

Sheridan Electric Cooperative

LiveWire

Sheridan Electric Cooperative - Medicine Lake, Mont. 406-789-2231

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Sheridan Electric continues to grow

BY ROD SMITH

As we review this past year, it reminds us how important it is for your co-op to keep up with changes in the power industry. This past year, Sheridan Electric Co-op had a good year, with few changes in our operations. But, as we look back to the start of this century, the changes at Sheridan Electric in the past 19 years have been dramatic. The co-op staff researched the information for the table on page 5.

Power sales (kilowatt-hours) have increased from 72,041,152 in 1999 to 130,073,080 in 2018. That is an increase of 80 percent in 19 years.

To serve that growth, we invested in infrastructure to meet the power demand. In 1999, our utility plant was worth \$18,860,146. Today, our utility plant is worth \$83,502,177. This investment in our utility plant

not only made it possible to meet our commercial power demand, it greatly improved the reliability of our system in the northeast portion of our territory. We did incur debt in this buildout of our system. It is anticipated that this debt will be retired in about four more years.

Annual operating revenue has increased from \$5.2 million in 1999 to \$18.9 million in 2018. In 2018, about \$5 million was received from kilovolt-ampere (kVA) charges on our commercial accounts, and lease payments on our new transmission line. The kVA charges are used to retire the debt on our transmission line and will be removed once the debt is retired.

Power sales continue to grow, with the most growth in commercial sales. Our ability to grow sales allows the

board and staff to focus on improving the reliability of our system through upgrades and maintenance.

Each month, we review our power rates. The good news is that they are trending down. If this continues, we anticipate providing a bill credit later this year, with a potential rate reduction early next year.

Your board of directors and staff work to keep the membership informed on the industry challenges we will face in the coming years. With input from our members, we can meet those challenges successfully. ■



Rod Smith

Verbal de-escalation and active shooter training held

BY SCOTT WESTLUND

Training brought to this area three years ago returned for a third time in August. Chad Sheehan, Strategic Solutions, made his third trip to this region on Aug. 3. This was an answer to a request from area schools to have this training return to enhance an already trained workforce within our schools and area businesses.

Hosted by the Froid School District, Chad made his

presentation to well over 100 participants from all walks of life. Participants included six area schools, area businesses and Sheridan Electric personnel.

Chad has an extensive background in law enforcement and has seen it all. This was his opportunity to share his experience, and teach what works and what does not work in these types of situations. ■



Where are all the workers?

BY SCOTT WESTLUND

It seems that this question is continually asked in northeastern Montana. In fact, Rick Knick once told me that if someone does not have a job, they don't want one in this area.

Well, that is true, now that we see the economy booming again, outside of the oil boom we just experienced.

Unemployment is at an all-time low throughout the nation, and there are shortages of people to fill the positions open at this time. Some, or a good portion of these positions, are in the trades and not in the professional sector.

Plumbers, carpenters, lineworkers, electricians and general labor are all positions that are difficult to fill due to lack of training or people to work them.

It is the trades on which we are focused, as this problem has saturated throughout the nation.

Our investment in lineworkers and electricians is a great example of how

we are combatting this shortage, one person at a time.

Training of our young people is the core solution to the problem. To not look at the raw material that comes from our schools is ignoring the problem for the next generation to solve.

In my opinion, we have ignored this problem for the past 40 years in this region. We have neglected to educate our young folks to the possibilities that reside in the area where they grew up. We are ignoring the fact that 40 percent of the folks who graduate from college will have tremendous debt, and no job. There is no job because of the shift in job openings throughout the nation. Forty years ago, higher education was the norm, as we did not have enough people to fill those jobs then. Now another shift has taken place, creating a void of people to fill the jobs needed for the trades, leaving a surplus of people qualified for

professional positions.

It is time that we address this lopsided problem and start to invest in the trades. It is time that co-ops across the nation recognize this statistic and step up to the challenge of training the next generation of young folks to fill much-needed positions.

We have found that schools are the "Petri dish" to cultivate this much-needed labor. We will continue to improve and spend even more time with better programs to teach and invest in the future to help fill this need.

Co-ops across the nation, whether they are electric, farmers, food or any other entity, all know and abide by the co-op principle that ties them directly to their communities, and that is "commitment and concern for community." It is here, within these communities, that young laborers learn how to fill these much-needed jobs, either through apprenticeship programs or schooling. It is here that we will see the root cause of the problem be identified and cured.

We have a school within the service territory that created a work study program for its students. This program targets the students who want to learn about jobs within their area. They want to experience what each one of these jobs are, so they have an idea of where they want to go in the future.

I applaud this school as taking these steps toward training our next generation workforce for the trades.

Above all, we need to remember that some of these folks do not desire the higher education, and in fact know that the money and future is in the trades. Yes, we have seen a shift in the labor force. Now, we need to do our part in addressing it. ■

Treat electricity with respect on farms, ranches

Electricity is a necessity for hardworking farmers and ranchers, but electrical hazards on a farm or ranch can be dangerous, even deadly. Electrical safety is key to prevent fires, injuries, electrocution and potential death.

Your local electric cooperative urges you to watch for electrical hazards around the farm or ranch, and follow these tips:

Electrical panels

- Always use properly sized fuses or breakers in the boxes. Use of the proper size will prevent overheating of the wire from excess current. If a fuse is repeatedly blown, or a breaker is repeatedly tripped, find the cause.
- Periodically check the panel and boxes for spiderwebs, and mouse and insect nests, particularly the older installations that may not be sealed properly. Cleaning around the panels can help to prevent overheating.

