In a hurry?
Afraid your payment will be late?
Want a no hassle way to pay your bill?
Call 888-395-5293 to make a phone payment anytime day or night.

Your phone number and account number will be needed for this system. Follow the prompts to hear your account balance and pay your bill. You can pay by credit card, debit card, or bank account.

Our secure pay system also allows you to check your account balance, update your phone information and enroll in bill autopay.

The BEC Secure Pay system complies with security standards set forth by the credit card industry. This ensures your payment information is kept safe and secure.

CALL IN BILL PAYMENT—
888.395.5293
Electricity powers our lives. We depend on it for nearly everything we do. So we understand how frustrating it can be when you’re left in the dark.

Power outages are never convenient. It takes a lot of hands to keep your power on, and even more hands to get it up and running when an outage occurs. Beartooth Electric line crews work hard to restore your electric service when outages occur, but there are necessary steps to take to ensure that power is restored to the majority of member-owners as quickly, and safely, as possible.

When an outage does occur, Beartooth Electric line crews identify which towers, poles, and lines have incurred damage. In some instances, transmission lines can be damaged. If that is the case, all BEC member-owners tied to the disrupted substation will be affected. Repairing damage to transmission lines is a top priority for our provider, NorthWestern Energy (“NWE”).

NWE high voltage transmission stations feed power to Beartooth Electric’s 10 distribution substations. Each substation serves anywhere from a few hundred to thousands of BEC member-owners (Graphic 1).

If BEC line crews are notified of no outage on NWE transmission lines, the local distribution substations are checked first, if the issue is isolated and can be resolved at the substation level, that is great news! It means that BEC member-owners will have their power restored rather quickly (Graphic 2).

At times, the issue cannot be isolated to one of our substations. If that is the case, BEC crews inspect power lines between the substations and the meters they serve. If the power lines can be repaired, power can be restored to the homes, businesses, and equipment those lines serve, as long as there is no damage to the tap lines (Graphic 3).

Tap lines carry power to the transformers located underground or connected to poles outside of homes, buildings, or equipment. BEC line crews identify which damaged lines to work on first, which is based on the lines that will restore power to the greatest number of member-owners. (Graphic 4).

Many times, the issue is resolved once the tap lines are repaired. But have you ever lost power only to look next door and see the lights still blazing from your neighbor’s window? When this happens, it generally means that the power line between your meter and the nearby transformer has been damaged. As with any outage, call BEC right away so we can send a line crew your way. Before calling, always remember to conduct few tests right at home. First, check your fuse or breaker panel. Next check the main breaker below the BEC meter that registers the amount of power you use. Fuse replacement or resetting a tripped breaker may allow you to restore your power quickly. If your outage does not appear to have been caused by something in your home, call BEC right away.

In some instances, the damage may be identified after the meter on

After a power outage
BEC’s Steps to Restoring Power

To report a power outage — Always call BEC at 800-942-9843 or 406-446-2310

Continued on page 5.
GENERAL MANAGER’S MESSAGE

Greetings members! Hard to believe, but February brings us one more month closer to Spring.

The new year brought us a new budget with some very clear priorities to be accomplished in 2019. It is our full intention to have our meter upgrade project (6,000 meters) completed in 2019. We’ll be completing our installations one substation at a time. In the interim, the year will be bringing many more changes to our bill print format and more access to energy information, online and in print, focusing on when you use it and how much you used.

We also kicked off the new year with a couple of workshops conducted by Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) on January 15. The Board and Member Committees were interested in a review of new and innovative rate designs responsive to changing demographics in our industry. Also presented was a workshop on Customer Financing Programs, that CFC is offering to their member cooperatives. It was very timely information of great value.

Having wrapped up the 2018 financial year in December, we were able to provide current information to our Cost of Service consultant, EES Consulting. As we progress throughout the year, please look for opportunities to engage in the discussion regarding potential new rate designs and cost of service. The driver behind this effort is not to raise rates, but to make sure we are equitably recovering costs from the different customer classes; i.e., residential, commercial and irrigation.

