




# HILL COUNTY ELECTRIC NEWS & VIEWS

December 2024



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hillcountyelectric.coop

## CEO MESSAGE



Craig Gates  
General Manager/CEO

### The holiday season is a *magical* time of year...

When homes sparkle with colorful lights, festive decorations fill the air, and families come together to create cherished memories. For those of us who hold faith close to our hearts, this season is also a time to gather with loved ones

in our places of worship, practicing our beliefs and traditions. It's a time to be grateful and to celebrate the many blessings in our lives.

This year, we at Hill County Electric have much to be thankful for and several accomplishments to celebrate. While the year brought its challenges, especially with the Verona Substation incident in April, it also revealed the strength of our community and team. When the substation went down, it was a difficult moment for the cooperative.

Yet, out of that adversity came a shining example of resilience. The HCE team rallied, working tirelessly to bring the transformer back into service. Once we solidified our plan of action, the teamwork was remarkable, and we successfully executed the project—completing it a full day ahead of schedule. Even though we had to install four generators and assist our largest member in self-supplying power, the cooperation from our members was extraordinary. Many went out of their way to help, expecting nothing in return - something rare in today's world of "what's in it for me." I am deeply grateful to members like you, who stood by us and made it possible for us to serve you better.

At Hill County Electric, we remain committed to the safety and well-being of our members and employees. Within these pages, you'll find safety tips and energy-saving ideas to help you light up your home this season while keeping costs down and ensuring the comfort of your loved ones.

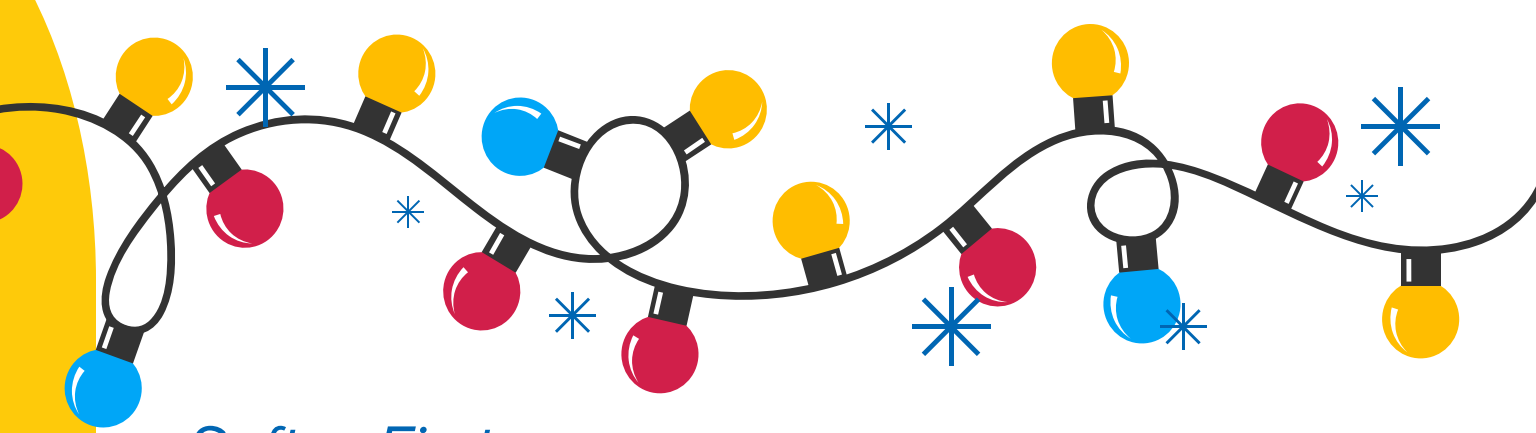
As you gather with family and friends this holiday season, I encourage you to embrace every moment. Our time with loved ones is precious—let's not take it for granted.

From all of us at Hill County Electric, we wish you a joyous holiday filled with gratitude, love, laughter, and brightness. May your Thanksgiving, Christmas, and holiday season be truly *special!*

**HOLIDAY CLOSURES**

*Christmas*  
Tuesday, December 24th  
Wednesday, December 25th

*New Year's Day*  
Wednesday, January 1st



## Safety First

### Tips for a **Secure** Holiday Season

**Inspect Decorations Before Use.** Prior to hanging any lights or setting up decorations, **examine all** electrical components for damage. Look for frayed cords, broken bulbs, or loose connections. If you find any issues, replace the faulty items to avoid potential fire hazards.

