

GOLDENWEST ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE HI-LINES

WIBAUX, MONT. | 406-796-2423

OCTOBER 2025

Celebrating National Co-op Month

In October, electric cooperatives nationwide take the opportunity to honor National Co-op Month and reflect on the unique benefits of being part of a cooperative. This is also the perfect moment to express our gratitude to the members who make it all possible. For us, this celebration goes beyond festivities. It's a chance to reaffirm the values that guide our mission.



Jason Brothen
General manager

As the CEO of Goldenwest Electric Cooperative (GWEC), I witness purposeful action every day. Unlike investor-owned utilities, our cooperative exists not to generate profits for distant shareholders, but to serve our members, neighbors and communities. This purpose distinguishes us. It's the foundation of our establishment and the driving force behind every decision we make.

The heart of our cooperative model

At its essence, being a cooperative means we are member-owned and locally controlled. This isn't just a slogan. It's the core of our business model. Members have a voice in our cooperative's operations. You elect board members who reside in our service area and understand the unique challenges and opportunities our communities face. Decisions are made here at home, not in distant corporate boardrooms, by people who care about the same issues you do.

This local accountability allows us to concentrate on what matters most: delivering reliable, affordable electricity and providing real value to those we serve.

We achieve this by investing in crucial infrastructure upgrades and technologies that strengthen our local grid and enhance electric service. We work diligently to manage costs and keep rates as low as possible, recognizing the impact of rising prices on families and small businesses in our region. When storms strike or outages occur, GWEC crews are ready to respond swiftly, as we are part of this community, too.

Beyond power lines

However, our commitment extends beyond just power lines. Cooperatives were created to address community needs, and this purpose stretches far beyond electricity delivery. Whether we are supporting local schools, sponsoring youth programs, collaborating with volunteer organizations or helping to bring electricity to rural areas, we constantly seek ways to enhance the quality of life in the communities we serve. Supporting our community is not an afterthought. It's integral to our mission.

We are also looking ahead. As electricity demand increases due to new technologies and economic growth, electric cooperatives are working to ensure we continue to meet those needs with a balanced and reliable energy mix. We understand our members value both affordability and dependability, and we are dedicated to providing both.

That's the power of the cooperative difference. That's what it means to be powered by purpose.

This National Co-op Month, I encourage you to take pride in your cooperative membership. You are not just a customer. You are an owner, a stakeholder and an essential part of a broader effort to keep our community strong, connected and energized.

Thank you for the trust you place in us. We are proud to be your local electric cooperative. ■

YOUR co-ops power YOUR life

From internet service to agricultural products to the electricity that powers your home, cooperatives play a role in your everyday life. As we celebrate Co-op Month in October, electric cooperative members should be proud of the success of the cooperative business model and the spirit of cooperation these organizations promote. Cooperatives are a true example of grassroots involvement, because cooperatives are owned and controlled by the people they serve.

Local cooperatives include sectors such as electricity, broadband, credit unions, finance, agriculture and even child care.

Decades ago, rural residents joined together to bring the convenience of electricity to their communities. The cooperatives they formed are as strong and relevant today as they were then.

But co-ops are not just products of a proud past. Today, folks across the country recognize the cooperative approach works to achieve price and service benefits, just as effectively as it delivers affordable power to rural residents. As locally owned businesses, cooperatives are part of the community. Neighbors helping neighbors. That's the cooperative difference.

And all these cooperatives operate under the same principles of member ownership. The power of the people is exemplified in the seven principles that guide all cooperatives:

- 1. Voluntary and open membership** – Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.
- 2. Democratic member control** – Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members

have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

- 3. Members' economic participation** – Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.
- 4. Autonomy and independence** – Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.
- 5. Education, training and information** – Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public about the nature and benefits of cooperation.
- 6. Cooperation among cooperatives** – Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.
- 7. Concern for community** – While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members. ■



Unplug energy vampires

Our homes are filled with an alphabet of electronics: DVD, PC, TV, Xbox. Americans own approximately 24 electronic products per household, according to the Consumer Electronics Association, so considerable energy goes toward powering those products.

And some of these products consume power even when they are not in use. To control these “energy vampires,” Goldenwest Electric Cooperative offers some suggestions.

Use power strips

No matter what types of electronics you use, those glowing lights at night prove power is still being consumed, even while everyone is sleeping. Those TVs, game consoles, cable boxes and other electronics all draw small amounts of power, even when not in use, wasting energy in the form of “vampire loads.”

There is a convenient and low-cost solution. A power strip makes it easy to turn them all off with one click.

Advanced models offer options like timers, remote control or the ability to set a “master device” to shut down everything else when it’s turned off.

