

MWVEC

Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Kiss a pig?

Tammy Lyson and Meridith Johnson were caught off guard by a pig squeal when they went in for the kiss.

In this issue:

- Youth Tour winner announced
- Meeting minutes, and more!



Howard Klug and Dale Haugen take their turn to kiss a pig.

Tammy Lyson and Meridith Johnson got to pucker up for their kiss with the pig.



TOP PHOTO: Lewis & Clark students dance to the "Funky Cowboy" with Ms. Lyson during halftime of the Teton basketball game

LEFT: Haugen, Klug, Berg, Lyson and Johnson all prepare for a halftime kiss.

Commitment to community by kissing a pig?

Each year, Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative (MWEC) participates in the Williston State College's School Spirit Night, when it partners with an area elementary school to bring area students and their families to a Teton basketball game. At each game, the students participate in activities for fun and to raise money for their school. This year, MWEC got the opportunity to work with Lewis & Clark Elementary. Together, they came up with the theme, "Western Wear." Which kind of fundraiser could possibly go with this theme? How about kissing a pig!

After a few months of planning and hard work, the event kicked off on Jan. 23, when five contestants

came together to help Lewis & Clark raise money. The contestants were Williston Mayor Howard Klug, WSC Foundation Alumni Association Director Hunter Berg, MWEC General Manager Dale Haugen and Lewis & Clark Elementary gym teacher Tammy Lyson and Principal Meridith Johnson.

Tickets were sold for \$1 each and counted as one vote. Lewis & Clark students were able to purchase tickets for 50 cents each. After a ticket was purchased, the buyer then dropped that ticket into a box with the corresponding photo of the contestant they wanted to vote for. Whichever contestant received the most tickets in their corresponding box would therefore be the "winner" and have to kiss



Lewis & Clark students high five the Teton ladies basketball team before their game pep rally.



All of the Lewis & Clark students learn about the ladies and men's Teton basketball teams.

a pig.

Boxes for voting were available the week prior to the event at Lewis & Clark, as well as the MWEC main office. Not only did students know Ms. Lyson and Mrs. Johnson, but many knew Dale Haugen, as two of his grandchildren attend the school. Although, many did not know Mayor Klug, Ms. Lyson explained to them how the the mayor is like the president of our little town. Many students liked that explanation and cast their vote for him.

Students were so excited for this event that some of them even used their own birthday money to vote. The smiles and joy these students showed was incredible. They couldn't wait to see two of their school staff members kiss a pig.

During halftime of the Lady Teton

game, the students first showed off their dance moves to the "Funky Cowboy" that Ms. Lyson taught them. After that, it was time to see who the "winner" was. The announcement came with many excitedly, cheering students as Ms. Lyson and Mrs. Johnson were chosen. As the two went in for their kiss, they were caught off-guard by a little squeal. However, the second attempt went much better.

Tickets were then sold again until halftime of the men's Teton game. Once again, students were able to show off their moves with Ms. Lyson and then another winner was announced. This time the winner was Dale Haugen. Haugen then took the microphone prior to his kiss and announced that if Mayor Klug would join him in kissing the pig, MWEC

would donate another \$500 to Lewis & Clark. Klug accepted and the two kissed the pig for all to see. After the kiss, Haugen said with a laugh, "I feel hungry for a ham sandwich."

Together, MWEC and Lewis & Clark raised \$1,032.50 for the school. The money was presented to the school and accepted by Mrs. Johnson and Ms. Lyson as well as some of the students. The students continue to talk about how great the event was and cannot wait for next year.

MWEC would like to thank all of those who purchased tickets and helped make the event a success. A big thank you to the MWEC member who allowed us to use one of their pigs and to all the MWEC and Lewis & Clark staff without whom this event would not have been as successful. ■

Megan Jorgenson wins Youth Tour essay contest

Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative congratulates this year's Youth Tour essay winner, Megan Jorgenson of Williston. Megan is the daughter of Blaine and Jennifer Jorgenson and is a junior at Williston High School.

Megan will join other participating North Dakota students on an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. The students from North Dakota will travel with the Montana youth delegation in the day-to-day touring of the sites, attractions, monuments and congressional offices in the Washington, D.C., area. The students will learn about electric cooperatives and discuss issues facing their communities and the nation.

The students who participated in the Youth Tour contest submitted an essay on the question: ***“Democracy is the foundation of our American way of life and of cooperative enterprise. The fundamentals of democracy include voter participation, political party affiliation, and public debate of issues. Describe what you think makes our current democracy strong, and provide suggestions for ways our democracy can be made stronger and more effective.”***

Here is Megan's winning essay:

The United States of America is a democracy. We hear this phrase repeated thousands of times throughout our lifetime. But what does it mean and why should we care? A simple definition of democracy is a form of government in which people choose leaders by voting. This means that the people decide who leads our country. This poses another question. Do the people who decide our government, our democracy, make it strong?

Democracy has its virtues and its downsides. One virtue is all citizens over the age of 17 having the ability to vote. The 15th amendment allows all men to vote. The 19th allows all women to vote. Amendment 24 eliminates poll taxes, making voting for poor people easier. The 26th amendment allows every person over the age of 17 to vote. These all allow the people to decide who is best fit to represent them. As Franklin D. Roosevelt said, “Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a president and senators and congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country.” However, this also has a downside. Many people acknowledge their right to vote, but they do not use it. Our democracy could be made stronger if everyone who has the right to vote used it.

Another virtue of our democracy is our political parties. Without political party debates, how much would we, as civilians, know? Freedom of press guarantees the distribution of foreign affairs. Freedom of speech also allows our nation's

citizens to be aware of issues. Of course, we can improve in this area as well. One way to do this would be to balance the power that the parties both have. If one party controls the House, the Senate and the presidency, then the other party is almost powerless to stop laws and bills that are being passed. We should not balance them to a point where nothing can be done but rather to a point where there are better debates about issues and pressing matters.

The Constitution of the United States of America is a virtue that we have enjoyed from many years. Our Constitution is fluid and allows for change. One example of this is the elastic clause, which states “The Congress shall have power to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof” (Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18). Even as some people see this as a good thing, there are those that think our Constitution is too fluid. Some people will argue that too much freedom is a bad thing.

Learning from our past is another virtue that we all too often forget to look at. We have made our way this far by learning from the past. One thing that we spend too much time doing, however, is trying to solve the problems of the past. We often get so wrapped up in trying to solve the past, we forget that there are still problems in the future. Willie Jolley once said, “The past is a place of reference, not a place of residence.” We needed to learn from the past, but not get wrapped up in trying to solve it. If something is a mystery, maybe it should stay that way.

The last virtue is our democratic government. Even as we cannot live without someone to tell us what needs to be done, we cannot live with someone trying to force their ideas onto us. In order to make our government stronger, the people running it need to realize that the people of this country do not always agree with what the government wants. As Andrew Jackson stated in The Bank Veto, “In thus attempting to make our General Government strong, we make it weak. Its true strength consists in leaving individuals and States, as much as possible, to themselves; in making itself felt, not in its power, but in its beneficence; not in its control, but in its protection; not in binding the States more closely to the centre, but leaving each to move, unobstructed, in its proper orbit.”

Our democracy is strong in too many ways to write about. Some people will never know about some of these strengths, whether they just choose to ignore them or they just aren't informed. Our democracy is made strong by people who vote, the differences between political parties, the Constitution of the United States of America, learning from our past, and our democratic government. ■

SPRING INTO ENERGY SAVINGS

March brings the beginning of spring and the start of a new season.
And spring cleaning can bring a fresh opportunity to find ways to save energy and money.

Here are just a few simple ideas from your local electric cooperative to improve the energy efficiency and comfort of your home as warmer temperatures arrive:

- 1. Service your air conditioner.** Easy maintenance such as routinely replacing or cleaning air filters can lower your cooling system's energy consumption by up to 15 percent. Also, the first day of spring could serve as a reminder to check your air conditioner's evaporator coil, which should be cleaned annually to ensure the system is performing at optimal levels.
- 2. Use ceiling fans.** Cooling your home with ceiling fans will allow you to raise your thermostat four degrees. This can help lower your electricity bills without sacrificing overall comfort. In the winter months, ceiling fans should go clockwise to push rising warm air downward. In the summer, however, the fans should circulate counterclockwise for the opposite effect.
- 3. Caulk air leaks.** Using low-cost caulk to seal cracks and openings in your home keeps warm air out – and cash in your wallet.
- 4. Seal ducts.** Air loss through ducts can lead to high electricity costs, accounting for nearly 30 percent of a cooling system's energy consumption. Sealing and insulating ducts can go a long way toward lowering your electricity bills.
- 5. Dust off electronics, light bulbs and vents for efficient use of energy.**
- 6. Open windows.** Creating a breeze allows you to naturally cool your home without using air conditioners. This is an ideal tactic in spring when temperatures are mild. If it's warmer during the day, open the windows in the evening and close them during the day.
- 7. Cook outside.** On warmer spring days, keep the heat out of your home by using an outdoor grill instead of the indoor oven.
- 8. Set the thermostat.** On warm days, setting a programmable thermostat to a higher setting when you are not at home can help reduce your energy costs by approximately 10 percent.
- 9. Switch on bathroom fans.** Bathroom fans suck out heat and humidity from your home, improving comfort.
- 10. Clean out your fridge.** It's one of the biggest energy hogs in your whole home, with the average fridge using nearly 14 percent of a household's energy. By properly cleaning out your fridge, you can reduce its energy consumption and cut down your electricity bill. Start by rolling your refrigerator away from the wall and using a duster or vacuum hose to clear the dirt and dust from the coils. Remove unneeded and old food from your fridge to allow air to circulate and increase efficiency.



You've planned every acre **HAVE YOU PLANNED FOR YOUR SAFETY?**

As spring planting nears, Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative reminds hardworking farmers and ranchers to stay safe. Overhead power lines are necessary to deliver electricity, but those same power lines can also be deadly if not treated with respect. While you need to focus on the field and your machinery, Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative urges you to also watch for electrical hazards around the farm or ranch.



Be aware

Farmers and their equipment should always be 10 feet away from power lines on all sides. Field cultivators and sprayers can often reach as high as 12 feet in the air. Practice extreme caution and use a spotter to make sure you stay far away from power lines when you use tall equipment.

If you have purchased new equipment, be aware of antennas or other attachments that may pose new hazards. A newer, bigger piece of equipment may no longer clear a line. In addition, shifting soil may also affect whether or not machinery avoids power lines from year-to-year.

Power lines also may sag over the years. If power lines on your property are sagging, contact Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative to repair the lines. Never try to move a power line on your own.

Overhead power lines are not the only electric hazard on the farm. Pole guy wires, used to stabilize utility poles, are grounded. However, when one of the guy wires is broken, it can become charged with electricity. If you break a guy wire, call the cooperative to fix it. Don't do it yourself.

Follow these other tips:

- Look over work areas carefully for overhead power lines and utility poles. Make sure you, your family and employees know the location of overhead power lines, and use routes to avoid the lines when moving equipment. Do this every year, as equipment sizes and soil conditions may change.
- Be aware of increased heights of equipment, especially new equipment with higher antennas.
- Avoid moving large equipment alone. Have someone watch as you move equipment to ensure you are clear of power lines.
- Be extra careful when working around trees and brush; they often make it difficult to see power lines.

What if you contact a power line?

Imagine that you are driving a tractor to the field when things come to a screeching halt. You look back to see what's stopping you, only to discover that you're tangled in an overhead power line! What do you do?

