



BIG FLAT NEWS



April 2024

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LINEWORKER APPRECIATION DAY

APRIL 18, 2024

THANK YOUR LINEMEN!



Big Flat Electric Linemen from left: Nathan Veit, Leif Sorensen, Joe Hould, Ross Hasler, Erik Simanton. Not Pictured: Brenden Johnson.



From left: Debbie Kindle, Kari Hammond and Shawna Myers.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONALS DAY

APRIL 24, 2024

THANK YOU FOR HOLDING
EVERYTHING TOGETHER!

THE HISTORY OF LINEWORKER APPRECIATION DAY

BENJAMIN Franklin is said to be the discoverer of electricity in the 1700's with his famous kite experiment, in which he flew a kite with a metal key tied to it during a thunderstorm. In the late 19th Century, electricity was first introduced into people's homes. It was in London that the world's first electric streetlights were set up in 1878.

The truth is that lineworkers have existed for as long as electricity has been a standard part of modern living. It is impossible to have powerlines carrying electricity to our homes and businesses without them. They keep the lights on and the furnaces going.

Lineworkers often do their jobs in the most dangerous of conditions, and must face the worst weather conditions. However, bad weather is not the only danger in their careers. The most dangerous task they must do is handling wires that pulse thousands of amps of current. These are the people in charge of restoring power, setting up emergency systems to carry us through, and putting lines back in order when things get tough. RM

A LITTLE ABOUT ADMIN PROFESSIONALS DAY

DURING World War II there was a shortage of administrative professionals. In 1942, the National Secretaries Association was formed to recognize the contributions of administrative personnel to the economy, support their development and attract workers to the field. During its first year as an association, it created National Administrative Professionals Day.

The designated moment of celebration was first dictated by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Charles W. Sawyer, as National Secretaries Week, held from June 1-7. In 1955, Secretaries Week was moved to the last full week of April, with Wednesday marked as Administrative Professionals Day. In 1981, the name was changed to Professional Secretaries Week, but in the year 2000, it became Administrative Professionals Week, to include the wide range of responsibilities and job titles of administrative staff. The day has undergone many name changes, but the initial goal to celebrate and recognize all the hard work administrative professionals do has remained. RM

MARTIN'S GROCERY

The little Hays store that offers so much

STORY BY **SHAWNA MYERS** | BIG FLAT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

IN Hays, a small community located in the Little Rocky Mountains, sits Martin's Grocery. This store has convenience store items, as well as groceries and gas. It is owned and operated by Gerald and Sheila Martin.

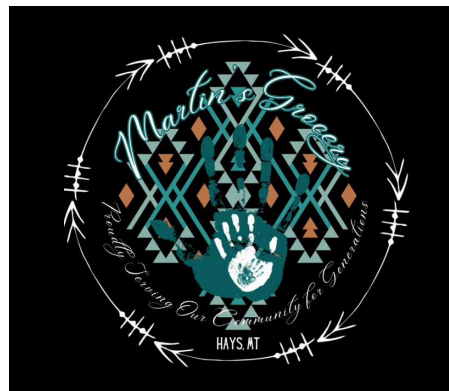
Gerald's dad and mom, Harold and Margaret Martin, saw the need for a grocery store in Hays. In 1989 they opened the doors to Martin's Grocery. Two of their sons ran the store for a few years, until 2001, when Gerald and Sheila took the store over, seeing the need to keep it open. Being the handyman that Gerald is, they started construction on a new store building in 2011, by themselves, and opened the doors in 2012. Martin's Grocery is open 365 days a year. Monday through Friday hours are 6:30 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday they are open 7:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.

During the pandemic they stepped up their grocery inventory with bulk items for customers to stock up on since people were unable to leave their homes. The bulk groceries were a big hit with people not only from the community but also those coming from Wolf Point, Lewistown and even as far as Billings, so Sheila made the decision to continue to stock bulk items. Some of the groceries available in bulk are bacon, cheese and potatoes. If there are other items that you wish to purchase in bulk, contact Sheila to see if they are on hand. If not, she will gladly see if she can get them in for you.

