



BIG FLAT NEWS



December 2025

www.bigflatelectric.com

Rate increase coming Jan. 1

HERE at Big Flat Electric Cooperative, our goal has always been to provide safe, reliable and affordable power to every home, farm and business we serve. Recently at our annual meeting, we stated that we will have a rate increase beginning January 1.

Electric rates will increase by a demand charge of \$0.75 per KW to all rate classes. This decision was not made lightly. We understand the impact that rate changes can have on our members, and we will commit to keeping costs as low as possible and

still provide you with a high level of service that you all depend on.

The primary factor in the board's decision for the rate increase was a substantial increase in our wholesale power costs. Wholesale costs are increasing throughout the nation due to electric load growth. To meet the growing demand, wholesale providers are building new plants and expanding transmission



networks. Equipment and maintenance expenses are also increasing.

We know that affordability is important to everyone and we want to remind you about budget billing and payment-assistance options for members who need extra support.

Thank you for your understanding and trust that we will continue to bring you safe, affordable and reliable power for many years. RM

Stay on track with holiday spending

WITH the holiday season in full swing, it may be your last chance to finalize and stick to your holiday budget. If you haven't created one yet, do it now. List all expected holiday expenses and compare them to your available funds. If there's a gap, focus on creative alternatives such as homemade gifts, potluck-style gatherings or setting spending limits with family and friends.

Black Friday and Cyber Monday present shopping opportunities, but only if you shop strategically. Stick to your pre-planned gift list and compare prices across multiple retailers before making purchases. Many "deals" may not be as good as they appear, so do your research and avoid impulse buying items that weren't already on your list.



If you need to boost your holiday funds quickly, consider selling items online, taking advantage of seasonal job opportunities or temporarily cutting discretionary spending such as subscriptions or dining out. Every

dollar you save now helps prevent January credit card stress.

Stay disciplined with your plan, and you can enjoy the holidays without compromising your financial future.

Ross Hasler calls it a career

Column by **ROSS HASLER**
Big Flat Electric Lineman

AFTER 30 years of employment, I've decided my last day at Big Flat Electric Cooperative will be January 2. I was former general manager Jeanne Barnard's first hire in September 1995 as a meter reader. Shortly after that, I started the lineman apprenticeship program. After 8,000 on-the-job hours of training and bookwork, I passed my journeyman exam.

I thought my knowledge of Phillips and adjoining counties was good, however, I soon found out we have a huge service area and I had a lot to learn.

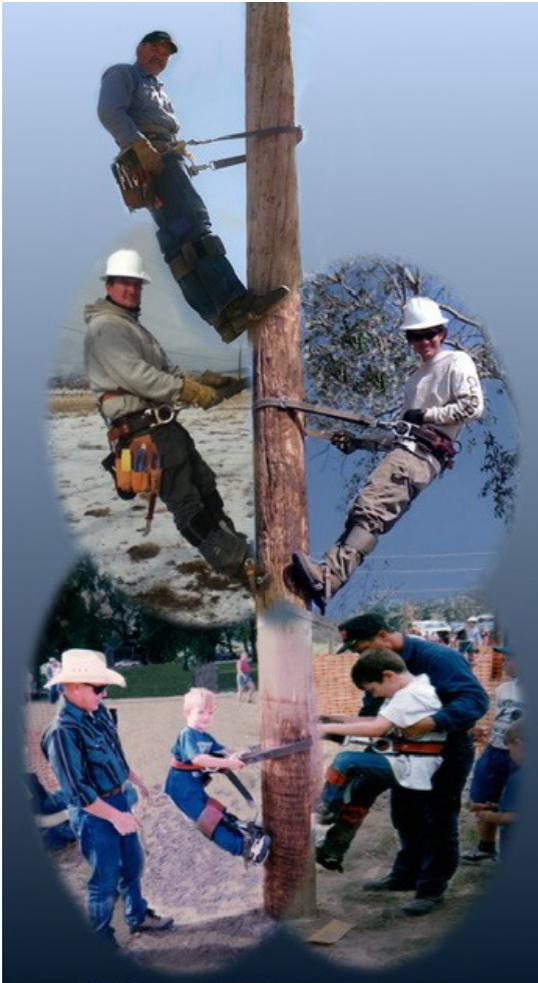


As the years went by, both my sons became journeymen for NorthWestern Energy. My son Kevin worked for NorthWestern Energy here in Malta for awhile. I was working on a joint-use powerline above the NorthWestern Energy line that my son Kevin was

dispatched to repair. So, we were both working together on that minus-30 degree repair, cool – or should I say VERY COLD!

I like being out in the country and visiting with the members. This job has many challenges and will humble you in a hurry if you think you know everything. The inside and outside crews are like family, and they all try to keep the power on. If you have an outage, rest assured we want the power back on as fast as you do.

To the many members who have come to my rescue with a tug out of a mud hole, hot cup of coffee or a better place to cross a creek, thank you. I will miss you all! RM



A father/son moment that won't happen very often. Big Flat Lineman Ross Hasler works on the cooperative's line above his son, Kevin, who was dispatched to repair NorthWestern's line.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Apply for MECA and BEPC scholarships

MONTANA Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) offers a \$500 scholarship to any college-bound undergraduate student. The applicant's parent or guardian must be receiving electric service from Big Flat Electric Co-op.

The scholarships may be used at a Montana college, university or any out-of-state institution. Funds for these scholarships come from donations that honor the memories of deceased directors, managers and employees who have served the electric cooperative.

