

Beartooth Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partners
The power of human connections®

Members Newsletter • Beartooth Electric Cooperative • PO Box 1110, Red Lodge, MT 59068 • 406-446-2310

General Manager's Report — By Ron Roodell



SURVIVING VEHICLE ACCIDENTS INVOLVING POWER LINES

Since May is Safety Month, it seems very appropriate to remind our members on what they should do if they ever find themselves involved in a vehicle accident that involves a power line pole. Instincts tell us to flee danger. Unfortunately, in vehicle accidents that bring down power lines, these natural inclinations can lead to tragic results.

Beartooth Electric Cooperative wants everyone to know that if your vehicle hits a power pole, or otherwise brings a power line down, stay in your vehicle and wait until a utility crew arrives on the scene and ensures that the downed lines have been de-energized. Also, if you ever come upon or witness an accident involving toppled power poles and lines, don't leave your vehicle

to approach the scene. Call 911 and report the accident.

According to the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration, tens of thousands of accidents occur each year where power poles are struck by vehicles or large equipment. Each one of these accidents has the potential to bring down power lines. Surviving the accident itself might not be enough to stay alive. You need to know of the right moves to make.

In the vast majority of these incidents, the safest thing to do is remain inside the vehicle. Only in the rare instance of fire should you exit a vehicle. If you must exit the vehicle, do it safely by jumping free and clear of the vehicle. Before jumping, however, take a look around and above you to be sure

there are no wires dangling in your path of escape. When making the jump, land with feet together, and then hop away from the scene. It is critical that you keep your body from touching the vehicle and the ground at the same time, thus creating a path for electricity to flow.

When people are involved in a vehicle accident, electricity is most likely not on anyone's mind. They are most concerned about whether anyone was injured,

or how badly their vehicle is damaged. They forget that by exiting the vehicle, they're risking bodily exposure to thousands of volts of electricity from downed power lines. It is important to keep your cool, survey the scene, and take appropriate action.

Get all the latest news @:

www.beartoothelectric.com



Vehicle accident involving downed power pole.

WHAT'S GOING ON @ BEARTOOTH ELECTRIC

By *Thad Moseman, Engineering Manager*

On Monday, March 28, the Cooperative "Net Metered" its twelfth interconnected service at the Fishtail Basin Ranch. Located by Dean, Montana the Fishtail Basin Ranch has installed a 12 kW photovoltaic system on the southern side of a barn roof. The installation consists of 64 solar panels channeled to two inverter panels located in the barn itself and then fed back to the metering. This solar generation system will be tied into the entire ranch facilities and offset the ranch's energy usage.

Please contact the Cooperative if you find any power lines with broken neutral wire or trees that are leaning into the power line itself.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Does your home have a window air conditioner? Make sure that your window unit is properly weather stripped, and clean the filter monthly. Keep "fresh air" vents on window A/C units closed.

Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

Announcements

- May is Electrical Safety Month! Checkout the safety insert included with your May billing statement.
- Low Income Senior Citizen (LISC) & Low Income Disabled (LID) Discount Program effective 01/01/11, low-income senior citizens and low-income certified disabled members are eligible to apply for a 10-percent discount on the energy portion of their power bill. For more information please contact the BEC office.
- Help us keep you safe! If you see any anomalies on our power lines.
Call us: 406-446-2310 or 800-472-9821 or
E-mail us: bec@beartoothelectric.com

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Five Ways to Spring Into Energy Efficiency



Spring marks a perfect time of year to make your home more energy efficient. Here are five quick tips that will save both energy and money:

1. Seal cracks and gaps around your home. As you put away your storm windows consider adding weather stripping around leaky doors and caulking around window frames. TogetherWeSave.com, a website sponsored by Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives, the branding program of the nation's not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric co-ops, shows how easy it is to use a caulking gun to seal up leaks around vents, duct work, and windows. A typical member at Beartooth Electric Cooperative can save more than \$200 annually by taking this simple step.

2. Change filters regularly. Change furnace and air conditioner filters monthly. Dirty filters restrict air flow and reduce the overall efficiency of your heating and cooling system by making it work harder on hot summer days.

3. Clean the refrigerator inside and out. Now's a good time to not only throw out that leftover fruitcake from the holidays but check the temperature settings on your refrigerator. Ideally, a refrigerator's temperature should be between 37 and 40 degrees for maximum operating efficiency.

When it's time to replace that old refrigerator, be sure to buy one that's ENERGY STAR rated. These energy-efficient appliances can save Beartooth Electric members as much as \$100 a year based on calculations.

4. Think sun block. By pulling down the shades on your windows this spring and summer, you could save about \$35 a year. Your local hardware store likely carries lots of inexpensive window coverings. Best of all, by blocking the sun, your house will stay cool and comfortable year-round.

5. Enjoy spring breezes. Use a clothesline during warmer months and let sunlight and breezes dry clothes naturally. This will reduce your electric bill by not running a dryer, and add a genuine clean scent to your family's laundry.

You can learn more about ways to lower your monthly energy bill by visiting TogetherWeSave.com or by calling the energy experts at Beartooth Electric Cooperative at 406-446-2310.



Transmission & Distribution

BEC serves some of the most rugged areas in South Central Montana. Keeping the lights on when we get a lot of snow, is often challenging as snow loading is the number one cause of winter outages.

