

HILL COUNTY ELECTRIC • NEWS & VIEWS

hillcountyelectric.coop • 1.877.394.7804 f t

AUGUST • 2016



Manager's Message

By Craig Gates, General Manager



In last month's magazine, we talked about work being done at the Sprinkle substation. It is a pretty interesting example of the cooperative spirit in action showing cooperation among cooperatives allowing us access to mobile substations during these situations. Plus, it shows the dedication of our employees to you the member.

The original transformer at Sprinkle was manufactured in 1956 and moved to the substation in the 1980's to help with the new irrigation systems being installed in the area. Oil samples are taken annually from the transformers at each of our substations and the testing in 2011 showed a possible issue at Sprinkle. The transformer was tested every six months after that and it appeared everything was getting better. Then Mother Nature and a curious raccoon had other ideas. First, the raccoon caused a through fault on the transformer, then on May 17, 2015, a possible lightning strike caused the transformer at the Sprinkle substation to fail. This was due to a short in the internal copper windings. A mobile substation was setup that same day and ran the substation until May 5, 2016, when the transformer was replaced.

Thankfully, Hill County Electric (HCE) has access to two mobile substations through a partnership with these Montana electric cooperatives: NorVal Electric, Sun River Electric, Park Electric, Marias River Electric and Big Flat Electric. Together, this group purchased a large 7,000 kVA and a small 1,500 kVA mobile substation. These mobile units are specially built so they will work with each cooperative's system needs and durable enough to be set up, taken down and moved around.

As you can imagine, these mobile substations weigh a lot! Luckily, HCE members have helped us get the units in place using their tractors and even a D7 Cat which helps us get power restored that much faster. Our dedicated HCE Linemen pull together as a team and go to work in any type of weather and any time of day getting the mobile substation up and operational which includes grounding, connecting the high and low voltage sides, building a fence, running tests and energizing it. It is great having members and employees who understand the meaning of cooperative membership and are willing to work together. This helps us keep the outages as short as possible for our members.



HCE Crews setting up the mobile substation.



The large mobile substation waiting to go back into storage.

Portable Standby Generator Safety Tips

When storms knock out power, many turn to portable, standby generators to help keep food safe, lights on and medical equipment operating. The growing popularity of emergency generators has resulted in several million being placed in homes and small businesses across the nation.

However, only a small percentage are hooked up or used correctly. SafeElectricity.org urges consumers to understand proper generator safety steps.

“Generators can be a lifesaver for some and can improve the quality of life after a natural disaster such as a hurricane, tornado, or earthquake,” explains Molly Hall, executive director of the Safe Electricity program. “However, it’s critical that proper safety precautions be taken to prevent accidents that could affect you, a family member, neighbor, or utility lineworker.”

Generators can be temporarily or permanently installed. A permanent generator is wired into a house by a qualified electrician using a transfer switch. This protects you, your neighbors, and repair crews from electricity backfeeding onto power lines. This can seriously injure anyone near those lines, especially co-op crews working to restore power. A temporary generator fired by gasoline or diesel fuel should not be attached to a circuit breaker, fuse, or outlet.

The improper use of a standby generator can lead to injury or death. When using a generator, SafeElectricity.org urges you to follow these tips to keep you and your family safe:

- Read and follow all manufacturer operating instructions to properly ground the generator. Be sure you understand them before starting it up.
- Standby generators should have a transfer safety switch installed by a professional. Portable generators should never be plugged directly into a home outlet or electrical system—use an extension cord to plug appliances into an outlet on the generator.
- Never operate a generator in a confined area, such as a garage. Generators produce gases, including deadly carbon monoxide. They require proper ventilation.

Generate Safely

Safe Generator Operation

Keep this card in your home's emergency kit or with your generator.

- Never connect a standby generator into your home's electrical system. There are only two safe ways to connect a standby generator to your equipment:
 - Stationary Generator:** An approved generator transfer switch, which keeps your house circuits separate from the electric co-op, should be installed by a professional.
 - Portable Generator:** Plug appliances directly into the outlet provided on the generator.
- Set up and run your generator in a well-ventilated area outside the home. Make sure it's out and away from your garage, doors, windows, and vents. The carbon monoxide generated is **DEADLY**.

- Use a heavy-duty extension cord to connect electric appliances to the outlet on the generator.
- Start the generator first **BEFORE** connecting appliances.



Source: SafeElectricity.org

Developed jointly by the Energy Education Council & Rural Electricity Resource Council

- Remember, when venturing outside after a severe storm, stay away from downed power lines and be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. Assume that any dangling wires you encounter are electrical, and treat all downed or hanging power lines as if they are energized. Warn others to stay away and contact the electric utility.
- Generators pose electrical risks, especially when operated in wet conditions. Use a generator only when necessary when the weather creates wet or moist conditions. Protect the generator by operating it under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot form puddles or drain under it. Always ensure that your hands are dry before touching the generator.
- When you refuel the generator, make sure the engine is cool to prevent a fire, should the tank overflow.
- There should be nothing plugged into the generator when you turn it on. This prevents a surge from damaging your generator and appliances.
- Be sure to keep children and pets away from the generator, which could burn them.

