

## Nominating Committee to meet in March



*Larson*



*Rauschendorfer*



*Thiessen*

Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Association's Nominating Committee is scheduled to meet Monday, March 17, at Lower Yellowstone Electric's office. The purpose of the meeting is to select candidates for the board of trustees to be voted on during the June 4 annual meeting.

The Nominating Committee is composed of two members from each district in which trustees will be elected. The committee shall

nominate one or more candidates for each district from which trustees are to be elected. Up for election this year are trustees in Districts 5, 6 and 7. The present trustees holding seats in these districts are Lester Larson, District 5, Greg Rauschendorfer, District 6, and Allen Thiessen, District 7.

The 2014 Nominating Committee consists of:

- Representing District 5, Roger Bearce and Wagner Harmon
- Representing District 6, Eugene Fisher and Mike Fisher
- Representing District 7, Don

Diede and Brian Ligon

Any member interested in running for the board of trustees from these districts should contact one of the Nominating Committee members and ask to be considered for nomination.

Remember, only the person named on the membership is eligible for nomination. Joint memberships (memberships in more than one name) are available and do allow any of the joint members to run for the board of trustees. The joint membership, however, is only entitled to one vote at any meeting of the cooperative.

Please contact Lower Yellowstone Electric's office at 406-488-1602 if you have any questions. ■

## Saving members \$ every day

The Co-op Connection card will help you save money on hotel rooms, prescriptions and much more.

As you visit the website, [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop), you will be able to see which businesses accept the card.

One of the greatest advantages of this savings card is the pharmacy discount. This is not insurance, but if your insurance does not pay on a prescription, you may be able to use this card to get a discounted rate on your prescription. Your card

cannot be used in conjunction with your insurance.

During 2013, an average of 37 members used their Co-op Connection card each month on prescriptions. The average savings on prescriptions alone totaled \$434 per month. If you would like to see if your pharmacy accepts this card, go to [www.locateproviders.com](http://www.locateproviders.com).

Everyone in the family can use the same card. You can use the card an unlimited amount of times. The best part about this card is it is FREE and there is NO PAPERWORK to

complete prior to using the card.

Simply carry it with you, and present it the next time you go to the pharmacy or check out the savings on hotels, car rentals and much more.

If you did not receive a card, but would like to take advantage of the great deals the Co-op Connection card can offer, simply call the office at 406-488-1602. After all, who doesn't enjoy saving money! ■



# Understanding your home's electrical system

Our local electric cooperative delivers safe, reliable electricity to our homes to keep us warm, cook our food or recharge our cell phones. We also rely on our home's electrical system to bring us power when and where we need it.

Understanding the basics of your home's electrical system will help you maintain it and stay safe, too.

Electricity enters your home from a series of outdoor power lines or an underground connection. A typical service consists of two, 120-volt wires and one neutral wire that deliver power to lights and appliances around the home.

The 120-volt circuits use one phase of the electrical service to power standard home appliances. However, certain larger appliances such as water heaters, stoves or clothes dryers require a 240-volt circuit, which is created using both 120-volt wires and the neutral wire.

The electric meter is typically mounted where electricity enters your home. This device is used to measure the amount of electricity consumed in your home. The meter is monitored by your electric cooperative and is protected by law – tampering with it is both extremely dangerous and illegal.

The electrical service panel is the central distribution point for delivering electricity to switches, outlets and appliances throughout the house. Located near the electric meter, the service panel is equipped with breakers or fuses that shut off power to the circuits if an electrical system failure occurs.

Grounding is the method used to connect an electrical system to the earth with a wire.

Grounding adds critical protection against electric shock and electrocution by using a grounding rod to provide



a third path for conducting electricity in the event of a short circuit or an overload. Grounding will help protect the person working on the system, the system itself, and any appliances and equipment that are connected to the system.

Grounded outlets have a round hole for the grounding conductor in addition to the two vertical slots. The circle slot is connected to a ground wire. Grounded outlets are required to be installed in all modern homes today. If your home does not have grounded

outlets, then your electrical system is likely missing critical safety features. Consult an electrician about updating your home.

## Electrical service panel

Every home has a service panel that distributes electricity to switches, outlets and appliances. The service panel is usually found in the basement, garage or utility area.

When a short or overload shuts down power to a circuit, this is where you can restore the flow. It is also where you



will shut down power to a circuit before starting a project or repair.

Mark each fuse or breaker with a label specifically indicating which location it serves.

