



HILL COUNTY ELECTRIC NEWS & VIEWS

January 2026



1.877.394.7804
hcelectric.com 

CEO Message Be Ready for Winter Weather



Craig Gates
General Manager/CEO

Winter along Montana’s Hi-Line is never predictable, but one thing is certain: it’s coming. At Hill County Electric, safety is always our top priority. While our system is built to be reliable, Mother Nature can still throw challenges our way. Heavy snow, ice, and extreme cold can lead to downed power lines and outages. When that happens, you can count on HCE’s crews to respond as quickly, and safely, as possible.

To help you and your family stay safe and comfortable during the season, here are a few steps you can take before winter storms arrive:

Keep Warm Safely.

Have an alternate heat source available in case of an outage. Wood burning fireplaces are a great option, provided chimneys are properly maintained and an adequate supply of dry wood is on hand.

Stock Up in Advance.

It’s wise to keep several days’ worth of food on hand that doesn’t require cooking, items like canned goods, cereal, bread, crackers, and peanut butter are all good choices. The CDC also recommends storing at least five gallons of water per person in case of an extended outage.

Put Safety First.

If a storm hits, avoid unnecessary travel. If you must drive, bring a survival kit and don’t travel alone. Always assume downed power lines are energized and dangerous - stay far away and report them immediately. If you see a downed line, please report as soon as possible.

Be Storm-Ready with Backup Power.

For members who want added peace of mind, HCE offers Generac generators through our Havre warehouse. Our Master Electrician is available to handle installation as well. To learn more or to place an order, stop by or call the HCE warehouse at **406-394-7804**.

ALWAYS READY PEACE OF MIND

Even the most reliable power can face the unexpected.

A Generac system automatically restores power within seconds of an outage, giving you seamless backup support when you need it most.

No stress. No scrambling. Just dependable peace of mind for your home.



INQUIRE WITH US TODAY!

It's Scholarship Season!

Hill County Electric is committed to helping our members' families pursue their educational goals. Each year, we offer several scholarship opportunities for students planning to attend college, trade school, or technical programs.

Investing in local students strengthens both our communities and our cooperative. If you're continuing your education this coming year, we encourage you to explore the scholarships available and apply.

January 15th Deadlines

MECA Memorial Scholarship - \$500

For students planning to attend college as an undergraduate in the fall. Apply once and you'll automatically be entered for Hill County Electric's \$500 Member Dependent Scholarship as well.

Basin Electric Scholarship - \$1,000

For students enrolling full-time in an accredited college, university, or technical school. Applicants are also automatically considered for Hill County Electric's \$500 Member Dependent Scholarship.

March 1st Deadlines

HCE Tell Us Your Story Scholarship - \$1,000

For students who want to share their story and goals for the future. Tell us how this scholarship will help you reach your dreams.

Lineman Workforce Development Scholarship - \$1,000

For students in one of the five counties served by Hill County Electric who plan to attend an accredited lineman school and build a career right here in Montana.

Trade School Scholarship - \$500

For members or dependents pursuing their first accredited trade school program, including fields like automotive, construction, welding, electrical, or other skilled trades.

Teacher Appreciation Program - \$1,500 (renewable)

For current or incoming teachers working in a Class B or smaller school district within HCE's service area.

July 1st Deadline

Non-Traditional Scholarship - \$1,000

For adult learners returning to school to advance their careers.

HOW TO APPLY

Visit www.hcelectric.com/scholarships

Each scholarship listing includes eligibility information, deadlines, and instructions for applying.



**HAPPY WORK
ANNIVERSARY**

CRAIG!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR
10 YEARS
OF SERVICE!



**HAPPY WORK
ANNIVERSARY**

KATIE!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR
15 YEARS
OF SERVICE!



Space Heater Safety Tips

Space heaters are a great way to warm specific rooms in your home without having to crank up the thermostat, but using space heaters doesn't come without risk! Use the tips below to keep your home safe.

DO: Plug your space heater directly into the wall outlet.

