

# FLASHES

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



### STIEHL ELECTED SECRETARY/TREASURER OF MECA

Fall River Electric board member Jodi Stiehl has been elected Secretary/Treasurer of the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA). The association provides Fall River with most all of its safety training programs. For Montana co-op members, MECA helps guide legislation in the State of Montana to ensure that cooperative services are protected and members' best interests are maintained.



Fall River Propane's board officers have changed. Merrick Young of West Yellowstone has been elected Board President; Don Betts from Teton Valley is now the Vice-President; and Island Park's Amber Boyce is the Secretary/Treasurer.

## Fall River Electric Rates To Increase

Fall River Electric Cooperative rates will increase an average of just 3.9% with billing statements received after May 1, 2025. This rate increase will be collected by a modest increase in the monthly demand charge. There will be NO increase in the kilowatt hour charge or the access fee!

### The reasons for the increase include:

- Higher demand for electricity due to increased energy usage by member homes and businesses.
- New growth in services (more than 700 new connections in 2024) with more people moving into our area.
- Higher wholesale power costs especially for "tier two" power purchases, as well as the expected Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) increase of 10.8% on power and 24% increase in transmission costs (see January 2025 FLASHES).
- Inflation in both materials and maintenance costs.



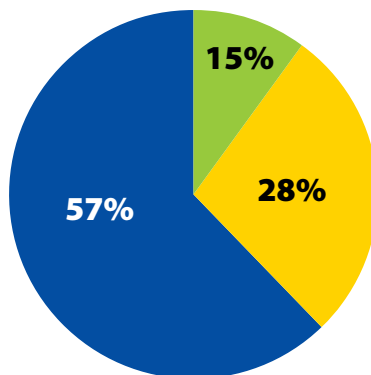
"We have had a long stretch without rate increases as we have focused on controlling costs and being efficient in delivering services to our members," said Fall River Electric CEO/General Manager Bryan Case. "We have deployed financial tools to help us control costs as much as possible, while delivering a robust equity ratio of up to 52%. That means we can now use some of that equity to finance portions of upcoming wholesale power price increases."

### Fall River Electric still has some of the lowest power rates in the nation!

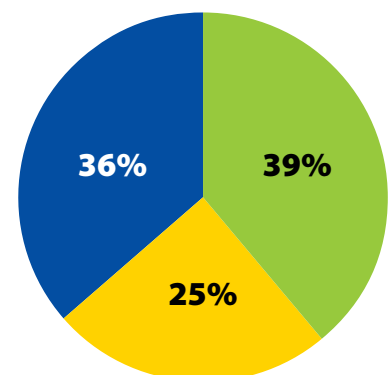
Investor-owned utilities in the region have implemented or are requesting to have double-digit rate increases. The average monthly residential power bill for Fall River members in 2023 was \$123. This new rate change will result in an increase of about \$6.00 per month to the average residential member.

Focusing the rate change on demand better balances the Co-op's revenue to its expenses as seen in these charts from our 2024 cost of service analysis completed prior to the increase in the rate for demand:

#### Revenues Collected by Fall River Electric Co-op



#### Expenses Incurred by Fall River Electric Co-op



Access Fee
  Power Cost/kWh
  Demand

## TAKE SAFETY HOME Stress & Your Heart



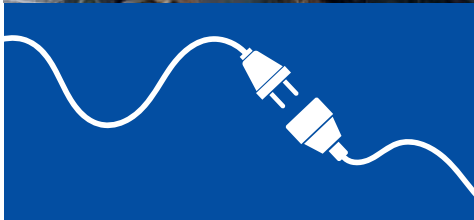
**American  
Heart  
Association.**

Ongoing stress not only takes an emotional and psychological toll, but it can also produce physical ailments such as headaches, tense and aching muscles, insomnia, low-energy, and potentially heart disease. Stress may also lead to high blood pressure, which can pose a risk for heart attack and stroke.

