



HILL COUNTY ELECTRIC NEWS & VIEWS

May 2020



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hillcountyelectric.coop



Craig Gates
General Manager/CEO

CEO May Message

Thank you to all of our members for your patronage this year. I hope this finds you healthy. The past few months have been uncharted territory for all of us and we thank you for your patience during this time.

On March 24th, Hill County Electric (HCE) and its sister cooperative, Triangle Communications, closed our office to the public to protect our members and employees

from the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Like many other companies, some of our employees began working from home and those remaining in the office are practicing social distancing. Coordinating this was not an easy task, but our team worked together and accomplished what was best for everyone. Providing our members with excellent service and the safety of our employees will always be our top priorities.

Unfortunately, we will not be celebrating the HCE 75th Annual Meeting of Members. In the best interests of our member's safety and health, the HCE Board decided to cancel the 75th Annual Meeting scheduled for May 16, 2020. This was not an easy decision. With the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic and officials limiting large gatherings; it seemed like the right thing to do for everyone. When life returns to normal, the Board will decide if a special meeting will be called this year or wait until the next annual meeting to have the election of our trustees. The Bylaws allow for such provisions, and the Board will work through the issues of COVID-19 and make the best possible decision for the Cooperative.

The following is an excerpt from a letter given to us by Governor Bullock, who was gracious enough to work with the electric cooperatives to ensure that as an essential business we are able to limit our financial exposure; while maintaining our help to those that are financially impacted by the loss of a job or business due directly to COVID-19.

“As you know, on March 31st, I announced a series of consumer protections to lessen the economic impacts on Montanans during the COVID-19 statewide emergency by stopping evictions, foreclosures and preventing the disconnection of utility services including water, heating and internet service. Under the directive, no business or political subdivision of the State supplying electricity, gas, sewage disposal, water, telephone, or internet services for use in a dwelling unit or residence may terminate that service. In addition, no fee or charge for late or untimely payment that becomes due during the time the directive is in effect may be billed or collected.

In order to dispel any confusion regarding implementation of this directive, I want to offer a few additional points of clarification. First and foremost, nothing in my directive absolves individuals or families from their obligations to pay their utility bills whether arising prior to or during this crisis. My office will continue to encourage those experiencing hardships to communicate directly with their providers to explore payment plans or other flexibilities to avoid the prospect of interruptions to their service in the future. Second, my directive applies only to residential customers – I recognize many businesses and commercial customers may also experience hardships during this time and my office stands ready to work with those businesses to identify state and federal relief that may be used to address revenue shortfalls. Third, the order is prospective as of the date of its issuance and would not affect any disconnect occurring prior to March 31st.”

Again, I want to thank Governor Bullock for working with us and being flexible while trying to help all of Montana's needs.

To mark HCE's special anniversary, we were wondering who the first home or business was to be connected at the Cooperative. We could not find a specific name of one person or business in our records. If anyone has any information on this, we would love to hear from you. Share any memories of the early years of HCE on the HCE Facebook page, send us an email, or note. And remember, we can still celebrate 75 years of keeping the lights on! Seventy-five years is a long time to be in business and we owe that to you, our members.

Creating a Strong Password

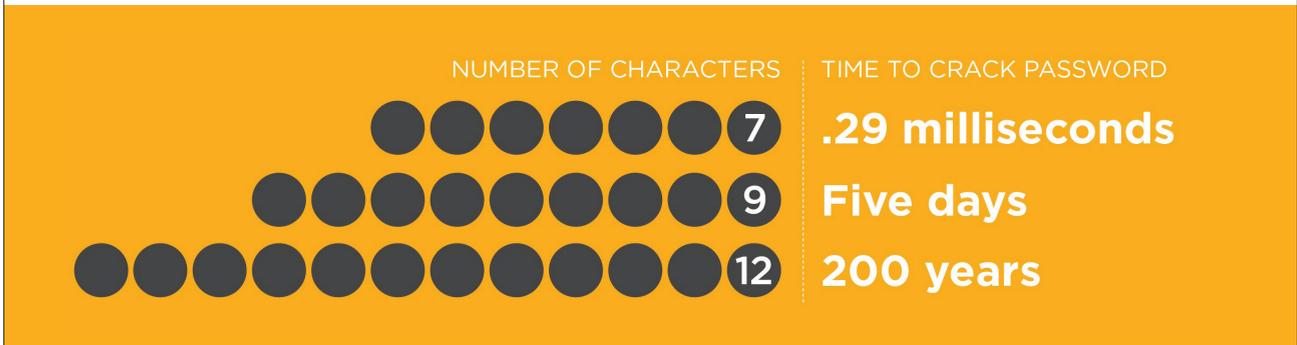
Everything we log into on the Internet requires a password. Choosing a password can be difficult and stress. You don't want it to be too easy so someone can guess it, but you don't want it so hard that you forget it. You can come up with the most secure password, but if you can't remember what it is it's useless. Security experts also recommend that you do not write your passwords down.

