



BIG FLAT NEWS



January 2026

www.bigflatelectric.com

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Big Flat Electric Cooperative ready to face challenges coming in the future

By **KEVIN KOSS** | *Big Flat Electric President*



CHALLENGES continue to be on the horizon for Big Flat Electric Cooperative and the entire electric industry. The electric grid is going to struggle to keep pace with demand. We are equipped to handle some of the challenges ahead.

Our tremendous crew and staff do a great job of repairing and upgrading our infrastructure, budgeting, keeping us within our budget during these high inflationary periods and keeping us up to date on important developments just to name a few. There is so much

more to it, but it is all focused on keeping your power at the lowest possible price.

There are many things we have no control over unfortunately. We have very little control over the rates of our generation and transmission cooperative (G&T). These rates are what we pay for power we purchase to distribute to you, the owners. As demand is increasing at an alarming speed, G&Ts struggle to keep pace. Building new generation is very expensive, must meet many regulations and is time consuming. Reliable base-load generation, that's generation that is available 24/7, is a very contested topic in today's political climate, especially by means by which it is generated.

Environmental issues are very expensive for the power industry, regardless of the side you are on. Everyone is aware expenses have risen in their own businesses, and Big Flat Electric is certainly no different. With the demand for electricity on the rise, the time it takes us to get our supplies has increased for some items.

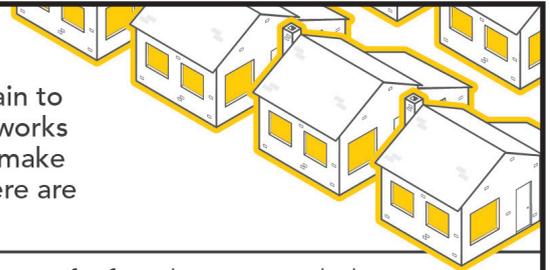
Just know that you have the best team of professionals working on your behalf. Our crew and staff will work tirelessly to keep your lights on, and at the lowest possible rate. My hope is that 2026 will bring you and your family a safe, healthy and prosperous time. I personally wish you all the best. May God Bless you, and may you have a prosperous New Year. RM

POWER UNDER PRESSURE

Four Ways to Ease Grid Strain This Winter

Energy use spikes during periods of extremely cold weather, which adds strain to the electric grid. When our community works together to reduce energy use, we can make a big impact in supporting reliability. Here are four simple ways you can help:

1. Lower your thermostat. Even a difference of a few degrees can help.
2. Delay using large appliances. Run them in the evenings or midday when demand is lower.
3. Lower your water heater to 120 degrees and avoid back-to-back showers.
4. Unplug unnecessary devices. Electronics and lighting add up. Unplug any unused items.



NEW RATE COMPARISON

RATE SCHEDULES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2026

	Previous Rates	New Rates
Single Phase Services - Residential, Farm/Ranch, Small Commerical, Public Buildings		
Base Charge - Monthly	\$38.00	\$38.00
Energy (kWh) Rate	\$0.109	\$0.109
Demand (kW) Rate	\$0.25	\$1.00
Storage Heat Energy (kWh) Rate	\$0.074	\$0.074
Stockwells		
Base Charge - Monthly	\$28.00	\$28.00
Energy (kWh) Rate	\$0.109	\$0.109
Demand (kW) Rate	\$0.25	\$1.00
Three Phase Services - Farm/Ranch, Large Commercial, Public Buildings and Industrial Under 1,000 KVA		
Base Charge - Monthly	\$60.00	\$60.00
Energy (kWh) Rate	\$0.111	\$0.111
Demand (kW) Rate-up to 100 kW	\$11.00	\$11.75
Demand (kW) Rate-over 100 kW	\$16.00	\$16.75
Storage Heat Energy (kWh) Rate	\$0.074	\$0.074
Three Phase Services - Industrial Over 1,000 KVA		
Base Charge - Monthly	\$68.00	\$68.00
Energy (kWh) Rate	\$0.098	\$0.098
Demand (kW) Rate-up to 100 kW	\$11.00	\$11.75
Demand (kW) Rate-over 100 kW	\$16.00	\$16.75
Irrigation		
Base Charge - Monthly	\$60.00	\$60.00
Energy (kWh) Rate	\$0.081	\$0.081
Demand (kW) Rate-up to 100 kW	\$7.00	\$7.75
Demand (kW) Rate-over 100 kW	\$14.00	\$14.75
Abandoned/Idle Service		
Base Charge - Monthly	\$7.00	\$9.00

JANUARY 2026

IN THE KNOW

HAPPENINGS AROUND BIG FLAT ELECTRIC

The Big Flat Electric line crew and office staff have been busy the last few months. Key activities include:

- Pole Replacements:** The crew completed multiple single- and three-phase pole changeouts to replace deteriorated poles.
- New Service Installations:** Thirteen new services were installed in 2025, and preliminary planning has begun on a couple additional new services to start the year.
- Planned Power Outage:** A planned power outage occurred on October 17 at the North Harlem Substation. The outage lasted approximately 2 hours as the crew replaced a switch in the substation.
- Substation Maintenance:** Electrotest completed routine maintenance on substation equipment during their recent visit.
- Data Management:** Meter Technician Eric Simanton has been entering pole-inspection data into the software system. This recordkeeping is necessary for compliance and will greatly improve long-term tracking.
- Emergency Preparedness:** Staff reviewed Big Flat Electric's Emergency Restoration Plan and May Day Procedures. Updates were made to contact lists and employee information.
- Budget Preparation:** Our 2026 capital and operating budgets were presented for initial review at the November board meeting with final approval made at the December board meeting.
- Security Light Maintenance:** Ongoing maintenance and installation work continues on security and street lighting.
- Equipment Incident:** Our 2007 freightliner bucket truck is currently out of service until repairs are completed, due to a tire blowout that caused significant damage. Thankfully no one was injured.

Celebrating Doug Hardy's retirement

PATTI Quisno honored Doug Hardy on his retirement from Central Montana with a beautiful star quilt. RM



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 recurring 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**.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

New Year's Resolution: To tolerate fools more gladly, provided this does not encourage them to take up more of my time.

James Agate

FROM JANUARY 1962: *BFEC NEWSLETTER*

If Your Freezer Fails . . .

When your home freezer stops, there's bound to be trouble, but how much depends upon how much you know about handling the situation, according to USDA's Extension Service.

There are several steps you can take:

1. Keep your freezer closed — food usually stays frozen about two days after the electricity goes off;
2. Move the food to a locker plant — wrap food in newspapers and blankets or pack in insulated boxes, then make the move as quickly as possible.
3. Add dry ice — fifty pounds will keep the temperature at 15 degrees for about two days in an average size freezer — cover freezer with blankets for added protection;
4. Can the food if necessary — fruits can be re-frozen — they may not be tasty due to fermentation, but they are safe — be careful with meats and poultry —vegetables, shellfish and cooked foods should be disposed of if they have completely thawed.

A Stand-by Electric Plant Is A Sound Investment

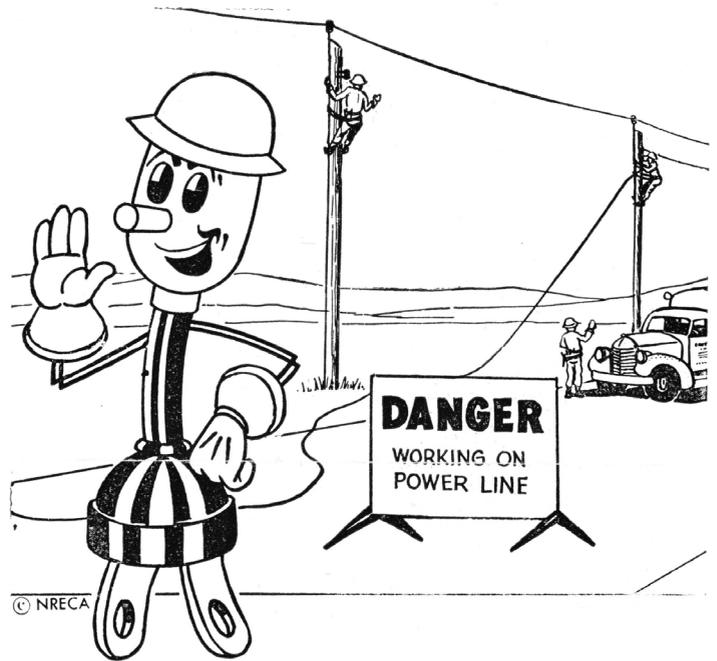
Any farmer who feeds and waters automatically or depends on a continuous source of electricity to operate other equipment can afford a stand-by plant.

Many farms are becoming so large and highly mechanized that many critical operations would be seriously curtailed in the event of any major electrical cut-off. This can be prevented with the use of either portable or tractor power-take-off driven plants.

The Big Flat will furnish literature and information pertaining to stand-by plants to any consumer requesting this information.

Willie Wiredhand Sez:

Perfect Service is Their Goal



© NRECA

Your co-op has a staff of well trained people to serve you. They keep the current flowing, quietly, conveniently, steadily to make your life easier, your home more comfortable. Skilled men repair lines and install new ones to assure you of dependable electric service day or night. Perfect service is their goal.

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BIG FLAT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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