



Missoula Electric Cooperative Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Putting the *You* in Utility

MISSOULA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Trustees:

Ray Cebulski,
President

677-2280, District #5,
Seeley Lake

Tom Alsaker,
Vice President

543-8801, District #2,
Big Flat

Douglas Bardwell,
Secretary – Treasurer
626-5252, District #7,
Huson

Chuck Drinville, 825-4101
District #4, Clinton

Terry Hoke, 728-6221
District #1, El-Mar

Sharon Jacobsen,
793-5686

District #6, Ovando

Harry LaFriniere,
777-3307

District #3, Florence

Bill Payment:

Online:

www.missoulaelectric.com
info@meccoop.com

Mail:

1700 W. Broadway
Missoula, MT 59808

Offices:

Office Locations:

Missoula — 1700 W.
Broadway

Office Hours:

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

Report Outages:

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

General Manager

Mark Hayden

Editor

Vickie Sutton

Manager's Report — *By Mark Hayden*

Take advantage of tax incentives

As the 2009 tax year comes to a close, and we begin to plan for 2010, it is important to remember that some energy efficiency home improvements may qualify for higher tax credits than in the past. The following information is provided by the Alliance to Save Energy and outlines the new tax incentives which may be available to some MEC members.

Since 2006, tax credits for energy-efficient products have allowed U.S. homeowners to enjoy the benefits of energy efficiency in three ways: lower home energy bills, lower federal income taxes, and increased home comfort. Now, consumers stand to receive a savings of up to 30 percent more on their investment as part of the latest tax credits included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), which has raised the cap on energy efficiency home improvements to \$1,500 in federal income tax credits through 2010.

ARRA's federal income tax credits for specific home improvements are very similar to those that were in effect in 2006 and 2007. However, consumers should be aware of some changes, mostly having to do with the installation

of specific products and equipment that qualify for the 2009-10 tax credits.

There are two basic categories of qualifying equipment – “building envelope” products and heating and cooling equipment. Building envelope products are replacement windows and doors (including storm windows, storm doors, and skylights), certain ENERGY STAR asphalt and metal roofs, insulation, and other sealing products. Heating and cooling equipment includes furnaces, boilers, gas or propane water heaters, central air conditioning systems (but not window air conditioner units), and biomass stoves. Remember that installation costs are not covered for building envelope products, but they are covered for heating and cooling equipment.

For each type of qualifying equipment, the credit is for 30 percent of the cost up to \$1,500. It is a one-time tax credit with a maximum of \$1,500 per taxpayer over the 2009-2010 time-frame. The \$1,500 may be used in one single year or spread among the two years. Homeowners who claimed any part of the \$500 credit available in 2006-2007 can still claim the full \$1,500 credit for additional qualifying products bought



and installed in 2009 and/or 2010.

For some products, the qualifying criteria are more stringent than they were in 2006 and 2007 and, under different legislation, in early 2009 (from Jan. 1, 2009, through Feb. 17, 2009, the date that the ARRA was signed into law). For example, all ENERGY STAR windows no longer qualify; now they must meet additional energy efficiency criteria.

Specific efficiency criteria also apply to heating and cooling equipment. But for exterior windows and skylights, the older criteria apply to products purchased and put into service before June 1, 2009. Homeowners who purchased and put into service equipment meeting those older criteria between Jan. 1 and Feb. 17, 2009, can still claim the higher percentage of the cost (30 percent) and the higher dollar amount (\$1,500).

Finally, incentives for geothermal heat pumps, solar and wind systems fall outside of the 30 percent/\$1,500 caps meaning a full 30 percent of the system cost may be eligible for the tax credit.

As with most tax laws the rules can be quite confusing,

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MEC Scholarship applications available

Missoula Electric Cooperative is proud to award 20 one-time, \$1,000 scholarships to MEC Members or Member dependants that will be attending a Montana college in the fall of 2010. Missoula Electric Cooperative's mission is to help our area students achieve their career goals.

These scholarships are funded from the unclaimed capital credits fund, which are designated for educational purposes. Applications are available at the Missoula office or visit www.missoulaelectric.com for scholarship information and print an application. Completed scholarship applications are due back by Feb. 8, 2010.

Last year's Scholarship Winners and Ray Cebulski, MEC President.



2010 board election information

As a member-owned electric cooperative, Missoula Electric Cooperative is governed by a democratically-elected board of directors. In 2010, directors from District 2, District 4, and District 6 will be elected.

Eligible members residing within these districts' boundaries can run for the board. If you are interested in running, please contact Missoula Electric Cooperative at 541-4433 to determine your eligibility. Board Election Packets will be available to be picked up at the Missoula office on Jan. 4, 2010.

Give the gift of energy efficiency

An energy-efficient gift is really a gift that keeps on giving! When you begin shopping for and comparing appliances and home electronics, look for the EnergyGuide and ENERGY STAR® labels to ensure the energy efficiency credentials of the product.