Replacing your conventional power strips with advanced power strips (APS) can help reduce the electricity wasted when these devices are idle.

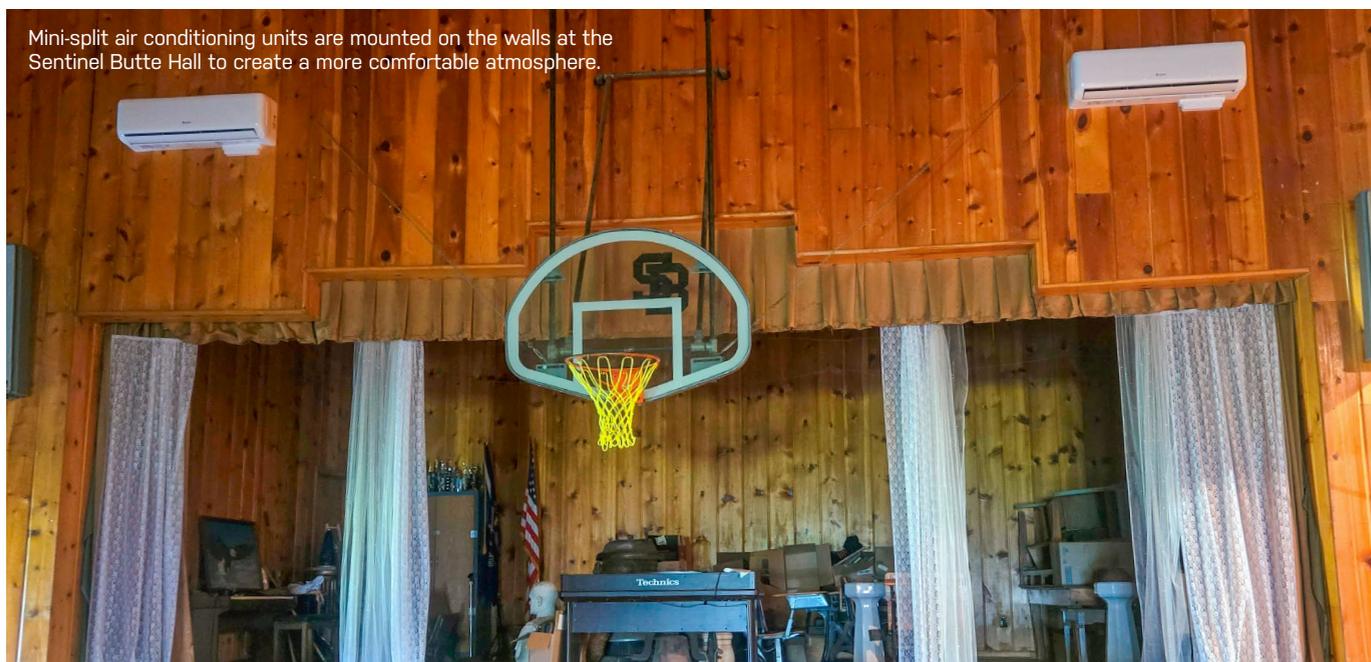
APS are designed primarily for home entertainment centers and home office areas where there are typically many consumer electronics plugged into a power strip, and they work by preventing electronics from drawing power when they are off or not being used.

Unplug

When a laptop or smartphone is fully charged, unplug it.

Turn off computers, game consoles and other devices when they are not in use. Powering down your computer completely every night uses 50% less energy than sleep mode. ■

Mini-split air conditioning units are mounted on the walls at the Sentinel Butte Hall to create a more comfortable atmosphere.



Sentinel Butte Hall receives funding

A grant was awarded to the Sentinel Recreation District by Goldenwest Electric Cooperative (GWEC) to secure matching funds from Basin Electric Power Cooperative. GWEC contributed \$1,500, which Basin Electric matched, facilitating the installation of mini-split air conditioning units in the Sentinel Butte Hall. This venue serves as a gathering place for various community events, including funerals and weddings.

In the past, the hall's high temperatures

posed challenges for attendees, particularly the elderly and those with health conditions. With the new installation, more individuals can now participate comfortably.

The project's total cost amounted to \$18,276, with funding coming from local businesses, several residents and substantial support from the North Dakota Community Foundation grant. Of this total, \$3,000 was specifically allocated for the installation of the mini-split units. ■



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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Reporting outages

Trouble calls may be placed to the office 24 hours a day. After normal working hours, the phone will be forwarded to one of our lineworkers who are on call. Please check with your neighbors to see if they have power, along with resetting your breakers below the meter prior to calling Goldenwest.