Operating Martin's Grocery can be demanding at times. Sheila is at the store during the day, Monday through Thursday. Gerald and Sheila stay close to home most of the time, tending to people's concerns and needs. Gerald is employed full time with HGL, but



Martin's Grocery owners Gerald and Sheila Martin pose with a picture of their grandkids. | **BIG FLAT ELECTRIC PHOTO**



always finds time to help others in times of need, plus he recently accepted a position on the board with Island Mountain Development Group. Both Gerald

**BUSINESS
in FOCUS**

If you know or have a business that you would like featured in our newsletter, please contact Shawna at (406) 654-2040 or shawna@bigflatelectric.com

and Sheila have their hands pretty full, but always have time to support and provide for the community.

Martin's Grocery has a great group



of employees. Sheila said, "We are very lucky to have the clerks we have. When we are away, the clerks take care of everything."

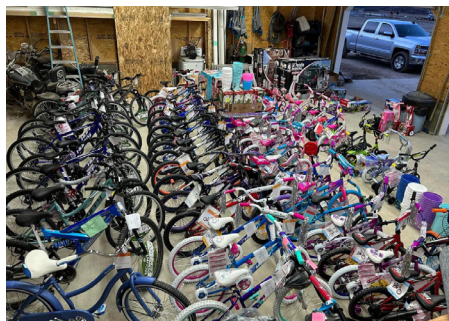
The Martins like to provide jobs to high school students. Sheila believes this is a good starting point with hopes of instilling great work ethics. Incentive bonuses are offered to encourage the kids to further their personal achievements (drivers licenses, GED, etc.) and encourage them to work toward bettering their future.

Occasionally, hamburgers, Indian tacos, etc., are sold at the store, with proceeds going toward different occasions, trips and events. Also, there is always a cash board (50/50) to help with funding these things. One of the events that is organized by Gerald, Sheila and their family, through many donations of bikes and cash, is the annual Easter Egg Hunt. It is for all ages, with bikes to be won for the kids, and cash eggs for the adults.

"Adults are funnier to watch than the children," Gerald said with a grin.

If you're planning on being in the Hays area, stop by Martin's Grocery for groceries, gas and snacks. Put your name on the cash board, and with a little luck, you could be a winner.

This little store offers a big variety.



Bike donations for the 2023 annual Easter Egg Hunt. | COURTESY PHOTO



Martin's Grocery employees: **Top L to R:** Summer Ariwite, Sheila Martin, Petrina Ariwite, Aiyana HasEagle; **Middle:** Dani Turnsplenty, Amy Cochran, Rayleigh Snell; **Bottom:** Michael Turnsplenty, Damon Shambo. | COURTESY PHOTO



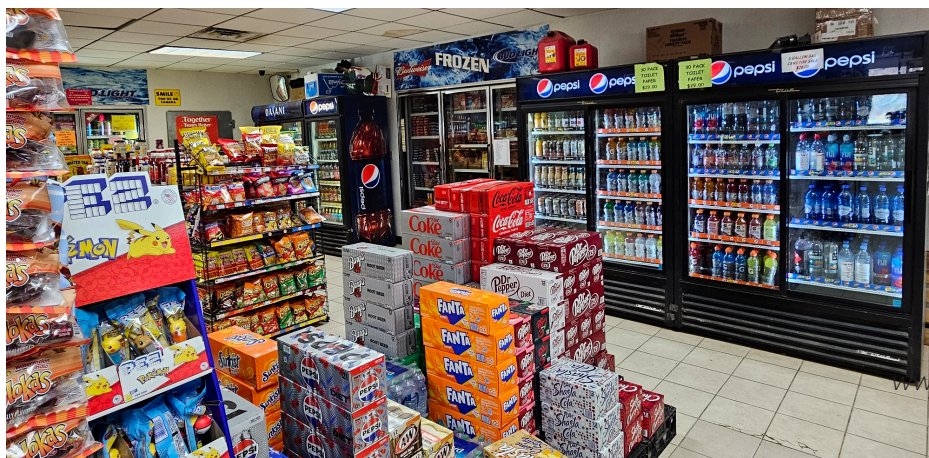
Big Flat Electric Lineman Leif Sorensen demonstrates what happens when electricity comes in contact with a tire.