Outlets

- It is preferable that all outlets be of the three-prong grounded type.
- In areas that tend to remain wet or where water is nearby, a ground-fault circuit interrupter is necessary. These devices can interrupt a power surge in as little as 25/1,000 of a second. Adapters to plug into three-prong outlets are available to provide protection at the outlet. In addition,

ground-fault circuit interrupter breakers are available to protect a whole circuit.

Extension cords

- Many times, an extension cord that is being used "temporarily" can become "permanent." If a piece of equipment is going to stay in one place for any length of time, it should have a properly grounded outlet. Extension cords can be damaged over time, creating hazards.
- Make sure extension cords are properly rated for their intended use, indoor or outdoor, and meet or exceed the power needs of the appliance or device being used.
- Inspect cords for damage before use. Check for cracked or frayed sockets, loose or bare wires and loose connections. Never use a cord that feels hot or is damaged in any way.
- Do not run extension cords through walls or ceilings. Do not nail or staple electrical

cords to walls.

Outside hazards

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines. A driver's vantage point from the cab may not be sufficient.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines, at all times, in all directions.
- Look up and use care when raising any equipment such as ladders, front-end loaders or augers. The number one electrical hazard on a farm is the potential contact from a grain auger.
- Inspect the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always remember to lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, contact your electric cooperative. ■

Sheridan Electric growth statistics

Year-end numbers for	2018	2009	1999
Miles distribution line	2,694	2,595	2,503
Miles transmission line	141	81	81
Members	1,839	1,801	1,915
Meters	3,992	3,447	3,231
Number of employees	22	24	17
Annual operating revenue	\$18,939,243	\$9,616,848	\$5,257,976
Total utility plant	\$83,502,177	\$30,385,384	\$18,860,146
Cost of power	\$6,570,810	\$4,435,499	\$2,641,952
Capital credits retired to date	\$17,193,369	\$7,888,711	\$4,278,287
Total long-term debt	\$33,328,524	\$5,904,041	\$6,776,092
Total kilowatt-hours sold	130,073,080	112,198,525	72,041,152
Commercial kWh	81,648,233	70,355,592	40,006,419
Residential kWh	42,377,079	37,979,954	29,507,077

Lighting to be given away



In the spirit of efficiency, Sheridan Electric Cooperative is giving away light-emitting diodes (LEDs) each month. Each month's winner will receive 12 new LED bulbs.

So this month, take a moment to complete and mail the coupon. Maybe you'll be this month's lucky winner and save on your energy costs. Good luck. ■

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

Account number: _____

*Congratulations to **Bruce Nyby** for winning this month's light bulb giveaway.*



Sheridan Electric Cooperative STATISTICAL REPORT

	August 2018	August 2019
Total miles of line	2,836	2,835
Consumers billed	3,090	3,121
Kilowatt-hours purchased	10,424,462	10,224,101
Kilowatt-hours sold	9,703,387	9,342,967
Average KWH per residential consumer	1,203	901
Average bill per residential consumer	\$134.70	\$113
Cost of purchased power	\$540,662	\$509,969
Margins year to date	\$2,468,395	\$3,006,099

LINE DEPARTMENT STATS

	August 2018	August 2019
Weather	11	36
Age or deterioration	3	3
Animals and public	3	9
Power supplier	0	0
Equipment	0	0

SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED

	August 2018	August 2019	Year to date
Pole installations	58	21	85
New construction	3,271 ft.	25,624 ft.	47,497 ft.
Miles driven	23,353	25,194	172,352
New accounts	4	8	31
Accounts retired	0	2	18

SHERIDAN ELECTRIC CO-OP

Medicine Lake, Mont. 59247
406-789-2231

TRUSTEES

Rod Smith, President Dagmar, Mont.
 Rick A. Hansen, V. President Froid, Mont.
 Rob Rust, Sec. Alkabo, N.D.
 Kerrey Heppner, Treas. Plentywood, Mont.
 Alan Danelson, Trustee Scobey, Mont.
 Andrew Dethman, Trustee Brockton, Mont.
 Harlan Skillingberg, Trustee Plentywood, Mont.
 Jody Lagerquist, Trustee Westby, Mont.
 Sherl Shanks, Trustee Brockton, Mont.

EMPLOYEES

Rick Knick Manager
 Riley Tommerup Office Mgr./Accountant
 Scott Westlund Marketing/Member Service Manager
 Jamie Ator Accountant
 Lisa Salvevold Office Assistant
 Tasha Roness Customer Service Representative
 Torie Waller Work Order Clerk
 Kory Opp Line Superintendent
 Bryan Lenz Line Foreman
 Nick Oelkers Staking Tech
 Tim Ereth Operator/Utilityman
 Josh Johnson Electrical General Foreman
 Tom Hinds Electrical Foreman
 Steve Augustine Line Sub Foreman
 Dan Roeder Journeyman Lineman
 Shawn Sansaver Journeyman Lineman
 Josh Marottek Journeyman Lineman
 Josh Ming Journeyman Lineman
 Bill Baillie Apprentice Lineman
 Nolen Drury Apprentice Lineman
 Tristan Ereth Apprentice Electrician
 Rod Luft Warehouse/Utility
 Vicky Haddix Custodian

OUTAGES • CALL 24 HOURS A DAY
406-789-2231

OFFICE HOURS: 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Monday through Friday

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative