



Lineworkers **Blade Jankovsky** and **Bryan Franck** install sectionalizers in Trenton, N.D.

Sectionalizer installed

Have you seen Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative's line crew working in the Trenton, N.D., area and wondered what they are doing? They have been installing sectionalizing devices on the main line and the single-phase lines going through Trenton.

Sectionalizers isolate permanent faults and confine outages to a smaller section of line. In previous years, if a fault occurred on any section of line in Trenton, the entire town would lose power. Lower Yellowstone Electric has installed seven sectionalizing devices throughout Trenton. The sectionalizer devices make it possible to divide the town into sections. Therefore, when there is an interruption of power in a certain section of town, fewer meters will be affected by the outage.

Another advantage of the sectionalizing device is that the line crews will be able to find the problem faster due to having less line to patrol. Typically, if a temporary fault occurs on a piece of line, the sectionalizer device will operate three times before the power stays off. For example, if the wind is causing the electric lines to touch, your lights will blink the first three times the lines touch. If the problem continues to occur, the electricity will go off permanently until our line crews are able to resolve the issue.

If you are experiencing a power outage, call our office at 406-488-1602 any time day or night. When you call, please have your meter number ready for the dispatcher. ■

Update on bills

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative's billing period has changed. Beginning in March, you should have your bill around the 10th of the month and your bill is due on the 20th.

If you are signed up for ACH (automatic payment plan), your checking account will be debited on the

15th of each month. If you would like to sign up for ACH, you will need to sign a form and bring in a voided check.

If you would like to receive your bill as soon as it is available, you can sign up for e-bill by going to www.lyrec.com. Once you have signed up for e-bill, you will receive an email when your bill is ready for viewing. If you need assistance signing up for e-bill, please call our office.

Capital credits

One of the many benefits of being a co-op member

There are so many benefits that come with co-op membership, but perhaps one of the best benefits is capital credits.

What are capital credits? Each year, Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) calculates its operating margin, which is the amount by which its operating income has exceeded its operating expenses during the year.

We then allocate the operating margin as “capital credits” to each member based on the amount of electricity purchased throughout the year. When our board of directors determines it is financially feasible and prudent, we retire the capital credits as bill credits or cash.

In the interim, we use the allocated, but unretired, capital credits to improve and expand our electric system, and meet our other capital needs. This reduces our need to borrow money and helps us provide reliable electric service.

You might wonder why we do this. As an electric cooperative, we are here to provide at-cost electric service. We aren't here to make a profit, and we don't have shareholders. As a member of an electric cooperative, you invest in the efficient operation of your co-op.

Unlike an investor-owned utility, we don't pay dividends or other amounts to shareholders who don't purchase electricity from us.

Every year, LYREC's board of directors evaluates the cooperative's financial position and capital needs, and determines whether the co-op will retire capital credits and how much will be retired.

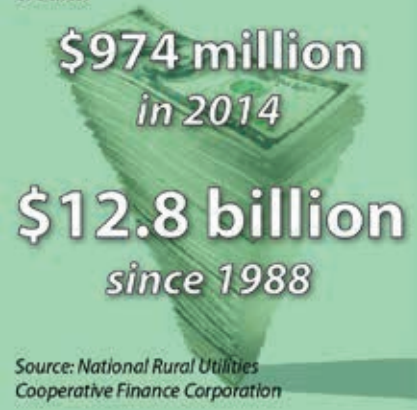
After determining that capital credits will be retired, you will see the retirement on your bill next to the line item, “Apply Capital Credit Retirement.” If you are no longer an LYREC member, you will receive a check in the mail. To help ensure you receive your retirement after leaving the cooperative, please keep your current address updated with LYREC.

In 2014, LYREC retired \$700,000 in capital credits to members, and collectively, America's electric cooperatives retired \$974 million – LYREC retired \$750,000 in 2015. That's the cooperative way!

Capital credits benefit all co-op members by keeping costs and electric rates as low as possible. And, they ensure that non-customer shareholders don't profit from the cooperative's operations. Capital credit allocations help qualify

Did You Know?

Electric cooperatives have retired \$12.8 billion to members since 1988— \$974 million in 2014 alone. Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues, called margins, are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.



LYREC for cooperative status under federal income tax law. Capital credits also help to reduce the amount of debt the co-op has to borrow, which also keeps service costs down.

The bottom line, capital credits are just one of the many benefits of being a member of LYREC! To learn more, visit www.lyrec.com. ■



Join us on Facebook!

If you would like to stay updated on what is happening at Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative, join us on Facebook. LYREC will report on power outages, give energy efficiency tips and keep you updated on important news and events.