**Use Outdoor-Rated Decorations.** When decorating outdoors, ensure that your lights and electrical decorations are designed for exterior use. Look for labels indicating weather resistance, which will help prevent electrical shorts or shocks due to exposure to rain and snow.

**Avoid Overloading Circuits.** Avoid plugging too many strings of lights into one outlet. Overloading circuits can lead to overheating and increase the risk of electrical fires. Follow the manufacturer's guidelines for how many strings can be safely connected.

**Secure Cords and Lights.** Keep cords away from walkways and areas where people will be walking. Secure them to the ground to prevent tripping hazards. Use clips or fasteners specifically designed for outdoor use to prevent them from becoming loose or dangling.

**Turn Off Lights When Not in Use.** While it may be tempting to leave lights on all night, make it a habit to turn them off before going to bed or when leaving the house. This not only saves energy but also reduces fire risks. Consider using timers to automate your lighting schedule.

#### **1. Opt for LED Lights**

Switching to LED lights can significantly reduce your energy consumption. LED holiday lights use up to 80% less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs and last much longer, making them a more cost-effective and eco-friendly option.

#### **2. Use Dimmers and Timers**

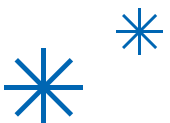
Installing dimmer switches can help reduce energy consumption by allowing you to adjust the brightness of your lights. Additionally, timers help ensure that lights are only on when needed, giving you both convenience and savings.

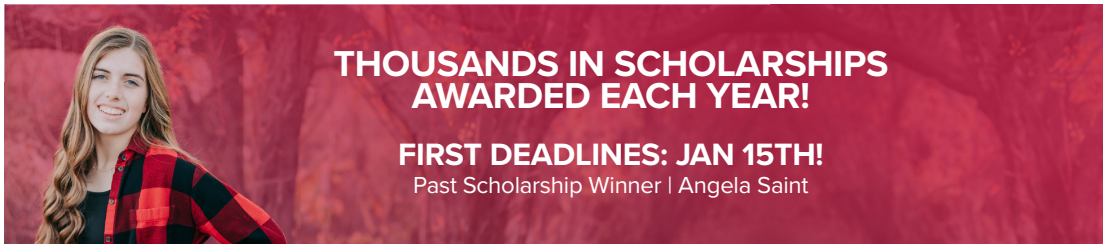
#### **3. Decorate Strategically**

Showcase your decorations to maximize viewer impact without needing to cover every inch of your home. Focus on focal points such as doorways, windows, and yard ornaments, which can be enhanced with fewer lights for festive flair.

#### **4. Unplug and Store Carefully**

Once the holiday season is over, be sure to unplug lights and decorations. Store them in a dry, cool place to prolong their life and ensure they can safely be used for many festive seasons to come.





## Hill County Electric Cooperative:

### **Empowering Future Leaders Through Scholarships**

Hill County Electric Cooperative (HCEC) is proud of its continual commitment to supporting the educational aspirations of its member's dependents by providing a variety of scholarship opportunities.

HCE believes that education and trade careers are the foundation for a bright future. In line with this philosophy, we offer scholarships to the dependents of our members to help ease the financial burden of higher education and training. These scholarships are designed for students pursuing a variety of fields, from traditional academic programs to specialized trades.

#### **In Partnership with MECA and Basin**

Our cooperative's membership in the Montana Electric Cooperative Association (MECA) and Basin Electric Power Cooperative further expands the scholarship opportunities available to our member's dependents. This partnership allows us to provide additional opportunities for financial support that can make a significant difference in students' lives.

#### **Key Scholarship Opportunities and Deadlines**

**MECA & Basin Scholarships:** The first deadline for these scholarships is fast approaching on January 15. We encourage all eligible member dependents to apply and take advantage of this opportunity to support their educational endeavors.

**Tell Us Your Story, Lineman, and Electrical Technology Scholarships:** For those interested in a scholarship based on your future plans or pursuing careers in the lineman and electrical technology fields, applications for these scholarships are due on March 1. This is a great opportunity for students who wish to explore these dynamic and essential career paths.

**Teacher Appreciation Program:** We are proud to offer a unique opportunity to help our communities with recruiting and retaining good, quality educators. The deadline to apply for the Teacher Appreciation Program is March 1.

#### **How to Apply**

Interested applicants can find more information and access the scholarship application forms on our website [www.hcelectric.com](http://www.hcelectric.com) under the Community section. Here, you'll find detailed descriptions of each scholarship, eligibility criteria, and instructions on how to apply.

