

PARK SPARKS

August 2024



LUCK OF THE DRAW WINNERS

At the 2023 Annual Meeting, we awarded fifteen \$2,000 Luck of the Draw scholarships for the fall of 2024. These scholarships are funded through unclaimed Capital Credits, and the amount available each year may vary. Congratulations to the recipients!



Kaylee Roberts - MSU

Kaylee is studying Pre-Veterinary Medicine with a minor in Ag Business. She enjoys being outdoors hunting and riding with her family.



Houston Dunn - Central Wyoming

Houston is studying business. In addition, he received a scholarship to play golf for the college's team.



Kayla Johnson - U of M Western

Studying Business Administration with a minor in Farm and Ranch Operations, Kayla aims to start her own business. In her spare time, she enjoys family time and adventures with her two dogs.



Mariah Creason - Montana State

Mariah is a multi-generation Montanan continuing to study Animal Science in the fall. She is active in her church, community, and 4H.



Matthew Marlowe - Lehigh University

Matthew, a sophomore, is combining biology with mechanical engineering to focus on sustainable design. In his free time, he enjoys the outdoors, spending time with friends, reading, and drinking coffee.



Cole Flatt - MSU Gallatin

Cole is entering his final semester this fall. He works as a ranch hand and enjoys riding dirt bikes, hunting, fishing, and skiing. During the summer, he loves spending time at the lake and soaking up the sun.



Zoey Payne - Montana State

This upcoming fall, Zoey will begin her freshman year, embarking on her journey as a business student.



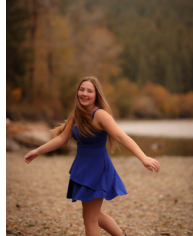
Bailey Opitz - Montana State

Bailey will be a junior pursuing a Nursing degree this fall. Outside of class and studying, Bailey enjoys spending time outdoors, attending school activities, and being with friends and family.



Severn Sienkiewicz - Bowdoin College

Severn is majoring in Earth & Oceanographic Science. She captains the club soccer team, is a member of the alpine skiing team, and leads weekend outdoor trips for the outing club.



Ava Burkes - University of Maine

Ava, valedictorian at Shields Valley High School, plans to study marine sciences starting in the fall. She has been invited to UMaine's Honors Program and looks forward to a coastal semester at the Darling Marine Science Center.

By Matt Haggerty

Understand that our recent widespread outages, stemming from heavy wet snowfall in late May, likely impacted many of you. I'd like to take the time to provide an overview of the entire incident and detail the actions taken by PEC to address these major outages.

A few days preceding the storm's arrival in our area, our Operations Manager and I closely monitored weather forecasts. These forecasts indicated the likelihood of heavy wet snowfall ranging from 1 to 2 feet across our service area. As an electric utility, late spring snowstorms raise significant concerns for us, as we anticipate the potential impact on our electrical infrastructure. Little did we anticipate that it would result in one of the most substantial outages we've experienced in recent decades.

To grasp the magnitude of the storm's effects, consider the difference between shoveling light, powdery snow typical of winter months versus the heavy, slushy snowfall we encountered during this event. While the powdery is easy to manage due to its lightness, the heavy poses significant challenges due to its weight. This analogy extends to the impact on trees: light, powdery snow usually has minimal effect on trees or branches, whereas heavy, wet snow weighs down limbs, causing them to sag or break entirely, sometimes leading to the collapse of entire trees. As these events unfold, power lines are often brought down in the process.

During the same period, we also faced the issue of ice accumulation on our lines. The combined effect of ice buildup and trees falling onto our lines resulted in Park Electric experiencing service disruptions affecting an estimated 2,600 meters across four counties.

Shortly after the storm began sweeping through our coverage area, power went out, prompting a flood of calls from residents across our service territory. As each call is answered, important details such as addresses and reports of downed lines or poles are documented. This information is swiftly relayed to our operations department, where it is cross-referenced with our mapping system, and a comprehensive master list of outage locations is compiled.

Despite its apparent simplicity, managing the influx of calls during this storm posed a significant challenge, with our staff handling several thousand inquiries throughout the day. Following the logging of each outage, our operations team dispatches crews to the affected areas. During this storm, our transmission lines were the first to trip out, resulting in widespread power loss for those serviced by the affected substations.

Of the ten substations within our system, four were completely offline during this event, leaving only one unaffected. Almost immediately after the transmission lines tripped, reports flooded in of wires down in driveways, yards, on porches, and even across highways, along with reports of damaged poles. In response, crews were dispatched to patrol the transmission lines, restoring power to the substations upon completion.

With substations restored, crews embarked on a meticulous 300+ mile journey to inspect and repair each section of affected line. Progressing systematically from substations to the farthest points of each line, power was gradually restored section by section. Once a crew completes repairs and restores power to a section of the line, they notify the office, and our outage list is updated accordingly before proceeding to the next location. This effort persisted around the clock until all services were restored.

The duration of outages varied depending on your location. While some members had their power restored within 24 hours, a larger portion saw restoration within 48 hours. However, for some members residing in more remote areas, it took up to three days to regain power. Throughout the storm and its aftermath, numerous members reached out to express gratitude towards our staff for their dedicated efforts. These heartfelt gestures of appreciation were deeply valued, after the long hours spent to ensure power was restored to all members.

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Connect with Park Electric

Billing and general information: 406-222-3100
Outage and project information: 406-222-7778

Online: www.parkelectric.coop
Email: info@parkelectric.coop

Office hours: 8-5 Monday - Friday

Location: 5706 US Hwy 89 S
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