“Snow load causes outages for two main reasons.” stated Line Superintendent, Marvin Dukart. “First, when temperatures hover at 32°F, the wet heavy snow build-up starts to freeze on the lines causing them to sag. Then, as the temperature rises to 34°F and above, the snow drops off the lines causing them to spring up and slap together. The line acts like a spring, and the wires end up bouncing, breaking and sometimes burning down. And, second, snow builds up on trees outside of our right-of-way and trees or limbs snap and fall into the lines.”

Restoration times can be lengthy in remote areas due to challenges of locating the cause of the problem and then getting crews and equipment to the source of the problem.

We have a dedicated team that does an outstanding job and works around-the-clock to restore power. This winter we used snowshoes, snowmobiles and a Track machine to keep ahead of the weather and help prevent and repair outages.

Major Outage Report: Transmission Lines (NWE)

April 7-8, 2011
 Reed Point: 2.5 hrs
 Members Effected: 350
 At 6:52 PM the Northwestern Energy (NWE) experienced a 50KV pole burn effecting the BEC Reed Point Substation.

Distribution Lines (BEC)

April 8, 2011
 A heavy wet snow caused overhead distribution lines to snow load causing outages across the BEC service area.
 Columbus: 2 hrs
 Red Lodge: 1 hr. 50 min
 Roberts: 30 min
 Hearts & Diamonds: 45 min
 Absarokee: 2 hrs
 Roberts: 6 hrs 25 min
 Park City: 1 hr 40 min
 Beehive: 4 hrs 25 min
 Nye: 2 hrs 15 min
 Huntley Butte: several hrs



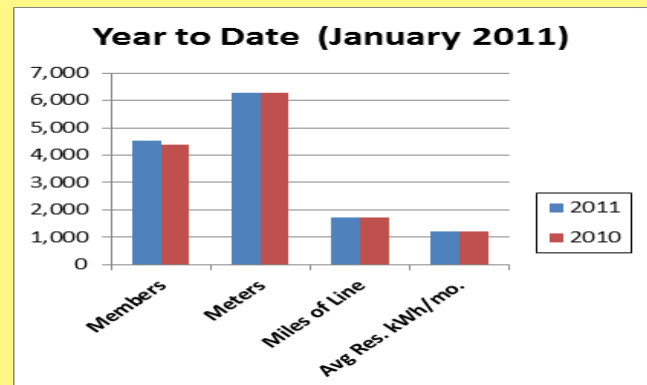
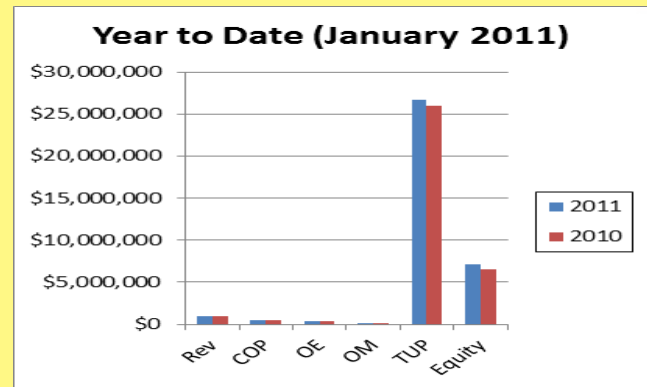
Snow load on distribution lines.

BOARD ROOM REPORT

The Board of Trustees held their regular board meeting on March 25, 2011. Action items included:

- Approved Financial Report (RUS Form 7) for January 2011
- Approved member candidate list for vacant District 1 board seat – interviews scheduled for April 26
- Director Reports – Southern/SME, Bylaw Committee, Legislative Committee
- Approved resolution for guarantee of Southern Montana G&T operating line-of-credit

Financial Summary: (Abbreviations) Rev – Revenue, COP – Cost of Power, OE – Operating Expenses, OM – Operating Margins, TUP – Total Utility Plant. Note – 2009 includes wholesale power surcharge.



HIGHWOOD GENERATING STATION (HGS) UPDATE

With most of the “below ground” work completed, the on-going “above ground” work is quite noticeable. The water storage tanks and the water treatment building are constructed. The turbine generator and power transformers are set in place. The 80-foot exhaust stack is being erected. The Southern general office facility is set up and a Plant Superintendent and Administrative Assistant have been hired. Southern presently has posted six other positions that will need to be filled in the next couple of months.

transmission line. The steel transmission towers are ready to be installed. Crews are waiting for things to dry up a bit before taking on this task. The commercial operation date is set for mid-August. The critical path continues to be the Northwestern Energy Substation.

Work taking place during March and April includes; 1) complete remaining foundations in the turbine area, 2) complete installation efforts in the control room, 3) complete installation of HVAC systems in the water treatment building, 4)

install miscellaneous concrete pads for auxiliary equipment in the turbine area, and (5) commence with landscaping efforts at entrance to HGS.



Northwestern Energy—230kV substation.

PHASE 2

Construction of the HGS Substation is well underway, as is the Northwestern Energy Substation that will accommodate interconnection to the existing 230 kV

As mentioned last month, Southern continues to work through the due diligence process associated with deciding to move forward with Phase 2 of the project. The earthquake in Japan

may well change the landscape of future generation projects both nationally and internationally. It will be interesting to see how the demand for natural gas fired generation projects changes because of it.



Recent construction activity near the turbine generator at the HGS site.

ACH PAYMENT PROCESSING & BUDGET BILLING

If you would like to enroll in our budget billing program or sign up for automatic payment of your monthly bill, please call our office today!

406-446-2310 • 800-472-9821

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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In case of power failure please call **406-446-2310** or **800-472-9821** Anytime day or night