TAKING CHARGE OF CHANGE

CELEBRATING 80 YEARS—TAKING CHARGE OF CHANGE

Advantages of an electric cooperative
Kaaren Robbins, Communication and Member Services

Farmers and ranchers formed Beartooth Electric Cooperative 80 years ago to secure electricity in order to better their lives. Today, Beartooth Electric brings that same spirit of purpose and cooperation to the changing needs of a new generation of cooperative members.

As a member of Beartooth Electric, you have the opportunity to attend one of the most important events of the year—the Annual Member Meeting.

Not every electric utility invites its consumers to participate in its annual meeting, vote for members of the board of trustees and voice their opinions about the way the business is run.

Beartooth Electric does. That’s because you don’t belong to just any electric utility—you are an owner of Beartooth Electric Cooperative. Beartooth Electric doesn’t sell shares of stock, so your cooperative isn’t owned by out-of-state shareholders. Instead, you control the business as a member-owner, along with the other 4,500 members who buy electricity from Beartooth Electric.

The strength of our Cooperative comes from our members— informed and concerned members that stay involved by electing those people who value our way of life and work to improve the quality of life in our service area from Clark, Wyoming to Reed Point, Montana.

The Annual Meeting is a fun-filled event for our members. In addition to the business meeting, there are lots of door prizes, including a $500 electric bill account credit, informational exhibits including Shares du Soleil, Meter Upgrade Project, Budget Billing, Auto-Pay, Operation Round Up and Energy Efficiency Tips, all concluding with a Montana raised beef luncheon catered by Uncle Sam’s of Columbus.

Mark your calendars and plan to attend this year’s 80th annual meeting—September 29 at the ANIPRO Event Center located at 2878 MT Hwy 78, Absarokee, Montana. Registration opens at 8:00 a.m., the business meeting begins at 9:00 a.m.

Members, be sure to register when you arrive at the meeting to receive your attendance gift of two Solar LED driveway markers. See you there!

For more information on the BEC Annual Meeting, please call your cooperative at 406-446-2310 or visit www.bertootelectric.com.
Greetings members!

Hope you all had a great summer and I hope to see many of you at our Annual Meeting on September 29. We had a great turnout last year with lots of great presentations and interaction with members. Your Cooperative is very busy and doing a lot of great things for its members. This is the time to find out even more about your Cooperative. Our theme this year is Taking Charge of Change—which clearly aligns with the activities and vision your Board has defined. Our Strategic Plan and the projects underway that support that vision are exciting in light of the dramatic changes occurring in our industry and how Beartooth is taking charge of those opportunities and challenges.

Travis Kavulla is our keynote speaker this year. He is recognized as a true visionary in the industry and has had a major impact on energy policy at the state level as well as nationally. He is currently vice-chairman of the Montana Public Service Commission (PSC). While the PSC has no governing authority over the Cooperative, his outlook on energy policy in Montana and nationally is something we are all interested in.

I hope to meet many of you at our Annual Meeting. Don’t hesitate to tap me on the shoulder and introduce yourself.

Kevin P. Owens, PE
General Manager

WHAT’S HAPPENING? BEC Board Update

At the beginning of my tenure as President, the board had a facilitated strategic planning session where we came up with three areas we wished to explore.

The first was our new TWACS metering system. The board reviewed the timeline for implementation, vendor bids were discussed and approved, and a decision was made to finance the project with a single loan from CoBank.

The second area for consideration was community solar. The idea was explored because we had a lot of member interest from our recent member survey. After getting a conceptual design, preliminary costs and feedback, we had two informational workshops that were well attended by members. We are currently taking subscriptions to purchase the output (kWhs) from one or more panels and are planning on having our carport solar array operative the spring of 2019.

Finally but certainly not least is the review of our cost of service and rate design within each member rate class; i.e., Residential, Commercial, Irrigation, etc. We will just be getting started in the next couple weeks with a day of education from experts in this field. We will be looking at ways to make sure everyone is billed in a fair and equitable manner. Potential changes wouldn’t be made until after our meter project is completed.

In summary, I see the need for another strategic planning session the last quarter of 2019 to continue our mission, “To provide our members with reliable, reasonably priced electricity and related services delivered in a safe and efficient manner.”

Julie Lindgren
Board President

BEC PROPOSED BYLAW AMENDMENT

In 2017, the Beartooth Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees approved adoption of a calendar fiscal year. Current BEC bylaws (Article III, Section 1) stipulates that each year an annual meeting will be held in September. With the new calendar fiscal year, an audited annual report presented at a September annual meeting would feature data compiled nine months earlier. The board wishes to have recently audited financial reports for members to review at the annual meeting and asked the committee to consider a bylaw change requiring the annual meeting to be held in the second quarter of each calendar year. This proposed bylaw amendment is on your ballot. Please vote!

Bylaws define the rules that govern our co-op. BEC bylaws hold a strong commitment to transparency: using all means available to keep members informed and sharing all information that is not legally confidential. The 2018 proposed bylaw changes support the standards of the 2013 revisions with an effort to increase clarity.

HELP US PLAN - SIGN-UP NOW FOR THE ANNUAL MEETING LUNCHEON

You could WIN a $250 electric bill credit!

Help us plan! We are serving a Montana beef luncheon catered by Uncle Sam’s Catering to every member that attends the annual meeting—getting close to an accurate count will help us plan ahead and serve members well.

Give us a call or sign up online—Thank you!