MECA scholarship applications need to be turned into Big Flat Electric by **March 6**.

BEPC scholarship

Basin Electric Power Cooperative (BEPC) offers a \$1,000 scholarship to dependent children of member-co-

operative employees and a \$2,500 scholarship to dependent children of member-cooperative consumers enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate course of study at an accredited two or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school.

The scholarships are awarded based on academic record, the potential to succeed, leadership and participation in school and community activities, honors, work experience, a statement of education and career goals and an outside appraisal.

Scholarship applications are due to the Big Flat Electric office by **February 13**.

Applications are available online at bigflatelectric.com, school guidance counselors' offices and at the Big Flat Electric office. Don't miss out! 

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- **Find us on Facebook** under Big Flat Electric Cooperative, Inc.
- **Visit our website** at www.bigflatelectric.com.
- **Sign up for budget billing** and/or ACH (auto payments) by calling our office.
- **Bills** are generated on the 1st working day of each month, and are due on the 20th of each month.
- **Bills that are 60 days in arrears are subject to disconnect.** Once disconnected, a reconnect fee will be charged. The bill will then have to be paid in full to be reconnected.
- **We have a secure, automated toll-free phone number** for members making payments by credit card and/or bank account: 1-844-968-1965. You will need to have your account number and/or phone number that is on file with our office to access the automated system.
- **Take control of your electric account with SmartHub.** You can pay your bills; set up and cancel reoccurring payments; set up notifications; obtain duplicates of your bills; and view your monthly and yearly usage, all at your fingertips. Visit our website: www.bigflatelectric.com or download the SmartHub app from your Play Store on Android or the App Store on Apple devices.
- New service and service change quotes are only **valid for 30 days**.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Wishing you a season
filled with warmth, joy
and all the love in the
world.

Big Flat Electric will be closed
December 25th & 26th
and
January 1st, 2026



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas."

— CALVIN COOLIDGE

FROM DECEMBER 1964: BFEC NEWSLETTER

Turkey Time Tips

Worried how big a bird to buy? Allow $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 pound per person if your bird weighs less than 12 pounds; allow $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ pounds per person if it weighs 12 pounds or over. When you shop, look for the round USDA inspection mark to be sure the bird is wholesome. Look for the USDA grade shield to indicate quality. Turkeys best suited for roasting will carry the word "young" on the label. If you select frozen birds, be sure the wrappers are not torn or broken. For more tips on shopping, preparation, and cooking to party-perfection, send post card for "Turkey on the Table the Year Round — HG-45" to Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., 20250.

Along Our Lines

DECEMBER 1964 - BFEC Newsletter

- Fire destroyed the Norman Dyrdaahl pup house on his farm near Loring in the early part of November.
- A short tap has been built to serve another stockwell for Louis Modic near Hogeland.
- The town of Turner is brightly lit up under 15 new mercury vapor lights which were recently installed to replace the old streetlights.
- Mr. and Mrs. Harlie waters and family are new consumers on our lines. A short tap has recently been constructed to serve their home south of Malta.

How to Get Smart With a Christmas Tree

Before you buy your Christmas tree, run your fingers through the foliage to see if it feels fresh to your touch. No needles come off? Then give the tree a shake, and again check to see if any needles drop. If it passes both these tests, tap it on the ground to see if it still holds its needles as well, U. S. Department of Agriculture forest experts say. If the needles are turning brown, the tree has already dried out and will be a fire hazard. If you're economy-minded, you might select a tree better developed on one side than the other. In a corner, it won't show anyway, and it may cost you less.

After you get your tree tussled home, store it in a cool, shady place with the butt end placed in water. Sprinkle the branches and foilage with water daily. Cutting the butt diagonally about an inch above the original cut will aid in the absorption of water. Then keep it standing in a container of water which you refill daily, so it will stay fresh.

- The Big Flat crew has been doing service changes for consumers throughout our system - heavying-up their services for electric heating and larger loads.
- Among new consumers on our lines are Mr. and Mrs. Chuck Wasson. They are living in the Wright house in Whitewater while Mr. Wasson is employed on the E. Clair Hotchkiss ranch.

Cold Snap Causes Power Outage

Damage to lines caused by 23 below zero weather Friday night, November 27, shut off power to all Big Flat consumers from the Canadian line to the Missouri river and east and west through the county.

Direct cause of the outage was a broken wire south of Wagner causing a three-phase Montana Power transformer to burn out. The Montana Power Company had to bring a portable substation in from Great Falls.

Four-hundred eighty-five families were affected by the outage, many of them dependent on electricity for heat and light. The outage caused the television installation on Mt. Antoine to go off the air.

The Montana Power Company has informed us that they will be installing a replacement sub-station transformer soon. There will be numerous outages when this change occurs, but it is hoped that the outages will be of short duration.

The Big Flat appreciates the cooperation we received from our consumers during this emergency.

- The annual Christmas dinner for the Big Flat Electric directors and employees and their wives will be held on the 17th of December at Stines's Nite Club east of Malta.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District 1	Duane Klindworth
District 2	Alan Van Voast, Sec./Treasurer
District 3	Alan Wasson
District 4	Warren Morin
District 5	Roger Solberg, Vice President
District 6	Patty Quisno
District 7	Kevin Koss, President

General Manager: Gretchen Boardman

BIG FLAT ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE

SERVING BLAINE, PHILLIPS AND VALLEY COUNTIES

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PAYMENT OPTIONS:
1-844-968-1965 or
bigflatelectric.com