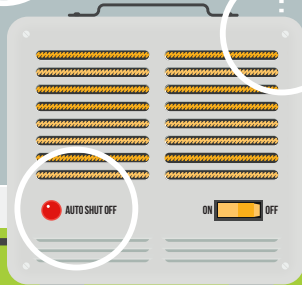


DO: Keep your space heater in low-moisture rooms.

DO: Keep your space heater at a safe distance (at least 3 feet) from kids, pets and flammable items.



DO: Buy a unit with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over, or you forget to shut it off.



DO: Always follow the directions and take a broken space heater to a qualified appliance service center.



DON'T: Leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.

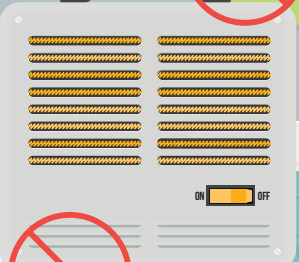


DON'T: Use an extension cord to plug in your space heater. It can cause the heater to over-heat, and can be a tripping hazard.

DON'T: Place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding.



DON'T: Try to repair a broken space heater yourself.



DON'T: Put your space heater in your bathroom. The moisture can damage the unit, which could cause it to malfunction.



2026 NOMINATIONS FOR BOARD OF TRUSTEE

It's time for members to consider running for the Hill County Electric Board of Trustees! This year, **Districts 2 and 3** are up for election.

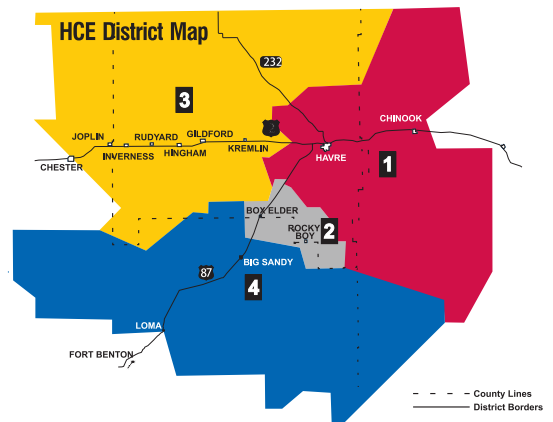
Nominee requirements to run:

- Complete a petition that includes the district number and nominee's name.
- Collect **15 signatures** from current members, including their printed names and addresses.
- The nominee must **reside within the district** they are running to represent.
- Members signing the petition **do not need to live in the same district** as the nominee.
- Submit the completed petition to HCE **no later than February 11th, 2026.**

After petitions are submitted, they will be reviewed for accuracy. If a petition meets the minimum requirement of 15 valid member signatures, the nominee's name will appear on both the mail-in ballot and the in-person ballot at the Annual Meeting.

If you're unsure which district a nominee lives in, call us at (406) 394-7804 and we'll be happy to help.

For details about our bylaws, please visit www.hcelectric.com/hce-bylaws



This map represents approximate borders. District 5 is at large. The boundary for District 2 has been updated this year.

Swap and Shop

Welcome to our Swap and Shop! Feel free to post and find classifieds from other members!

Visit www.hcelectric.com/swap-and-shop to view all listings or to submit/remove your own.

**Denotes photo available on website*

Insulated Shop Door

Used, 16' wide x 14' tall, insulated, complete with all needed hardware. \$625. (406) 395-4800.

Misc Tools

Van Norman Boring Bar & Accessories. Souix Valve Grinder & Hard Soft Facer. (406) 262-3058.

2022 Chevy G3500 Passenger Bus

Comes with a chair lift, seats 14, or 12 with 2 wheel chairs. \$20,000. (406) 932-5455.

1973 28' Red Dale 5th Wheel

Sleeps 4, full bath, kitchen etc. Great for hunters or bunk house. \$2,450. (406) 262-4466.

Birch Hutch

Lots of storage, bottom has 4 drawers and 4 cupboards, upper portion has glass front. Length 6 ft.- Height 7 ft. \$250.00. (406) 376-3135.

Hydraulic Rock Picker

\$1,750. (406) 670-9706.

