



Operation Round Up Trustee **Ted Patterson** presents a \$1,000 check to **Heather Cotter** to support the summer reading program at the Sidney-Richland County Library.



Operation Round Up Trustee **Mary Hagler** presents **Brook Meyer** with a \$1,500 donation for the Eastern Montana Pet Rescue to support the completion of its animal shelter in Savage.

## Operation Round Up impacts communities

**I**n March, Operation Round Up (ORU) awarded a \$1,500 grant to Eastern Montana Pet Rescue in Savage. Founded in 2020 by Brook Meyer, the rescue focuses on saving parvo-positive and other sick and contagious dogs from overcrowded shelters, giving them a second chance at life.

Meyer recently purchased a 30x12-foot building, with plans to insulate and install enough kennels to accommodate up to 27 dogs and 12 cats. In the last five months of 2024, the rescue rescued 102 animals. Prior to receiving the ORU grant, the rescue was funded entirely out of pocket.

The Sidney-Richland County Library also received a \$1,000 ORU grant to support its summer reading program. This program encourages children and families to stay engaged in learning over the summer break, helping kids retain the skills they've gained during the school year and prepare for the next school year. The grant will go toward prizes, activity supplies and materials for the program.

Thank you to our generous members for making Operation Round Up possible. Your small change truly makes a big difference in our community! ■



# 5 tips to help reduce wildfire risks



**W**ildfires aren't just a problem out West anymore. While once mainly linked to dry states like California, wildfires are now impacting communities across the country, including here in Montana. In fact, humans are responsible for nearly 75% of wildfires in our state, with the top causes being debris burning, escaped campfires and equipment use, according to MT Fire Info.

Why the shift? Rising temperatures, extended droughts and changing weather patterns are fueling fire conditions in places that rarely faced them before. As wildfire risks grow, it's important to stay informed and prepared.

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative is committed to protecting our communities by reducing the risk of wildfires across our service area. Through ongoing vegetation management, system maintenance and grid-hardening efforts, we are proactively working to reduce risks and improve the reliability of your electric system.

Here are five practical ways you can help reduce wildfire risk around your home and community.

**1. Properly extinguish campfires.** Always douse

your campfire with water, stir the ashes and ensure everything is cool to the touch before leaving the area.

- 2. Don't burn on windy days.** Avoid outdoor burning when it's windy or dry, as embers can easily spread and ignite surrounding areas. Burn early in the day and check the weather for afternoon and next day wind conditions.
- 3. Clear vegetation and debris.** Maintain a defensible space around your home by removing dry leaves, dead branches and other flammable materials.
- 4. Use equipment safely.** Tools such as lawnmowers and farm equipment can spark fires. Use them during cooler times of the day and keep them in good working conditions.
- 5. Follow local fire regulations.** Always check for burn bans or restrictions in your area before burning anything or using open flames outdoors. Prior to burning, you must obtain a permit from your local county fire control authority. Most counties have burn permit applications online. To activate your county burn permit, go to [app.egovmt.com/burnpermit](http://app.egovmt.com/burnpermit) on the day you would like to burn. ■

# Helping you stay cool and save this summer

**A**s summer temperatures rise, so can your electric bill. Air conditioners are working harder, and energy use goes up. Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) is your local, not-for-profit electricity provider, and we are here to help you keep cool without overspending.

As the temperatures get hotter over the next few months, we want you to keep in mind these energy-saving tips to help you manage your summer energy consumption and costs.

## Budget billing

When you sign up for LYREC's budget billing plan, your energy bill is calculated by averaging your previous 12 months of use. With budget billing, your monthly energy costs are easier to budget and manage, especially during seasonal fluctuations when bills tend to increase based on the weather. Budget billing is a great option for anyone on a fixed income or those with highly variable seasonal needs. You can sign up for budget billing from April 1 to Aug. 30. To see if you qualify for budget billing, contact our office at 406-488-1602.

## Rebate program

When you make upgrades or purchases to reduce home energy use, those smart decisions should be rewarded. LYREC offers rebates on energy-efficient appliances, such as ground-source heat pumps, air-

to-air heat pumps, mini-split heat pumps and electric water heaters.

