BEPC) scholarship and the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) memorial scholarship. All applications must be submitted to: LYREC, Attn: Jami Propp, P.O. Box 1047, Sidney, MT 59270 by the due dates listed below.

### Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship

Basin Electric Power Cooperative is offering a \$1,000 scholarship to an LYREC member's dependent. The applicant must be a student who is enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate course of study at an accredited, two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school.

Scholarship recipients are selected based on academic record, leadership and participation in school and community activities, honors, work experience, a statement of education and career goals, and an outside appraisal. To apply, complete the required

criteria and the scholarship application, which can be obtained at [www.lyrec.coop](http://www.lyrec.coop). The application is due Feb. 15.

### MECA memorial scholarship

MECA is offering a \$500 scholarship to one eligible student from the Northeast District of Montana. The applicant's parent/guardian must be an LYREC member and the applicant must be attending college in the fall of 2021. Applications are judged on academic strength, school and community activities, employment, volunteerism, community service and personal statement.

A committee comprised of LYREC staff will choose one application to send to MECA for a chance to win a \$500 scholarship. The applicant chosen by the LYREC scholarship committee will be awarded a \$500 scholarship from LYREC.

To apply, complete the application form, along with all required materials. You may get the application at [www.lyrec.coop](http://www.lyrec.coop). MECA memorial scholarship applications are due Jan. 25. ■

## Rural Development Finance Corporation awards grant in Lower Yellowstone's service area



The Rural Development Finance Corporation awards a grant to East Fairview School for the purchase of new COVID-19 health and safety equipment.

**L**ower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) is a member of the Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC). As a result, communities in our service area were eligible to apply for a grant of up to \$2,000 for community-based projects. RDFC is making these funds available so more people become aware of its larger loan program that funds community-based projects and nonprofit entities with low-interest loans.

RDFC has recently granted \$2,000 to the East Fairview School. The vision of East Fairview School is to create a safe and effective environment which encourages a growth mindset and engages students in the learning process to prepare them for future success with the understanding that failure is part of the process. The grant will be used to help purchase new COVID-19 health and safety equipment such as new water bottle filler kits, air purifiers and disinfecting foggers. ■



## Photo contest welcomes entries

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) is holding a photo contest through Jan 31. We invite you to share your most beautiful, engaging and fun photos for a chance to have your work highlighted in the monthly magazine.

### Photo guidelines

- Photos must be electronic.
- We are looking for scenic photos that reflect the beauty of our service

territory (seasons, lifestyles or landscapes).

- Photos MUST NOT include people.
- You may submit up to five of your own photos.
- Photo entries MUST be at a minimum of 2,000 pixels.

For more information regarding the photo contest, go to [www.lyrec.coop](http://www.lyrec.coop), then "My Cooperative" then "Photo Contest." ■



Thank you to our big-hearted community for donating almost 300 pounds of food and hundreds of books for the Co-op Month drive.

## Operating report

Year to date:	September 2019	September 2020
Total miles energized	2,103	2,104
Total number of meters	6,161	6,217
Kilowatt-hours sold	201,299,296	191,507,338
Revenue	\$21,248,521	\$20,486,225
Total expenses	\$20,191,075	\$19,786,095
Operating margins	\$3,575,426	\$1,259,478



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Greg Rauschendorfer	Vice President
John Redman	Secretary/Treasurer
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Dennis Schmierer	Trustee
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Jami Propp	Member Service Manager
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Margo Zadow	Billing Coordinator
Pam Wilcoxon	Plant Accountant
Tiffani Hentges	Customer Service Representative
Melissa Buckley	CSR/Staff Assistant
Chris Hillesland	Chief Operations Officer
Rich Gorde	Journeyman Lineman
Eric McPherson	System Controller
Kevin Goff	Operations Assistant
Kelly Keyser	Operations Manager
Lee Alvstad	Journeyman Lineman
Aaron Eide	Journeyman Lineman
Bryan Franck	Journeyman Lineman
Jesse Obergfell	Journeyman Lineman
Blade Jankovsky	Journeyman Lineman
Tanner Roth	Journeyman Lineman
Ryder Peterson	Journeyman Lineman
Lee Delp	Apprentice Lineman
Cole Jankovsky	Apprentice Lineman
Brandon Mueller	Master Electrician
Dan Gieser	Energy Management Supervisor
Mike Eberling	Mechanic
Richard Tremblay	Service Technician
Bo Kindopp	GIS/Easement Technician
Corey Candee	Chief Information Officer
Jeremy Reese	Information Technology Technician
Edwin Gatzke	Line Locator/Meter Reader
Justin King	Warehouse Supervisor

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