



BIG FLAT NEWS



February 2022

www.bigflatelectric.com

BIG FLAT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

2022 Youth Tour Winner

STORY BY **SHAWNA MYERS** | BIG FLAT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

ADDISON Ulrich, a junior at Malta High School, had the winning essay for this year's Washington, D.C. Youth Tour contest. The essay subject was "What does the second cooperative principle, Democratic Member Control, mean to you and your community?" Read her winning essay below.

Big Flat Electric Cooperative sponsors a student every year for this trip, except in 2020 and 2021 when the trip didn't take place due to Covid-19.

Addison will travel with other

winners from Montana rural electric cooperatives to Washington, D.C., in June. They will be joining 1,500 other students from all over the United States, including Hawaii and Alaska, for a fun-filled week of sightseeing and learning. They will meet with Montana's members of congress, visit many memorials and see many other Washington, D.C., places of interest.

Addison is the daughter of Jason and Jamie Ulrich of Malta.

Congratulations, Addison. RM

Democratic Member Control:

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.



PHOTO BY LYNNE BREWER, LYNNE'S LINE PHOTOGRAPHY

"What does the second cooperative principle, Democratic Member Control, mean to you and your community?"

ESSAY BY ADDISON ULRICH

Being member controlled is exactly what my community needs in an electric co-op. Why? When critical decisions need to be made that directly affect the members, the elected officers, also members, are able to make the decisions based on their life experiences. I can't imagine if our policies were made and decided on by some city person who has never driven on a gravel road! It keeps the community in control. If it is good for the members, it is good for the cooperative; if it is good for the cooperative, it is good for the members.

Without Big Flat Electric in our rural community, we would be run by corporate America, where decisions and regulations in urban

areas wouldn't reflect our needs. In the city, people think of and use electricity in different ways than on a farm or ranch. When the power goes out, our nearest neighbor is over a mile away.

With our cooperative, the ability to have equal voting rights in decision making and setting policies is available to the members — since the members are able to vote on the board members, who then make decisions about what's best for the cooperative members. In closing, the second cooperative principle is good for me and my community because decisions voted on by our board members are based on our local needs.

WE LOVE SERVING OUR MEMBERS

By **ANNE PRINCE** | For *Big Flat Electric*

FEBRUARY may be the shortest month, but it's packed with special observances such as Presidents' Day, Black History Month and Valentine's Day, in addition to a host of unofficial "national" days you've probably never heard of such as "National Tater Tot Day." But they all have something in common. They were created to draw attention to a particular issue or theme.

Valentine's Day may seem like an observance originally created by a greeting card company, but over time it's become a widely celebrated day generating millions of dollars spent on flowers, candy and, of course, greeting cards professing our love. But Valentine's Day isn't just for the lovebirds. It's also the perfect time to let our friends, family, co-workers and other special people in our lives know we care about them — with or without a store-bought greeting card.

So, in that vein, we've created our list of top four reasons why we love serving you, the members of Big Flat Electric Cooperative:

1. We love serving our members because without you, the co-op wouldn't exist. Our purpose is to provide you with reliable, responsible and safe electricity. Simply put, Big Flat Electric exists to serve you. That's why we were formed in 1946 — to

bring power to our local area when for-profit utilities would not.

2. Members of our co-op also serve on the board of directors. They provide guidance for setting co-op priorities and helping make big decisions. Because our board members live in the area, they're able to serve as the pulse of the larger community and identify immediate and long-term needs. The broader co-op membership provides helpful input through their vote on director elections, and by weighing in on co-op and community issues.

3. You help us get it right. Big Flat Electric members are great about keeping us in the know. We do our best to avoid power outages, but Mother Nature can occasionally throw us a curveball. Our members are quick to report any power disruptions and are patient as our crews work to safely

restore power. We know outages are frustrating, and your support as we work through storms means so much to our employees. We also appreciate your feedback on co-op programs and services. Your opinions are critical for the co-op's success, and we thank you for that.

4. You and other Big Flat Electric members make up the community we serve — and for us, it's all about community. Our employees live and work here, too, and care about our community the same way you do. We're invested.

As a co-op, our mission is to enhance the quality of life in our community and look after its long-term interests. We love serving our members and our local community, and just like you, want to see it continue to thrive. RM



Congratulations to Nathan Veit

Story by **SHAWNA MYERS**
Big Flat Electric Cooperative

Big Flat Electric Cooperative would like to congratulate Nathan Veit on successfully completing one of the world's most comprehensive training programs for power line personnel.

Big Flat Electric's Acting Training Coordinator and Line Superintendent Darren

Demarais, assisted Nathan by administering "closed book" testing.

After completing his fourth year of employment and all four Merchant Job training books and tests, Nathan was promoted to a journeyman lineman when he passed the final journeyman lineman exam in Butte this past December.

