


VIGILANTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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OWNED BY THOSE WE SERVE

A TRIP OF A LIFETIME

By Jordan Peterson

Vigilante Electric Cooperative gave me the opportunity of a lifetime this summer. I visited Washington, D.C., with 25 participants from Montana, 13 from North Dakota, and one from Idaho. I saw everything from monuments to *Sheer Madness* at the Kennedy Center. I would love to tell you about them all, but then I'd have to write a book.

Visiting Arlington National Cemetery made me think of

honor, dignity, greatness, pride, integrity and American history. The thousands of peaceful white gravestones standing on the lawn made me reflect on all the sacrifices made by our country's brave soldiers. This special place never lets us forget the men and women who died, or never made it home. I am very privileged to live in this honorable, free country.

Dancing on the three-deck paddleboat on the Potomac River was the best entertainment ever! I was a little rusty at first, but after I jitter-



Jordan Peterson

bugged and dougied with Brexton from Georgia, it all came back to me. The second level was full of refreshments and goodies, including high schoolers' favorites — pop and candy! On the top level of the paddleboat, the view was breathtaking. I had my *Titanic* moment at the front of the boat. That night was truly an incredible experience, and I made many new friends.

"If You Can't Stand Up, Stand Out" was motivational speaker Mike Schlappi's message to us. Mike's story began with a tragic shooting accident, and has evolved into a lifetime of lessons and victories. He encouraged us to dream big, always have a positive attitude and never give up. Mike is a four-time Olympic medalist with the USA Men's wheelchair basketball team. I learned that people make mistakes every day, and forgiving is a great testament to your character.

Walking into the Holocaust Museum, I had one question. "Why? Why would the Nazis do this?" Hitler ranked people in society by race, religion, working ability, political dissidents, etc. Six million people were killed in the Holocaust. Jews were the primary victims. In the muse-

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A Message from Your Manager

2014 Rates

Recently we have been informed that our wholesale power provider, the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), will be increasing our wholesale rates by an estimated average of 9 percent effective October 1. By the time you read this, we should have the actual figures of the increase. We will immediately update our Cost of Service Study (COSS) to determine the overall impact of these higher rates and present that study to the board for consideration. They have the task of approving all retail rates, and will use the sound judgment you have become accustomed to in establishing the retail rates for the upcoming year. Originally the BPA rate proposal included an increase of an average of 19 percent, but with the help of our alliances the increase sits at 9 percent as referenced above.

Speaking of our alliances, we currently belong to and support several entities that represent our interests and advise us on various issues at the federal and state levels, in addition to BPA. They include the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association, Western Montana Generation and Transmission (G&T), Northwest Requirements Utilities (NRU) and Northwest River Partners, Public Power Council and Northwest Public Power Association.

My point is that it takes a significant amount of effort to attempt to match the lobbying efforts of entities not aligned with our kind of thinking related to issues paramount to us, and primarily because of BPA's delivery

of wholesale power. The board and I review the costs versus benefits of belonging to these organizations routinely and only belong to those that provide adequate support of our causes. In the past, all of the alliances we share in have proven extremely beneficial, and as the old saying goes, "strength is in numbers." Without all of us joining hands, we would not be nearly as successful.

Projects

This spring and summer our crews have been busy with budgeted projects to ensure the electric system remains reliable. Some of the work completed involved a total rebuild of a section of line on Carrigan Lane south of Dillon, completion of a three-phase replacement project southwest of Melrose, and replacement of an overhead single-phase line with underground on Lump Gulch Road west of Clancy. This is in addition to new and replaced services for new homes and irrigation pumps. These projects take a complete team effort, from the inside staff through engineering and, finally, actual construction — all completed entirely by Vigilante staff. I am very pleased with the coordination and effort put forth by your staff.

One project that we have contracted out is the pole replacement project in the Centennial Valley. These pole replacements are the result of pole testing we completed in that area last year. We have contracted with Western Line Builders to replace the "bad" single-phase poles in this area. Our linemen cannot replace the amount of poles needed this distance from the shop in an economical manner.

Recently, we completed another round of pole testing in the Wise River area. We

contract with Independent Inspection Services to test approximately 2,700 poles annually. This has proven to be an effective way to determine the integrity of the poles, and allow us to proactively replace these poles prior to failure.

We hope you are enjoying your summer, and if you have any questions of me feel free to call me at the office or on my mobile phone at (406) 925-1085. You also can reach me via email, at rollie@vec.coop.



