



# Missoula Electric Cooperative Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## Putting the *You* in Utility

MISSOULA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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### Bill Payment:

#### Online:

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### Offices:

#### Office Locations:

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#### Office Hours:

Monday-Friday  
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

#### Report Outages:

406-541-4433 or  
1-800-352-5200

**Interim General Manager**  
*Larry Nelson*

## Interim Manager's Report — *By Larry Nelson*

### MEC welcomes new manager

**B**y the time this is published, your new General Manager will be on board. Mr. Mark Hayden, has accepted the position of General Manager of Missoula Electric Cooperative, effective March 21. Your Board of Trustees spent many hours reviewing applications and interviewing candidates in late January and in early February. They selected Mr. Hayden as their General Manager.

Before coming to Missoula, Mark served as the Assistant General Manager at Dunn Energy Cooperative in Menomonie, Wis. where he began his rural electric career in 1995.

Mark was born and raised on a dairy farm in Wisconsin and attended the University of Wisconsin where he received a Bachelor's Degree in accounting, and also has a Masters Degree in Business Administration.

While at Dunn Energy

Mark also held the position of General Manager for Dunn Energy's propane subsidiary DEC Energy.

He served as a Board Member of the Wisconsin Propane Gas Association and served as Treasurer of

the Menomonie Rural Fire District. Mark and his wife, Tiffany, have two daughters, Gabrielle and Allison.

Selecting a General Manager is one of the most important jobs that a Board of

Trustees has, and your Board spent many days and hours working at that task.

They had numerous candidates to review and many qualified applicants to consider. Because of the number of applicants for the job, it is obvious that many would like to work, live and raise their family in western Montana and especially in the Missoula area.

It has been my pleasure to work for you and your Board of Trustees over the



Mark Hayden

last two and a half months as your Interim General Manager and to help with the General Manager transition.

While working at MEC, I have become truly impressed with the quality of service delivered to members and the dedication that the employees, and Board Members have at delivering that service.

Even in these tough economic times, in my opinion, the future looks bright for Missoula Electric Cooperative.

Long-term power contracts are in place with some of the lowest cost wholesale power in the nation, the system is well maintained, and the cooperative is in good financial condition.

Thanks again for the opportunity to spend some time at MEC and best of luck to all in the future.



# IRRIGATION EFFICIENCY

In 2008 Missoula Electric Cooperative (MEC) agreed to become a partner with the Blackfoot Challenge to offer an Irrigation Efficiency Program package to irrigators.

MEC had already launched an Energy Efficiency Irrigation Program and partnering with the Blackfoot Challenge folks significantly increased the options that can be offered to participating irrigators.

As a part of this partnership outreach, more than 30 people gathered in Ovando at the school gymnasium on Feb. 10 for an irrigation workshop.

The workshop was sponsored by the North Powell Conservation District and the Blackfoot Challenge with support from MEC.

There were featured presentations on everything from irrigation system efficiency evaluations to irrigation scheduling.

"February is definitely a strange time to be talking about irrigation" said Brian McDonald of the Blackfoot Challenge and the North Powell Conservation District "but we have some exciting irrigation related programs that we want people to know about."

The day began with McDonald giving attendees some background on water conservation efforts in the Blackfoot watershed and how those led to the development of an irrigation efficiency program.

Marla McCombie, representing MEC and Tom Hannon from the Bonneville Power Administration then discussed the Irrigation Hardware and Green Motors



*Bart Peterson, MEC Manager of Operations, and Brian McDonald, Blackfoot Challenge Representative, discuss the workshop.*

Programs which provide incentives for irrigators to replace worn or otherwise inefficient irrigation equipment.

"Worn irrigation equipment increases energy use," said Hannon. "This is a win-win program. It helps Bonneville Power and MEC meet their energy conservation goals while reducing production costs for ranchers." After learning about the program and how it can help update irrigation equipment, John Heffernan who evaluates irrigation systems throughout the Northwest, explained how a test of irrigation systems can identify worn equipment, system design flaws and inefficiencies as well as improve energy savings.

Proper and regular maintenance of irrigation systems can save energy and water, reduce repair costs, reduce breakdowns and lengthen the life of equipment.

John Gardner of Aquatech reinforced this point as he outlined critical maintenance on irrigation equipment covering everything from the

pump to the wheels on a pivot.

"The bottom-line here is that an irrigation system is a big investment. Good maintenance makes sense economically and has multiple conservation benefits" said Gardner.

Equally important is maintaining irrigation equipment to ensure that the system is designed properly with the right equipment for the job.

Mike Boyd's presentation highlighted that crop quality and quantity are directly related to the design and efficiency of the irrigation system.

"Too often as an industry we try to save money on the front end when a little more money up front will more than pay off in terms of production over the long term," Boyd commented.

Barry Dutton, a soil scientist from Missoula, was the final presenter of the day that challenged the audience with this question: "You can have the best built and designed system out there but if you don't know how to use it, what good is it?"

