Erickson wins Youth Tour essay contest

Big Flat Electric is proud to announce that Jaycee Erickson is the winner of the 2020 Youth To Washington, D.C. essay contest.

Jaycee is the daughter of Jason and Amber Erickson and is a sophomore at Saco High School. She will be attending the Washington D.C. Youth Tour in June of this year. The 2020 essay topic was: “How can electricity be used to save and improve lives, especially in developing nations?”

Excerpts from essay:

“Electricity plays a huge role in people’s lives today and over the years it has been improving our everyday life styles, as well as others in developing nations. Before electricity was invented, we survived mainly on our environment and without the technology it was difficult to live in harsh climates. Ever since electricity was introduced, we have been depending on it for many things and according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA.gov), we are consuming 1.4 trillion kilowatts per year. We’ve continued to enhance the role of electricity in our nations and many lives have been improved and saved because of it.

There are many ways electricity has helped us, but a few that are the most obvious are in our homes; the production, preparation, and distribution of foods; communication and transportation; entertainment; education; and health care.”

“Electricity has tremendously improved our entertainment along with our education and healthcare. Technology is still evolving today because of electricity, and along with technology so has education. Electricity has made learning more efficient than ever. Medical machines in healthcare have improved lives immensely, and many people in growing nations have access to hospitals now and can be healed because of all the miraculous medical machines.

Everyday we are using electricity and without it, we would struggle to survive. It will continue to advance and improve lives of many, changing the way we live and work forever.”

Jaycee Erickson
WHAT’S ON THAT POLE?
This illustration shows the basic equipment found on electric utility poles. The equipment varies according to the location and the service they provide.

PRIMARY WIRE
Primary wires carry 7,200 volts of electricity from a substation. That voltage is 60 times higher than the voltage that runs through your home's electrical outlets!

SURGE ARRESTORS
These protect the transformer from lightning strikes.

NEUTRAL WIRE
The neutral wire acts as a line back to the substation and is tied to the ground, balancing the electricity on the system.

SECONDARY SERVICE DROP
Carries 120/240-volts of electricity to consumers' homes. It has two “hot” wires from the transformer and a bare “neutral” wire that’s connected to the ground wire on the pole.

GROUND WIRE
The ground wire connects to the neutral wire to complete the circuit inside the transformer. It also directs electricity from lightning safely into the earth.

TELEPHONE, CABLE, TV, AND FIBER WIRES
These are typically the lowest wires on the pole.

NEVER NAIL POSTERS OR OTHER ITEMS TO UTILITY POLES. THESE CREATE A SAFETY HAZARD FOR LINWORKERS.

Original illustration by Erin Binkley
Three ways to electrify your lawn care

By Abby Berry

Spring is just around the corner, and you can practically smell the freshly-cut grass. If you’re in the market to upgrade your lawn care equipment, you may want to consider electric (or battery-powered) options.

Gas-powered lawn mowers and trimmers may be your go-to, but times they are a changin'. Electric lawn care equipment options are becoming more popular than ever, offering consumers faster charging times, longer battery life and quieter, greener products compared to their gas-powered counterparts. Here are three ways you can electrify your lawn care this spring.

Electric Lawn Mowers

Electric lawn mowers have come a long way over the last few years. Early models required corded connections, which were tricky to manage—but the cord has been cut. Newer cordless electric mowers are certainly more expensive than gas-powered mowers, but much of the upfront cost can be recovered since electricity is a less expensive fuel than gas, and electric engines generally require less maintenance than gas engines. Cordless electric mowers typically range from $200 to $500.

Electric mowers are suitable for most lawn care needs, with batteries that typically require about one to two hours to fully charge, and most batteries can run for a full hour. That said, if you have a large yard (half an acre or larger), a gas-powered option may be best to suit your needs.

Electric Trimmers

Cordless electric string trimmers are a great option for most lawns. Traditionally, like lawn mowers, string trimmers have typically been powered by gas. But new versions of electric trimmers are improving and are now considered worthy competitors of gas-powered models.

Cordless electric trimmers are much quieter and easier to use, but most batteries last about 30 to 45 minutes. So, if you have a lot of space to trim, you may want to consider a back-up battery or plan to work in short bursts. If you’re interested in purchasing an electric trimmer, the main factors to consider are the battery’s life, charge time and power. Costs can vary depending on your needs, but you can find a quality version for about $100.

If you’re looking to electrify your lawn care equipment, be sure to do your homework. Search online for the latest reviews, and check trusted websites like ConsumerReports.org. With a little research, you’ll be well on your way to Lawn of the Month— with less maintenance, hassle and noise (and your neighbors will thank you!).

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME REMINDER

Don’t forget to spring forward on March 8!
Set your clocks forward by one hour.
Energy Efficiency Quiz Winner

The winner of January’s Energy Efficiency Quiz Drawing was Shayden Blout of Hays. He will receive a gift certificate for $15.00 from Martin’s Store. Congratulations, Shayden.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Placing hot food in the refrigerator makes the appliance work harder than necessary, using more energy. Allow food to cool down before you place it in the fridge.

Last call for 2019 Scholarships

—Big Flat Electric area graduating students may apply for a $500 scholarship. Applications can be found on our website (www.bigflatelectric.com) and at the local school’s guidance counselor office.

—The Trade School Scholarship is being offered from Big Flat Electric. Up to $1000 will be given to applicants who are attending or plan to attend a trade school. This scholarship is open to students of any age that go back to school for a trade. Applications are available online or at Big Flat Electric’s office. Applications are due in the Big Flat Electric office by April 1, 2020.

2020 SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER

Applications are due in the Big Flat Electric office by April 1, 2020.

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OPEN WEEKDAYS 8 AM - 5 PM
333 S 7TH ST W
MALTA, MT 59538
(406) 654-2040
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www.bigflatelectric.com