

## FLASHES

*Committed to safely and economically provide reliable energy and other services which bring value to its membership.*

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Holiday Food Drive



### EXTENDED OFFICE CLOSURE FOR THANKSGIVING

Fall River Electric will be closed Thursday AND Friday, November 23 and 24, in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. The extra day will allow our staff to spend a little more time with their families.

In case of an unexpected power outage during this holiday weekend, our crews will be on stand-by to respond as quickly and safely as possible. If you experience an outage on the weekend or any time after normal business hours, call 1.800.632.5726.



## Electric Rates To Increase An Average Of Just Four Percent Beginning with January Statements

**AFTER 9 YEARS WITHOUT AN INCREASE, SIGNIFICANT JUMPS IN INFLATION AND POWER COSTS IMPACT THE CO-OP'S FINANCES**

As we first reported last month, the nation's inflation rate during the past two years, along with increases in wholesale power costs and supply chain prices, have forced a modest rate increase effective with member statements to be received in January 2024. This rate increase will result in monthly electric energy rates rising for both residential and commercial users. Due to the aggressive approach to managing costs and the Cooperative's current equity ratio of nearly 50 percent, the board was able to keep the increase in rates low.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a copy of the new monthly rates for all classifications. Additionally, we have added calculators for each rate class on our website at [www.fallriverelectric.com/rates-fees](http://www.fallriverelectric.com/rates-fees). Visit the website so you can determine how this slight increase will impact your monthly expenses. If you need assistance pay-

ing your energy bill, Fall River Helping Hands or your State's LIHEAP program may help. LIHEAP's contact information can be found elsewhere in the newsletter. Contact a friendly Member Services Representative for help applying to Helping Hands. Fall River Electric also offers rebates on energy conservation projects that can lower your heating bill. Visit [www.fallriverelectric.com/home-improvement-rebates](http://www.fallriverelectric.com/home-improvement-rebates) for details.

To help you manage your demand, Fall River Electric Cooperative has created an entire section of our website about demand, including a calculator, as well as several frequently asked questions and answers. Go to [www.fallriverelectric.com/demand](http://www.fallriverelectric.com/demand) to access these resources. If you have further questions or need help with these calculators, call a friendly Member Services Representative at 800.632.5726 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mountain Time.

## Members To Receive \$2.1 Million Cash Back In December

More than \$2,137,000 in patronage capital funds will be distributed next month to owner-members who were members of the Cooperative in 2005 and a portion of 2006. This is one of the most significant benefits of being an owner-member (customer) of Fall River Electric. Patronage capital is a program that pays customers cash back over time. Whenever Fall River Electric collects more money than it needs for operating expenses, those extra revenues, which are called "margins," become patronage capital, and are disbursed to the owner-members of the Co-op over an approximate twenty-year cycle. Unlike for-profit utilities that pay profits to shareholders, Fall River Electric belongs to you and the communities it serves. The Co-op uses patronage capital to invest in



the Cooperative's infrastructure.

The amount of patronage capital paid out to you this year is based on how much electricity you used during the years mentioned. The Cooperative's board retires or pays out patronage capital only when the financial condition of the Co-op allows. Fall River Electric's continued excellent financial condition allows the board to authorize these annual payments.

Please carefully review the letter that will be enclosed with your check in December. If you have further questions, please call a friendly Member Services representative during normal business hours Monday through Friday at 800.632.5726.





# Stuff The Trailer To Benefit Those In Need

Last holiday season, Fall River owner-members and others in the communities contributed nearly four tons of non-perishable food, as well as cash donations, during our annual "Stuff the Trailer" event.

This year, our trailer will be at the following planned locations:

- **Dave's Jubilee, Ashton:** Friday, December 1, 11am – 1pm
- **Broulim's Fresh Foods, Rexburg:** Friday, December 8, 3pm – 5pm
- **Food Roundup Supermarket AND the Market Place, West Yellowstone:** Friday, December 15, 11am – 2pm
- **Broulim's Fresh Foods, Driggs:** Thursday, December 21, 4pm – 6pm

Each participating store will be offering deals on non-perishable food items so you can buy them right there or bring 'em from home!