• 406-446-2310
• bit.ly/BECRSVPTOWIN
Every Beartooth Electric Cooperative (BEC) member—even those who cannot attend the annual meeting—have the opportunity to vote for board trustees and proposed bylaw amendments using the BEC vote-by-mail process.

This year’s vote-by-mail package is mailing on September 7. It will be marked from Beartooth Electric Cooperative, with the notice in red, 2018 Annual Meeting Mail Ballot Enclosed.

The package contains everything you need to know about the meeting and to cast your vote—
1. Your mailing envelope
2. Kevin P. Owens, GM Welcome letter & official notice of meeting
3. Shares du Soleil brochure
4. Draft 2017 BEC annual meeting minutes
5. Voting instructions and proposed bylaw amendment
6. The official ballot, and
7. The official ballot return envelope

The 2018 Board of Trustee candidates this year are all incumbents: District 4—Richard Nolan and District 6—Bill Pascoe.

Please follow the voting instructions carefully—vote once on each of the three ballots, separate ballots at the perforations and insert all ballots into the official ballot return envelope, seal, sign, stamp, and mail.

Please note: the official ballot return envelope must be signed and received by the BEC Auditor by Friday, September 28, 2018, to be counted. Please do not mail your ballot to Beartooth Electric Cooperative.

Who can vote?
Single membership: If membership is single, only the member whose name is registered on the account is eligible to vote.
Joint membership: A joint membership with two names registered to the account is entitled to one vote. If one member is away, the other can still vote. For memberships listed as businesses, churches, schools, or other organizations, only the registered agent may vote the ballot.

Mail ballot validity:
Ballots are valid ONLY if signed by the registered member and returned in the business reply envelope provided by mail or at the meeting.

Mail ballot integrity:
BEC has gone to great lengths to ensure the integrity of the vote-by-mail process. BEC contracts with Dairyland Power Cooperative, a certified, third-party service to print and mail ballots to members. BEC’s independent auditing firm, Summers, McNea and Company., PC, receives, validates and holds secure all mailed ballots and delivers the ballots to the annual meeting location. The BEC Auditor, with the assistance of the BEC Elections Committee, counts the mail ballots and ballots presented in-person at the annual meeting.

If you have questions, call BEC at 406-446-2310 or send us an e-mail at bec@beartoothelectric.com.

Participating in the election of trustees and the proposed bylaw amendment is the most important way that you can be involved in your Cooperative. Vote in 2018.
We have made some big changes at BEC. With many challenges behind us and a positive financial forecast in place, we are once again evaluating change.

Technology improvements often drive change. At BEC we are replacing obsolete meters with more efficient meters that will improve service. We have just launched a solar project that allows members to support renewable energy and learn from on-site solar power data.

Now we are outlining steps for a two-year evaluation of rate design. We want members informed and involved as the board’s risk management committee helps examine billing alternatives. We will start with research, followed by a Cost of Services Analysis (COSA) and comparison of alternatives. How does BEC structure member classes and implement rate factors fairly as change occurs in how members use power and, in some cases, generate it? We know how much revenue is required to provide service, buy power and finance the co-op distribution infrastructure. The challenge is to charge members fairly so that everyone pays the cost of the power they consume and the cost getting it to them.

We are engaging a financial consultant to replace the now-retired finance advisor who helped us model BEC forecasts over the past few years. The objective is to have an industry expert to support ongoing BEC financial efforts and help update our forecast model, streamline generation of what-if scenarios, and analyze data for strategic decisions dealing with rate design, equity planning and other issues.

With fewer board reports in the Rural Montana, it is more important than ever to keep members involved. We post risk management reports and analyses on the website– just click the Board Reports tab on the home page menu bar for easy access. Monthly risk management meetings appear on the website calendar. Please participate and consider joining the committee. Contact the co-op or contact me directly for more information.

Arleen Boyd
Risk Management Committee Chair

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING
BEARTOOTH ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

The 80th Annual Meeting of the members of Beartooth Electric Cooperative, Inc., will be called to order at 9:00 a.m. Saturday, September 29, 2018, at the ANIPRO Event Center, located 1.45 miles South of the MT-419 and MT-78 intersection, located in the Town of Absarokee, County of Stillwater, and State of Montana. Member registration begins at 8:00 a.m. The business meeting will commence at 9:00 a.m. and adjourn at 12:00 noon.

ACTION WILL BE TAKEN ON THE FOLLOWING MATTERS:
1. Report on the number of Members present in person in order to determine the existence of a quorum;
2. Reading of the Notice of the meeting and proof of the due publication or mailing thereof, or the waiver or waivers of Notice of the meeting, as the case may be;
3. Reading of unapproved minutes of previous meetings of the Members and taking of necessary action thereon;
4. Election of Board Trustees
   District 4
   Red Lodge area
   District 6
   Nye, Stillwater River area;
5. Presentation and consideration of reports of officers, Trustees and Committees;
6. Unfinished business;
7. New business;
8. Adjournment.

DATED THIS 1ST DAY OF SEPTEMBER 2018
Arleen Boyd
Secretary/Treasurer

OWN YOUR SHARE OF THE SUN!

PHASE 1 ALMOST SOLD OUT!

PHASE 2 OPENING SOON!

How do I purchase Shares du Soleil Certificates?

Stop by the BEC Red Lodge office or mail your down payment of $375.00 between now and November 1, 2018.

Your final payment is required in January 2019.

Purchase your Solar Panel Energy Output