



BIG FLAT NEWS



January 2025

www.bigflatelectric.com

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is Jan. 20

What did Martin Luther King, Jr., do and what is he known for?

Martin Luther King, Jr., was a Baptist minister and social-rights activist in the United States in the 1950s and '60s. He was a leader of the American civil rights movement. He organized a number of peaceful protests as head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, including the March on Washington, D.C., in 1963.

He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, and, at the time, was the youngest person to have done so.

His most famous work is his "I Have a Dream" speech, delivered in 1963, in which he spoke of his dream of a United States that is void of segregation and racism.

King also advocated nonviolent methods of protest, and he organized and staged countless marches and boycotts.

Who did Martin Luther King, Jr., influence?

Martin Luther King, Jr., influenced people around the world. He advocated for peaceful approaches to some of society's biggest problems.

He was instrumental in the Memphis sanitation workers' strike and the Montgomery bus boycott. The holiday honoring King is often celebrated as the MLK Day of Service, a reflection of his legacy of addressing social problems through collective action.

What was Martin Luther King's family life like?

Martin Luther King, Jr., grew up as the middle child of



Michael (later Martin Luther) King, Sr., and Alberta Williams King. His father was the minister of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta – the same church where Martin Luther King, Jr., would eventually minister. In 1953, King married Coretta Scott, and the two had four children: Yolanda, Martin Luther III, Dexter Scott and Bernice.

How did he die?

Martin Luther King, Jr., was standing on a motel balcony in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 4, 1968, when he was shot by James Earl Ray. An hour later, King died at St. Joseph's hospital. His death sparked riots across the country.

In the United States he is memorialized on the third Monday of January every year – Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, which was first observed as a federal holiday in 1986. RM

Boost your financial fitness for the new year

Just as many resolve to improve their physical health in the new year, we think January is a great time to boost your financial fitness. Begin by assessing your current financial situation – review your income, expenses, debts and savings. This snapshot will help you identify areas for improvement.

Next, set clear, achievable financial goals for the year ahead. Whether it's building an emergency fund, increasing

retirement contributions or paying off debt, having specific targets may help keep you motivated.

Create a realistic budget that aligns with your goals. Track your spending for a month to understand where your money is going, then adjust as needed. Look for areas to trim expenses and redirect funds toward your priorities.

Financial fitness is a journey, and it is important to stay committed. Stay

informed about personal finance topics through books and podcasts, or seek guidance from a financial professional. Small consistent steps may lead to improvements in your financial health over time.

Investing involves risk, including the possible loss of principal. Past performance does not guarantee future results. RM

A DREAM COME TRUE

Big Flat Electric members install wind turbine, solar panels

A few years ago, Don and Cheryl Spalinger sold their home in Eagle River, Alaska, giving them the opportunity to return to Cheryl's family ranch located on Frenchman Creek North of Saco.

In April 2022, Cheryl purchased an anemometer to measure wind speed data. The spot where the wind was being measured is the exact location where the ranch's original windmill for water was located. That windmill was a natural electrical generator that fed to battery banks in the basement.

After months of data measurements, Cheryl contacted Castle Energy in Ohio with questions and an interest in ducted wind turbine (DWT) energy. They then started researching solar panels, opting to go with Silfab, which are commercially engineered panels. With the two systems, the amount of energy produced would power their home and all outbuildings.

By the end of June 2024, the solar panels were up and running. By the end of August, the wind turbine was producing energy as well.

Cheryl said their purpose was not to be off the grid, but it has been a long-time interest of theirs to be more self-sufficient. Considering their place is quite a few miles north of Saco, the potential to have to go without power for a day or two during storms is very real. Don added that this project is an experiment and a challenge for him, especially the integration and understanding of how the system works. He said the learning process is ongoing.

The DWT is rated to withstand 130 mph winds, but the couple has noticed the turbine will automatically throw a brake on at around 35 to 40 mph, and will spin very slowly for about 45 seconds in order to cool down, and then restart. This system is based on voltage, and anything over 500 volts will cause it to overheat, thus shutting it down to cool. The underground wire used is rated at 600 volts, so anything over that will cause the wire to melt.

