

# Watts Up?

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Volume 23, No. 6

Ravalli Electric Co-op

Corvallis, Montana

**Please plan to attend your Annual Meeting!**



**9:30 a.m. Registration** ~ Corvallis High School Gym

**10:30 a.m. Meeting Program:**

Auditor's Report, Rick Matusiak  
Manager's Report, Richard J Brown  
Question & Answer Period

President's Report, Stacy L Bartlett  
Business Meeting

Election of Trustees ~ Districts 1&5

Scholarship Drawing ~ *Must have previously applied and be present to win.*

Adjournment

Door Prizes ~ *Must be present to win.*

## Paul Rennaker Retires from Ravalli Electric Co-op after 32 Years of Dedicated Service

Paul Rennaker had a lot of memories to share with employees and other retirees at the Co-op office in Corvallis where he was honored with a retirement party after work on March 3, 2010. Rennaker joined the Ravalli Electric staff as an apprentice lineman in 1978 and retired as an Apparatus Foreman.

"I learned a great deal from Paul. He was our 'Go-to Guy' when it came to all operations regarding line and substation equipment. Paul never told me my ideas were wrong, but he did have a way of keeping me advised until my strategy sounded a lot like his. You can't replace Paul's knowledge and experience," commented Jim McKay, Manager of Engineering and Operations. Jim praised Paul for his years of service and presented him with a check and gift certificate for a "trolling motor" for his fishing boat.

"We wish Paul good luck and good fishing in retirement," said McKay.



1381

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



**Ravalli Electric Co-op**

## Ravalli Electric Co-op's 75th Annual Meeting Features Touchstone Energy Hot Air Balloon

Ravalli Electric Co-op is happy to announce that the

Touchstone Energy Hot Air Balloon will be in Corvallis at our 75<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, June 12, 2010. The Touchstone Energy Hot Air Balloon is a professionally flown and managed competitive hot air balloon team sponsored by the Cooperative Balloon Associates, LLC.

Touchstone Energy (TSE) cooperatives are over 700 members strong. Touchstone Energy is an organization of rural elec-

tric cooperatives that have banded together to market



the cooperative difference. TSE evolved to meet the changing needs of co-ops and their members, while maintaining a firm commitment to the core values of integrity, accountability,

innovation, and commitment to community.

The TSE Balloon is scheduled to arrive in Corvallis on Friday, June 4, 2010. It will be located on the old football field behind the Corvallis High School gymnasium prior to start of the Annual Meeting. We hope to see you at there.

As the summer vacation starts, we want to remind our members and their families who have irrigation systems to remember to "Look Up and Live." Remember not to raise irrigation pipes higher than your head.

### Do you have a new phone number?

If your phone number has changed since you signed up for service at the co-op, please send us an update or give us a call. You can write your new number on your returned payment coupon or call our office at 961-3001. Be sure to include both land line and cell phone numbers. This keeps us up to date in case we need to reach you with information on a planned outage, etc.



Thank you!

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### Reusing barcoded envelopes...

We know a lot of you who pay your bill with our "Pay by Bank" or "Auto Credit Card" services still receive a co-op return envelope with your statement. It's great that you reuse those envelopes rather than toss them. But, be sure to heavily cross out the barcode on the lower right front of the envelope before you mail it. If you don't, that envelope gets sent to us by the US Postal Service as their automated system reads the barcode as our address.

We encourage you to reuse the envelopes - save a tree by recycling - but you probably don't want it sent to us which can add another day or two to your delivery time. So, be sure to "black out" that barcode.

78171

# Maunder Meanderings

by Jim Maunder

## Direct Mail Compact Fluorescent Light Bulb Program Wrap Up

Ravalli Electric Co-op's direct mail Compact Fluorescent Light Bulb (cfl) Program is winding down. By the end of May, 7170 members will have received a big box of 14 energy efficient light bulbs. We had hoped to complete the program by March 31 but the manufacturer had some problems with a trucking company in tracking the shipments.