### Fuses and circuit breakers

All service panels are equipped with fuses or circuit breakers that protect the wires in each circuit from overheating and causing a fire. In general, older service panels use fuses, while more modern systems rely on circuit breakers.

Fuses and circuit breakers are safety devices that help prevent overloading of your home electrical system and prevent fires. They stop the electrical current if it exceeds the safe level for some portion of your home electrical system.

### Fuses

Service panels installed before 1965 use fuses to protect each individual circuit. Early fuses were commonly used in 30- and 60-amp service panels. Today, new homes require 100- to 200-amp service panels in order to provide

proper protection.

There are several different types of fuses, and picking the right one may seem confusing at first. Each fuse is marked with a code, which provides information about the type of base and the degree of time delay, if any.

If your home still uses fuses, it may be time for a system upgrade.

### Instructions for replacing fuses:

Once a fuse is blown, it must be unscrewed and thrown away. When replacing fuses in your service panel:

- Always make sure that the replacement fuse matches the amperage rating of the circuit.
- Never replace a fuse with one that has a larger amperage rating. This is a dangerous practice and a serious fire hazard.
- Before changing a fuse, unplug anything on that circuit.

### Circuit breakers

All newer homes are protected by circuit breakers. Unlike a fuse that

must be replaced when it blows, a circuit breaker that has “tripped” can be mechanically reset to resume operations once the problem has been resolved. A tripped breaker is likely the result of too many appliances overloading the circuit and should be fixed immediately.

Sometimes a breaker may appear normal, but if you believe a circuit breaker has tripped, reset it.

### Instructions for resetting a tripped breaker:

- Unplug or turn off appliances in the room.
- Find your main breaker panel and open the cover.
- Locate the tripped breaker or blown fuse. A tripped circuit breaker will be in the off position or in a middle position between on and off.
- To reset the breaker, switch it to off position and then back to on. This may restore power to the room. If the problem continues, there may be more serious issues. Contact an electrician to diagnose the problem. ■

# Is it time for an upgrade?

Our dependence on electricity is increasing every day, and we are expecting more out of our home electrical systems.

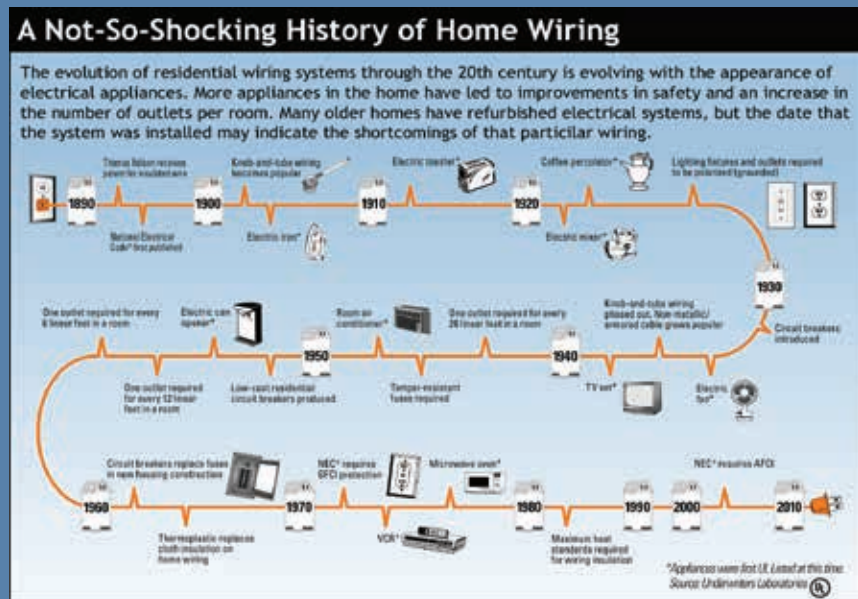
According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the average home in the United States is more than 37 years old. Many older homes were built with electrical systems and components which are no longer safe and may be considered as fire hazards. Fire and other electrical safety concerns may also arise due to aging, improper installation and alteration, or misuse. It is important to identify what type of wiring system is present in your home in order to properly identify and address potentially hazardous situations before they become critical.

The Electrical Safety Foundation International recommends that you have an electrical system inspection conducted if:

- Your home is 40 years old or older
- You purchase a previously owned home

- Your home has undergone a major renovation
- You have added major new appliances in the last 10 years

If you have questions about your electrical system, ask a licensed electrician to check the system. ■



# Heat pumps use energy efficiently

**D**id you know that heating and cooling accounts for more than half of the energy used in a typical U.S. home, making it the largest energy expense for most homes? (Meter 23113)

## Air-source heat pump

Throughout the United States, the most common type of heat pump is the air-source heat pump, which transfers heat



between your house and the outside air. When properly installed, an air-source heat pump can deliver one-and-

a-half to three times more heat energy to a home than the electrical energy it consumes. This is possible because a heat pump moves heat rather than converts it from a fuel, like combustion heating systems convert fuel.