The DWT is made of a composite material that encompasses the aluminum blades. Don and Cheryl feel that the DWT helps birds detect where the blades are. So far, they have not had any problems with birds getting into the blades. The tower and wind turbine stand 8 meters high, and is installed on a concrete base measuring 8 feet x 8 feet x 4 feet. The couple ordered the DWT with a jack arm, which allows them to safely lower the turbine prior to anticipated high winds.

The Silfab commercial solar panels have a hail rating up to 1-inch in diameter and can withstand 51.6 mph winds. When asked if the couple was worried about them piling up



Don and Cheryl Spalinger pose in front of their ducted wind turbine and solar panels on their home north of Saco. | **BIG FLAT ELECTRIC PHOTO**

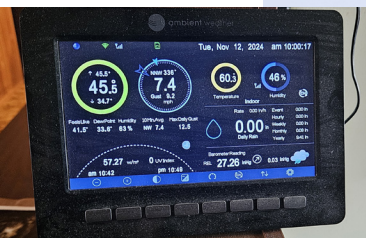
with snow, Cheryl said that with the slope and warmth of the panels, snow should not pose a problem. The solar panel system generates about twice as much power as the turbine.

These two systems feed information to a computer program that shows what Big Flat Electric Cooperative is providing, and what their turbine and solar panels are generating, as well as the ranch's usage.

The turbine and solar panels both feed to an inverter, which in turn produces power to the home and all out-buildings, along with keeping the backup battery charged. If the power goes out, the backup battery ties to a single 60-amp circuit that runs only to the house and will power the house for up to four days. The couple decided against purchasing more battery banks as they figured Big Flat Electric would have the problem fixed within four days should an outage occur. In the future, Don would like to figure out a switch to install that could be used to switch the single circuit

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- **Find us on Facebook** under Big Flat Electric Cooperative, Inc.
- **Visit our website** at www.bigflatelectric.com.
- **Sign up for budget billing** and/or ACH (auto payments) by calling our office.
- **Bills** are generated on the 1st working day of each month and are due on the 20th of each month.
- **Bills that are 60 days in arrears are subject to disconnect.** Once disconnected, a reconnect fee will be charged. The bill will then have to be paid in full to be reconnected.
- **We have a secure, automated toll-free phone number** for members making payments by credit card and/or bank account: 1-844-968-1965. You will need to have your account number and/or phone number that is on file with our office to access the automated system.
- **Take control of your electric account with SmartHub.** You can pay your bills; set up and cancel reoccurring payments; set up notifications; obtain duplicates of your bills; and view your monthly and yearly usage, all at your fingertips. Visit our website: www.bigflatelectric.com or download the SmartHub app from your Play Store on Android or the App Store on Apple devices.
- New service and service change quotes are only **valid for 30 days.**



ABOVE: The anemometer Cheryl Spalinger purchased to measure the wind speed. **RIGHT:** Don and Cheryl Spalinger's ducted wind turbine and solar panels. | **BIG FLAT ELECTRIC PHOTOS**



between the house and each of the buildings, if needed.

I asked Don and Cheryl if there were any permits or licensing that had to be obtained before the systems could become operational. Don said there were none, but they did have to follow Big Flat Electric's Interconnection Agreement and Net Metering policy requirements. Early conversations with Darren Demarais, line superintendent, included reviewing the Interconnection Agreement and signing the application requirements. The Spalingers mentioned how much they enjoyed working with Darren and that they are very happy with the collaboration with Big Flat Electric and the cooperative's willingness to let them run their own power supply, and to learn how these

systems work.

Darren said their power bills show their challenges have been met and the system has exceeded expectations.

It is an understatement when I say spending the morning visiting with Don and Cheryl about this process of being self-sufficient, enjoying the challenges and following their long-time interest and dream was very interesting. They would like everyone to know that they would be more than happy to visit or answer any questions you may have about their DWT and solar panel systems.

Because they are not in the house often and have no cell service at their place, the best way to contact them is via email at dspalinger@mtaonline.net.