Visit [lyrec.com/rebates](http://lyrec.com/rebates) to learn about our rebate program and how you can receive a bill credit or cash back for making smart energy choices.

## You have the power

Small actions combined can have a big impact on summer energy bills.

- The best way to lower energy use during summer months is to raise the thermostat to the highest setting that's comfortable.
- Ceiling fans can also help you feel cooler, but remember to turn them off when you leave the room.
- On warm summer nights, fire up the grill to keep additional heat out of the kitchen.
- Remember to change air filters often, so your cooling system doesn't have to work harder than necessary.
- Use curtains, blinds or shades to block direct sunlight and prevent heat from entering your home.
- Open windows and doors for cross-ventilation, especially at night, to allow cooler air to flow in.

Don't let energy bills take a toll on your summer fun. LYREC is here to help manage your energy use, whether through efficiency programs and services or energy-saving advice.

Contact us to learn more about practical strategies to lower your use, trim your bills, and make this summer a breeze for both you and your wallet. ■

# Move over. Protect roadside workers.

If your car has ever broken down or had a flat tire, leaving you stranded on the side of a road, you know how dangerous and unnerving it can be. Cars and trucks speeding by just inches away leaves little margin for error and could easily result in a disastrous crash.

Essential workers face this peril every day, from first responders to utility workers.

Electric cooperatives are committed to the safety of our employees and members, and encourage motorists to move over or slow down when approaching utility vehicles on the side of the road.

Please give our employees the room they need to work safely; their jobs are dangerous enough already.

"Move Over" laws state drivers are required to move over to an adjacent lane and reduce their speed to a safe level before passing any vehicle with flashing hazards or emergency lights stopped on the side of the road. This includes any motor vehicle, emergency vehicle and

transportation department vehicle.

The law states if a vehicle is parked or stopped on the interstate system or on a multi-lane highway outside city limits and the vehicle is displaying an emergency light or flashing hazards, the driver of an approaching vehicle shall proceed with caution and move to a lane that is not adjacent to the stopped vehicle if the move may be made safely. If the driver cannot move over, the driver must reduce speed and maintain a safe speed for the road conditions.

Every driver has a part to play in keeping utility workers, first responders and others safe. When you see a vehicle with flashing lights or our cooperative crews working, please slow down, move over and give them space to stay safe.

"Move over" is not only the law in all 50 states, but is also the courteous thing to do. And when you safely move over, you are signaling to the drivers behind you they should follow your lead. ■



## What are demand charges?

**E**ach year, when irrigation season rolls around, Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) receives numerous calls regarding demand charges.

Demand charges (kilowatts) are a separate line item on your electricity bill, calculated based on the highest 15-minute interval for power consumption during the billing period. Demand charges usually apply to commercial and irrigation accounts, which tend to have higher peak loads than residential customers.

Regardless of the members

peak load, LYREC is responsible for ensuring its electrical system is properly sized to deliver continuous service during periods of peak loading.

Think of electricity as a car. The speedometer measures the maximum speed the car can travel, much like demand (kilowatts) measures the maximum amount of energy used at one time. The odometer measures distance traveled, much like consumption (kilowatt-hours) measures energy used. ■



## Discounts offered for Medora vacation

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative is able to offer its members discounts in Medora by being a Touchstone Energy® member. Simply call 800-MEDORA-1 and give the discount code of "TOUCH2025" for a 15% discount on all of the following during any night of the season.

### THINGS TO DO:

- Medora Musical
- Pitchfork steak fondue
- Bully Pulpit Golf Course
- Gospel Brunch tickets
- Old Town Hall Theater shows

### LODGING AT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Elkhorn Quarters
- Badlands Motel
- Rough Riders Hotel
- Medora Campground

*The code is good for reservations over the phone, website or in person. A greens fee discount will be applied at check-in at the golf course.*

3200 W. Holly - Sidney, MT 59270

Phone: 406-488-1602

Website: lyrec.coop

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