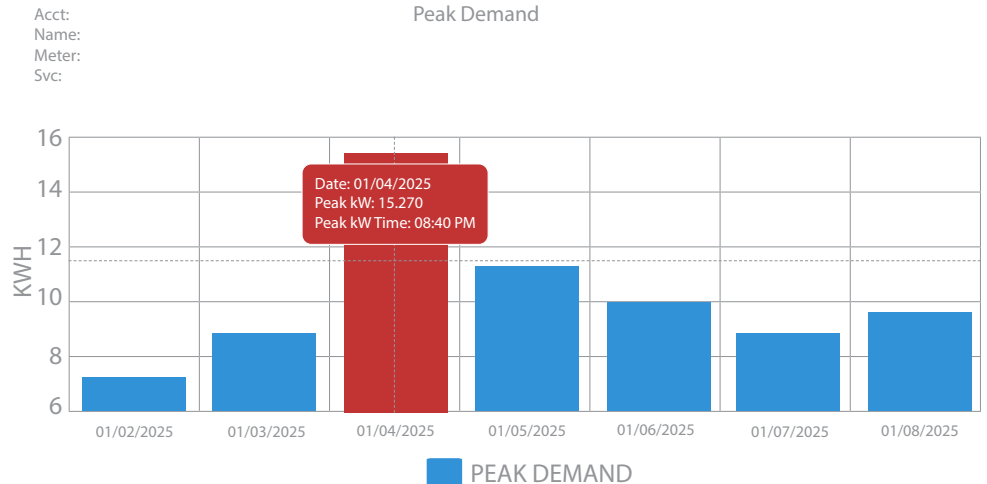
### So, how can you manage stress? Here are a few suggestions:

- **Light exercise**, a nature walk, yoga, or meditation.
- **Make time for family and friends.**
- **Get seven to nine hours of sleep nightly.**
- **Find a stimulating hobby** that can take your thoughts away from what is causing your stress.
- **Maintain a positive attitude.**

February is American Heart Month... celebrate by being heart healthy!



To further help members manage their energy use, Fall River Electric has added new information and tools to our website at [www.fallriverelectric.com/demand-resources](http://www.fallriverelectric.com/demand-resources). The demand calculators have been updated and a new video explaining demand and how you can better control it has been produced. Residential members can access their account online, then click "My Account," followed by "Usage History." There, you can then view your peak demand that includes the date of your highest demand, the amount of demand, and the time the peak occurred. Members can then evaluate what usage was occurring on that date at the time of the peak.



Members can also take further steps to reduce demand by considering some of these actions:

- **Install programmable thermostats** on heating/cooling systems.
- **Avoid the use** of small electric space heaters.
- **Place timers on electric water heaters**, roof heat tape, vehicle engine block heaters, and animal water tank heaters.
- **Delay starting times on clothes washers**, dryers, and dishwashers to when other electrical appliances are not in use.
- **Use "smart" power stripes** to cut power from devices when not in use, such as electronics and game consoles.
- **Use LED bulbs** and turn off interior and exterior lights when not in use.

Members are invited to discuss this increase in rates with the Co-op's management and board at any one of the below meetings:

- **March 18:** Driggs Fall River Electric office at 1605 N Highway 33, 6 p.m.
- **March 19:** Ashton office at 1150 N 3400 E, 6 p.m.
- **March 20:** West Yellowstone office at 436 Madison Avenue, 6 p.m.

Fall River Electric's goal is to level out future rate increases as they come down the pipeline, in hopes of keeping them less significant and as small as possible. "We are probably going to see rate increases annually over the next five years," Case said.

## Food Drives Result In Record Six Tons Of Food

During the holiday season, Fall River Electric's staff conducted four food drives at area grocery stores in support of local food banks. Additionally, the second annual high school senior class food drive challenge was held during December with four area high schools competing for a \$1,000 cash prize.

As a result of these events, a total of more than 12,000 pounds of nonperishable food was delivered to four regional food banks, including Teton Valley Food Pantry in Driggs, North Fremont Food Pantry in Ashton, the social services office in West Yellowstone, and the food pantry in Rexburg operated by Eastern Idaho Community Action Partnership.

In addition to the nonperishable food donated, the food pantries received a share of \$3,140 in cash donations from individuals and Co-op members.



RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Where Service Matters

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

# Candidates Sought For Fall River Electric's Board

Because Fall River Electric is a cooperative, owned by the customers it serves, you have a vital role in determining how the Co-op is governed. Your ability to provide direction comes through the Co-op's elected Board of Directors. One of the seven guiding principles of Fall River Electric Cooperative is democratic member control where the board members you elect actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The elected representatives of Fall River's board are accountable to the membership and this year, three of those nine seats are set for election. Those seats up for election this year are District 4, East Driggs currently represented by Anna Lindstedt; District 7, the southern area of Island Park represented by Jodi Stiehl; and the West Yellowstone area of District 9, where Doug Schmier currently serves.

