



Need help paying your heating bill? *Assistance is available until April 30*

Are you finding it difficult to pay your heating bills? Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Association wants you to know that heating assistance is available.

If you are struggling to pay your heating bills, and you fall within the income guidelines, apply for

assistance right away.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is based on your annual household income. Listed here are the LIHEAP 2013-2014 criteria to qualify for assistance.

Number in household	Annual income
1	\$21,498
2	\$28,113
3	\$34,728
4	\$41,343
5	\$47,958

Make sure to provide all required information. Failure to provide information will delay the eligibility determination and may result in application denial.

- If you turn in your application income in March 2014, provide verification for March 2013 through February 2014.
- If you turn in your application income in April 2014, provide verification for April 2013 through March 2014.

What if you don't fall within the income guidelines?

Even if you do not qualify for LIHEAP, you may be eligible for other programs, such as Energy Share. If you have questions regarding heating assistance, contact Action for Eastern Montana at 800-227-0703. North Dakota residents can contact Community Action at 701-572-8191.

You can also contact Jami at Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Association for Montana LIHEAP or Energy Share applications. If you need help completing your application, Jami will be able to assist you. ■

Bloesser wins experience of a lifetime!



The Youth Tour is more than a trip to the nation's capital to sightsee. It is a prestigious event in which thousands of high school juniors and seniors from across the nation join in Washington, D.C., to gain an understanding of the value of rural electric cooperatives.

The Youth Tour experience is rewarding, educational and fun! In addition to visiting memorials such as the Lincoln Memorial and the World War II Memorial, students also tour museums and national landmarks they have only read about in history books.

Trey Bloesser, a sophomore at Savage High School, is the winner of the 2014 Youth Tour essay contest, earning an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., June 14-20, 2014. Trey is the son of Rolly and Jan Bloesser, Savage, Mont. Trey enjoys football, basketball, track and working on the ranch. Trey is currently employed by the Savage school and Basta Ranches.

This year's essay topic was: "Describe how electric cooperatives operate based on the seven cooperative principles. Tell which of the seven cooperative principles you think is the most important and why."

The following essay was written by Trey Bloesser:

Rural electric cooperatives operate on an open membership. Open membership means whether you are black or white, man or woman, gay or straight, Christian or Muslim, you can be part of a cooperative. The only qualification you really need is to live in a rural area.

Because they are owned by their consumer-members, and nonprofit as well, the goal of an electric cooperative is to keep rates low, and still cover all expenses. Profits are returned to the members through capital credits based on the amount of energy the member has used in this period. This process keeps the cooperative as a nonprofit organization.

Cooperatives are democratic, like the United States of America government, but on a smaller scale. Members of a cooperative get one vote to elect a representative. In turn, these representatives have meetings and speak for and act on behalf of their cooperative members. Representatives decide what to do with the cooperative's money. They usually spend the money on four things: growing and strengthening the cooperative, making cash reserves, or reimbursing the members. The fourth one is supporting cooperative activities like this Washington, D.C.,

Youth Tour.

If a cooperative does business with another organization of any kind, it does so on its own terms. These terms include the ability to make decisions democratically and independently. Cooperatives, like all well-run and successful businesses, provide training to employees, members and representatives. They even spend the time and money to educate young people to enhance their leadership skills.

Cooperatives, even though I am sure they have some disagreements, still cooperate with other cooperatives. This cooperation, from the local to the national level, allows the cooperatives to progress and grow. Cooperatives work toward helping and improving rural communities throughout Montana and the nation.

I believe that education is the most important principle. Cooperatives educate their members on safety issues and how to conserve energy, protecting both people and the Earth. Investing in the youth of cooperatives through school programs, scholarships and the Youth Tour, gives students a broader perspective of the world, helping them to understand the importance of continued education, what it means to be a good citizen and leader, and their global responsibilities. Without education, people are limited in what they can do, but with education, people can accomplish anything they set their minds to.

Congratulations, Trey, on your week-long trip to Washington, D.C.! ■

Online bill pay FAQS

Q. Where do we go to pay our bill online?

A. Simply log onto www.lyrec.com.

Q. How do we get signed up for online bill pay?

A. On the top, middle section of the Web page, click on the orange "Online Bill Pay" box. It will take you to the next page, where it will ask for your email address and password.