Rollie Miller
General
Manager

Prescription Discount Tracker

Total Paid Claims	66
Savings June 2013	\$583.75
Savings Year to Date	\$1,745.31
Total Savings Percentage	33.24%



TRIP

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um, there was a room full of shoes. Old shoes. New shoes. Worn shoes. Men's shoes. Women's shoes. Wide shoes. Narrow shoes. Baby shoes. There are hundreds of them arranged in a heap 10- or 12-inches deep. This room told a story within itself. It made me realize how lucky I am. The United States Holocaust Museum inspired me to confront hatred, prevent geno-

cide and promote human dignity.

Dana Falkenberg was a 3-year-old on American Airlines Flight 77 when it crashed into the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. The Pentagon Memorial honors the 184 men, women and children whose lives were lost, and their families. The memorial consists of illuminated benches arranged according to the victim's age. Each bench is engraved with the name of the victim. I paid respects to the brave, innocent victims and families of the 9/11 attacks.

The Youth Tour was the greatest experience of my life. I learned life lessons, American history and how to give back to my community. I hope everyone can see our nation's capital and history like I did. On the tour I made life-long friends and memories that I will never forget. "Thank You" Vigilante and members for this incredible opportunity.



Energy Efficiency Program Offering Manufactured Homes

In rural settings, manufactured housing is quite common and an option worth considering. Manufactured homes come in an array of modern floor plans, they can be customized for your personal tastes, they cost less than site-built homes, and they take less time to build because they are factory built. However, there is the perception that they are less energy efficient. This is something that the Northwest Energy Efficient Manufactured Housing (NEEM) program is trying to change.

The NEEM program, as part of Northwest Energy Works, is the longest-running residential energy efficiency program of its kind in the nation. Beginning in 1988, this organization has certified more than 200,000 manufactured homes, and the most ENERGY STAR homes in the country. Northwest Energy Works has been an integral part of the design, implementation and program management of this heralded program since its inception.

There are several reasons to look at NEEM rated Energy Star homes. First and foremost is quality construction. NEEM homes come with insulation packages that typically have R-values of 38 in the ceiling, 21 in the walls and 33 in the floor. The windows used have low-e glass. They also use quality components to ensure good indoor air quality and ventilation. Plus, NEEM rated homes use advanced duct-sealing techniques to reduce conditioned air loss.

NEEM rated homes are not only built to provide years of comfort, they also are designed to endure the travel from the factory to your

home site. Also, when you purchase a NEEM rated manufactured home, you will receive instructions on preparing the foundation, properly sealing the seam between the foundation and home, and sealing any cross connections in the ductwork.

What assurances are there? NEEM rated, Energy Star manufactured homes are inspected to ensure that insulation is properly installed, that energy-efficient windows and doors are installed, and that potential leaks are sealed.

Yes, NEEM homes initially cost a little more, but there is more to this than just the sticker price. In an article about NEEM rated manufactured homes, the Montana Department of Environment Quality addresses the long-term affordability of this purchase. It notes that the addi-

tional upfront cost is typically \$8 to \$10 per month over the life of the loan (approximately \$3,000 on a 30-year loan). However, it is estimated that you will save 30 percent on your annual heating bill, and improve summer comfort by reducing solar heat gain by 70 percent.

NEEM rated manufactured homes also are eligible for tax credits from the government, and an incentive from Vigilante Electric Cooperative on qualifying installations.

Vigilante Electric will offer an incentive of \$1,450 on a qualified installation of a NEEM rated Energy Star manufactured home. The home must receive its electricity from Vigilante Electric Cooperative; it must be new; electrically heated; and be designed, constructed and certified by the Northwest

Energy Efficient Manufactured Homes program as Energy Star. Application must be made and copies of all relevant documentation regarding this purchase must be provided. A Vigilante Electric employee will verify the location and NEEM certification prior to the incentive being paid.

This is just another example of the energy efficiency incentives that we make available to our membership. While the incentives we offer, combined with the eligible tax credits, may not cover the entire additional costs of upgrading to a more efficient home, the long-term energy savings and comfort will make it worth the investment. If you have any questions about our energy efficiency offering, please feel free to contact us.

Co-op Connections

Two more local businesses join

There are many facets to the Co-op Connections program that help you save money. There are travel benefits, health savings benefits and discounts available from retailers nationwide. All these savings are available to you because you're a member of a Touchstone Energy Cooperative. Vigilante Electric Cooperative is pleased to announce the signing of two local discount providers.

The Knock About is located at 4 S. Idaho St. in Dillon. Co-owned by Maryellen Wilkerson and Kirsten Love, the Knock About is a women's clothing boutique. With a look that is always modern, the Knock



About can help you with your clothing and accessory needs. It also is a source for formal wear and tuxedo rentals.