For more safety information on the use of portable and standby generators and safety after a storm, go to SafeElectricity.org.

Safe Electricity is the safety outreach program of the Energy Education Council, a non-profit organization with more than 400 electric cooperative members and many others who share the mission of educating the public about electrical safety and energy efficiency.

HCE Happenings

Last month, Hill County Electric (HCE) had approximately 869 account hours affected by outages. Of these hours:

- Underground faults: 166
- Misc or unknown: 180
- Weather: 63
- Wildlife and trees: 25
- Equipment or material failure: 435

This compares to 1,046 hours one year ago.

DON'T FORGET!

YOU CAN PAY ONLINE AND OVER THE PHONE!

-  **ONLINE BILL PAY**
hillcountyelectric.coop
-  **AUTO-PAY**
Never miss a payment
-  **PREPAID METERING**
Control your energy budget
-  **SMARTHUB®**
Get the app for your smartphone
-  **PAY BY PHONE**
1.855.385.9913

Paygo

It's easy!

Pay as you go

with prepaid electricity from HCE

Reconnect Your Power NOW!

No Deposit or connect fees required & you don't have to pay your old bill in full!*


**Some restrictions may apply.*

**FOCUSED ON YOUR STREET.
NOT WALL STREET.**
TOUCHSTONEENERGY.COM



Your Touchstone Energy cooperative is owned by our members, not shareholders. So we don't just answer to you, we have answers for you. To learn more, visit TouchstoneEnergy.com.

YOUR SOURCE OF POWER. AND INFORMATION.

HILL COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

HILL COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Swap & Shop



SWAP & SHOP is a classified advertising section of the Hill County Electric and Triangle Communications websites and newsletters. It is maintained as a service to customers and communities wanting to buy, sell and announce non-commercial items. To include an ad, go to itstriangle.com/swap-and-shop and complete the online form. Administrators will review the information within two business days and if approved, the ad will appear on the website. It will stay online for 60 days unless you notify us to remove or change it. It will also appear in any of the HCE & Triangle newsletters printed during that 60 day window. HCE and Triangle reserve the right to abbreviate ads. If the section is full, we will display ads on a first come, first-served basis.

Community Events

Family History Program

The Yellowstone Genealogy Forum meets the 4th Tuesday of each month at 1711 6th St W in Billings from 7-9pm for educational programs. Call 406.669.3139 for more information.

To Give Away

4 & 8 Foot Fluorescent Light Tubes and Ballasts

The Florence Dedman Foundation is giving away fluorescent tubes and ballasts. T8 through T12. Call 406.781.3948 for more information.

In Search Of

In Search of Honda Garden Rototiller

Looking for walk behind style in good condition. Please contact Rhoda at 406.374.2406.

Agriculture

John Deer 9650 Walker Combine

John Deere 9650 Walker Combine. Recent inspection, includes 962 Mac-Don draper header with newer pick-up reel. \$59,500 OBO. Call 406.674.5462 or 406.390.1554.

1680 Case IH Combine

1680 Case IH Combine, ID#JJC0047994. Good condition with 4159 hours on it. Includes Case IH 10-10 header. Asking \$23,000 will work out terms. Call 406.378.2576.

White Model 272

White Model 272, 35 ft Rockflex disc, 22 inch blade. Good condition. Call 406.397.3333.

2 New Holland Balers

One large round baler and one small square baler. Both in good condition. Call 406.357.2505, if no answer leave a message.

Household

Handloomed Rugs

Any size, any color. Made from recycled materials. Good quality. Call 406.374.2406.

TV Stand

TV stand, 36 inches wide with glass doors. Black in color. \$25.00 OBO. Call 406.378.3226.

Miscellaneous

1996 Yamaha 250 ATV

1996 Yamaha 250 ATV Timberwolf. Recently overhauled with new battery and new rear tires. Asking \$750.00, call 406.378.3226.

1999 Honda Boat Motor

1999 Honda, 15 horse, 4 stroke boat motor with a long shaft. Like new, low hours. Comes with an extra prop and a gas tank for \$1,000. Call 406.357.4282.

Remington Firearms

Remington Model 700 BDL 30.06 LH and Remington Model 700 BDL 243. Call 406.326.2287.

Fuel Tank

New 10,000 gallon Wilray double wall vertical fuel tank for sale. Some exterior damage. Call 406.292.3662.

Real Estate

Harlowton Home

Two story home with spectacular view of Chief Joseph Park and the Crazy Mountains. Well maintained with original woodwork and ornate stair case. Underground sprinkler system. Three bedroom, two full baths, attached garage, and paved driveway. Loads of closet storage and a full basement. Appliances included. Call 406.632.4211. Photos available at itstriangle.com/swap-and-shop.

