



# BIG FLAT NEWS



August 2025

[www.bigflatelectric.com](http://www.bigflatelectric.com)

## Big Flat Electric pole-top and bucket-truck rescue

By **TODD SOLOMON** | 406 Safety & Consulting, LLC

**W**ELL, it is that time of the year when co-ops gear up for pole-top and bucket-truck rescue. This is an annual requirement that OSHA has mandated electric linemen do. They need to show proficiency getting a person down from the pole if he or she has become unable to do so on their own.

So, let's start by explaining the purpose of the rescue practice. Twenty years ago, electric linemen climbed poles several times a day, which was normal for them. Since then, we have better equipment — bucket trucks — to access poles and equipment on the poles. Most co-op's have several bucket trucks, and we can also access most power poles with an aerial device. The art of climbing has changed from 20 years ago.

In 2014, OSHA updated regulations that govern electrical linemen. This new rule made linemen utilize what we call fall protection while they climb power poles. This made everyone in the co-op world purchase new equipment that wraps around the poles, ensuring 100 percent attachment to the pole. This was a big change for linemen as they mostly free climbed up the pole, put a strap around the pole and then went to work. With this old way we had linemen that cutout and fell from the power poles from time to time. When OSHA saw injuries from the falls, it prompted the requirement to use new fall protection while climbing. This greatly prevented pole-climbing accidents. The other thing is when linemen climbed, they de-energized the lines so they could work on the pole. This caused co-op members to lose power while linemen did the work. Now, with the use of bucket trucks, our linemen can keep the power on while they do the work, most of the time. There are cases when taking an outage and de-energizing the line is safer for the line crew.

Getting back to pole-top and bucket-truck rescues, the importance of getting employees down as fast and safely as possible is the reason we do it. If a lineman gets hurt



while they are working on the lines, they may only have four minutes before irreversible and permanent damage is done to the body. Getting up and doing a rescue needs to be done as safe and fast as possible so CPR can begin on an unresponsive employee.

Pole-top rescue is a critical safety procedure for power linemen, enabling them to save a coworker who is unconscious or unresponsive atop a utility pole, often due to electrocution or injury. RAM



# A trip of a lifetime

By **SOMMER GREEN**

**M**y trip to Washington, D.C., is one I will never forget. It had its airplane ups and its hospital bed downs. Not only did I make friendships that will last a lifetime but I also made many great memories.

My favorite places to visit were The National Archives, where we were able to see the Declaration of Independence; The Holocaust Museum, a place I feel everyone should experience; outside of The White House, and Gettysburg, where we toured the town and infamous battlefield.

I have to add that my least favorite place to visit was the urgent care facility. They took great care of me while I was there due to an unexpected and ill-timed bout with the stomach virus, but fortunately, they took good enough care of me that I was able to come right back and tag along.

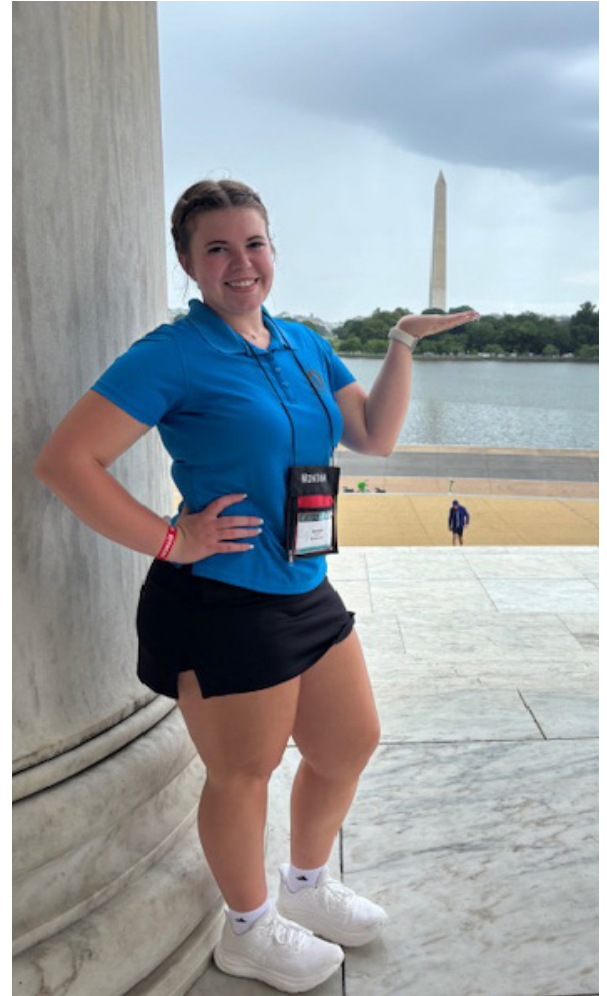
The schedule was packed and the weather was definitely unpredictable. At one point, we

got stuck outside waiting for the bus and our shoes filled with water and our clothes became soaked! Definitely something we haven't had much of in Northeast Montana lately.