We'd like to thank all of our members for their patience and understanding during the program. We especially want to thank all the members who sent cards and messages on their utility statements for their kind words of appreciation. The best comment was: "In these hard economic times it's nice to have the Co-op helping its members save money."

We're sorry we couldn't please all our members who received the boxes of cfls. Less than 1% of our members were unhappy with the program. Forty-six members failed to pick their box up, five refused them at the post office and fifteen members returned their box to the co-op. We appreciate them bringing the box back even if the member number and label were torn off.

The reasons to return the cfls varied. Some expressed their dislike of cfls. Others thought it was a government handout. But, the biggest concern was the mercury contained in the cfls.

In regard to the mercury concern, the amount is no larger than the end of a pencil lead. We included a fact sheet from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the boxes explaining disposal and clean up procedures in the event one broke in a house. REC now has a recycle bin at our Corvallis Office for members to recycle their cfl bulbs. We continue to sponsor a recycle bin at the Missoula Home Depot and ACE Hardware as well.

We've heard comments that the cfls were purchased with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) or stimulus money. They were not. REC purchased the cfls for the program. We were reimbursed by our power supplier, the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), in full for the purchase.

Offering the "Direct Mail CFL Program" allowed REC the opportunity to provide energy efficiency savings to all our members regardless of their space heat source. We also help BPA recognize electricity savings throughout the year. In addition, the electricity savings may delay REC's need to purchase more expensive power resources in the future.

We are currently working with the cfl manufacturer to make them available to our members for ordering on-line. Stay tuned for more information as it becomes available. For members that have electric water heaters and returned the showerhead postcard, you should see them in the mail later this summer. If you have questions or concerns, please contact our Member Services Department.



## Keep Food Safe During a Power Outage

By Scott Gates

We've all been there: a summer storm rolls through, toppling trees and damaging power lines. The lights go out. And although it may only be a matter of minutes or hours before your electric co-op gets things up and running again, thawing food in the refrigerator and freezer can make that relatively short time seem like an eternity.

It's important to keep cold food safe during a power outage, and a little advanced preparation and know-how can keep your family safe from food-borne bacteria. First and foremost, keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature: if unopened, a refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about four hours; a full freezer will do so for about 48 hours (24 hours if it's half-full).



A sure-fire way to know if food is safe is to monitor its temperature. Meat, poultry, fish, and eggs should be refrigerated at or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit and frozen food at or below 0 degrees Fahrenheit. If the power goes out, a digital, dial, or instant-read food thermometer and appliance thermometers will help you know if the food remains at safe temperatures.

If the power stays out for a prolonged period, there are a few ways to aid your refrigerator and freezer in the fight to keep things cold. The simplest tip is to keep your freezer full. If it's not full, group items close together to preserve the cold.

Dry ice can help keep freezers chilly: find it by scanning for "ice" or "carbon dioxide" in the phone book. It will take 25 pounds or so to keep a full, 10-cubic foot freezer safe for three to four days. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic foot full freezer for two days. Wear heavy-duty gloves or use tongs when handling dry ice—the temperature of dry ice is -216 degrees Fahrenheit—and separate it from food with cardboard to prevent freezer burn.

During cold months, it may be tempting to store food outside. Although this may work for cold drinks, food can spoil in direct sunlight. Curious animals may also take advantage of an outside stash.

Rather than putting the food outside, consider taking advantage of the cold temperatures by making ice. Fill buckets, empty milk cartons, or cans with water and leave them outside to freeze. Then transfer the homemade ice to your refrigerator, freezer, or coolers.

Power back on? Make sure your food is still safe by either checking its temperature or looking for ice crystals. If frozen food is 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below or ice crystals are visible, it's safe to refreeze. Discard any perishable refrigerated food (meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers) that have been above 40 degrees for 2 hours.

*Source: US Department of Agriculture, US Food Safety and Inspection Service*

*Scott Gates writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*



### Find the Hidden Number



We will hide three account numbers this month in our "Watts Up?" pages. If you find your account number, call the office at 961-3001 by the 20th of the magazine month and you get a \$30 credit on your electric bill. Good luck!

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General Manager

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