

Sheridan Electric Cooperative

LiveWire

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

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Knick announces retirement

by Scott Westlund



Rick Knick

At some point in time, everyone thinks about retirement. Retirement from a job of many years does not mean the end, but a beginning. It is a time of celebrating a long career, doing other things, or spending more time with family. In some cases, it can also mean doing something different.

Rick Knick will retire from this cooperative, with his last day June 30. With a career of over 25 years, Rick has taken this co-op to the next level in many realms. As a member services manager, he took charge of addressing members' concerns, and preserving the co-op at the owner's level. He developed relationships with the schools by building new lighting projects, waxing gym floors, and helping with student development. Rick developed heat load for the cooperative, brought in new specialized motors, developed a water heater program and created an electrician department.

These past 12 years, Rick was the CEO and manager of this cooperative. He continued his legacy well beyond the days of a member services manager, stuck to those values, and brought the cooperative through some tough times to what you see today.

I have been with Rick through the last 10 years and have been exposed to some of the things that made him what he is today. He created a team of

people, starting 12 years ago, that led to a stable line crew, electrician crew and office staff. He has taken this co-op through the construction of a \$41 million transmission line that stabilized troubled areas on our eastern boundaries and supported not only the membership, but an ever-growing oil economy.

When asked why he decided to retire, he states, "What a better time to retire when things are running very well, and I have a great team in place." He also stated that the time is now, "because I find myself looking out the window quite a bit."

Through these years of writing, I have described leadership styles, leadership training, building futures, continuous improvement, and the list goes on. I have even talked about the most influential people I have ever worked for, and Rick Knick falls right into that bucket, as does one more.

This guy knows people, and understood that building relationships with members is the core competency of any cooperative. He understood that building these relationships takes time and fortitude. He also understood the meaning of the most valuable resource the cooperative has, and that is its people.

Rick's absence will be noticed, but we understand the time has come for him to move onto bigger and better things. He has created his legacy, he has ensured longevity, and he has earned the trust and respect of the employees within its walls.

We wish him luck in the future. ■

To value your membership

by **Scott Westlund**

To value your membership is to value the heart and soul of your cooperative. In recent months and years, questions have been raised about our industry and what to do about rising costs of power, and service.

These questions always seem to revolve around what the upstream people are doing that reflect costs downstream to you. With this in mind, it is easy to become distracted by what the “other guy is doing” versus what you are doing.

The membership is the heart and soul of your cooperative. These folks have the say in how you operate their business based on economic and regional needs. We strive to do that with every bit of information we may get from our members in this region.

But as stated, sometimes we get embroiled in the affairs of other cooperatives, when all they are doing is following the requests and direction from their membership. Can it affect us in the long run? Maybe, but maybe not. It really all boils down to those folks doing what they are instructed to do, follow their heart, keep the cooperative model whole, and proceed into the future.

I find it wasteful to spend time on someone else’s business when they are doing the will of their membership. Now, if it affects this cooperative, yes, we will step in and protect the values of this cooperative and its members.

Recently, I was at a meeting in North Dakota.

During this roundtable discussion, there was a whole lot of discussion about what a single co-op was doing, how they were doing it, and how the group did not agree with its direction. When it came to my turn, I stood and stated this, “I firmly believe that for us to run down a fellow co-op is wrong. They are doing the will of their membership and who are we to second guess that? Although their methods of communication were rough, I support them adhering to their membership’s direction.”

The case and topic were closed.

We cannot spend time second-guessing the will of another membership’s group with another co-op. That is not our business model, as we support one another. We cannot run them down and force them to be the outcast for decisions they have made. Stand up for ourselves when some of those decisions become obstacles for this cooperative, but do not categorize them as the outcast.

Now back to our cooperative. Yes, we are continually looking at rates and how to keep them as low as possible for our membership. We will just cover the cost of electricity, and infrastructure, but are continually focused on our service territory.

