

Electric co-ops concerned with president's budget proposal

BY DAN RIEDINGER

Every year, the president sends Congress a proposal for funding the government during the upcoming fiscal year, which Congress considers as it weighs its own budget priorities. The president's budget request for fiscal year 2018 includes several proposals that threaten to handcuff rural families and businesses. While Congress isn't required to adopt them, electric co-ops have an obligation to stand up for the interests of their members by alerting our elected leaders of our concerns.

That's why Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative and other co-ops have been vocal in Washington, D.C., about several areas of the president's budget that would hurt America's electric cooperatives and their 42 million members.

Rural economic development

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development program provides loans, grants and guarantees to support economic development and many essential services in rural communities. But the president's budget proposes to eliminate funding for the Rural Business Service, including the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program (REDLG), Rural Cooperative Development Grant and Rural Energy for America programs.



Power marketing administrations

The federal government provides clean, low-cost electricity to more than 600 co-ops from federal hydropower projects operated by four power marketing administrations (PMAs). But the administration proposed selling off the transmission assets of three PMAs. This would jeopardize affordable, reliable power for more than 100 million people and have a devastating impact on rural

economies. Both Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill have joined co-ops in speaking out against this proposal.

Low-income energy assistance

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services proposes eliminating the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), a valuable tool that electric cooperative consumers use to help pay their energy bills in times

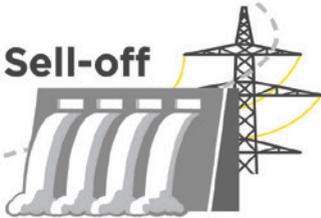
5 FEDERAL BUDGET ISSUES CO-OPS ARE WATCHING

1. Rural Development



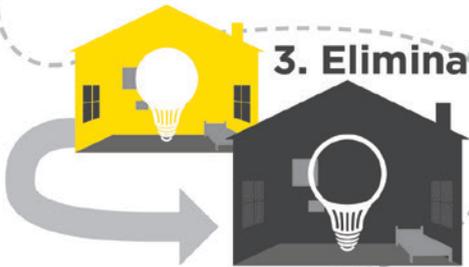
RURAL
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

2. PMA Sell-off



x600
CO-OPS

3. Eliminating LIHEAP



4. International Electrification



USAID ↓

5. DOE Energy and Cyber Programs



of severe weather or economic crises. Co-ops have joined others in the power sector each year in asking Congress for robust LIHEAP funding to help those in need pay their home heating and cooling bills. The program has had a strong track record of success since 1981.

International electrification

The president's budget proposes a 32-percent cut to the U.S. Agency for International Development, a major funding source for electric cooperatives' work to promote electrification in other countries. The pressure to cut rural electrification programs could both halt ongoing successful efforts to provide millions more people access to reliable and affordable electricity and stall the growth of global trading partners.

Department of Energy programs

Four U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) applied energy research and development (R&D) programs are targeted for a \$2.15 billion cut under the president's budget. Among those, funding for solar energy would be cut from \$238 million to \$134 million, reducing the potential for future co-op solar R&D projects. Further cuts to DOE cybersecurity programs would reduce electric sector coordination and collaboration with the Department's Office of Electricity Delivery.

Jim Matheson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), summed the budget proposal up this way: "A healthy rural America can be the rising tide that lifts the nation's economy and the standard of living in countless communities. Rather than shifting funds away from critical programs that have a record of success, the administration should be working with co-ops and other stakeholders to jumpstart rural America's economic engines."

That's the message NRECA and its member co-ops, including MWEC, are delivering to federal policymakers. ■

Efficient kitchen lighting

BY ANNE PRINCE

Kitchen sizes, styles and configurations have changed dramatically through the years. As consumer lifestyles and tastes have changed, kitchen lighting has evolved to reflect these shifts. In the past, a simple florescent ring placed in the center of the ceiling operated by a single switch was the norm for a typical American kitchen. Now, the proliferation of TV networks and shows devoted to every aspect of home decorating, remodeling, building and sales reflect current consumers' higher standards and expectations for a home's appearance. Lighting, once considered an afterthought, is now an integral part of home décor and function – particularly in a focal area such as the kitchen.

Layering effect

The effect of a single overhead light source can be too much light in one area and not enough in others. Layering different types of light from different sources is not only a smart plan, but it makes good sense from an efficiency perspective.

Task lighting, such as under-counter lighting, illuminates a particular work surface without a shadowing effect. Energy-efficient options typically feature LED-powered puck lights that can be placed precisely where they are most needed under the cabinets. Another option is the thin-diameter fluorescent tube that use about 25 percent of the electricity of halogen or incandescent bulbs and have a much greater life span. Regardless of the type of light selected, when installing the lights, place them toward the front of the cabinet so they illuminate the whole countertop rather than the wall. Most types of under-counter lights can be plugged into a standard outlet. Overhead lights, whether from a central fixture, track lights or recessed, can offer indirect illumination and complement the task lights. Where possible, utilize ENERGY STAR and LED options.

Shining a light on flexibility

Efficient lighting in the kitchen does not necessarily mean more lights, but rather more versatile lighting.

25% The energy you'll save with energy-saving incandescent bulbs

75% The energy you'll save with CFL bulbs

75% The energy you'll save with LED bulbs



Lighting Choices **SAVE YOU MONEY**

All of these light bulbs meet the new energy standards that took effect from 2012-2014. The energy-saving incandescent bulbs use about 25% less energy than traditional varieties.

Source: energy.gov

Dimmer switches create more flexible lighting options for existing lights. There are times when maximum illumination is required for tasks such as food preparation or clean-up. At other times, it makes more sense to turn down the lights to create a cozier ambiance. By placing different sets of lights on dimmer switches, you increase your options, minimize the energy used for lighting and thereby allow for greater energy efficiency. However, when installing dimmer switches, make sure they are compatible with LED lights.

Lighting accounts for up to 15 percent of a home's energy budget, and since the kitchen still remains the heart of the home and is a high traffic hub, it makes good

sense to focus here. For basic energy efficiency in the kitchen and elsewhere, sometimes small adjustments can make a big impact.

The simplest area to focus is on the light itself. LED lights use a small fraction of the energy of CFL, halogen or traditional incandescent bulbs and they are known for their longevity and efficiency. ENERGY STAR-rated LED bulbs typically are the most energy efficient.

At its best, a good kitchen lighting plan is functional, attractive and energy efficient. Whether your kitchen is large or small, old or new, one reliable recipe for energy savings is utilizing more efficient lighting in the heart of the home. ■

Always Call Before You Dig.



One easy call gets utility-owned lines marked.

If your home or shop is served by Mountrail-Williams Electric, you own the electric lines from the meter to your home or shop. These lines will not be located by calling 811. If you need these lines located, you must contact a locating company or request a secondary locate from Mountrail-Williams Electric after calling 811.

Safe Digging Is No Accident: Always Call 811 Before You Dig
Visit call811.com for more information.



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

COOL MONTHS MEAN TIME TO SAVE ENERGY

Simple and inexpensive actions can help you save energy and money during the cool fall and winter months.

Here are some tips from Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative:

Take advantage of the sun

- Open curtains on your south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat your home, and close them at night to reduce the chill you may feel from cold windows.

Cover drafty windows

- Use a heavy-duty, clear plastic sheet on a frame or tape clear plastic film to the inside of your window frames during the cold winter months. Make sure the plastic is sealed tightly to the frame to help reduce infiltration.
- Install tight-fitting, insulating drapes or shades on windows that feel drafty after weatherizing.