Here is a suggestion from one of the top Internet security companies on how to come up with a password that is secure, and you can remember:

- Pick a song lyric, sentence, quote or phrase, etc. with at least eight words. Make it easy for you to remember and hard for someone else to guess. Here is an example: "The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."
- Take out the first letter of each word in your sentence: TJOATMBWOS
- Randomly change out a few of the upper-case letters with lower case letters: tJOaTmbWOs
- Change out at least one letter with a number: tJOaTmbWO5
- Lastly, replace a few letters with special characters (\$,%,&,@,+):+JOaTm!WO5

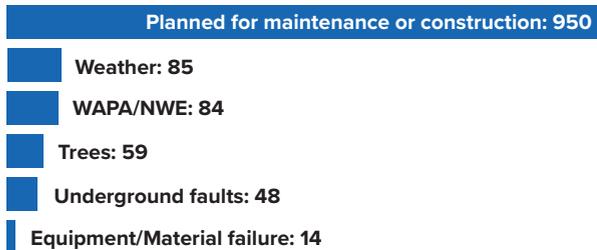
How long should your password be?

The length and complexity of a password has a direct impact on how difficult it would be to crack.



HCE Happenings

Last month, Hill County Electric (HCE) had approximately 1240 account hours affected by outages. Of these hours:



This compares to 484 hours one year ago.

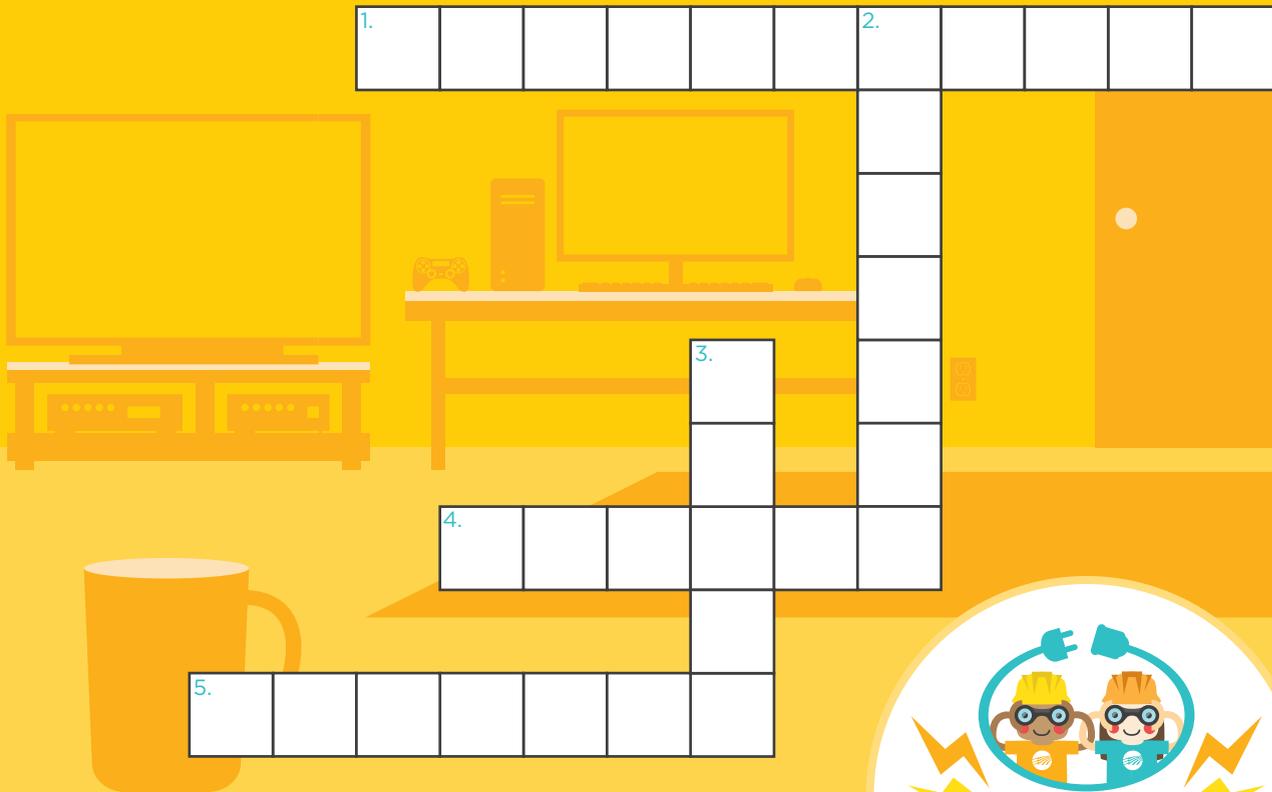
Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Spring is nearly here! Now is the perfect time to test your A/C and ensure it's ready for summer. Remember to check the evaporator coil, which should be cleaned annually for optimal efficiency.

