

Small change = large impact on community

Applications due March 15

We have witnessed firsthand what incredible communities are located in Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative's area. Whether a family has been devastated by a fire, or a family is having financial difficulties due to major medical costs, our communities step up. There are many ways members can help benefit the communities in which we live, and many of you already do this in one way or another.

The employees at Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) believe it is important to give back to the community. A few ways our employees give back is by volunteering at their churches or community events, serving on boards or volunteering their time on the fire department. LYREC employees also contribute to their communities by donating to Operation

Round Down. Each month, the employees opt to have their paychecks rounded down. The remaining funds are transferred to Operation Round Up (ORU).

Donating to Operation Round Up is voluntary for LYREC members. Those who choose to take part have their monthly bills rounded up to the nearest dollar, and the difference is put into ORU. For example, if your LYREC bill is \$78.80, the bill is rounded up to \$79 and the remaining 20 cents goes into the ORU fund. ORU is a way for members to contribute a small amount each month to local causes that will better our communities. The average account will donate \$6 a year or a maximum of \$11.88 a year.

Any nonprofit community organization that is in LYREC's general service territory may apply for the funds. Applications are submitted



quarterly to the Operation Round Up board, which is made up of co-op members from each of the seven districts. This board reviews the applications and distributes funds. Our first application deadline is March 15.

About 250 local electric co-ops nationwide currently offer Operation Round Up programs. These combined co-ops have raised more than \$100 million since the idea first started in 1989. If you would like to be exempt from this program, you can simply call LYREC and have your name removed. LYREC would like to thank each member who has agreed to participate in Operation Round Up for their generosity toward their community. (Meter No. T21207) ■



**FOLLOW US ON
FACEBOOK**

www.facebook.com/loweryellowstone

Convenient and safe ways to pay

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative (LYREC) has all kinds of members, and that is why the cooperative offers many different payment options.

SmartHub app

For those of you who wish to manage your account using your mobile device, LYREC offers a powerful app available for both Apple and Android devices.

With SmartHub's app on your smartphone or tablet, you will have the option to:

- View/safely pay your bill
- See payment history
- Sign up for autopay
- View outage map
- Update contact information
- Analyze your electric usage
- Request service orders

SmartHub gives you the ability to analyze your electric usage, allowing you to compare usage to other months/years and to compare the average temperature of each month.

If you would like to start using SmartHub, but need assistance, please call or stop by our office and we would be happy to help you get SmartHub set up today.

Low Income Home Energy Assistance available

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is still accepting applications. LIHEAP assists Montana residents and families with their heating costs. If you currently reside in Montana and need help paying your heating bill, you can contact Energy Share at 800-227-0703 or you can pick up an application at Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Cooperative's (LYREC) office. The application deadline is April 30.

If you do not fall within the income guidelines to receive LIHEAP, but have an emergency and need assistance, please call LYREC at 406-488-1602 for referrals.

North Dakota residents can contact Community Action at 701-572-8191 for assistance with heating. ■

Pay now

The Pay Now option offers members a safe and easy option for paying their bill online. To access Pay Now, you will need to go to www.lyrec.com and click on the "Pay Now" tab. Pay Now differs from SmartHub, as it only displays basic account information.



Automatic billing option

Paying your bill by bank draft is fast, easy and convenient. LYREC's automatic payment option program saves you time by paying your monthly bill automatically. Each month, you will still receive your LYREC bill as usual. On the 15th of the month, your financial institution will automatically deduct the payment from your checking account. Sign up at any time by completing a simple authorization form and attaching a voided check. You can get the authorization form at www.lyrec.com or by stopping in the office.

Pay by phone

If you would like to make a payment over the phone

Energy Share of Montana

Energy Share of Montana's primary purpose is to help Montanans faced with energy emergencies meet their needs and move toward self-reliance. Energy Share is funded through private donations. Recipients are encouraged to repay these funds if and when they are financially able to do so.

Energy Share is the only assistance available to Montana families who have income too high to qualify for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Applicants must first apply for LIHEAP before they can apply for Energy Share. If applicants are ineligible for LIHEAP or are still in need of assistance once receiving LIHEAP, they can apply for Energy Share. For more information regarding Energy Share, contact LYREC at 406-488-1602. ■

using a credit/debit card or check, you can call the toll-free number, 1-844-209-7159. The system is automated and all of your personal information, such as card number and payment amount, will be entered by you.

You must have your account number ready or call from the number that LYREC has on file for you.