The membership makes up the heart and soul of each cooperative. We must adhere to those principles or we have lost our way. ■

A refreshing moment

by **Scott Westlund**

Refreshing moments can come at any time, and sometimes when we least expect it. In late February, Miss Montana Mo Shea stayed at my home for a couple of days to film the Miss Montana commercial the next day. As a 23-year-old, she took the time to study each night for a medical exam coming up in a few weeks. She had an online tutor, dedicated several hours toward questions to prepare for this exam, and took time to visit.

The refreshing moment came when Mo stood up from talking to my wife and watching TV and told us that she had to study. It seemed like she did it at the top of the hour and did not linger a moment longer. However, she did say this, “I have to go study and hold myself accountable.”

Wow, I wish more people held themselves to this standard all the time. In fact, that is the first time I have ever heard anyone so dedicated toward a goal in my life.



Smith



Heppner



Skillingberg

Director nomination process underway

Each year, Sheridan Electric Cooperative holds Nominating Committee meetings in three alternating districts. This year, elections will be held for directors in districts 1, 4 and 7. It is the membership's responsibility to contact the committee members if they have a nomination they would like to see on the ballot.

The committee members for District 1 are Kenny Nielsen (406-483-5286) and Bryon Hendrickson (406-482-5405). The current director for District 1 is Rod Smith. This district covers the areas east of Dagmar and Medicine Lake.

The committee members for District 4 are Mark Lynch (406-385-2205) and Brian Rueb (406-765-1686). The current director for District 4 is Kerrey Heppner. This district covers the areas around Plentywood and Reserve.

The committee members for District 7 are Dale McCoy (406-765-7014) and Les Abernroth (406-370-4988). The current director for District 7 is Harlan Skillingberg. This district covers the areas around Redstone and Outlook.

If you have questions pertaining to the district in which you or a possible candidate might live, please contact Sheridan Electric at 406-789-2231.

Being nominated by the committee is one of two ways to get on the printed ballot. If the committees have already met and you would like to get on the printed ballot, then you will have to have a petition, signed by at least 15 members, delivered to the co-op five days before the annual meeting. Nominations will also be taken from the floor during the meeting. Please contact Sheridan Electric if you need more information or need assistance with a nomination. ■

I have talked with many people, in many settings - young, older, middle-aged - and some generations do not hold these values.

But let me explain. It isn't that they do not hold these values, but do in another form. Theirs is a world of instant information, connected to the world they live in all the time. They want this instant gratification, through electronics and technology. It isn't that they are not holding

themselves accountable, it's that they do it in a different manner.

Mo's visit was very inspirational. Our younger generations just do it differently, but achieve the same results.

This is how we connect with these folks. This is how we achieve the results we need within our cooperative word. ■

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 **Michael Geib** for winning this month's light bulb giveaway.



Sheridan Electric Cooperative STATISTICAL REPORT

	March 2019	March 2020
Total miles of line	2,836	2,835
Consumers billed	3,095	3,166
Kilowatt-hours purchased	14,602,239	13,986,621
Kilowatt-hours sold	13,447,046	13,332,084
Average KWH per residential consumer	1,591	1,392
Average bill per residential consumer	\$144	\$130
Cost of purchased power	\$683,694	\$613,770
Margins year to date	\$1,237,285	\$1,268,195

LINE DEPARTMENT STATS

	March 2019	March 2020
Weather	2	5
Age or deterioration	5	2
Animals and public	6	1
Power supplier	1	0
Equipment	0	0

SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED

	March 2019	March 2020	Year to date
Pole installations	3	336	511
New construction	96 ft.	0 ft.	2,100 ft.
Miles driven	18,663	21,369	64,404
New accounts	3	2	5
Accounts retired	0	1	28

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.
Sheri Shanks, Trustee..... Brockton, Mont.

EMPLOYEES

Rick Knick Manager
Riley Tommerup..... Office Mgr./Accountant
Scott Westlund.....Marketing/Member Service Manager
Jamie Ator Accountant
Lisa SalveoldOffice Assistant
Tasha Roness Customer Service Representative
Torie Waller Work Order Clerk
Kory OppLine Superintendent
Bryan Lenz Line Foreman
Nick Oelkers..... Staking Engineer
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 