Adjust the temperature

- When you are home and awake, set your thermostat as low as is comfortable.
- When you are asleep or out of the house, turn your thermostat back 10 to 15 degrees for eight hours and save around 10 percent a year on your heating and cooling bills. A programmable thermostat can make it easy to set back your temperature. If you have a heat pump, maintain a moderate setting or use a programmable thermostat specially designed for use with heat pumps.

Find and seal leaks

- Seal the air leaks around utility cut-throughs for pipes (“plumbing penetrations”), gaps around chimneys and recessed lights in insulated ceilings, and unfinished spaces behind cupboards and closets.
- Add caulk or weatherstripping to seal air leaks around leaky doors and windows.

Maintain your heating system

- Schedule service for your heating system.
- Replace your furnace filter once a month or as needed.

Reduce heat loss from the fireplace

- Keep your fireplace damper closed unless a fire is burning. Keeping the damper open is like keeping a window wide open during the winter; it allows warm air to go right up the chimney.
- If you never use your fireplace, plug and seal the chimney flue.
- If you do use the fireplace, install tempered glass doors and a heat-air exchange system that blows warmed air back into the room.
- Check the seal on the fireplace flue damper and make it as snug as possible.
- Purchase grates made of C-shaped metal tubes to draw cool room air into the fireplace and circulate warm air back into the room.
- Add caulking around the fireplace hearth.

Aiming at electrical equipment is never in season!

As autumn approaches, along with various North Dakota hunting seasons, please remember that electrical insulators, conductors and electrical equipment are NOT on the hunting season list.

Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative encourages hunters to be aware of electrical equipment while enjoying the great outdoors this season. Be aware of what's behind that big buck or it might cost big bucks. Repairs can be costly and damages cause outages to our members. As a nonprofit cooperative, owned by the members, we all share in this expense.

This doesn't include the inconvenience and hazards to members down the line that require power for medical equipment or other needs while a lineworker does some hunting of his own looking at spans of line trying to locate the problem.

Hunters and other gun owners should not shoot near or

toward power lines, power poles and substations. A stray bullet can cause damage to equipment, could be deadly to the shooter, and potentially interrupt electric service to large areas.

Sometimes the damage isn't noticed for several weeks or months, and is only discovered when an unexplained outage occurs.

Landowners are also encouraged to take note of nonmembers who are hunting on their property, and remind them to be aware of power lines.

We recognize the majority of hunters practice safe hunting and understand the potential risks when discharging a firearm. We encourage experienced hunters who are familiar with the area to identify the locations of utility properties and equipment to young or new hunters in their group and remind them to avoid shooting toward these facilities. Enjoy the great outdoors. Just be sure to hunt only what's in season. ■



HUNTING SAFETY TIPS:

- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Familiarize yourself with the location of power lines and equipment on land where you shoot.
- Damage to the conductor can happen, possibly dropping a phase on the ground. If it's dry and the electricity goes to ground, there is the possibility of electrocution and fire.
- Be especially careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.
- Do not use power line wood poles or towers to support equipment used in your shooting activity.
- Take notice of warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment on the poles can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them, causing shock or electrocution.
- Do not shoot at, or near, birds perching on utility lines. That goes for any type of firearm, including pistols, rifles or shotguns.
- Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Anything attached to a pole besides utility equipment can pose an obstruction – and a serious hazard – to electric cooperative employees as they perform utility operations.

Distracted driving law in effect

What is distracted driving?

Distracted driving is any activity that could divert a person's attention away from the primary task of driving. All distractions endanger driver, passenger and bystander safety.

Distracted driving is a growing and deadly threat. Too many drivers are ignoring their responsibilities behind the wheel. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), nearly 3,500 people were killed and an estimated 391,000 injured in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted drivers in 2015.

