



BIG FLAT NEWS



January 2024

www.bigflatelectric.com

Manager's look back at 2023

COLUMN BY **GRETCHEN BOARDMAN** | BIG FLAT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE GENERAL MANAGER

LET'S look back at 2023! It was a good year for Big Flat Electric Cooperative, and that comes from having an outstanding staff, membership and Board of Directors. Thank you ALL for making Big Flat Electric so special.



Our crew was able to complete installations of 50 more new compact modular reclosers (CMRs) replacing old oil circuit reclosers (OCRs). This project is part of a three-year plan started in 2022. We should finish the remaining 50 installs in 2024. A great article about CMRs was written by Shawna Myers, our newsletter editor, in the *Rural Montana* magazine December 2022 issue – if you haven't seen it, you can find it on our website.

We were also able to install more than 100 new streetlights in Hays and Lodge Pole, and as part of our annual pole testing program the crew changed out 87 poles in need of replacement in 2023.

Scholarships

We gave out four Big Flat Electric Scholarships to area students (Dakota Krass, Kennedy Koss, Kirsta Meisdalen and Kylee Zander) as well as a Big Flat Electric Trade School Scholarship to Brylee French. Basin Electric Power Cooperative also provided a scholarship to Kirsta Meisdalen.


Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting went very well, with 82 members attending, and it appears the beef and pork bundles are still a big hit. The bundles were purchased from hard working 4-H kids: Erin Solberg, Isaac Klindworth and Kennedy Simonson. We look forward to next year, and hope the attendance is even larger.

Brenden Johnson

Another highlight that happened at the beginning of December was Brenden Johnson became a journeyman lineman after completing his apprenticeship. Congratulations Brenden! We are very fortunate to have him serve the membership.

Thank you and happy new year

In closing, I would like to take the time to thank all our members and employees who have, or who are currently, serving our country. We appreciate you and your families. Also, please continue to pray for the families who have lost a loved one this past year, including Bud Johnson, a Board member of Big Flat Electric for 26 years. Wishing each one of you a very Happy and Healthy New Year! 



BIG
FLAT
ELECTRIC
EMPLOYEES

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

Big Flat Electric Cooperative would like to wish everyone a happy and prosperous New Year!

The time has come that some people will set their resolutions for the year. For the fun of it, I asked the employees at Big Flat to write down one or more of their resolutions. We will see if any of us stick to them or if the resolutions are just good intentions. Below are the responses I received from the employees.

Gretchen Boardman

- Maintain affordable, reliable and safe power to our members.
- To have our employees safely home every night.
- Enjoy family time.
- Go on a new adventure.

Kari Hammond

- Exercise both my mind and body more.
- Take a trip with no destination in mind.
- Learn a new hobby.



Big Flat Electric office employees: L to R; Gretchen Boardman, Debbie Kindle, Kari Hammond and Shawna Myers. | **BIG FLAT ELECTRIC PHOTO**

Darren Demarais

- I don't make resolutions because I know I will break them.

Debbie Kindle

- To work on my best self.
- Appreciate all that I have.

Nathan Veit

- Hunt more.

Joe Hould

- I don't usually make any.

Shawna Myers

- More will power.
- Less procrastination.
- Have a better outlook on life.

Leif Sorensen

- Go to church more.
- Be a better person.
- Have a better attitude when going on call.
- Possibly learn to play the flute.

Erik Simanton

- Start a garden.
- Exercise more.



Big Flat Electric linemen: L to R; Erik Simanton, Joe Hould, Leif Sorensen, Nathan Veit and Ross Hasler. Not Pictured: Darren Demarais and Brenden Johnson. | **BIG FLAT ELECTRIC PHOTO**

Apply now for MECA and Basin scholarships

MONTANA Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) offers a \$500 scholarship to any college-bound undergraduate student. The applicant's parent or guardian must be receiving electric service from Big Flat Electric Co-op.

The scholarships may be used at a Montana college, university or any out-of-state institution. Funds for these scholarships come from donations that honor the memories of deceased directors, managers and employees who have served the electric cooperative.

MECA scholarship applications need to be turned in to Big Flat Electric by January 26.



BASIN Electric Power Cooperative (BEPC) offers a \$1,000 scholarship to students enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate course of study at an accredited

two or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school.

The scholarships are awarded based on academic record, the potential to succeed, leadership and participation in school and community activities, honors, work experience, a statement of education and career goals, and an outside appraisal.

Scholarships are due in the Big Flat office by January 26.