On the Co-Op Connections Night, we attended an event with students from 44 different states. The speaker that night was Mike Schlappi, who delivered a very powerful and motivational account of his life and struggles.

Another highlight was getting to meet and talk with Senator Steve Daines. We appreciate our generous senators, representatives and staff who take the time out of their busy schedules to meet with the youth from their state.

Washington, D.C., was an experience full of history, amazing monuments, museums and memorials. Good food, great company, and even a side of D.C. that wasn't on the schedule! I am so grateful to Big Flat Electric Cooperative for selecting me for this trip of a lifetime. RM



## Committee to meet to nominate director candidates

**E**very year our members have the opportunity to vote for directors at the annual meeting. Directors serve for a three-year term and can be re-elected to serve additional terms. The directors/districts up for re-election this year are Alan Van Voast - District 2 (Turner area), District 4 (Hays area) and Patty Quisno - District 6 (Ft. Belknap Indian Reservation area). Big Flat Electric Cooperative's bylaws allow for director nomination by committee or

by petition prior to the annual meeting.

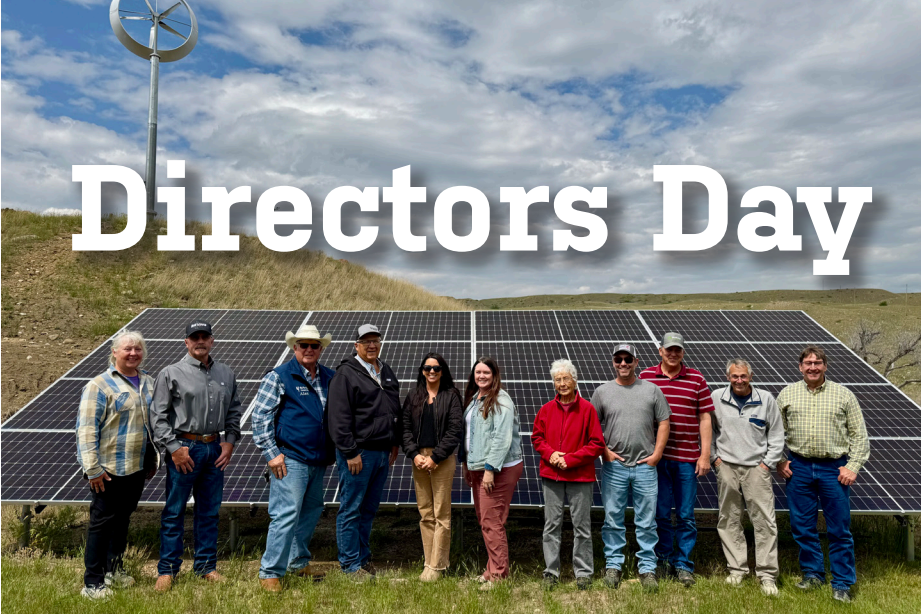
Big Flat Electric holds a committee meeting once a year to nominate directors for the upcoming election. A meeting of the nominating committee delegates will be held on September 3, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. in Malta. This year's nominating committee members for District 2 are Keith Cowan, Brian Fox and Steve Hickel; District 4 are Karlene Cochran, Alwayne LaRoque and Barbara Longknife; and District 6

are Clarina Brockie, David Crasco and Valdean El Assad.

Being nominated at the nominating committee meeting is one of two ways names may be printed on the ballot at the Annual Meeting. If the nominating committee has already met, a member may turn in a petition, signed by at least 15 members, to the cooperative office not less than 15 days before the annual meeting for their name to be on the ballot. RM



# Directors Day



**O**N a sunny day in June, Big Flat Electric directors and management held our annual Directors Day, where we toured different areas of our service territory. First the group went through the Lodgepole area to view the newly installed three-phase poles and line that will provide more energy output to the Lodgepole Store. Then we went through the Snowshoe Trail area and on to Bear Gulch Road in Zortman. The group concluded the day with a stop at Don and Cheryl Spalinger's family ranch located on Frenchman Creek, north of Saco. Don and Cheryl shared interesting information about their recently installed wind turbine and solar panels with the group. We thank the Spalingers for their hospitality. RM