First-time users must click on "**Click Here**" to sign up for online account access, which is located within the second bulleted line.

Once you click into "Click Here" to sign up for online account access, you will be asked for your Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Association account number (which you can find on your bill), name, email address and password. There is also a box that you can check if you do not want to receive printed statements. If you want to continue receiving the statements, don't check it.

Once you have set up your online account access, you will not have to go into the second bulleted line again. You will simply need your email address and password to sign in.

Q. Is the website secure?

A. The website is secure. Normally, when browsing the Web, the URLs (Web page addresses) begin with the letters "http." However, over a secure connection, the address displayed should begin with "https" – note the "s" at the end.

Q. Do I get confirmation that my payment was accepted?

A. Once your payment has been made,

you should get a code APP: Approved and the amount that was applied to the account will also show on this screen. There will also be an option to send the confirmation to your email account.

Q. Does it cost me anything to pay online by check or card?

A. No, it is FREE.

Q. What kind of payments are accepted?

A. Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Association accepts checks, debit or credit cards. The cards accepted are Visa, Discover and MasterCard. If your balance is more than \$2,500, you will have to pay by check.

Q. I paid my bill online last month and now I received an email labeled, "Your current Lower Yellowstone REA bill is now available online." Will I continue to get emails each month?

A. Once a month, normally between the 26th and the 29th, you will be sent an email when your bill is available. You can click on the link, <https://lyrec.ebill.coop>, which will be in your email to view and pay your bill.

Q. Will you give out my email address or send me "junk" mail if I sign up to pay my bill online?

A. No, we will not. You will receive a notice once a month by email when your bill is ready.

Q. How can I see when my last payment was made?

A. After you log onto your account, you will see a button labeled "Payments"

on the left side of the page. Click on "Payments" and it will show you each payment made on the account.

Q. I would like to be able to view my past bills. Is there a way I can do this?

A. After you log onto your account, you will see a button labeled "Billings" on the left side of the page. Click on "Billings" and you will be able to view or print your bills.

Q. If I register under the "Pay Bill Online" tab, do I have to pay my bill online?

A. No, there is other useful information to view.

Q. What other information can I retrieve when I register under "Pay Bill Online" tab?

A. You may look at charts that will help you compare your monthly costs and usage or your average costs and usage. You will also be able to view your current and past bills.

Q. Do I need to log into my account each month to pay the bill or does it pay automatically once I set it up and enter my card number?

A. You will have to log in every month to make the payment. Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Association does not keep your card number on file.

Q. When I originally signed up for online bill pay, I wanted to continue to get the paper version of my bill. Now that I am comfortable with the process, I would like to discontinue my printed statements. How do I do that?

A. All you will need to do to stop the paper bills is click on the tab that is on left side of the page labeled "**Stop/Start Print Bill.**"

Q. If I am unable to get into my account, can I call the office to make the payment?

A. You sure can. Just remember, we can only take payments over the phone during our regular business hours.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Keep wintery drafts out of your home by sealing cracks and gaps. Weather stripping around doors and windows works well when you can see daylight between the frame and the wall or floor. Use caulk to seal around the frames where you see gaps. For more tips and tricks, visit TogetherWeSave.com.

Source: TogetherWeSave.com

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. Give us a call during the month your meter is listed, and claim your \$25 bill credit. ■



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TRUSTEES

- Allen Thiessen..... President
- Greg RauschendorferVice 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.

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Lester Larson

Larson to retire after 30 years

Lester Larson, trustee for District 5, will not be running for re-election at the June 4 annual meeting. Any member residing in District 5, and who is interested in running for this position, should contact one of the Nominating Committee members and ask to be considered for nomination.

The 2014 Nominating Committee representing District 5 is Roger Bearce and Wagner Harmon. The Nominating Committee meeting is scheduled for March 17. (Meter 22405) ■



Brenda Bond

Brenda Bond joins staff

Brenda Bond is Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Association's new staff accountant. Brenda is married to Larry and they have two grown children, Jennifer and Jay.

For the past 15 years, Brenda worked out of her home as a business and support analyst for a utility software company. Lower Yellowstone Rural Electric Association is excited to have Brenda as a part of its cooperative family. ■