Whole & Half Pork

Processing dates of July, August, and September 2026. Raised in Havre, MT processed at the Pay-N-Save in Saco. (406) 230-2281.

Free Dogs

1 English bulldog and 2 tea cup yorkies. (854) 737-3737.

Hundreds of free books and records

Big Sandy Cultural Center. 79200 U.S. Highway 87, Big Sandy. (406) 378-2514.

1987 936 Versatile

10,000 hour engine, hydraulics, injector pump reworked. (406) 390-3185.

FlexCoil 2320 45' Airdrill

12" single shoot. Lots of new parts. (406) 390-3185.

Red Melroe 42' Cultivator

Good shape. (406) 390-3185.

Professional Chicken Cages

Accommodates 550 Hens. \$800 each. (406) 945-2027.

Two Brandt 835 Augers

New condition w/electric motors. \$6,000 each. (406) 945-2027.

1 year old Border Collie.

Started on sheep, too much energy. No fear. Will be great on cows. Has had 2 weeks professional training. Great with children and other dogs. Neutered, UTD on shots. \$950. Near Moore. (406) 374-2406.

2015 Polaris 1000XP

3,945 miles, 468 hrs. Handle bar & hand warmer, hard case lockable front rack, winch, 3/4 tread left, rear receiver, medium size trunk. \$7200. (406) 390-4077.

1993 Safari Motorhome For Sale

3430 Cummins, 8.3 turbo-charged, intercooled. Allison World transmission with 6 speed and 2 overdrive gears. Well-kept records, 98,600 miles. Asking \$15,000. (406) 547-2184.

1993 Ford Explorer

Needs transmission, runs good, \$400. (406) 547-2184.

1996 Suburban

Needs motor, \$400. (406) 547-2184.

Targhee Registered Rams

Over 75+ years of genetics. Great longevity and will do their best for you and your flock! (406) 799-2379.

Small Square Wheat Straw Bales

30lb average - \$3 each. Located in Havre. Call (406) 230-2281.

Cajun electric smoker with timer,

thermostat, burns pellets. Asking \$75, call (406) 547-2184.

Mini Washing Machine For Sale

Mini washing machine, capacity 1KA, B-Quick Bubbleator, portable, great for RV's or apartments. \$35.00. (406) 547-2184.

Water Tank*

Estimated 350-500 Gallons. (717) 994-5076.

Diamond Laser 3000 Glass Bandsaw

Asking \$220. Call 406-547-2437.

Round bale wool sacker gas motor

\$275 OBO. (406) 326-2287.

ISO Model T Car Body for Model T Frame

(406) 945-2027.

Craftsman 28" Snowblower

Electric start, 2 stage snowblower with tire chains. Only used twice. Asking \$500. (406)395-4581.

4 speed manual 350 V8

Very nice condition, new GM engine and all new interior, no rust P.S P.B. nice paint. runs great, long box. (406) 374-2458.

WANTED: Clamp bumper hitch.

(VO type) with or without ball. For Shriner parade vehicle. (406) 390-3522.

Powder River Cattle Squeeze Chute

(808) 391-0766.

Flexi-Coil Sprayer

65XL Sprayer 130 ft booms, 1,000 gallon tanks, wind screens. \$750. (406) 262.3969.

Sooner Aluminum 20 ft. Stock Trailer Gooseneck

Asking \$8,000. (406) 326.2287.

Love Seat and Couch

Love seat and couch flower print, solid wood, make an offer and you haul. (406) 932.4591.

Swap & Shop is a classified advertising section of the Hill County Electric and Triangle Communications websites and newsletters. It is maintained as a service to members wanting to buy, sell and announce non-commercial items. To have an ad included, simply enter all the pertinent information on the online form. An administrator will review the information and if approved, the ad will be published. It will stay online for 1 year unless you notify us to remove or change it. Ads will also appear in our newsletters (space permitting). Due to print deadlines and space available, some ads may appear in the next month's issue. We reserve the right to abbreviate ads.

Happy swapping and shopping!