## SAVE THE DATE

**BIG FLAT ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVE**

**ANNUAL MEETING  
OCTOBER 11, 2025**

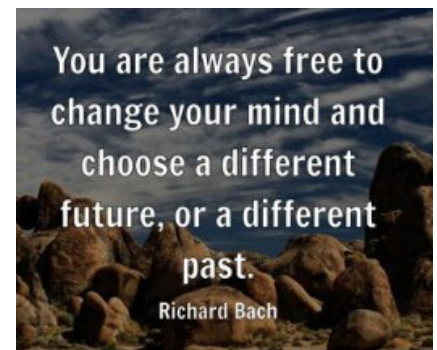
**MALTA HIGH SCHOOL  
AUDITORIUM**

**REGISTRATION - 9 A.M.  
MEETING - 10 A.M.**

## THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- **Find us on Facebook** under Big Flat Electric Cooperative, Inc.
- **Visit our website** at [www.bigflatelectric.com](http://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](http://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**.

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH



## FROM AUGUST 1966: BFEC NEWSLETTER

### Should a Farmer Take a Vacation?

"Yes indeed," says Dr. William C. Menninger, well known psychiatrist and head of the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas.

Dr. Menninger says, "I would strongly prescribe a vacation. I would definitely recommend it as a health aid and for any of the following mental states, all of them showing signs of stress and strain in one's personality:

"If you have reached that state of feeling 'fed up'—"

"If you seem to be 'just going along or existing on nerve'—"

"If you are bogged down as though you are dragging along and always tired—"

"Then you are in need of a vacation and a change of scenery."

"But the best prescription and advice is—take a vacation before you reach any of these states."

General employment rules and company regulations, along with union requirements pretty well take care of vacations for most people who are employed. However, such rules and regulations seldom, if ever include the farmer or rancher. He has no written vacation requirements or agreements. Yet he has more than his full share of worries, anxieties, hard work and long hours. And he needs and richly deserves a vacation and change of scenery as much or maybe more so than the next fellow. Often one of his major problems seems to be that of finding the right time of the year when he can get away for at least two weeks to enjoy a vacation. But he would be wise if he would plan it, take it, enjoy it and reap the benefits that it should bring to him and his family.



**FIRE DESTROYED COFFEE SHOP AT LORING**—The Loring Coffee Shop burned to the ground early Monday morning, Aug. 8.. The building was owned by C. J. Grabofsky but the restaurant had not been operating for some time. The living quarters were attached to the restaurant. The fire started in an upstairs apartment and was discovered by Grabofsky about 2 a.m. Monday. By the time help arrived the fire had too much of a start and the building burned to the ground, a total loss, Grabofsky saving only a few personal belongings.

### Along Our Lines

AUGUST 1966 – BFEC Newsletter

- Mr. and Mrs. Sam Fox have moved from Turner to Havre to make their home.
- Seventeen children from Chicago, Ill., participating in the "Friendly Town" program arrived in Malta on July 19 to spend two weeks with families throughout the community. Host families in the Big Flat service area were Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Anderson, South Malta Community; Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Ochsner of Whitewater; Mr. and Mrs. Allen Granter, Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Cowan, Mr. and Mrs. John Flansaas and Mr. and Mrs. Ken Lynch of Loring; Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Solberg of Wagner and Mr. and Mrs. Roger Simonson of Saco. Mr. and Mrs. Bud Bradley of Loring hosted the event.
- High point winners in the Boots and Saddles Show which was held recently in Malta were Greg Oxart, son of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Oxart of the Content community and Patti Sue Smith, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Smith of the Harb Community located south of Malta.
- Winners in the 4-H Dress Revue held in Malta in the Senior Division were Charlotte Mitchell, third, and Pat Cummings, second. Judy Blunt was the first-place winner in the Junior Division
- Mr. and Mrs. Bert Coon of Zortman have moved to Troy to make their home. Fred Wratishaw has purchased their home in Zortman.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District 1	Duane Klindworth
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



## BIG FLAT ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

SERVING BLAINE, PHILLIPS AND VALLEY COUNTIES

P.O. BOX 229 • MALTA, MT 59538 • WWW.BIGFLATELECTRIC.COM

A Touchstone Energy™ Partner  
The power of human connections

**CONNECT WITH US**  
**OPEN WEEKDAYS 8 A.M. TO 5 P.M.**

333 S 7TH ST E  
MALTA, MT 59538  
(406) 654-2040

**AFTER HOURS  
OUTAGE:**  
(406) 654-7400

**PAYMENT OPTIONS:**  
1-844-968-1965 or  
bigflatelectric.com