There are three main types of distraction:

- Visual: taking your eyes off the road
- Manual: taking your hands off the wheel
- Cognitive: taking your mind off what you're doing

Examples include:

- Texting
- Changing the radio/selecting music
- Waving to other people on the road
- Passengers in your vehicle
- Talking on a cell phone – even if it's hands-free
- Eating while driving
- Entering an address in your GPS
- Grooming

But, because text messaging requires visual, manual and cognitive attention from the driver, it is by far the most alarming distraction.

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found in analyzing 2009-2012 data, that even while more than eight in 10 drivers believed it completely unacceptable for a motorist to text or email behind the wheel, more than a third of those same respondents admitted to reading text messages while driving.

In 46 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands, texting while driving is an illegal, ticketable offense.

Distracted driving laws

Text messaging is prohibited for all drivers, and drivers under the age of 18 are prohibited from using any electronic communications devices, including cell phones.

This law carries a \$100 fine and went into effect Aug. 1, 2011.

For more detailed information, view the North Dakota Century Code 39-08-23 and 39-08-24

The law was expanded to include distracted driving

to mean any distraction that impairs the ability to safely operate the vehicle.

If you're distracted while driving and commit a traffic violation, you can be given a \$100 citation for distracted driving. This new expanded part of the law is effective Aug. 1, 2017.

For more detailed information, view the North Dakota Century Code 39-08-25

Speak up. If your friends or family text while driving, tell them to stop. Listen to your passengers; if they catch you texting while driving, and tell you to put your phone away, put it down. ■

JUST DON'T DO IT! Phones and Driving Don't Mix

Take the **NO TEXT, NO TALK** Pledge



Keep your co-workers, members, family – and yourself – safe! Help reduce driving accidents by taking the pledge not to text or talk while driving.

**Unofficial minutes
of regular board meeting
July 27, 2017**

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

Others present: Manager Haugen, attorney Foust and staff members.

The meeting was called to order at 9:36 a.m. in a meeting room of the Roosevelt Motel, New Town. Minutes of the June 28, 2017, reorganizational meeting were approved as presented. Minutes of the regular board meeting will be resubmitted at next month's meeting after corrections are made. The agenda for the meeting was approved as presented.

SEATING OF BOARD OF DIRECTOR MEMBER: Manager Haugen briefly reviewed the necessary qualifications for board members with the board and recommended that Dick Ludwig be properly seated. The board passed a motion to approve and formally seat Dick Ludwig as director for the West District.

NEW TOWN LOCATION: The board discussed possible location options for the New Town office.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT: In June, an individual who is not a member or employee of Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative was involved an accident that damaged Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative property located in the city limits of Williston. Attorney Foust updated the board on the status of the efforts being made to collect the cost to repair the damage.

Attorney Foust discussed resolution to clean up record title on the Osborn Substation land.

OPERATING AND FINANCIAL REPORT: Jay Lux presented the operating report for the year to date and for the month of June. The total margins for the year to date was \$10,035,731. OTIER is 2.23; TIER is 2.34; MDSC is 2.61; and equity is 30.98 percent.

Jay Lux also briefly discussed the Cooperative Finance Corporation loan status as of June 30, 2017, and also reviewed the annual meeting expenses.

The board considered the executive summary of 2017 restated adoption agreement changes provided by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. The board approved a motion to approve the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association adoption agreement retirement security plan for Plan A, Plan B and 401(k) Pension Plan as presented.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT/WORK ORDER CLOSEOUTS: The board approved the closeout of the following special equipment/work order:

Closeout 669.....	\$37,295.00
Closeout 670.....	\$28,316.00
TOTAL.....	\$65,611.00

CAPITAL CREDIT RETIREMENTS: The board approved the retirement of the following capital credit accounts:

- John Holter estate
- Denny Farhart estate

BAD DEBTS: The Board approved the transfer of \$2.50 from accounts receivable to

bad debts. Efforts will continue to collect these sums including the retention of capital credits.

N.D. REC BENEFIT STATEWIDE HEALTHCARE TRUST: The board approved a motion for Jay Lux to serve as principal trustee and Brandy Hansen to serve as alternate trustee of the N.D. REC Benefits Statewide Healthcare Trust.