Donated food will be delivered in January to the North Fremont Food Pantry, West Yellowstone Food Bank, Rexburg Food Pantry, and the Teton Valley Food Pantry to provide food for families in need. If you can't meet the truck during those dates, you can also drop off food items at any of our Fall River Electric offices in Ashton, Driggs, or West Yellowstone. Let's set a record for donations this year and more importantly, let's set a goal to feed more families than ever before!

## Winter Propane Prep

If you use propane at your home or business or have a vacation or rental home, here are some tips to prepare your propane system for winter. Excessive snow or ice can damage your propane system and could lead to a gas leak. Mark the location of your tank with a brightly colored stake or flag that is taller than the maximum amount of anticipated snow. If you have a regulator adjacent to your home or business, make sure it is protected from snow or ice coming off your roof.

When using a snow removal service, make sure the service knows where your propane tank is located and instruct them to keep snow and their equipment clear of your tank. When clearing snow or ice from the top of your tank, gently brush away with a broom or your gloved hand.

A vacation or rental home in a high snowfall area requires special attention. Designate a responsible person or party, such as your property management firm or snow removal service, to monitor your propane system while you are away to

make sure:

- They know the location of your propane tank(s) and regulator(s), so they keep them clear of snow and ice.
- Consider preparing a diagram of your propane system that you can provide to your snow removal company, property management firm, homeowners association, and any contractors that may be working around your property during the winter season.
- Keep your driveway and pathway to your propane tank clear. A propane delivery truck needs at least a 10-foot-wide path to be able to deliver fuel. When plowing, snow blowing, or shoveling, do not push or pile snow around your tank or regulator.

Follow these suggestions to ensure propane delivery, as well as a warm and comfortable winter season!

## Electric Board Member Named To Propane Board

Fall River Electric board member Jeff Keay has been named to the Fall River Propane Board of Directors. He joins fellow propane board members Merrick Young of West Yellowstone, Don Betts of Driggs, Amber Boyce of Island Park, Cindy Martinsen of Star Valley, Wyoming, and Bryan Case.





800-632-5726  
208-652-7431

**ASHTON**  
1150 North 3400 East  
Ashton, ID 83420

**DRIGGS**  
1605 N Highway 33  
Driggs, ID 83422

**WEST YELLOWSTONE**  
436 Madison Ave  
West Yellowstone, MT 59758

All Our Offices Are Open  
Monday - Friday  
8:00am - 4:30pm

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Husk Crowther**  
District 1  
Rexburg/Rigby  
Vice President



**Travis Markegard**  
District 2  
West Victor



**Georg Behrens**  
District 3  
East Victor  
Board President



**Anna Lindstedt**  
District 4  
East Driggs



**Brent Robson**  
District 5  
West Driggs/Tetonia



**Dede Draper**  
District 6  
Ashton



**Jodi Stiehl**  
District 7  
South Island Park  
Secretary/Treasurer



**Jeff Keay**  
District 8  
North Island Park



**Doug Schmier**  
District 9  
West Yellowstone



**Bryan Case**  
Fall River Electric  
CEO/General  
Manager

## MECA Scholarship Available To Students

Each year, the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA), of which Fall River Electric is a member, awards four scholarships in the amount of \$500 each. These scholarships are funded by individual contributions to the Montana Memorial Scholarship Program.

To apply for the scholarship, applicants and their parents or guardians must be a member of Fall River Electric. Students do not need to live in Montana or attend a Montana school to qualify. Applications for the MECA Memorial Scholarship are available on the Fall River Electric website



at [www.fallriverelectric.com/scholarships](http://www.fallriverelectric.com/scholarships). The deadline to apply is Friday, January 12, 2024.

## Be Ready For Winter Weather Power Outages

Winter weather can cause power outages, so be prepared! Storms can range from moderate snow over a few hours to a blizzard with blinding, wind-driven snow that lasts for several days. Many winter storms are accompanied by dangerously low temperatures and sometimes by strong winds, ice, sleet, and freezing rain.

