



# Merry Christmas

## BEARTOOTH BULLETIN

December 2017

### BUNDLE UP FOR WINTER STORMS

Are you ready for winter's cold grasp? Snow and ice are inevitable when dealing with winter storms, but being prepared can make a world of difference. Beartooth Electric recommends the following tips to help you prepare for wintery blasts.

#### Winterize your home

Winter storms wreak havoc on your home. By winterizing your living space, you'll be prepared for extreme cold and hazardous conditions.

- Remember to maintain and inspect heating equipment and chimneys every year to ensure they're working safely and properly.
- Caulk and weather strip doors and windows to make the most of your heating system.
- Freezing temperatures often cause water pipes to burst. Remember to insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic. Allow faucets to drip during extreme cold to avoid frozen pipes.
- Consider installing storm windows for better insulation. You can also cover windows with plastic (from the inside) to keep the cold out.
- Make sure everyone in your family knows where the home's fire extinguisher is located and how to use it properly. House fires occur more frequently during winter months, as people tend to use alternative heating methods that may not be safe.

#### Prepare a winter survival kit

Severe winter storms often bring heavy

accumulation of ice and snow, which can lead to downed power lines and extended outages. Beartooth Electric crews will work hard to restore power, but having a winter survival kit on hand is a smart idea.

- **Food:** Store food that does not require cooking, such as canned goods, crackers, dehydrated meats and dried fruit. Keep a large supply of water on hand. [Ready.gov](http://Ready.gov) recommends five gallons per person.
- **Medication:** Be sure to refill all prescriptions in the event of a major power outage.
- **Identification:** Keep all forms of identification handy, such as driver's licenses, photo IDs and social security cards. Bank account information and insurance policies are also good to have on hand.
- **Other items:** First Aid Kit, blankets, flashlight, battery-powered radio and extra batteries.

#### Stay warm and safe

If an outage occurs, you should plan for an alternate heating source. A fireplace, propane space heater or wood-burning stove would be sufficient. Fuel and wood-burning heating sources should always be vented, and make sure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly. Always practice extreme caution when using alternate heating sources.

If you decide to use a portable generator during an outage, make sure it is placed outside the home for proper ventilation. Be careful not to overload the generator. Use appropriate extension cords that can handle the electric load.

Follow these tips, and your family will stay warm in the event of a power outage.

### LIEAP - LISD - LIDD - OPERATION ROUND UP

ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE TO HELP LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS WITH ENERGY BILL PAYMENT

#### LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

##### LIEAP (MT & WY)

Call the toll-free phone number at:

1-866-674-6327

send an email to: [energy@ncat.org](mailto:energy@ncat.org)

#### BEC LOW INCOME SENIOR DISCOUNT (LISD)

Call the BEC office 406-446-2310 or 800-472-9821

#### BEC LOW INCOME DISABILITY DISCOUNT (LIDD)

Call the BEC office 406-446-2310 or 800-472-9821

#### BEC OPERATION ROUND UP

To apply for a grant, call the BEC office 406-446-2310 or 800-472-9821



### BEARTOOTH ELECTRIC MAINTAINS MEDICAL ALERT LIST

Beartooth Electric maintains a medical

alert list for member households with individuals who depend on electricity-powered medical equipment.

However, your first priority is to establish a backup plan in the event of either a planned or an unexpected outage that may affect the operation and availability of your medical equipment.

If you or someone in your home depends on such equipment, call Beartooth Electric at 406-446-2310. The information we require is the name of a contact person and the type of medical equipment in the home (such as a feeding machine, heart monitor, oxygen machine or nebulizer).

In the event of a planned or unexpected outage due to severe weather, Beartooth Electric will make best efforts to contact the individuals on the medical alert list and let them know they should plan to relocate temporarily or make arrangements for backup power.



BEC Linemen restoring power during a winter storm event.

# Budget Time! It's Important. Join the Process.

Arleen Boyd, Trustee District 5, Board Secretary/Treasurer, Risk Management Committee Chair  
Article from Rural Montana Magazine, December 2017 edition, page 6.

The 2018 budget process is underway and all the related information is available for members to examine. You can pick up budget and planning information at the co-op or access it on the BEC website. (News/Events Member Information). <http://BearthoothElectric.com/content/2018-budget-process-0>.