Drop boxes/office

You may always stop in our office to make a payment. If

you are unable to stop in during regular business hours, LYREC has two drop boxes for members' convenience. One box is located at the office by the LYREC sign and the other box is located across the road from Reese & Ray's IGA on Second Ave. N.W., Sidney.

There are no additional fees for using any of these payment methods. If you have any questions concerning the payment options, stop by or give us a call. ■



Time for Spring Cleaning

With the start of spring comes a fresh opportunity to find ways to save energy and money. As you work around your home this spring, here are **10 easy ways** to also save on your energy bill as warmer temperatures arrive:

- Service your air conditioner.**
 Easy maintenance such as routinely replacing or cleaning air filters can lower your cooling system's energy consumption by up to 15 percent. Also, the first day of spring could serve as a reminder to check your air conditioner's evaporator coil, which should be cleaned annually to ensure the system is performing at optimal levels.
- Open windows.**
 Opening windows creates a cross-wise breeze, allowing you to naturally cool your home without switching on air conditioners. This is an ideal tactic in spring when temperatures are mild.
- Vacuum refrigerator coils.**
 Dust that builds on refrigerator coils can cause the motor to work harder, using more energy.
- Bring in sunlight.**
 During daylight hours, switch off artificial lights and use windows and skylights to brighten your home.
- Caulk air leaks.**
 Using low-cost caulk to seal cracks and openings in your home keeps warm air out – and cash in your wallet.
- Set the thermostat.**
 On warm days, setting a programmable thermostat to a higher setting when you are not at home can help reduce your energy costs by approximately 10 percent.
- Seal ducts.**
 Air loss through ducts can lead to high electricity costs, accounting for nearly 30 percent of a cooling system's energy consumption. Sealing and insulating ducts can go a long way toward lowering your electricity bills.
- Switch on bathroom fans.**
 Bathroom fans suck out heat and humidity from your home, improving comfort.
- Use ceiling fans.**
 Cooling your home with ceiling fans will allow you to raise your thermostat four degrees. This can help lower your electricity bills without sacrificing overall comfort.
- Install window treatments.**
 Energy-efficient window treatments or coverings such as blinds, shades and films, can slash heat gain when temperatures rise. These devices not only improve the look of your home but also reduce energy costs.

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.



Co-op Connections® Card



Start saving today

Do you like saving money? The Co-op Connections card will help you save not only nationwide, but also locally. Currently, the Lone Tree Inn, Best Western Golden Prairie Inn and Suites, Tap House Bar & Grill and Richland Inn & Suites have promotions. Go to www.connections.coop to see what you can start

saving on.

Another huge advantage of this savings card is the pharmacy discount. If your insurance does not cover a specific prescription, you may be able to get a discount with your Co-op Connections card. You can use this card an unlimited number of times and you do not have to complete any paperwork before you use it. Simply take this card with you and present it to the pharmacist the next time your insurance coverage will not cover your prescription. Every pharmacy in Sidney accepts this card. If you use another pharmacy and would like to see if they accept the card, go to www.locateproviders.com. Since the card was distributed to our members in 2011, they have saved more than \$32,000 on prescriptions. ■



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TRUSTEES

- Allen Thiessen President
- Greg Rauschendorfer Vice President
- John Redman Secretary/Treasurer
- Colin Gartner Trustee
- Dennis Schmierer Trustee
- Dennis Nelson Trustee
- Jim Vitt Trustee

EMPLOYEES

- Jason Brothen General Manager
- Brenda Bond Chief Financial Officer
- Jami Propp Member Service Manager
- Kyle Kavanagh IT Coordinator
- Margo Zadow Billing Coordinator
- Pam Wilcoxon Plant Accountant
- Tiffani Hentges Customer Service Representative
- Melissa Buckley CSR/Staff Assistant
- Chris Hilleland Chief Operations Officer
- Rich Gorde Foreman
- Eric McPherson Foreman
- Kevin Goff Operations Assistant
- Kelly Keysor 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 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
- Edwin Gatzke Line Locator/Meter Reader
- Justin King Warehouse Supervisor

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Year to date:	October 2016	October 2017
Total miles energized	2,111	2,111
Total number of meters	6,141	6,168
Kilowatt-hours sold	239,429,076	236,083,849
Revenue	\$22,693,514	\$24,506,185
Total expenses	\$19,883,614	\$22,732,262
Operating margins	\$3,629,308	\$3,488,293