

Thank a lineworker April 12

If you were asked to associate an image or a person with Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC), you would probably think of a lineworker. One of the most visible employees of the co-op, lineworkers work tirelessly to ensure our community receives uninterrupted power 24/7.

“Lineworker” is listed as one of the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the United States. This is understandable, as they perform detailed tasks near high-voltage power lines. Regardless of the time of day, having to brave stormy weather and other challenging conditions, lineworkers must climb 40 feet in the air, often carrying heavy equipment to get the job done.

Being a lineworker is not a glamorous or easy profession. It takes years of specialized training, ongoing education, dedication, and equally important, a sense of service and commitment. How else can you explain the willingness to leave the comfort of your home to tackle a challenging job in difficult conditions, when most are sheltering comfortably

at home? This dedication and sense of service to the community is truly what sets them apart. That’s why we set aside the second Monday in April to celebrate and recognize the men and women who work around the clock to keep the lights on.

While lineworkers may be the most visible employees at LYREC, it’s important to note that there is a team of highly skilled professionals working behind the scenes. Engineers provide ongoing expertise and guidance

on the operations side of the co-op. Member service representatives are always standing by to take your calls and questions. Our information technology (IT) experts are continuously monitoring our system to help safeguard sensitive data. And these are just a few of the folks who work together to ensure we can deliver the service and reliability you expect and deserve. Without them, our lineworkers wouldn’t be able to “bring the light” to our community.

Our dedicated and beloved lineworkers are proud to represent LYREC, and they deserve all the appreciation and accolades that come their way on Lineworker Appreciation Day.

On April 12, and any time you see a lineworker, we hope you’ll thank them for their exceptional service. We also hope you’ll remember that you have a dedicated team of professionals working behind the scenes at the co-op whose commitment to service runs just as deep. ■



Lineworker Appreciation Day

On April 12, remember to
#ThankALineworker.

Schlothauer wins \$500 scholarship

BayLee Schlothauer was awarded \$500 from Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative for her exceptional Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) memorial scholarship application. Her application was nominated to be sent to MECA's scholarship committee in which it will be entered into a pool of other applicants from the northeast district of Montana. If BayLee's scholarship is chosen by MECA, she will receive an additional \$500 scholarship from MECA.

Baylee is the daughter

of Dirk and Laurie Schlothauer, Fairview, Mont. Her plan is to attend Montana State University and pursue a career in dentistry.

Congratulations, Baylee! LYREC wishes you a bright future. ■



Bloesser wins \$1,000 scholarship



Gage Bloesser is the 2021 recipient of the Basin Electric Power Cooperative \$1,000 scholarship. He is the son of Rolly and Jan Bloesser, Savage, Mont. Gage is attending Montana State University in Bozeman, Mont., to seek a degree in civil engineering.

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) thanks everyone who took time to apply for the scholarship. Follow LYREC on Facebook to see more scholarship opportunities. ■