Regardless of the severity of a winter storm, you should be prepared to remain safe during these events. Prepare a winter survival kit for your home.

When a power outage occurs in winter, you can depend on Fall River Electric crews to brave the cold conditions and work hard to restore power as quickly and safely as possible, but having a winter survival kit on hand is a smart idea.

#### Stock your kit with the below items:

- **Food:** Store food that does not require cooking, such as canned goods, crackers, dehydrated meats, and dried fruit. Keep a large supply of water on hand. *Ready.gov* recommends five gallons per person.
- **Medication:** Be sure to have an adequate supply of all prescriptions in the event of a major power outage.
- **Other items:** First Aid Kit, blankets, winter boots, heavy winter coat, hat and gloves, flashlight, battery-powered radio, and extra batteries.

#### Before an outage occurs, you should plan the following:

- Keep your vehicle's fuel tank full. Service stations rely on electricity to power their pumps.
- If you use your car to re-charge devices such as cell phones, do NOT keep the car running in a garage, partially enclosed spaces such as this can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.
- If you or a family member rely on anything that is battery-operated or power dependent like a medical device, determine a back-up plan.

Extended power outages caused by winter storms that affect a large number of Fall River members are reported and updated regularly on Fall River Electric's Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/FallRiverREC/](https://www.facebook.com/FallRiverREC/). Like us on Facebook to stay up to date.



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



## NEED HELP PAYING YOUR WINTER ENERGY BILL?

Winter weather is approaching and with it comes higher energy bills. The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) has begun processing applications for 2023. Participants may now apply via regular mail, email, phone, or in-person.

To receive further information, call these numbers for the state in which you reside:

**IDAHO – 208.522.5391**

**MONTANA – 406.587.4486**

**WYOMING – 800.246.4221**

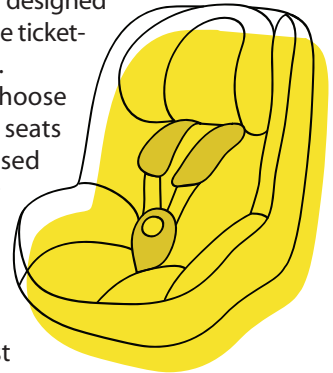


**833.682.3671**

## TAKE SAFETY HOME: Seatbelt & Car Seat Tips

With winter weather approaching, vehicle slide-offs become more common. Always ensure you protect yourself and others in your vehicle by properly using seat belts. Never put the shoulder belt under your arm or behind your back. Air bags are designed for use with seat belts, not a replacement for them. You can also be ticketed for not wearing your seat belt, even if you are in the back seat.

Children's car seats are based on the child's age and size so choose a seat fits both your vehicle and your child. Rear-facing car seats are for infants to age 3, while forward-facing car seats are used for children from 2 to 7, depending upon their size. A booster seat can be used as early as when your child is age 4 to as old as 8 or 9, when a regular seat belt is the way to go. For maximum safety, keep your child in the car seat for as long as possible and keep them in the back seat until at least age 12. Visit [NHTSA.gov/therightseat](https://www.nhtsa.gov/therightseat) for more help and tips on best practices.



## Schmier Named NWPPA President



At a recent Northwest Public Power Association Board of Trustees meeting, the trustees approved a restructuring of the officers after the departure of the former 2023-2024 president, Don Smith. The new NWPPA Board of Trustees will be led by Doug Schmier of Fall River Electric Cooperative who will be taking on the role of president.

Schmier was first elected to Fall River Electric's board in 2010 from the West Yellowstone, Montana, district and has previously served as Fall River's board president.

NWPPA is a regional association representing and serving more than 150 customer-owned, locally controlled utilities in the Western U.S. and Canada.



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Want your Fall River FLASHES faster? Click [www.fallriverelectric.com](http://www.fallriverelectric.com) and then select the tab "My Cooperative" followed by the drop-down menu "Fall River Electric Newsletter."

Keep up to date, including on power outage information, by "liking" Fall River Electric on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/fallriverrec](https://www.facebook.com/fallriverrec).