Dutton's presentation on irrigation scheduling, or knowing how much water to apply and when to apply it, struck a chord with many in attendance as the principles of irrigation scheduling are extremely useful in improving production, reducing production costs or trying to irrigate with limited water.

The irrigation workshop is just one component of a developing irrigation efficiency program in the Blackfoot Watershed.

Thanks to the Blackfoot Challenge and MEC, in 2008 13 irrigation systems in the Blackfoot Valley were evaluated for efficiency.

The evaluations identified 140,000-plus kWh of potential energy savings by applying upgrades to irrigation equipment.

Two irrigation equipment upgrade projects have already been enrolled in MEC's incentive program. One project was completed in 2008 which will save over 9,000 kWh annually, and the other project is scheduled to be implemented in 2009.

Evaluations will continue

# Program

“... a little more money up front will more than pay off in production.”

— Mike Boyd

throughout 2009 with help from a grant from the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.

The program will also continue to venture into new territory in 2009 with more emphasis on irrigation equipment maintenance.

“We hope to have a spring workshop where we can get folks out in the field and run through a maintenance plan on an actual system” said McDonald following the presentations.

“We may try to incorporate soil moisture monitoring into that workshop as well.”

Irrigation scheduling will be emphasized during the 2009 program as various tools such as an irrigation guide, scheduling posters, weekly water use updates and individual consultations are discussed.

While the irrigation efficiency program has focused

on the Blackfoot Watershed, it is anticipated that this information and this program model will be transferred to other areas. North Powell Conservation District and the Blackfoot Challenge are looking to partner with other Conservation Districts and utilities in and around the Blackfoot to expand the program.

“It’s funny” stated McDonald, “none of the stuff we are doing is new but it tends to get lost. The workshop was a great way to start off the year and to introduce our program to a whole new set of people. It was interesting to see how each of the presentations while different, had common themes and messages.”

In a time when resource and energy conservation as well as economic stability are becoming more and more critical, this program is a step in the right direction.

Encouraged by the success of the workshop and response from participants, program partners are excited about the possibilities of this program.

For additional information or to schedule an irrigation system audit, please contact Brian McDonald at (406) 493-0033 (Office), 406-546-3221 (Cell) or email him at [brian@blackfootchallenge.org](mailto:brian@blackfootchallenge.org).



Top photo: John and Irene Weaver help draw door prizes. Above: General attendance at the workshop.

APRIL 2009

## Incentives still available at Missoula Electric

We want to remind you that we are continuing to make our energy efficiency programs available. We are offering incentives for the purchase of Energy Star clothes washers, dish washers, refrigerators and freezers. There is also an incentive for energy efficient water heaters and for the purchase of compact fluorescent lamps (CFL's). MEC is also sponsoring CFL recycling bins at local vendors such as ACE Hardware (Missoula and Seeley Lake) and Home Depot.

An incentive is now available for Energy Star manufactured homes set up in Missoula Electric Cooperative's service area. We encourage you to take advantage of these incentives to save money on the up-front cost of new purchases as well as reducing the energy costs over the life of the appliance.

We are currently in the process of developing an appliance retirement program. This program will offer an incentive to have a used refrigerator or freezer either picked up by a qualified vendor or personally delivered to a recycling center for documentation for the decommissioned appliance. The appliance may be one that is replacing a current refrigerator/freezer in the home or a refrigerator/freezer that is residing in a garage. We anticipate more incentives may be offered in the future so

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## Incentives *Continued from page 5*

please check in with us frequently.

Please contact the Cooperative with any questions on how to qualify for these incentives. Let's all commit to using energy wisely.

These programs may also be found on the Missoula Electric Cooperative website: [www.missoulaelectric.com](http://www.missoulaelectric.com) under the

Member Care section.

If you are going to invest in a new appliance in the future and want to find out if it will be covered by our incentive program before you make that purchase; go to [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) web site, search for the model number of your appliance and it will tell you if it is Energy Star approved or not.

## Current Incentives

Compact Fluorescent Lamps (5 Watts or higher)	\$2.50
Qualified Energy Star Clothes Washers	
With electric water heating	\$70.00
With gas water heating	\$25.00
Qualified Energy Star Dish Washers	\$25.00
Qualified Energy Star Refrigerators	\$25.00
Qualified Energy Star Freezers	\$25.00
Qualified Water Heaters	\$25.00
Energy Star Manufactured Homes	\$1,450.00

## Missoula Electric 2009 Youth to Washington essay winner

*Sibahn Doxey is being presented as the Missoula Electric Cooperative 2009 Youth to Washington Winner by MEC Trustee Chuck Drinville. Her family and her teacher were there to share in the excitement.*



## Missoula Electric Cooperative awards and certificates



*Left to right: Eric Nicoson received his 5 year service award. Dave Friede received his 20 year service award. George Porter received his journeyman/lineman certificate.*