The Federal Trade Commission requires yellow EnergyGuide labels on most home appliances (except ranges and ovens). These labels provide an estimate of the product's energy consumption or energy efficiency, and compare it to the highest and lowest energy consumption or efficiency estimates of similar appliance models. You won't find EnergyGuide labels on home electronics such as computers, televisions, and home audio equipment. Instead, look for blue ENERGY STAR® labels on these products, indicating they've met strict energy efficiency criteria established by the U.S. Department of Energy and U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency. Ensuring that what you take home is energy efficient can make a big difference in the long run. The average home has two TVs, three telephones, and a DVD player. If these items were replaced with ENERGY STAR® qualified models, it would save more than 25 billion pounds of greenhouse gas emissions a year, equivalent to removing more than two million cars from the road. Products that have earned the ENERGY STAR® label also use less energy to perform "standby" functions, while providing the same performance and features as conventional models. Using less energy preserves energy resources while saving money on energy bills. For more information, visit www.eere.energy.gov or www.energystar.gov.

Sources: ENERGY STAR, U.S. Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

MEC Offices will be closed

December 25, 2009 & January 1, 2010

In observance of Christmas and New Years.

Below you will find a detailed list of the Energy Sense incentives offered by Missoula Electric Cooperative. Please visit our website at www.missoulaelectric.com or contact an Energy Sense Team Member at 541-4433

RESIDENTIAL

CFLs		Up to \$2.50/bulb
Dishwasher		\$25.00
Clothes Washer Incentives	Gas water heat	\$25.00
	Electric water heat	\$70.00
Refrigerator Incentive		\$25.00
Freezer Incentive		\$25.00
Early Retirement Incentive		\$125.00
Water Heater Incentive		\$25.00
Montana Home – Residential New Construction		\$1,500.00
NEEM Homes		\$1,450.00
Ground Source Heat Pump	must be approved installer	\$3,000.00
Air Source Heat Pump	must be approved installer	\$790.00

COMMERCIAL

Lighting	Lesser of 70% of cost or incentive amount
Power Save Computer Management	up to \$10.00/workstation
Energy Smart Grocer	Call for an appointment

AGRICULTURE

Green Motors	\$1.00/hp
Sprinkler Hardware	Call for details
Replacement Motors	\$11.00/hp

KILL A WATT

Have you ever wondered how efficient your appliances are? Missoula Electric Co-op now offers a device called a Kill A Watt that will help you determine how much your computers, television and household appliances are costing you. Stop by our office and check one out today. For your convenience they are also available at the Libraries in Frenchtown, Seeley Lake, Superior, Alberton, Ovando, Helmville and Condon.

Incentives

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so be sure to check with your tax professional before beginning your project to see if it qualifies for the enhanced tax credits, and visit www.ase.org/taxcredits and www.energytaxincentives.org for more information about eligible products.

Happy Holiday's from all of us at MEC.

Meter tampering can be dangerous

Have you ever thought about the importance of the meter seal that hangs below your meter? It prevents the accidental removal of the cover of the meter can. If the meter cover is removed, dangerous wires and parts behind the meter become exposed.

MEC employees that handle meters are trained to work with electricity safely and are aware of the dangers that exist with the job. If work needs to be conducted on the meter loop, or meter can and riser, you should call MEC at 1-800-352-5200 or 541-4433, so that we can send a trained serviceman out to safely remove the meter and ensure that no mistakes are made while working on the electric service.

MEC does not allow the removal of a meter seal except by a qualified MEC employee. Occasionally, a MEC employee will find a meter seal broken, cut, or missing. If the employee suspects tampering, service can be disconnected and the member must then contact the MEC office and pay the necessary charges to have power restored. Since meter tampering is illegal, criminal charges may also be filed. MEC takes it very seriously when a meter has been tampered with and electric service has been stolen or altered. The charges, both legal and for restoring service to the meter, can be extensive.

MEC's automated meter reading program helps to identify meter tampering quickly and efficiently. The system is alerted when there has been no electric usage for a period of time. Tampering with your electric meter is dangerous, it's illegal, and it's costly to both you and MEC.



Holiday Lighting Energy Tip:

Cool off your Christmas tree with new, bright LED lights

If you're one of the 33 million Americans who fill your Christmas tree stand with a live tree you know those tiny twinkling lights can get hot.

Cool things off his Christmas by replacing your holiday lights with LEDs – light-emitting diodes. They're cool to the touch so they don't heat up your tree branches. That is good news at holiday time.

The sad fact is that Christmas trees account for 200 fires every season estimates the U.S. Fire Administration. Well watered trees don't ignite as easily

as dried-out brittle branches which can catch fire within seconds of contacting a hot light bulb, an overheated wire or an open flame.

Decorative LEDs don't just burn cooler they are more energy efficient than your traditional incandescent holiday bulbs. They also last up to 50,000 hours and feature a nearly unbreakable epoxy plastic coating. Newer versions come in all shapes sizes and colors. And although they are more expensive than regular strands they will last far longer.



From all of us at Energy Partners, have a wonderful Holiday Season and a joyous New Year!