Through the Co-op Connections program, the Knock About is offering a discount of 10 percent off regular priced items, and 5 percent off sales items. This is an in-store discount, and you must present your card at the time of purchase.

Big Sky Window Cleaning has joined the Co-op

Connections program, offering 10 percent off your first window cleaning service. Owner/operator Eric van Dalen of Dillon can be reached by phone at (406) 683-2327. This is an in-home service, and the discount will be issued when you present your Co-op Connections card at the time of purchase.

Information on the discounts offered by the Knock About and Big Sky Window Cleaning can be viewed in the My Co-op Deals sections of the Co-op Connections website (www.connections.coop). We would like to welcome and thank the Knock About and Big Sky Window Cleaning for joining the Co-op Connections program.

**Big Sky
Window
Cleaning**

Co-op Connections

(More) National Discounts on Travel

By Rod Siring, Member Services

This month we continue to explore the travel benefits available from Vigilante Electric Cooperative's Co-op Connections program. We have secured discounts with organizations that have properties and services worldwide. This month, we highlight National Car Rental, and Wyndham Hotels and Resorts.

National Car Rental is one of the world's largest car rental companies, with approximately 3,000 locations in 72 countries across the globe. Whether you need to go to the East Coast for business or to the Eastern Hemisphere for vacation, National offers our members up to 20 percent off their car rental, and unlimited mileage.

You must reserve your car in advance to qualify for the discount. Reservations can be made through the Co-op Connections website by following the links and instruc-

tions, or you can call National Car Rental at 1-800-CAR-RENT. Be sure to request Contract I.D. Number 5000205 at the time of reservation.

Wyndham Hotel Group may or may not be a name that you are familiar with, but you are probably familiar with the hotel chains they own. Wyndham Hotel Group has more than 7,000 properties worldwide. Some of the names you will find are Wyndham Hotels and Resorts, Wingate, Hawthorne Suits, Ramada Inn, Days Inn, Super 8, Howard Johnson and Travelodge. Not all the properties are available through this program but I am sure that you will find something to fit your needs. Whether you are budget conscious or looking for a little luxury, the Wyndham Hotel Group has something for you.

As a member of Co-op Connections you will receive an additional 20 percent off the "Best Available Rate" at

participating locations every time you travel. You must reserve your room in advance of your stay to qualify for the discount. Reservations can be made online through the Co-op Connections web page by following the links and instructions on the site, or you can call 877-999-3223 and give the agent your special discount ID number 1000004709 at time of booking to receive discount.

Again, these discounts and many more are available every time you travel because you are a member of a Vigilante Electric Cooperative. Just remember that to receive the discounts, reservations have to be made in advance of your travel. In the coming editions of *Rural Montana* we will continue to explore the discounts available through the Co-op Connections program.

On the Job

Chase White

Vigilante Electric Cooperative would like to take this opportunity to introduce our newest employee, Chase White.

Chase is a journeyman lineman working out of our Townsend shop. He is a native of Montana, raised in Townsend. Chase did his apprenticeship through Southwest Apprenticeship Program, and has worked with various line contractors for the past nine years. His last employer was Rocky Mountain Contractors of Belgrade Montana.

Chase's family includes wife Amy and two children, daughter Landi and son Colt. Chase is also a U.S. Army veteran.

We would like to welcome Chase to Vigilante Electric; we look forward to a long relationship.

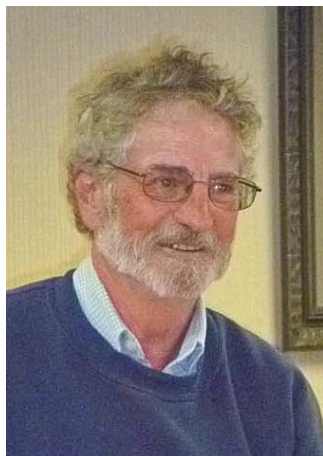


Off The Clock — Bill Walker Retires

2013 has definitely been a year of change at Vigilante Electric Cooperative. In the last six months we have seen the retirement of our general manager and two members of our line crew. The end of June brought the retirement of another key employee. After 21 years of service, Bill Walker has retired.

For those of you that may not know Bill, he served as the warehouseman/custodian in our Dillon shop. Bill worked well with our engineering staff and line crews, and made sure that if something was needed, he

would get it. He always ensured that our office was ready to open and that it was presentable. Whether it was



plowing snow in the winter or mowing and weed eating in the summer, Bill got the job done.

Too often the little things are overlooked and underappreciated. Bill did a lot of little things around this office that made life much easier for all of us. This, plus his personality and humor, will be missed. Vigilante Electric Cooperative would like to thank Bill for his years of service to our organization and wish him a long, healthy and active retirement.