Do you have a Plan B?

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Association has nine members who are registered with “medical necessities,” who rely on electronic equipment for their health. So what happens if their power is interrupted?

When a planned power outage is conducted for maintenance, these members are notified in advance whenever possible so they can make arrangements. Most outages occur randomly, however, so it’s best to be prepared.

Make provisions with someone ahead of time, or make sure you have a generator to accommodate you and your equipment, and then advise Lower Yellowstone Electric.

Please keep in mind that while we understand the sense of urgency experienced during an outage, it is not always possible for crews to respond immediately. Power is restored as quickly and to the most members as possible, but the process requires a series of safety measures.

And whether you have medical necessity or not, it’s a good idea to have your Plan B ready to go. ■

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) deadline nearing

If you are in need of financial assistance this heating season, funds are available. If you are a Montana resident, contact Lower Yellowstone Electric or Energy Share at 800-227-0703. If you reside in North Dakota, contact Community Action at 701-572-8191. Your application must be submitted by April 30. ■



Know what to do to save lives Do you know what to do if you are in an accident with a utility pole?

When people are in accidents, their biggest concerns are if anyone is injured or how badly the vehicle is damaged. However, if you are in an accident with a utility pole, your vehicle may be charged with electricity. If this is the case and you step out of the car, you will become the electricity’s path to the ground and could be electrocuted. Loose wires and other equipment may be in contact with your car or near it – creating a risk for electrocution if you leave the vehicle.

While downed lines can sometimes reveal they are live by arcing and sparking with electricity, this is not always the case. Power lines do not always show signs that they are live, but they are just as lethal.

After an accident, stay in the car, and tell others to do the same. If you come upon an accident involving power lines, do not approach the accident scene. If you see someone

approaching, warn them to stay away. Call 911 to notify emergency personnel and utility services. Do not leave your vehicle until a utility professional has told you it is safe to do so.

The safest place to be is almost always inside the car. The only circumstance when you should exit the vehicle is if it is on fire – and those instances are rare. If you must exit the vehicle, jump clear of it with your feet together and without touching the vehicle and ground at the same time. Continue to “bunny hop” with your feet together to safety. Doing this will ensure that you are at only one point of contact and will not have different strengths of electric current running from one foot to another, which can be deadly.

Knowledge is crucial in keeping everyone involved in the accident safe. If you are in an accident with a utility pole, please stop and think before you react. (Meter T20917) ■

Budget billing

Sign up April through August

Are you having a difficult time budgeting for your monthly electric bill? Home heating and cooling use the most energy and take the biggest bite out of your energy budget. If you would like to take control of your budget, budget billing is the answer for you.

This service is available to all residential consumers who are current, have an "A" credit rating, and have established a 12-month history with Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC). The consumer can remain on budget billing as long as the account remains current.

How is budget billing calculated? To determine your budget billing amount, LYREC averages your current and last 11 months of bills. Therefore, if you sign up for budget billing, your bill will NOT be the same amount every month. There will be variations each month, but the change will not be as drastic and will make it easier to budget.

If you would like to sign up for budget billing, call LYREC's office to see if you qualify. To sign up, all you will need to do is turn in a form between April and August. You can stop in the office to get a form or go to www.lyrec.com. ■



HIDDEN NUMBERS

If you find your meter number hidden in this issue, it is worth a \$25 credit on your next statement. The meter number will appear within the four Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative pages. Give us a call during the month your meter is listed, and claim your \$25 bill credit.

Operating report		
Year to date:	November 2014	November 2015
Total miles energized	2,142	2,110
Total number of meters	6,003	6,113
Kilowatt-hours sold	220,574,330	248,849,865
Revenue	\$21,218,163	\$23,250,561
Total expenses	\$17,867,176	\$19,342,728
Operating margins	\$3,919,323	\$5,105,421



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TRUSTEES

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 John Redman Secretary/Treasurer
 Colin Gartner Trustee
 Dennis Schmierer Trustee
 Dennis Nelson Trustee
 Jim Vitt Trustee

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 Brenda Bond Chief Financial Officer
 Jami Propp Member Service Manager
 Kyle Kavanagh IT Coordinator
 Cassie Parker Staff Assistant
 Margo Zadow Billing Coordinator
 Pam Wilcoxon Plant Accountant
 Tiffani Hentges Customer Service Representative
 Chris Hillesland Chief Operations Officer
 Doug K. Hettich Asst. Mgr. of Operations
 Rich Gorde Foreman
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 Kevin Goff Operations Assistant
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 Aaron Eide Journeyman Lineman
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