



companies have slowed down over the last couple of years. The slowdown has allowed LYREC to focus more on maintenance and upgrades to our existing system and to complete projects that improve the integrity of LYREC's system.

Technology is changing and improving in the electrical industry, like every other industry. The cooperative is continuously evaluating new products to decrease outage times, lessen damage to our equipment and improve our reliability.

LYREC started a new pole testing program in 2016. LYREC strives to test 10 percent of the cooperative's poles each year. The poles that get flagged are changed out as soon as possible. With approximately 34,000 poles, the pole change-outs keep our crews busy. So far, the program is showing a failure rate of less than 2 percent which is in line with or better than the industry standards.

LYREC has been exploring building new tie-lines between existing substations. Tie-lines make it possible for services to be fed from different substations. Tie-lines are used for extended outage situations and for balancing load, which helps improve reliability and redundancy.

LYREC has completed upgrades to some of the cooperative lines that had reached their capacity. Wire size, spans between poles and class (diameter) of poles have been re-evaluated. We have standardized wire sizes along with a great deal of our material, which has helped cut down on our inventory.

LYREC takes safety seriously. Our goal, every day, is that everyone goes home to their family in the same shape that they came to work in. Doing our job correctly and safely is a big part of "keeping your lights on." LYREC's goal is to provide our members the best quality power, safely and affordably. ■



CHRIS HILLESLAND

2018 operations report

BY CHRIS HILLESLAND, CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) has had a busy 2018. We have had several requests for new services, varying from shops, irrigation services, new homes, stock pumps and service upgrades. Many existing services require upgrades due to increased energy usage and age of equipment. LYREC has found that being proactive with services has paid off greatly, both for our members and our cooperative.

The requests for new services from the local oil

Scholarship opportunities



Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) is accepting applications for the Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship and the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association 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.

Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association memorial scholarship

Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) is offering a \$500 scholarship to an LYREC member's dependent. Applications are judged on academic strength, school and community activities, employment,

volunteerism, community service and personal statement.

A committee from LYREC will choose one applicant to send to the MECA committee. If the MECA committee chooses the LYREC applicant, LYREC will match the \$500 scholarship.

To apply, complete the application form, along with all required materials. You may get the application from your school counselor or at www.lyrec.com. MECA memorial scholarship applications are due Jan. 25, 2019.

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 from your school counselor or at www.lyrec.com. Applications are due Feb. 1, 2019. ■



Strategies for stress

BY DEMETRA ZURAS

Life is stressful. Competing priorities like work, family and other responsibilities can leave you little time to focus on your state of mind. Many people experience stress due to the demands of modern life; you are not alone. But ignoring stress can result in physical and mental consequences such as fatigue, unstable relationships, substance abuse and depression.

Here are some ways to relieve stress:

Change your diet. Rather than turning to traditional comfort foods such as pizza and ice cream while stressed, healthier (but still delicious!) food options such as fatty fish, carrots and nuts are known to reduce stress levels. According to *Prevention* magazine, drinking tea can help calm your nerves, too.

Get active! Many find it useful to go on a run or walk to clear their mind and reduce stress. Any type

of exercise can reduce stress as your brain releases chemicals such as endorphins and dopamine, which make you feel happier.

Meditate. Meditating for just a few minutes a day can help ease stress and lower anxiety levels. According to Dr. Elizabeth Hoge, a psychiatrist and assistant professor at Harvard Medical School, simple mindful meditations, which focus on your breathing, have been shown to quell anxiety symptoms and control stress.

Get involved in community service. Donate your spare time to help your community – increase your impact by bringing a friend or family member. Volunteer at a local event or help people in your community who may need an extra hand or some company. These simple acts will brighten someone else's day, as well as your own.

Find support. It's important to share your problems with others

rather than keep them bottled up inside. Depending on the issue you are facing, talking to a trusted friend or family member can help, or perhaps exploring group counseling which can provide an opportunity to benefit from speaking with others who are facing similar challenges.

Organize your living space. Living in an unorganized environment can sometimes create more stress by allowing things like bills or laundry to pile up to the point of being overwhelming. Find some time to organize your living space to live a less cluttered life.

Speak to your doctor. Stress and depression are major health issues, and it's important to get professional medical help. More than 40 million adults in the United States suffer from anxiety, and more than 16 million suffer from depression. You're neither abnormal nor alone. ■



LYREC's National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation themed float for Sidney's Parade of Lights.



LYREC donated "Elfin in Candyland" for the Parade of Trees. The proceeds from the sale of the tree were donated to the Boys and Girls Club of Richland County and the MonDak Heritage Center.




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- Dan Gieser Energy Management Supervisor
- Mike Eberling Mechanic
- Richard Tremblay Service Technician
- Bo Kindopp GIS/Easement Technician
- Corey Candee Chief Information Officer
- Edwin Gatzke Line Locator/Meter Reader
- Justin King Warehouse Supervisor

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Operating report

Year to date:	September 2017	September 2018
Total miles energized	2,111	2,101
Total number of meters	6,154	6,172
Kilowatt-hours sold	194,038,486	193,087,673
Revenue	\$19,864,387	\$20,042,799
Total expenses	\$16,256,312	\$19,121,639
Operating margins	\$3,061,906	\$1,965,378