I would hope by the time you read this issue of Rural Montana our Shares Du Soleil project is out to bid. Our project was impacted by the federal government shutdown as we were awaiting confirmation from the Dept. of Agriculture that we were awarded a grant covering 25% of our project costs. I suspect most of you didn’t think a “wall” would disrupt a solar project in Red Lodge. I didn’t, but that’s the world we live in. Please note that there are a few Shares du Soleil output certificates available for purchase. Give us a call today to own your share of the sun.

The Red Lodge Ice Rink lighting project was completed in mid-January. BEC assisted with the lighting design to utilize high efficiency LED light fixtures with lens optics that provide a specific lighting dispersion. Beartooth Electric stepped up to the plate when called upon to support its Members use of this ice rink. I hope you are enjoying the upgrade.

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Energy Efficiency
Tip of the Month

Laundry Tip: Dry towels and heavier cottons separately from lighter-weight clothing. You’ll spend less time running the dryer for lighter-weight items, which saves energy.

Source: energy.gov
CALL FOR TRUSTEE CANDIDATES DISTRICTS 2, 5 and 7
ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE 2019 ANNUAL MEETING MAY 4, 2019

At the 2018 Annual Meeting, BEC Member-owners voted to change the annual meeting date from September to the second quarter of each year. So, if you think it seems like we just held an annual member meeting—well, we did. This will be the short transition year as we implement the date change.

Just as the meeting date is early in the year, so too is the Trustee nomination period, the process to nominate trustee candidates for the Board of Trustees. This year’s open districts are 2 and 5. In addition, due to a retirement, District 7 is open for election to the remainder of the term (2020).

Trustee Nomination Petitions are available on our website www.beartoothelectric.com and at the Red Lodge office. Deadline is March 15, 2019.

Elections will take place at the 2019 Annual Member Meeting, May 4, 2019, ANIPRO Event Center.

CARLEE BLODGETT NAMED 2019 YOUTH TOUR REPRESENTATIVE

Congratulations to Carlee Blodgett, daughter of Chris and Jen Blodgett of Rapelje, who submitted the winning essay for the Beartooth Electric Cooperative 2019 Youth Tour trip to Washington D.C.! In June, Carlee will travel with over 50 other Montana High School electric co-op delegates to Washington D.C. where they will take VIP tours of the historical sites and speak with legislators.

Each year, Beartooth Electric Cooperative sponsors a service area to make this educational and inspirational journey. The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has brought high school students to Washington, D.C. every June since the late 1950s. Nearly 50,000 students from rural areas and small towns across America have participated in this program. Some of our Youth Tour alumni have gone on to design airplanes, lead companies and to serve in the highest ranks of our government, including the U.S. Senate.

Several BEC youth entered short essay’s for the chance to win this trip of a lifetime. The essay’s were written on the selected theme, What would your day be like without electricity?

Prior to 1938, only larger populated areas had electricity. For-profit electric companies did not install electricity to rural farmers and ranchers. Building power lines was costly and little money was made to insure its success.

However, in 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt recognized a need and signed the Rural Electrification Act. The Act allowed farmers and ranchers the opportunity to obtain loans from the government to build power lines reaching their homes and businesses. So began the electric cooperative movement. In 1938, farmers and ranchers from Carbon, Stillwater and Sweetgrass Counties gathered together, going door to door talking to their neighbors about electricity and organizing their efforts to form a non-profit electric cooperative. They elected a board, received a loan, and poured hours of sweat into building power lines so they too could pull a string switch and have a light bulb illuminate a room at night. As we know today, the modern conveniences of electricity change and save lives.

The NRECA Youth Tour teaches delegates about the rich history of electric cooperatives, and shows them how they can help make the future brighter for the co-op industry.

Carlee will travel to Great Falls where they will meet with all Montana Youth Tour attendees to begin their trip on June 15th and will return on June 21st. Beartooth Electric Cooperative is honored to be able to provide Youth Tour to our communities. BEC holds the Youth Tour competition annually. Information will be available on our website at www.beartoothelectric.com and with your high school counselor each October.

D.C. Fun Facts:
• The District of Columbia was established on June 11, 1800.
• The Pentagon has 17.5 miles of hallways. It has its own Zip Code.
• Washington DC has over 170 embassies and international culture centers.
• The tallest building in Washington D.C. is the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception built in 1959 standing at 329 feet.