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BRIDGING THE DATA DIVIDE
Striking a Balance Between Technology And Security

Missoula Electric Cooperative (MEC) has been safely and reliably serving the energy needs of our member-owners for decades, and the tools of our trade have definitely changed with the times. Mechanical devices on the line have been replaced with electronics, paper maps with GPS devices, and information regarding your monthly bill is simply a click away. In order to manage all of these cyber assets, and the mountains of data that come with them, utilities must maintain a robust data integrity and cyber security program.

No organization is exempt from the threat of a cyberattack. “Cyberattacks are expensive and damage not only the victim, but our entire economy.” states David Trepp, President and CEO of Info@Risk in Eugene, Oregon. “For example, we pay more credit card overhead (interest and fees) on

every transaction because companies have to recoup their losses from cyber-attacks. In addition, cyberattacks against utilities and other key infrastructure providers affect our national security.”

All of us in the industry can easily relate to risk management efforts as they relate to



safety, and our approach to cyber security is very similar. The goal of our safety program at Missoula Electric Cooperative (MEC) is not simply policy implementation and enforcement, but instead our goal is to fundamentally change our safety culture by increasing awareness and miti-

gating risk. Additionally, we recognize that safety is the responsibility of every employee and that when we all do our part individually, the safety culture as a whole is strengthened. The approach to cyber security is much the same – our individual efforts bolster the overall pro-

gram for the benefit of the cooperative and its membership.

As part of our 2016 “Safety and Security” initiative, MEC participated in an important study centered on cybersecurity at small utilities across the nation. In May, staff from the National Renewable Energy Labo-

MANAGER’S ARTICLE
Mark Hayden



ratory (NREL) visited MEC as part of a project funded by the Department of Energy’s Office of Energy Policy and Systems Analysis. The purpose of the project was to study the challenges that small distribution utilities face with regard to reliability, resilience, and cybersecurity. NREL visited six utilities (co-ops, municipal utilities, and tribal utilities), each with fewer than 100 employees and 50,000 meters, and held-day long conversations about risk management, asset management, governance, and related topics.

“We wanted to know what small utilities are doing well already, and in which areas they might need

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HAS YOUR BILL JUMPED RECENTLY?

Understanding your energy usage

One of our goals at MEC is to help our members use electricity wisely. The following is a list of some of the common causes of high bill complaints.

Space Heaters: sizes from 600 to 1,500 watts and can drive your bill up by \$30 to \$75 per heater each month. Space heaters should be used sparingly and are not designed to be a permanent heat source. Also, beware of energy saving claims on the boxes of many space heaters. All electric space heat is 100% efficient meaning you get \$1 of heat for every \$1 of electricity. Although many heaters are marketed as high efficiency, only heat pumps can offer better than 100% efficiency.

Vehicle Engine Block Heaters: sizes vary from 1,000 to 1,800 watts and can add \$30 to \$90 per month. It is only necessary to plug most vehicles in for one or two hours before starting. Consider using an outdoor timer with your heater to limit operating hours saving energy and money. Timers start at around \$10 and could pay for themselves in the first month of operation.

Well Pumps: a 1HP well pump with a broken shut-off switch will run non-stop and consume about 750 watts per hour. This added load could boost your monthly bill by \$40.

Water Heater: an electric water heater is one the largest electric loads in a home. Electric water heaters contain two heating elements controlled by two thermostats. When a thermostat fails causing the element to heat non-stop, the impact on your bill could top \$200 in a month.

Stock Tank Heaters: sizes vary from 750 to 1,500 watts and can run \$40 to \$75 per month in the coldest months. Consider upgrading to an insulated model.

If you suspect you bill is artificially high, start with a load test. Have one person watch the meter dial, turn while the other person slowly turn off breakers. When you find the breaker(s) that slow your meter dial to a crawl - that is the circuit driving your usage.



ELECTRICITY POWERS OUR LIVES: HOW MUCH IT TAKES (IN KILOWATT HOURS)



SOURCE: Buildings Energy Data Book 2010, 2.1.16 Operating Characteristics of Electric Appliances in the Residential Sector, published by the U.S. Department of Energy, March 2011. A kilowatt hour is the common unit of measurement for the electricity we use. It's calculated by the number of watts a device needs every hour it's in use. According to the Energy Information Administration, the average family uses about 10,654 kWh/year.

KeepElectricityAffordable.org

BRIDGING THE DATA DIVIDE - *Continued from Page 3*

help,” said Maurice Martin, technology lead for NREL’s Cyber-Physical Systems Security & Resilience center. “Talking to utilities is the only way to find that out, and the folks at MEC were generous with their time and supplied us with valuable insights for our study.”

An important next-step at MEC was to enlist the help of Info@Risk to prioritize the needs of our organization through a comprehensive penetration test of our current operation. A comprehensive penetration test is a “red team” exercise, where a utility’s safeguards are thoroughly tested from all possible attack vectors including human, physical, and technical attacks. The process provided a key baselining exercise that provided information about which safeguards are working as expected and which ones are not. MEC, like all utilities has limited resources to allocate to cyber defens-

es. The final report we received takes the guesswork out of prioritizing our finite budget and allows us to invest in areas that will provide the most return on that investment.