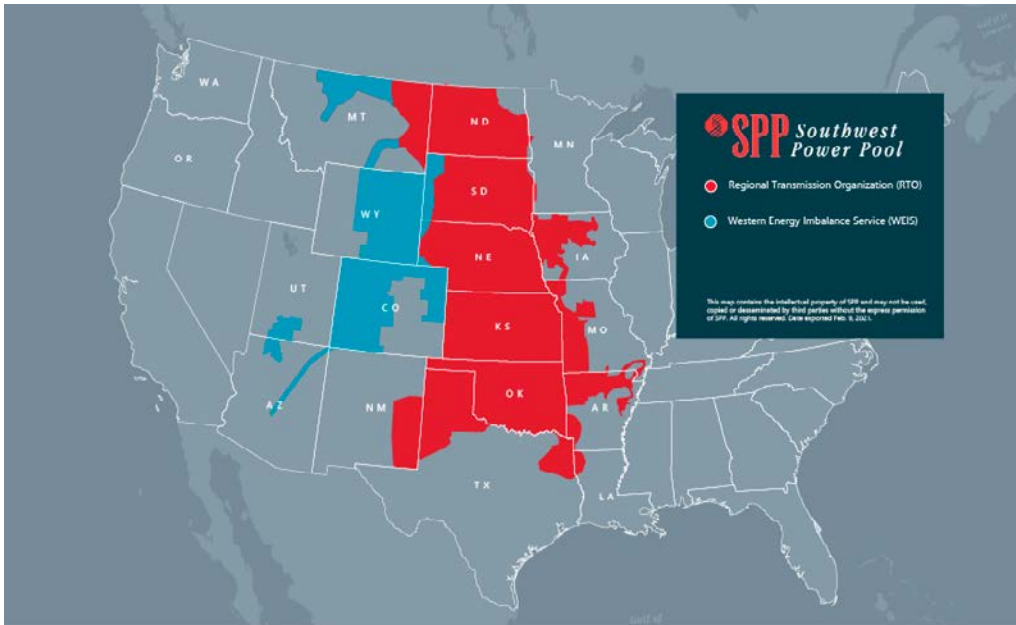


Heating assistance deadline April 30

If you need help this heating season, funds are available. The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) accepts applications until April 30. If you reside in Montana, you can download an application from www.lyrec.coop or contact Energy Share at 800-227-0703.

North Dakota residents can contact Williams County Social Services at 701-774-6300, McKenzie County Social Services at 701-444-3661 or Community Action at 701-572-8191. North Dakota residents may also download an application at www.lyrec.coop.

If you find yourself in an emergency after April 30, you may still be able to get assistance through the Energy Share Program. For more information, call the numbers listed above or Lower Yellowstone Electric at 406-488-1602. ■



SPP has a footprint that spans nearly 575,000 square miles in the central United States and includes more than 800 generating plants, nearly 5,000 substations and about 56,000 miles of high-voltage transmission lines.

All-of-the-above strategy

The first time many people heard of the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) was when it initiated rolling blackouts across its 14-state region in February. The SPP is a regional transmission organization (RTO) that manages and balances supply and demand to keep the transmission system operating within the safe limits. SPP reaches from the Canadian border with North Dakota all the way south to the northern part of Texas, spanning nearly 575,000 square miles, covering portions of 14 states in the central United States.

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) receives power from

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) and Basin Electric Power Cooperative (Basin Electric). Both WAPA and Basin Electric joined SPP in 2015 after seeing the advantages of being part of an RTO. The group offers more stable and competitive rates, access to increased power generation and it can sell excess power on the open market. Another advantage of being part of this group is if certain states need additional generation, SPP can shift the generation between the group, as you witnessed during the February cold snap.

The rare winter storm resulted in more than 170 million Americans being placed under

winter weather alerts. This is the first time the SPP has declared an Energy Emergency Alert (EEA) Levels 2 or 3 for its entire region in 80 years of operations. Rolling outages were necessary to ensure the stability of the power grid to prevent the failure of the entire system due to demand strains. This action, known as load shedding, is used to relieve stress on a primary energy source when demand of electricity is greater than the primary power source can supply. A system failure would have resulted in a greater impact on many more people and lasted longer.

Basin Electric reported that its generation and transmission systems

remained viable throughout the week as all of its available resources were online producing power to support and maintain the electrical grid and meet members' load requirements.

The energy emergency is a prime example of why Basin Electric believes so strongly in an all-of-the-above energy strategy. The power Basin Electric uses to serve its member load obligations comes from many different sources, including coal, renewables, natural gas, water (hydroelectricity), oil and recovered energy. Basin Electric also purchases power from the market. Because its resource portfolio is so diverse, the co-op's power supply is very reliable – if one source isn't producing, there are other options available to fill in the gaps. Without all these diverse sources, the interruptions in service would have been more significant.

The rolling blackouts helped the southern states by spreading the blackouts around to stabilize the grid. Although the situation was alarming at the time, LYREC is hoping our members feel more comfortable knowing this is the first time this has happened to SPP in 80 years, and that SPP could spread load between the 14 states if we needed assistance. ■

5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Working on an outdoor project? Careless digging poses a threat to people, pipelines and underground facilities. Always call 8-1-1 first. Here are five easy steps for safe digging:



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

1. NOTIFY

Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before your work begins. The operator will notify the utilities affected by your project.



2. WAIT

Wait two to three days for affected utilities to respond to your request. They will send a locator to mark any underground utility lines.



3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utilities have responded to your request by comparing the marks to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.

4. RESPECT

Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. The markers are your guide for the duration of your project.



5. DIG CAREFULLY

If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on the laws), consider moving your project location.



Annual meeting to be virtual

The annual meeting of members of Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) will be held virtually this year due to COVID-19 requirements. Additional meeting information will be mailed to all members in May.



3200 W. Holly - Sidney, MT 59270

Phone: 406-488-1602

Fax: 406-488-6524

Website: www.lyrec.com

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