Congratulations, Nathan! RM



Nathan Veit was promoted to journeyman lineman in December. | **BIG FLAT PHOTO**

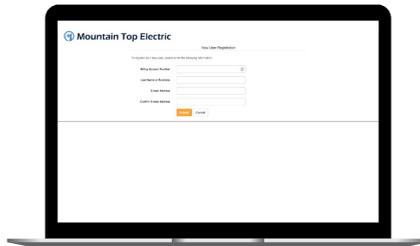
smart hub How To
Register Your Account in SmartHub (Web)

STEP 1



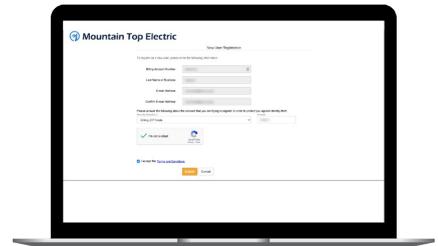
From the SmartHub login screen, click on **Sign up to access our Self Service site.**

STEP 2



Fill out the registration form completely and click the **Submit** button.

STEP 3



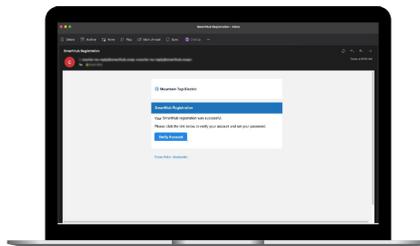
Enter the requested account information in order to verify your identity and click **Submit**. Answers must match account info exactly.

STEP 4



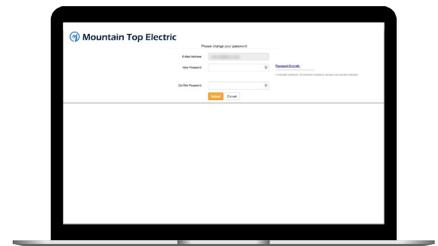
When successful, you'll get a congratulations notification like this.

STEP 5



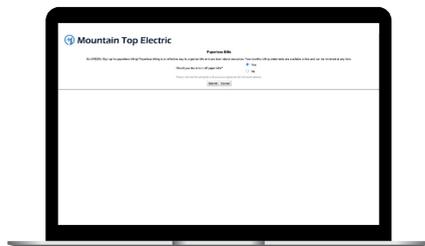
Check your inbox for an email that will contain a button asking you to **Verify Your Account**.

STEP 6



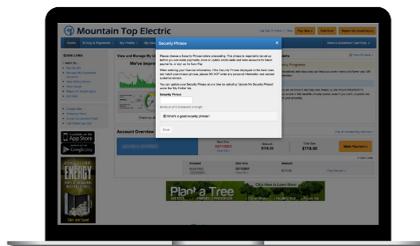
You will then be taken to a screen asking you to set your new password.

STEP 7



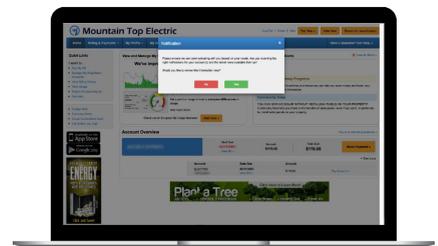
After you set your password, you'll be asked if you want to try Paperless Billing. Click **Yes** and **Submit** to activate.

STEP 8



The final step will be to set your security phrase. Once you have done that, you are ready to use SmartHub!

STEP 9



You will be asked to review your notification settings in SmartHub. Click **Yes** to view those settings.

STEP 10



On the notifications settings screen, you'll be able to set alerts in the categories of Billing, Service, Events, and News.

STEP 11



Congratulations! You have successfully registered your account. Browse around and see all the ways to save time and money.

SIGN UP TODAY

We encourage Big Flat members to register your account and utilize SmartHub for paying electric bills. The link can be found on our website bigflatelectric.com.



JANUARY 2022 PRICE INCREASE NOTICE

PRICE INCREASES STEM FROM INCREASED LABOR, OVERHEAD AND MATERIAL COSTS.

Lease Security

Light:

\$10 per month
(Last increase was Jan 2008, when the fee increased from \$7 to \$8 per month)

LABOR & FEES FOR SERVICES PROVIDED:

(For services performed which are not part of normal maintenance or service fees for such services.)

Bucket Truck:

\$50 per hour used

Trencher & Digger:

\$200 per hour used

Lineman Labor:

\$85 per hour, per employee

Bucket Trucks & Digger

Mileage:

\$3 per mile to and from job site for each vehicle.

Line Truck Mileage:

\$0.585 per mile for each vehicle.

MEMBER OWNED (NON-LEASE) LIGHT REPAIRS OR INSTALLATIONS

Bucket Truck:

\$50.00 per hour used

Labor:

\$85.00 per hour used

Mileage (bucket truck):

\$3.00 per mile one way

Materials Used:

Charged at member material cost

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- District 1 Duane Klindworth
- District 2 Alan Van Voast
- District 3 Alan Wasson, President
- District 4 Betty Campbell, Sec. /Treas.
- District 5 Roger Solberg, Vice President
- District 6 Patty Quisno
- District 7 Kevin Koss

General Manager: Gretchen Boardman



CONNECT WITH US

OPEN WEEKDAYS 8 A.M. TO 5 P.M.

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AFTER HOURS OUTAGE:
654-7400

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