RM

Customer Appreciation Night

January 4th, 2025

Whitewater/Turner basketball game in Whitewater
Big Flat Electric will be handing out \$5.00 concession vouchers.

Hope to see many of you there!

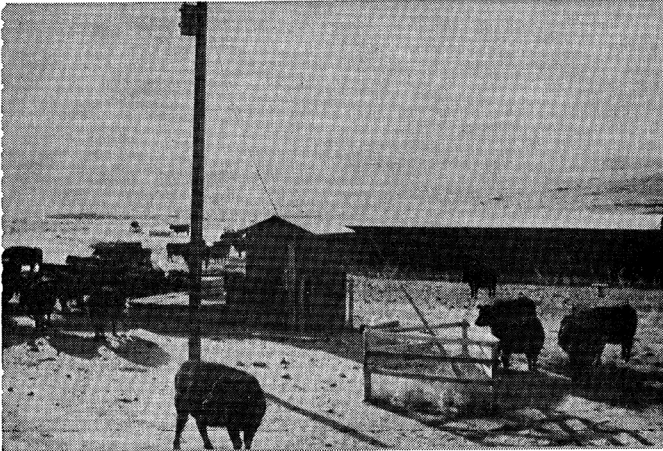
We will be happy to visit about any questions, concerns, or good thoughts regarding service with Big Flat Electric.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

BE SO GOOD
THEY CAN'T
IGNORE YOU

~STEVE MARTIN

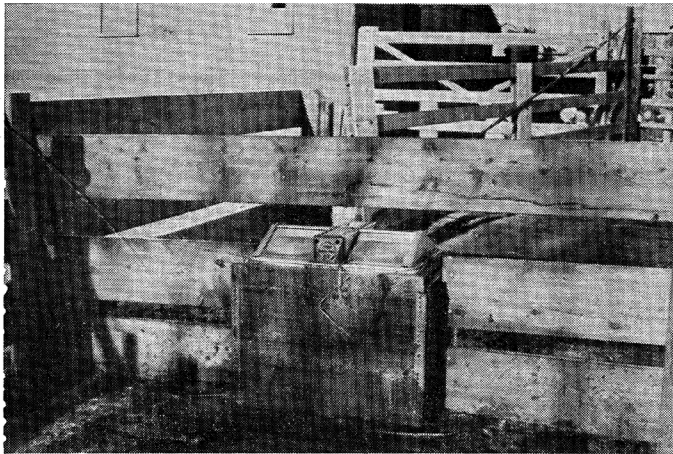
FROM JANUARY 1966: *BFEC NEWSLETTER*



Stock water system at the Francis Anderson place, north of Whitewater, completely automatic with large wooden tank, float and 1750 watt heating element, will take care of about 400 head of cattle.



Six miles of line was completed this fall to the Gilbert Haugo ranch located about 15 miles west of Hogeland. Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy Bevoiden, who are operating the ranch, started enjoying the benefits of electricity on October 28, 1965.



New and just recently installed at the Soennichsen Brothers ranch, east of Whitewater are two automatic fountain stock waterers. Located in the yard and feed lot, they will furnish fresh clean water for about 200 head.

Along Our Lines

JANUARY 1966 – BFEC Newsletter

- Mr. and Mrs. Dick Pancake have remodeled their home in the Wagner Community.
- A new stockwell has been drilled on the Boyd Ruud place south of Malta and an automatic stock watering system is being installed.
- David Emond and Will T. Henry of Malta have formed the Lazy TH Cattle Company and are building a cattle feeding lot on the Will T. Henry place south of Malta.
- Cold weather has halted the work at the new Whitewater School Gym. The steel framework and about half the roof has been erected. At the present time it doesn't look as though the gym will be ready for use before next spring.
- The Big Flat Electric now has 217 Security Lights installed on their lines. Lights have recently been installed for Milton J. Olson, Whitewater; Stanford Boothe, Wagner; Soennichsen Brothers and Henry Halverson, Saco; and Adam G. Koss of the Regina area south of Malta.

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