- First, DON'T climb out. If your equipment does contact a power line, stay in the cab and call for help. Warn others to stay away and wait until the electric cooperative arrives. Most utility lines are uninsulated, bare wires. Do not let your body become a direct link between the power line and the ground.
- If you must leave the tractor due to immediate danger, such as a fire, jump as far away as you can, making sure that no part of your body touches the tractor and the ground at the same time. Land with both feet together and shuffle with your feet a few inches at a time, making sure to never break contact with the ground or cause separation between your feet.
- Once you're off the tractor, do not go back until Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative disconnects the power line.

**Regular board meeting
Jan, 25, 2017**

Directors present: Hartsoch, Johnson, Lynne, Jorgenson, Bratvold, Lalim, Sorenson and Grant.

Directors absent: Haugen.

Others present: Manager Haugen, attorney Foust, in-house counsel Ellis and staff members.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. Minutes of the Dec. 28 board meeting were approved as presented. The agenda for the meeting was approved as presented, with the addition of risk management by Manager Haugen.

G&W presentation: Representative of G&W Electric presented a PowerPoint on G&W reclosure performance and continuous improvement activities. There was discussion on product failure and risk management.

Attorney's report: Attorney Ellis discussed the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) contract for WAPA services. The motion to approve the contract passed. There was also discussion on outside counsel from Delaware assisting on a small bankruptcy matter.

Compliance training: Jerry Rehak presented a compliance exercise on ransomware.

President's report: President Sorenson brought up the idea of two-day regular board meetings throughout the year for discussion.

Financial reports: Jay Lux presented the financial and operating report for the unaudited year to date through Dec. 31. Operating revenues are \$225,287,730, the total cost of electric service is \$207,296,159, the operating margins are \$17,991,570 and the total margins are \$21,302,244. TIER is 2.42, the equity level is 28.33 percent and OTIER is 2.20.

Special equipment/work order closeouts: The board approved the closeout of the following special equipment/work order:

Closeout 648	\$473,396.03
Closeout 649	\$73,161.82
Closeout 651	\$164,057.91
TOTAL	\$692,615.76

Capital credit retirements: The board approved the retirement of the following capital credit accounts:

Marjory J. Evenson estate	
Gail Curtis estate	
Laralie Foldesi.....	

Bad debts: The Board approved to write off bad debts.

Manager's report: Manager Haugen reported two minor accidents over the past month. Jerry Rehak presented the monthly and yearly reliability and outage reports. Jennifer Kaiser presented the operations updated. Generally, residential, commercial, oil well requests and system improvement numbers have trended down. A brief update was given on the estimated delivery dates for two new bucket trucks.

Manager Haugen gave an update on the building progress. He is meeting with FCI weekly for updates.

Manager Haugen reminded the board as of April 1, Basin Electric will no longer be responsible for compliance. Manager Haugen showed charts and diagrams from the SPP meeting on a transmission expansion plan and a breakdown of the projected costs depending on each system.

The revenue chart was shown for the year with a breakdown for commercial loads, gas plants, residential and other uses. Manager Haugen also discussed possible opportunities for expansion.

Report on Mountrail County projects: Chris Brostuen reported on meetings with Mountrail County planning and zoning concerning the county ordinance requirements for putting in transmission lines. Discussions are ongoing to ensure compliance with current ordinance and possible revision of the current ordinance.

Meeting reports: Written reports were presented from Upper Missouri Power Cooperative and Basin Electric Power. Jorgenson also presented a report on Upper Missouri Power Cooperative.

Grant presented a report on the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives. Jorgenson, Lynne and Hartsoch also provided comments on the annual meeting.

Old/new business, upcoming meetings, calendar: The board approved to pay Director Grant to be on the DRECA/CFC task force.

The annual meeting is set for June 6, 2017, but the location is still being finalized.

The headhunter is still working on obtaining applicants for MWEC employee openings. ■

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