

Communications Committee Report to the Board of Trustees

March 29, 2013 Board Meeting

Committee Meetings:

The communications committee met three times in March, on the 5th, 12th, and 27th. In attendance were committee and board members, Richard Nolan (chair), Arleen Boyd, and Roxie Melton; committee and co-op members, Gretchen Nolan, Deb Thomas, and Bill Hand; and co-op manager, Richard Peck. Board member, Dave Peterson, attended the second and third meetings.

The primary focus of each meeting was town hall meetings to inform members about the status of the bankruptcy of the co-op's wholesale power provider, Southern Montana Electric; its background, present developments, and possible consequences once the federal court resolves the bankruptcy.

As of this report, the board has held one town hall meeting in Clark, Wyoming, on March 20, which was very well attended. Board members, Beers and Boyd, also held an informal meeting on March 21 in Fishtail, Montana. Future town hall meetings are:

- April 4—Reed Point, MT—Reed Point High School
- April 16—Luther, MT—Luther Public School
- April 18—Absaroke, MT—Cobblestone School
- April 23—Joliet, MT—MSU-B Extension Office
- April 25—Rapelje, MT—Stockman Cafe
- April 30—Fromberg, MT—Fromberg High School

Members asked in both meetings if the lights would stay on. Arleen Boyd assured them they would.

For all but the meeting on April 4, members will receive multiple notices (Rural Montana and a billing insert) about a town hall meeting in their area before the meeting. Because members in district 7 would not receive the same notice, the committee accepted manager Peck's action to mail a special notice of the meeting in Reed Point to each of the 624 members in district 7.

Work on redesigning our website continues. The hard part of organizing the site logically and intuitively so members can find information easily is progressing well. The site now contains a calendar of events that concern members and Southern information organized by type of document and year. We still expect NRECA (National Rural Electric

Cooperative Association) to implement version two of the template we use for organizing the site by the end of the month. That effort will hopefully transfer information in our current template accurately to the new template.

Once we have the site fully organized, redesign will, for the most part, end and posting information to organized locations on the site (maintenance) will be the primary effort. That effort is already going well. Information is being posted to the site very quickly.

Banik, our website redesign partner, suggests committee chairs use a standard format to report the status of their committees. A standard format will make it easier for members to read and understand committee status.

Currently under review by the committee:

The committee will review the results of town hall meetings at its next meeting. It believes the questions members ask will be a good way to judge the board's success in informing members on the background, current status, and possible consequence of the Southern bankruptcy.

Manager Peck is currently working on a proposal to use Banik for more than website redesign. He wants to use the company to help inform members with, for instance, the press releases the co-op provides the media on Southern and other events.

Next meeting(s) of the committee:

April 15, 1200pm

Submitted by:

Richard Nolan, Chairman

March 29, 2013