Applications are available online at bigflatelectric.com, from school guidance counselors and at the Big Flat Electric office. Don't miss out! RM



Big Flat Electric Office Manager Kari Hammond (left) and Big Flat Electric General Manager Gretchen Boardman (right), took part in the Malta Elementary School's Community Outreach program recently by helping the school cook staff, including Candace Oshio (center left) and Terri Bibeau (center right). | **BIG FLAT ELECTRIC PHOTO**

BIG FLAT ELECTRIC PARTICIPATES IN SCHOOL OUTREACH PROGRAM

BIG Flat Electric Cooperative was proud to take part in the Malta Elementary School's Community Outreach program promoting local businesses and the role they play in the agriculture industry. Office Manager Kari Hammond and General Manager Gretchen Boardman assisted the cook staff with serving breakfast at the school. RM

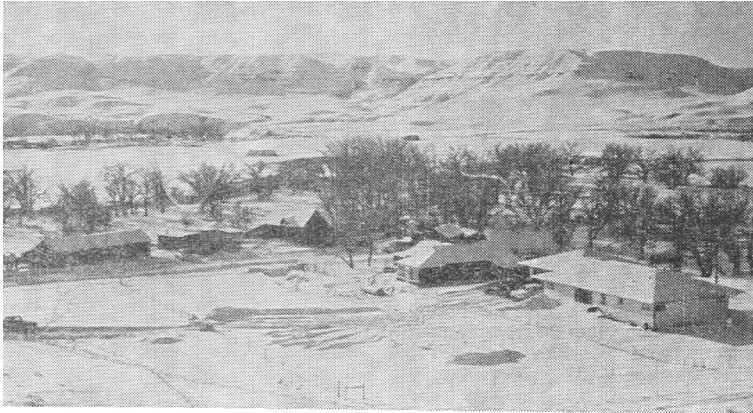
Johnson passes Journeyman Lineman test

BIG Flat Electric Cooperative employee Brenden Johnson successfully completed one of the world's most comprehensive training programs for power line personnel.

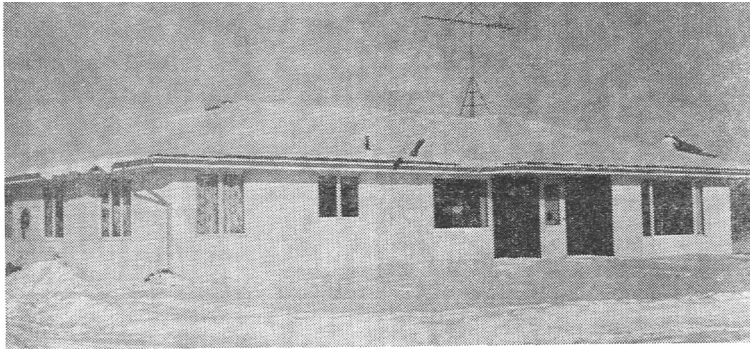
The Merchant Job Training and Safety Program is administered to line personnel in 40 states throughout the United States. Brenden Johnson and the staff of Big Flat Electric can be proud of their accomplishment. Each utility has an acting training coordinator assisting their trainees by administering "closed book" testing. The coordinators manage their own people throughout the training process from rules set by the MJTS and the statewide association.

Congratulations to Brenden Johnson on completing the required training and hours to become Big Flat Electric's newest journeyman lineman. RM

FROM JANUARY 1965: BFEC NEWSLETTER



The picture above shows the electric-heated home and ranch buildings of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Kropp, located about 17 miles north of Malta on Cottonwood Creek. The entire ranch was kept in operation including the electric heating during the 20-hour electric outage of Nov. 27 and 28 by a 10 KVA motor-driven emergency plant.



This picture is of the beautiful home of Mr. and Mrs. Milton Olsen located about six miles east of Whitewater. Although this home is not heated with electricity directly, electricity plays a most important part in the operation of the heating system and without it there can be no heat. For this reason along with energy for pumping water, cooking, automatic stock waterers and lighting, Milton feels having a stand-by plant is good insurance.

Along Our Lines

Very little outside work has been done by the Big Flat crews due to extremely cold temperatures. Several inside repair jobs have been completed during this slack period and a complete inventory was taken of our warehouse material.

The crews battled drifted roads New Year's Eve to repair a broken line in the Lost Lake area north of Harlem.

The December meeting of the Board of Directors was not held on the 17th, due to the extreme blizzard conditions and cold weather.

Two of our Board members have spent days in the hospital since our last newsletter. Earl Wasson was in the Malta hospital and Guy Riggan in the Deaconess hospital in Great Falls. Both are doing fine at the latest reports.

Miss Carol Ann Doyle, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Hames Doyle of Turner, has graduated as a United Aire Lines stewardess and is now serving abroad Mainliners flying from Los Angeles.

Mr. and Mrs. John Bednarczyk from south of Malta are in the process of remodeling their home.

Among consumers in the process of installing electric heat in their homes are the Jerry Maloney family of Loring, the Wallie Wings of Hogeland and Ralph Nace of Turner.

The Big Flat Electric now has 184 Security lights in operation on its lines, having installed lights recently for Harold Kappel, Lloyd Pewonka and Herman Breipohl, all of Saco.

Many of our consumers, especially south of Malta, experienced tremendous losses of their cattle during the blizzard which swept through the state in December. As many as 23 cows have been seen frozen to death in on fence corner. Snow plows are working daily to plow farmers and ranchers out of their homes and enable them to replenish their supply of food for themselves and their livestock.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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District 2	Alan Van Voast
District 3	Alan Wasson, President
District 4	Betty Campbell, Sec. /Treas.
District 5	Roger Solberg, Vice President
District 6	Patty Quisno
District 7	Kevin Koss

General Manager: Gretchen Boardman



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