The budget documents reveal where your money is going and what measures are proposed to ensure safe and efficient distribution of electricity at BEC. They show major investments like the planned meter replacements. This year, on the positive side, there is a potential resolution on our financial statement of a \$1.1 million return from NorthWestern for transmission overcharges and additional interest we will receive from the Rural Utility Service (RUS) on new "Cushion of Credit" deposits that are used for debt payments. The posted information includes the budget proposal, recent financial reports, the 2017 budget, risk management reports, the most recent update of the seven-year forecast plan, and links to other related information.

**BEC wants members to be informed and involved.** By the time this is printed you may already have attended some of the budget meetings. Important open meetings are coming up. The schedule provides a final review of the proposed budget by the board and members at the December 14 Risk Management/Finance Meeting. Final approval of the 2018 Budget has been moved to the January 9, 2018 board meeting to ensure full input and review during the busy holiday season. Members are encouraged to participate.

**Budget and planning go hand-in-hand, a best practice for BEC.** For nearly all businesses budgeting is an annual planning process. At BEC we add a risk management forecast model and seven-year plan as tools for examining impacts resulting from different assumptions and scenarios. Side by side with the annual budget the plan provides a hands-on reference for management and a broad picture with longer-term context for the board's evaluation and oversight.

Once the budget is approved its numbers are incorporated into the forecast plan, effectively adding a year to the reference time-frame and increasing the accuracy of future projections.

The risk management committee has run seven scenarios, starting with initial numbers for a standalone BEC following the decision not to pursue a merger with Lower Valley Energy. Today you can see Scenario 7, which reflects current anticipated expenses and revenue data, and Scenario 7A that contains the same data but adds a calculation of increased interest income from the RUS Cushion of Credit deposit. The most recent examination was designed to verify calculations of Debt Service Coverage, a key financial ratio that can affect borrowing interest rates and availability of funding.

**It feels good to have major budget items defined.** The co-op has fixed price power supply through September 2027. We know we must begin full replacement of member meters in 2018. Management has identified needed plant improvements and their likely cost. We have been very conservative with estimates for energy demand growth.

**Take a Look. Join the Process. Hold Us Accountable.** The BEC Board and management want to share openly the numbers and the analyses driving decisions. Even if we did not, we would have no choice thanks to foresight by the co-op, its bylaw committee and voting members who put in place

bylaws protecting a wide range of member rights and requiring notification, opportunity to participate and transparency while decisions are being made.

These reports show activities addressed by the risk management committee and the board. We plan a survey to help identify the methods members prefer for receiving information. Meantime, let us know your thoughts about what you are receiving here.



### The remaining 2018 Annual Work Plan and Budget schedule:

**December 14, 2017**  
Risk Management and Finance Committees review updates for final budget.

**January 9, 2018**  
Board Meeting: Presentation of final budget for approval.

**January 2018**  
Update forecast model with approved budget information.

### 2018 Budget Process Supporting Documents are available on our website at [www.BearthoothElectric.com](http://www.BearthoothElectric.com)

- 2018 Budget Narrative
- 2018 Budget Draft
- Budget Time. It's Important. Join the Process.
- 2017 Budget
- Forecast Scenario 7
- Forecast Scenario 7A
- RUS Financial and Operating Report 9-30-2017
- RUS Financial and Operating Report 8-31-2017
- RUS Financial and Operating Report 7-31-2017

# What's Happening

DECEMBER 2017

3	FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
7	PEARL HARBOR DAY
12	POINSETTIA DAY
13	CHANUKAH/HANUKKAH (first day) NATIONAL GUARD BIRTHDAY
20	LAST DAY OF CHANUKAH/ HANUKKAH
21	DECEMBER SOLSTICE
22	HOLIDAY HALF-DAY BEC OFFICE CLOSING AT NOON
24	CHRISTMAS EVE
25	CHRISTMAS DAY BEC OFFICE CLOSED
26	KWANZAA (until Jan 1)
27	NATIONAL FRUITCAKE DAY
31	NEW YEAR'S EVE

## Fun Facts—

This month in History:

- December 7, 1877- Thomas Edison shows off his new invention, the phonograph.
- December 15, 1939- Gone With the Wind premiered in where else but Atlanta, Georgia.
- December 26, 1865 James Mason invents the coffee percolator.

Among other things, December is:

- Bingo Month
- Write a Friend Month

Birthstone:

- Turquoise, Zircon

Flower:

- Narcissus, Holly



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