Ultimately, by taking a holistic approach to cyber security similar to the cultural model we use with safety, our goal is to raise individual awareness and focus on risk identification and mitigation. The evolution and integration of technology in our industry is not likely to reverse course anytime soon, and it is our obligation as stewards of an ever-increasing amount of data to put our consumers first by maintaining cyber security as not just a top priority, but a core value in all that we do. Happy New Year!

Adapted from MEC’s article featured in the November 2016 issue of the Northwest Public Power Association Bulletin. To view the full article, visit www.nwppa.org.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ELECTION INFORMATION

As a member-owned cooperative, Missoula Electric is governed by a democratically elected Board of Trustees. In 2017, Trustees for Districts #5 and #7 will be elected. Eligible members residing within these districts’ boundaries are welcome to run for a Trustee position. If you are interested in running, please contact Missoula Electric Cooperative at 541-4433 to determine your eligibility. Board election packets will be available to pick up at the Missoula office beginning Tuesday, January 3, 2017. Completed packets will be accepted in the Missoula office until close of business Wednesday, February 1, 2017



MEC SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE FEBRUARY 1

Changes in effect for application and selection process

This year, MEC will once again offer area students the opportunity to compete for one of fourteen \$1,000 scholarships. Scholarships will be distributed through MEC’s service territory with two scholarships awarded for each trustee district. All members of Missoula Electric Cooperative with an active account, or their dependents, may apply for scholarship awards. Applicants must include their account number when submitting their application.

Scholarship applications may be downloaded from our website at www.missoulaelectric.com where you will find a link on the home page. Make sure to complete all sections of the application. Be sure to attach school transcripts to your application (a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 is required). Don’t forget to sign and date your application. Incomplete applications, or applications containing errors will not be considered.

Completed scholarship applications must be received by MEC by 5:00pm on Wednesday, February 1, 2017. If you have questions, please contact Vickie at 406-541-4433.

One of the missions of MEC is to support and promote education. As a cooperative, we operate on a non-profit basis. This means each year, after all the bills are paid, we allocate all remaining margins back to the members in the form of capital credits. Capital Credits are retired (paid out) periodically with board approval after review of the Cooperative’s financial status. Sometimes, the intended recipient cannot be located and the capital credits go unclaimed. After a period of time, unclaimed capital credits are turned over to MEC’s education trust fund. The scholarships awarded by the Cooperative are funded by these unclaimed capital credits.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Replacing windows is one of the most expensive energy efficiency projects you can invest in. If you have older windows which are in good shape, consider adding Low-E storm windows. Low-E storm windows are easy to install and cost a fraction of the cost of replacement windows and can save you 12% to 33% in heating costs.

Source: Energy.gov



MEC SOLAR TURNS 1

It is hard to believe that a year has passed since our community solar installation in Lolo began producing kilowatt-hours. In one year, the 50 KW, 176 panel array has generated almost 67,000 kWh. While that system is sold out, there are a limited number of panels available in the Phase II installation located in Frenchtown. Call the office today at 541-4433 to check on panel availability.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY REBATES

Effective 10/1/2016

Appliances (New)

ENERGY STAR Clothes Washers*	\$20.00-\$50.00
ENERGY STAR Clothes Dryers*	\$50.00
Thermostatic Shut-off Valves	\$14.00-\$23.00
Pipe Insulation	\$5.00-\$25.00

HVAC Measures*

Ductless Heat Pumps*	\$800.00-\$1,000.00
Air-Source Heat Pump Upgrade*	\$500.00-\$700.00
Air-Source Heat Pump Conversions*	\$1,400.00-\$1,600.00
Geothermal Heat Pump Systems (new)*	\$3,000.00
PTCS Duct Sealing*	\$200.00-\$250.00

New Construction*

New ENERGY STAR Manufactured Homes	\$1,200.00
Montana House (v 2.0)*	\$1,500.00

Weatherization

Insulation*	Varies
ENERGY STAR Exterior Door*	\$40.00
Low-E Storm Windows*	\$2.00/Sq. Ft.
Prime Window Replacement*	\$2.00-\$8.00/Sq. Ft.

*Restrictions apply, make sure to contact an Energy Sense representative to find out how to obtain your rebate. In cases of HVAC measures, new construction and window replacement and weatherization, pre-approval by MEC is generally required. For a list of qualified ductless heat pump installers or PTCS technicians, please contact Dan at 406-541-6333.

SMARTHUB MOBILE APP

Manage your MEC account from any device

We have all kinds of members, and that is why we offer all kinds of payment options. For those of our members who wish to manage their account using their mobile device, we offer a powerful app available for both Apple and Android devices. Best of all - it's free!

The SmartHub mobile app allows you to pay bills, track usage, receive notifications and much more. To download the app, visit your app store and search for "SmartHub".