Source: energy.gov



ELECTRICAL SAFETY CROSSWORD PUZZLE



May is Electrical Safety Month!

Read the safety tips below to complete the crossword puzzle.

1. **ACROSS:** Keep all liquids away from _____, like TVs, computers and gaming consoles.
2. **DOWN:** Never overload electrical _____. This creates a greater risk of fire.
3. **DOWN:** Never use electrical _____ that feel warm to the touch or are damaged in any way.
4. **ACROSS:** Smoke _____ should be installed in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home.
5. **ACROSS:** Don't run electrical cords under rugs. This creates potential fire _____.

1. electronics 2. outlets 3. cords 4. alarms 5. hazards **ANSWER KEY**

SWAP AND SHOP

Welcome to our Swap and Shop! Feel free to post and find classifieds from other members!

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!

Empire Direct Vent Wall Furnaces

Two 20,000 btu Empire direct vent wall furnaces, model DV-20E-3. Set up for propane. Asking \$1,000 or \$1,500 for both. Call 406.932.6775.

VW Trike

Custom-built VW trike, 170 miles, 1776cc engine, big valve heads, Carter 2-barrel carb, s.s. springer front end, bus transaxle, suicide clutch. Asking \$5,000, trades considered. Call 406.547.2184.

Vintage VW Parts

Three motor blocks and crankshafts, rods, alternator, carb, dist, glass, and early style door. Asking \$250, call 406.547.2184.

2001 Prowler 5th Wheel Trailer

Prowler 32 1/2 ft 5th wheel trailer with three slides, four new 16-inch tires and two air conditioners. 7100 generator also available. Trailer is in great shape. Asking \$7,500, call 406.654.2756.

2009 Toyota Camry

2009 Toyota Camry with 121,000 miles. It is an automatic 2.4 liter with good tires. Runs great and gets good fuel mileage. Call 406.262.4310.

Singer Treadle Sewing Machine

Patented 1910 Singer Treadle Sewing Machine for sale. "An oldie but a goodie." Machine is in good shape, works and has attachments. Call 406.622.3605 or 406.788.2717.

Buffalo Meat

Buffalo meat for sale by the half or whole. Call 406.697.0993.

2011 Lund Tye

2011 1950 Lund Tye, 225 Mercury Verado with only 240 hours, complete canvas, Minnkota Terrova trolling motor and HDS 7 Lowrance. Excellent condition, always covered and stored in heated garage during winter. Asking \$39,995 or best offer, call 406.265.4009.

Kenworth T800 Day Cab

2004 Kenworth T800 Day Cab, tractor, 10 speed, C-15 Cat engine with 700,000 miles. Asking \$38,000 or best offer. For picture and more information call Mike at 406.799.6978.

4000-Watt Generator

Sears/Craftsman 4000-watt generator. 110 outlets work, but the 220 outlet needs to be rewired. Make an offer. Call 406.353.4462, located in the Harlem area.

Ali Arc Aluminum Front Bumper

Bumper has push bar and lights. Fits 2008-2010 Ford F-450 and 550 Super Duty truck, in good condition. Asking \$600, call 406.397.3333.

2014 Flat Bed Trailer

2014 PJ 30-foot flatbed trailer. Has 10-foot hydraulic dovetail, dual wheel 16,000 pounds, tandem axles and air brakes. Excellent condition, asking \$14,000. Call 406.397.3333.

1994 Ford Truck

1994 Ford L-900 truck cat 3176 with 370 horsepower motor, a 9-speed transmission and 4-way lockers. Good condition, asking \$9,000. Call 406.397.3333.

1995 John Deere

1995 John Deere 8100 MFWD tractor with power shift, 100 PTO, 3-point hitch and 7817 hours. In good condition, asking \$47,000. Call 406.397.3333.

Wanted to Buy

Looking to buy a 1955 to 1958 Chevy car or 1/2-ton truck. Call 406.326.2287.

Wanted To Buy

Looking to purchase a small upright freezer in the Havre area. Call 406.395.4581.

1967 Ford Thunderbird

Two-door classic vehicle with a 390 engine and 90,000 actual miles. It has new tires plus an excellent interior but needs some minor bodywork and paint. Asking \$7,000, call 406.357.4282.

Leer Topper

2016 Leer topper off a 2006 short bed Chevy. Topper is taller in the back to make lots of room, like-new condition. Can send pictures, call 406.379.2605.

Electric Service Loop

200-amp electric service with loop, mast and wires. Located in Harlem area. Asking \$150, call 406.353.4462.

Tractors and More

IHC Industrial tractor with loader, T9 IHC Caterpillar with dozer and grapple bucket (older one), 990 David Brown tractor with loader and Suzuki 200 2x4 four-wheeler (as is). Call 406.739.4361 evenings for more details.