#### **Conclusion**

At Hill County Electric Cooperative, we are dedicated to supporting our members and their families. The scholarships we offer are just one of the many ways we strive to give back to our community. By investing in the education of our future leaders, we not only strengthen our cooperative, but also ensure a brighter future for everyone.

Don't miss these incredible opportunities—mark your calendars and start the application process today! Together, we can help pave the way for educational success and inspiring careers in a variety of fields.



# Swap and Shop

Welcome to our Swap and Shop! Feel free to post and find classifieds from other members! Ads submitted online are usually added within 2 to 3 business days.

Due to print deadlines and space available, some ads may appear in the next month's magazine.

*\*Denotes photo available on website*

## 1984 Steiger Panther IV

Panther IV series model KM-360. Has 855 Cummins Motor with 360 Horse Power. SST 110 transmission, radial tires, new batteries, runs excellent. Asking \$29,500 OBO. Call 406.353.4466.

## Flex coil sprayers

Two Flexi coil sprayers S67 XL Models, 1500 gallon tanks. Rare 60ft cultivator, 1984 Morris M CP-760 Magnum, comes with harrows. Asking \$7,500. Call 406.262.4466.

## Rare 60ft Cultivator

Rare 60ft cultivator, 1984 Morris M CP-760 Magnum, Harrows come with. Asking \$7500, call 406.262.4466.

## 120 Ft Booms

120 ft booms. One is good and one for parts. Comes with monitor to run it. Asking \$4,300 for both. Call 406.262.4466.

## Hamburger For Sale

In 2lb packages, \$4 per pound. Call 406.301.4035.

## Set of 4 stock wheels\*

Set of 4 stock wheels from 2016 Dodge Ram pickup truck. Very good condition \$700 OBO. Call 406.357.2891.

## Boat, Motor, Trailer and Motorcycles For Sale

15 ft. boat, motor & trailer  
2004 Harley Davidson Fat Boy (5000 actual miles) 2013 Harley Davidson v-Rod 2012 Suzuki V-Strom (5000 actual miles)  
Call 406.399.4949

## Big Foot Camper

Big Foot 10 FT Camper with A/C, toilet, refrigerator and bed for sale. Call 406.301.4035.

## Trailer Needed

Trailer needed for hired men. Call 406.930.2276.

## Tubular Aluminum Table

Tubular aluminum inversion table, lightly used. Asking \$50. Call 406.395.4581.

## 1999 GMC 3500HD 2WD Dually\*

.5L V-8 turbo diesel engine with 195HP. Utility body featuring a generator, rack, lockable tool boxes, Maintainer Crane and built-in hydraulic leveling/support jacks. Includes ability to plug in additional external hydraulic accessories. Crane has a 21,000 ft/lb rating, so can handle 5,000 lb when vertical. 1,000 lb at full 21' horizontal extension. Heavy duty 19.5" wheels, 2 full spares.  
Odometer 207,235.

## Wanted 1955-1959 GMC or Chevy Parts

1955-1959 GMC or Chevy parts. Pickup parts or whole pickup. Call 406.326.2287.

## Early 1970's Disassembled Triumph Spitfire\*

Early 1970's Disassembled Triumph Spitfire. Call 406.372.3161. Asking \$2,500 OBO.

## Wheat Straw Bales

Small square wheat bales, our of conventional combine. \$5.00 per bale, located just a few miles north of Havre, MT. Limited quantities available. Please call or text 406.230.2281, email: noneckfarms@gmail.com or on Facebook at Twyla Knudson.

## Craftsman 2 stage snowblower with tire chains

Craftsman 28-inch electric start, 2 stage snowblower with tire chains. Asking \$500 obo. Call 406.395.4581.

## Flatbed Trailer\*

48' by 102" flatbed trailer, 2013 East, asking \$23,500. Call 406.980.0789.

## Male Welch Corgi Missing

Black/White 3-year-old male, last seen on Stockyard Road in Chinook. Call 406.357.3288 or 406.357.2279.



*Swap & Shop is a classified advertising section of the Triangle Communications and Hill County Electric websites and newsletters. It is maintained as a service to customers and communities wanting to buy, sell and announce non-commercial items. To have an ad included, simply enter all the pertinent information on the online form. An administrator will review the information within two business days and if approved, the ad will then appear. It will stay online for 60 days unless you notify us to remove or change it. It will also appear in any of the newsletters printed during that 60 day window. Triangle reserves the right to abbreviate ads and if the section is full, we will display ads on a first come, first-served basis. If you're unable to enter your ad online you may mail or e-mail it to us using the contact info inside the front cover of this magazine. Happy swapping and shopping.*