Big Flat Electric perform electric safety demos

Big Flat Electric wishes to extend a big thank you to the schools in our service area. During the month of February our linemen demonstrated the danger of downed power lines and electricity. The safety trailer is owned by Big Flat Electric, Fergus Electric, and Hill County Electric for the purpose of educating people on the serious and threatening situations power lines and electricity can cause.

During these demonstrations, grapefruit, hot dogs, a bike and a tire were used to show the path of electricity. Joe Hould, subforeman, explained that electricity will always find a path to the ground. Meaning, if you are standing on the ground and come in contact with electricity, the electricity will travel through your body in order to reach the ground.

Safety is of great importance to all of us at Big Flat Electric. We thank the students and teachers that attended, and hope everyone learned something during the demonstrations.



FROM APRIL 1967: BFEC NEWSLETTER

Big Flat Electric Manager's Report

By **GEORGE HOYNES**

With a new \$50,000 steel structure substation located at Wagner being put into service on March 15, 1967, the Big Flat Cooperative terminated their contract with the Montana Power Company for the purchase of wholesale electricity. The Montana Power Company had sold wholesale power to the Big Flat Electric Cooperative since its lines were first energized at the substation located at Harlem in 1947.

Under a 20-year contract, wholesale power will be purchased from the Central Montana Electric Generation and Transmission Cooperative, a transmission cooperative organized under the laws of the State of Montana for the purpose of transmitting electric power from the Bureau of Reclamation.

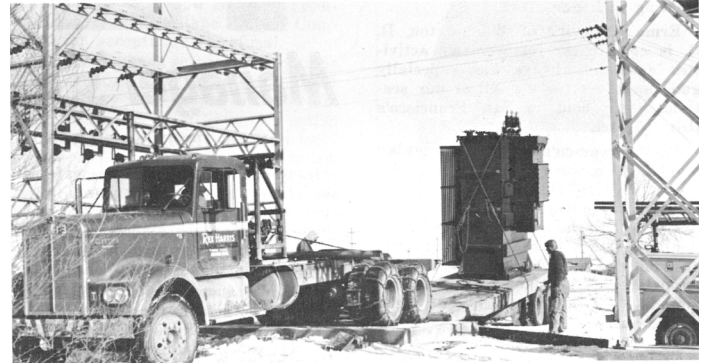
The new substation at Wagner has a 3750 KVA transformer with a capacity of three times what the Montana Power Company could furnish through their station. There are 645 connected consumers served from this substation, which comprises over half of our total connected services and covers all our area south of the Milk River and north of Malta to include the towns of Loring and Whitewater. A load growth study was made for purposes of determining the capacity needed in a substation to take care of increased use of electricity in the future years.

Other advantages in having our own substation are a double circuitry three phase 14,400 volt line; a separate protected circuit feeding north and one south; better voltage control on our lines and assurance of enough power to negotiate for industrial or large power loads should some move into our area.

The Big Flat Electric Cooperative now owns three substations with adequate capacity for increase in electrical use over the entire area.

A 1500 KVA, 14,400 volt substation at Saco, Montana with three phase line north to serve the Radar Station and consumers north and west of Saco and west to the Genevieve area.

A 1000 VKA 7,200 volt substation located between Turner



A LARGE OIL RIG TRUCK is used to move the 37,000-pound transformer from the railroad flat car to the Wagner sub-station location, then slide it into position on the concrete slab.



A GREAT DEAL OF ACTIVITY takes place as the Montana Power Company's crew is working on a 69,000-volt tiein line to the Wagner substation, the Bureau of Reclamation's crew installs metering equipment and the Big Flat Electric crew works on the erection of the new substation.

and Hogeland serves the towns of rural areas north of Harlem to the Canadian line, east to Chapman and west of Hogeland about twelve miles.

The total area covered from the three substations is approximately 100 square miles from the Missouri River on the south to the Canadian line on the north.

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