In March, the nominating committee will make candidate selections for each of the three districts and a notice as to the eligible candidates for each district will be posted on April 25 at each of the Co-op's offices. This information will also be included in the 'Notice of Annual Meeting' that will be mailed to all active owner-members in mid-May. That mailing will include a ballot prompting members to



Anna Lindstedt



Jodi Stiehl



Doug Schmier

vote by mail or vote online. Final voting will be held on Saturday, June 14, 2025, at the Co-op's annual business meeting in Ashton, ID.

If you are interested in being considered as a board candidate, you may submit a nomination by petition to CEO Bryan Case by Sunday, April 20, 2025, at [bryan.case@fallriverelectric.com](mailto:bryan.case@fallriverelectric.com). Petitions must be signed by at least fifteen (15) active members of the Co-op that live within the boundaries of the district up for election, the same as the district the potential candidate resides in. Qualifications and expectations for board members can be found in our bylaws, located on our website at [www.fallriverelectric.com/bylaws](http://www.fallriverelectric.com/bylaws). Petitions may also be mailed to Fall River Electric Cooperative, 1150 N 3400 E, Ashton, ID, 83420, but must be postmarked on or before April 20, 2025, to qualify. Interested candidates may also drop off their petition at the Ashton office of the Cooperative on or before April 20.

## 2025 Energy Expo Returns To Ashton June 14

As Fall River Electric enters its 86th year in business, you are invited to save the date for the Co-op's Energy Expo and annual business meeting of members to coming up on Saturday, June 14, at North Fremont High School in Ashton, ID.

The event will kick off with the traditional FREE breakfast of pancakes, eggs, bacon, sausage, hash browns, and a beverage of your choice. Breakfast is open to ALL owner-members of the Co-op and their families. There will be kids' activities, including rides in one of our bucket trucks and much more.

The annual business meeting will start at 10 a.m. with a presentation of students awarded scholarships, a financial report on the condition of the Co-op, and other news from 2024 and plans for 2025.

Watch for complete details and election ballots mailed to each active member in mid-May.



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



# Member Teens Invited To Free Summer Youth Rally

Would you like your high school student or your grandchild to build leadership and team building skills, gain knowledge about the electric industry, learn about cooperatives and industry related careers, and earn at least \$500 in scholarships, while meeting new friends from across the Northwest—at no cost to you?

Encourage them to apply to attend Fall River Electric’s summer Youth Rally program! Students that qualify must currently be sophomores or juniors in high school, have parents or guardians who are Fall River Electric owner-members (customers), and submit an application. The application deadline is **April 18, 2025**. Students who get to attend the July 2025 weeklong rally in Treasure Valley (Boise area) will be selected in June. Applications are available at [www.fallriverelectric.com/youth-rally](http://www.fallriverelectric.com/youth-rally). Be sure to watch the short video, too!

## NEED HELP PAYING YOUR ENERGY BILL?

If you are struggling to pay higher winter energy bills, help is available. The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance program (LIHEAP) is available to qualifying Fall River Electric members, however, time is running out to apply. To inquire, call the office in the state you reside in:

**IDAHO 208.522.5391 (deadline to apply is March 31, 2025)**

**MONTANA 406.587.4486 (deadline to apply is April 30, 2025)**

**WYOMING 800.246.4221 (deadline to apply is March 31, 2025)**

# CEO Case Elected To PPC



Fall River Electric Cooperative CEO/General Manager Bryan Case was recently elected to the executive board of the Public Power Council (PPC). The Public Power Council represents one hundred of the Pacific Northwest consumer-owned utilities on critical issues in the region and in Washington, D.C.

Its focus is on the federal Columbia River Power System, and on Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) rate-making, revenue requirements, and policies. In addition, PPC engages with BPA and the Northwest Power and Conservation Council on issues related to power supply planning and conservation and strives to keep its members informed about transmission issues, including rates and potential impacts to the Northwest from federal policy proposals.

Columbia River and Snake River fish and wildlife recovery efforts are a large component of power rates in the Northwest, and PPC tracks developments in this arena and partners in its advocacy with other regional parties.



Fall River’s *FLASHES* newsletter is printed on recycled paper and is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. Products certified by FSC directly support responsible forest management.

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](http://www.facebook.com/fallriverrec).

