

BIG FLAT NEWS

July 2021

www.bigflatelectric.com

Meet Big Flat's newest employee



Shawna Myers

Big Flat Electric would like to introduce Shawna Myers to our members. Shawna joins the team as the new work order and warehouse person, taking over for Rick Starkey who will soon be retiring. She will also be involved in communications and customer service.

Shawna was born in Malta. She said, "I have always considered this my home, even though I have moved and lived in quite a few places. I have a son, Tel, who is enlisted in the U.S. Air Force and is stationed at Eielson Air Force Base in Alaska."

Previously with the Phillips County Sheriff's Office, Shawna also works part time performing the bookkeeping and payroll for Malta Opportunities, a job she's had for at least 19 years.

She enjoys spending time at her cabin on Nelson Reservoir. "I don't have a lot of time for it, but when possible, it is one of my favorite places to go to relax. Country drives and seeing new things and places run a close second with Nelson Reservoir," she said.

Some of Shawna's hobbies that she enjoys are demolition and rebuilding. She likes redoing and fixing things up, either on the inside or the outside of her home.

Big Flat Electric welcomes Shawna to the co-op family.



**HAPPY FOURTH
OF JULY!**

Have a safe and happy
Independence Day.



Inside:

- ★ Don't fall for utility scams
- ★ Cooperative word search
- ★ Firework safety tips

Don't fall victim to utility scams

By Abby Berry

Every day, millions of Americans are targeted by scammers through phone calls, emails, text messages, online or in person. Scammers' tactics can change daily, which is why it's important for consumers to stay on top of the latest scam reports from local and national news outlets, as well as your local utility companies.

Just recently several co-op members were targeted through a phone scam where the scammers demanded immediate payment and threatened to shut off power if the money was not received. Remember, Big Flat Electric will never call you and demand immediate payment without notice.

We want you to be aware of two trending scam tactics. One is the overpayment trick, where a scammer contacts you and

claims that you have overpaid your utility bill. The scammer will say they need your personal banking information to deposit the credit back to your checking account. Don't fall for this scam! If you make an overpayment on your energy bill, Big Flat Electric will automatically apply the credit to your account, which will carry over to your next billing cycle.

Another trending scam is smishing (short for SMS phishing). Many consumers know to watch out for suspicious emails, but we tend to trust text messages sent to our smartphones. Always question suspicious texts, especially from someone claiming to represent a utility. These are just a couple examples of trending scams, so it's important to watch for any red flags.

Here are a few reminders on how to take control of the situation when you've been targeted by a scammer:

- Take your time. Utility scammers try to create a sense of urgency so that you'll act fast and hand over personal information, especially over the phone. Take a moment to think about the situation before acting.

- Be suspicious. Scammers typically request immediate payments through prepaid debit cards or third-party apps. Unusual requests like this should raise red flags. Remember, if the request seems strange and out of the ordinary, you're likely being targeted by a scammer.

- Confirm before you act. If you're contacted by someone claiming to represent Big Flat Electric or another utility but you're unsure, just hang up the phone and call the utility directly. You can reach us at 654-2040 to verify the situation.

Our increasingly connected world provides scammers with more opportunities to connect with unsuspecting consumers. Be vigilant, and please report any utility scams to Big Flat so we can let others in our community know. Together, we can help prevent our friends and neighbors from being victimized.



AVOID UTILITY SCAMS

Scammers will threaten you with everything from shutting off power to your home to legal action. Don't fall victim to these types of scams.

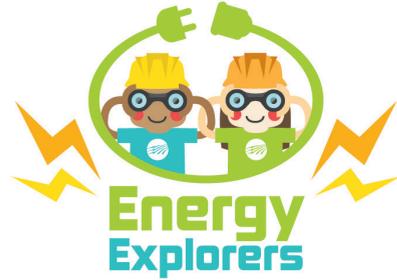
- Our employees will never show up at your door to demand payment.
- Never give personal information to an unknown caller or visitor. Our representatives have access to the details they need to service your account.
- Demands for immediate payment by wire transfer, cryptocurrency, gift cards or cash reload cards should immediately raise red flags.
- If you think you've been contacted by a scammer falsely representing the co-op, please let us know as soon as possible.



COOPERATIVE WORD SEARCH

As a member of an electric cooperative, you're part of something special!

Read the facts below to learn how co-ops are unique, then find and circle the **BOLDED** words in the puzzle.



WORD BANK:

- **COOPERATIVES** are local organizations and businesses, so they understand the communities they serve.
- Co-ops don't have customers; instead, they have **MEMBERS**.
- All co-ops are guided by the same set of cooperative **PRINCIPLES**.
- "Concern for **COMMUNITY**" is the seventh cooperative principle.
- Co-ops are led by the members they **SERVE**.
- You're a member of an **ELECTRIC** cooperative, but there are also housing, grocery and other types of co-ops.



FIREWORKS SAFETY TIPS

Fireworks and the Fourth of July go hand-in-hand, and we want you to have a safe, fun-filled celebration! About two-thirds of all fireworks-related injuries occur between June 16 and July 16, so keep these safety tips in mind:



- ★ Make sure fireworks are legal in your community before using them.
- ★ Never buy professional-grade fireworks. They are not designed for safe consumer use.
- ★ Keep small children a safe distance from all fireworks including sparklers which can burn at temperatures in excess of 2,000 degrees.
- ★ Never reignite or handle malfunctioning fireworks. Keep a bucket of water or garden hose nearby to thoroughly soak duds before throwing them away.
- ★ Keep pets indoors and away from fireworks to avoid contact injuries or noise reactions.

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333 S 7TH ST W
MALTA, MT 59538
(406) 654-2040
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www.bigflatelectric.com