Although air-source heat pumps can be used in nearly all parts of the United States, they do not generally perform well during extended periods of sub-freezing temperatures. In regions with sub-freezing winter temperatures, it may not be cost-effective to meet all your heating needs with a standard air-source heat pump. Although, systems with an alternate heat backup can overcome this problem. Heat pumps specifically designed for cold climates also show promise, and reverse cycle chillers may operate efficiently at below freezing temperatures.

## Geothermal heat pump

Geothermal heat pumps, sometimes referred to as earth-coupled or ground-source heat pumps, have been in use since the late 1940s. They use the constant temperature of the earth as the exchange medium instead of the outside air temperature. This allows the system to reach fairly high efficiencies (300 to 600 percent) on the coldest winter nights, compared to 175 to 250 percent for air-source heat pumps on cool days.

As with any heat pump, geothermal heat pumps are able to heat, cool and, if so equipped, supply the house with hot water. Relative to air-source heat pumps, they are quieter, last longer, need little maintenance, and do not depend on the temperature of the outside air.

Even though the installation price of a geothermal system can be several times that of an air-source system of the same heating and cooling capacity, the additional costs are returned in energy savings in five to 10 years. System life is estimated at 25 years for the inside components and 50-plus years for the ground loop. There are approximately 50,000 geothermal heat pumps installed in the United States each year.

Whether a geothermal heat pump is appropriate for you will depend on the size of your lot, the subsoil, the landscape and, of course, your budget. Ground-source heat pumps can be used in more extreme climates than air-source heat pumps, and customer satisfaction with the systems is high.

For more information, go to [energy.gov](http://energy.gov). ■

# HIDDEN NUMBERS

If you find your meter number hidden in this issue, it is worth a \$25 credit on your next statement. The meter number will appear within the four Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Association pages. Call us during the month your meter is listed, and claim your \$25 bill credit. ■



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**Phone: 406-488-1602**

**Fax: 406-488-6524**

**Website: [www.lyrec.com](http://www.lyrec.com)**

## TRUSTEES

- Allen Thiessen..... President
- Greg Rauschendorfer .....Vice President
- John Redman ..... Secretary/Treasurer
- Colin Gartner..... Trustee
- Marvin Kilen ..... Trustee
- Lester Larson Jr. .... Trustee
- Dennis Schmierer ..... Trustee

## EMPLOYEES

- Donald J. Prevost ..... General Manager
- Scott D. Johnson ..... Mgr. of Office Services
- Jami Propp ..... Member Services Coordinator
- Brenda Bond ..... Staff Accountant
- Margo Zadow ..... Billing Clerk
- Pam Wilcoxon ..... Cashier/Receptionist
- Chris Hillesland ..... Operations Manager
- Doug K. Hettich ..... Asst. Mgr. of Operations
- Tracy Henry ..... Foreman
- Rich Gorde ..... Sub-Foreman
- Kevin Goff ..... Engineer Assistant/Materials Mgr.
- Kelly Keysor ..... Engineering Staking Technician
- Eric McPherson ..... Journeyman Lineman
- Lee Alvstad ..... Journeyman Lineman
- Richard Tremblay ..... Journeyman Lineman
- Aaron Eide ..... Journeyman Lineman
- Bryan Franck ..... Journeyman Lineman
- Dan Gieser ..... Apprentice Lineman
- James Pihl ..... Apprentice Lineman
- Blade Jankovsky ..... Apprentice Lineman
- Mike Eberling ..... Mechanic
- Bodrey Kindopp ..... Staking Technician
- Alan MacDonald ..... Meter Reader/Shop Asst.
- Jason Brothen ..... Special Project/IT Manager
- Corey Candee ..... Electrical/IT Tech.

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

## OPERATING REPORT

Year to date:	October 2012	October 2013
Total miles energized .....	2,086	2,112
Total number of meters .....	5,481	5,745
Kilowatt-hours sold .....	150,313,584	179,073,057
Revenue .....	\$14,358,520	\$16,810,331
Total expenses .....	\$12,589,257	\$14,564,639
Operating margins .....	\$2,120,084	\$2,668,269