MEETING REPORTS:

North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) – Director Grant presented the NDAREC board report. As part of his report, the mid-year reports and May 2017 board notes were provided. Director Grant also discussed NDAREC website development and the possibility of NDAREC board of directors establishing a 501(c)(3) organization. Director Grant also provided information on a few of the programs NDAREC is a part of in its commitment to the future of rural America.

Upper Missouri Power Cooperative (UMPC) – Director Jorgenson gave a report on UMPC. The Upper Missouri general manager report for June 21 was made available.

RESCO – The board approved a motion for Director Sorenson to serve as delegate at the Region VI meeting in September.

Basin Electric – The Basin Electric Power Cooperative board meeting “Review of Basin’s Credit Rating Strategy” was provided. The board approved a motion for Director Lalim to serve as delegate and for Director Lynne to serve as alternate at the upcoming annual meeting in November.

Mid-West Electric Consumers Association – A memorandum on the upcoming annual meeting in December in Denver was provided. Directors Lalim and Jorgenson will attend. The board approved a motion for Director Lalim to serve as delegate and Director Jorgenson to serve as alternate.

MANAGER'S REPORT:

ELECTRONIC ANONYMOUS VOTING – The board participated in a trial run exercise using electronic anonymous voting.

SAFETY – A memorandum was provided to the board regarding a failure of the data center battery backup system, which caused all servers to reboot. The failure occurred while work was being done on the power on the facility side of the power input at MWEC's Primary Data Center. Efforts will continue to improve recovery time in catastrophic failures such as this. The National Information Solutions Cooperative is also in the process of doing a deep lessons-learned and mitigation plan from this event.

Manager Haugen reported one incident in June. An employee fell on steps at the MWEC office and broke a foot. MWEC staff is working to complete all necessary filings to property and timely report the incident.

SPP – Manager Haugen provided maps of the MWEC SPP facilities. MWEC has requested a system configuration change known as the Wheelock Tap, to be evaluated through the sponsored study process. As part of his report, Manager Haugen also updated the board on the status of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and provided the order accepting MWEC's filing, subject to refund after establishing hearing and settlement from July 1, 2017. The judge selection made was Judge Young for the matter

and information on the judge was presented.

Manager Haugen also provided the 2018 high priority study from SPP which was developed in order to appropriately assess the needs in the regional transmission area.

RELIABILITY AND OUTAGE REPORT – Manager Haugen provided the current reliability and outage report. There were 117 interruptions reported in June.

MWEC BUILDING UPDATE – Manager Haugen presented an update on the progress of the MWEC office building. As part of this update, he presented the meeting minutes from his latest weekly meeting with FCI Constructors Inc. and the two roofing observation reports prepared by PIE, the consulting and engineering company hired by MWEC to oversee certain aspects of the architectural and construction of the office building. Manager Haugen also reported the project is still on budget.

The board discussed the board room design, mainly addressing seating concerns for hearing and presentations.

CONSTRUCTION NOTES – The latest construction notes were provided.

EMPLOYEE UPDATE – Manager Haugen gave an update on open positions at MWEC.

UNION CONTRACT – Manager Haugen gave an update on the status of the union contract and healthcare.

MEMBER CONCERNS – The board discussed a member's concerns about being disconnected.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: The board broke for executive session to discuss employee matters and member concerns.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. ■

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Roger Sorenson.....	Chairperson
Robert Grant.....	Co-chairperson
Cheryl Hartsoch.....	Treasurer
Blaine Jorgenson.....	Secretary
Larry Johnson.....	Director
Aaron Lynne.....	Director
Garrett Lalim.....	Director
Luke Lahtinen.....	Director
Dick Ludwig.....	Director
Neff, Eiken & Neff, PC.....	Project Attorney
Dale Haugen.....	General Manager

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