Sun River Electric Cooperative
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Office Hours: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Mon.-Fri.
Phone Numbers: 406-467-2526 or 1-800-452-7516
Website: www.sunriverelectric.coop
After Hours & Weekend Dispatch:
406-467-2526 or 1-800-452-7516
If calling from a local number or cell phone – please use: 406-467-2526 or 406-467-2527
Be sure to check your breakers before reporting outages.

Ripples

NOVEMBER 2026

A look back at 2026, ahead at 2027

Column by **BRAD BAUMAN** | *Manager*



IT is the time of year that we all begin to look back and analyze how the year has unfolded. For our ag producers that involves crop production successes, or not. For the ranchers, did the hay crops produce enough to cover the upcoming winter and did the summer grass hold up for calf development? Are the markets in a place that we can live to see another year?

For us at your electric cooperative, it is a time for us to reflect in a similar way. Did our sales produce a revenue stream to fulfill our revenue requirements to meet our financial goals? Were we able to accomplish the work projects in our workplan? And what will 2027 look like for all of us?

By the time you receive this, our board of trustees and management team will have shared in the annual strategic planning session to make our 2027 plan. This opportunity is one that we do not take lightly. It is not lost on us that the rural economy is not as strong as we all would like. The input costs that affect all of your operating decisions are a piece of our discussions. Likewise, our input costs are seeing similar pressure that we will have to evaluate in a similar way.

We know that our price of power is going up. Basin Electric Power Cooperative has given us a 7.6 percent rate increase. Approximately 40 percent of our power is purchased from Basin. The other 60 percent is purchased through the Western Area Power Administration. As of this writing, they have not indicated a price increase. They do have the option to put a 2-mil drought adder on at any time without member input or discussion. Surprisingly, the 2026 snowpack runoff for our area was good. For the first time in the last few years farmers were able to do fall irrigating. 366484

We continue to see higher prices for equipment purchases and insurance adjustments. Our property tax may show an increase, and the employee working agreement has a 3 percent increase coming in 2027. As we look at all of these in total, a rate adjustment for 2027 looks to be something in the ballpark of what we saw in 2026, which was 5 percent. Our team will be looking for opportunities to shave this if possible; but for the cooperative to continue to provide safe, reliable and affordable electric service, we need to maintain our system to a level that allows for continued success.

2026 has been a successful one for the cooperative and we appreciate the strong support that we receive from our membership. Many of you have offered us thank-you acknowledgements through conversations, thank-you cards and Facebook posts. We appreciate all of you that take the time to offer your kind words. We will continue to do our best to keep the lights on and with the smallest rate adjustment that we can live with. At the end of the year, I will provide the final numbers as you plan your future for 2027. Until then, thank you for your support of your electric cooperative in making 2026 a success. RM

SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION is available at *www.sunriverelectric.coop.*

DON'T FORGET: Applications and essays for the Washington, D.C., Youth Tour are due **November 25, 2026.**





Employees in the Spotlight

Robert Anderson

At the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association 2026 Operations Conference, Robert Anderson received the Power Up Award!

This is awarded to an exceptional employee in the operations department in a cooperative. The employee must exhibit strong leadership abilities, be ready to accept new challenges, and be involved in community and volunteer organizations. They also need to be an employee who is forward thinking, willing to go the extra mile, dedicated to safety and embody the cooperative spirit.

Shelley Batson

Recently at the Fairfield Community Hall Celebration, SREC Employee Shelley Batson received a thank-you plaque from the Fairfield Lions Club in recognition of her many years of service with the Community Hall Board. Shelley served on the board then continued to volunteer her time for the past 35 years.

Brad Bauman

At the 2026 Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association (MECA) Annual Meeting, SREC CEO-General Manager Brad Bauman received the Fritz Keller Cooperative Spirit Award. This award is given to an exceptional cooperative employee whose actions in their cooperative and community always promote the cooperative spirit!



Robert Anderson



Brad Bauman



Pictured with Shelley Batson: SREC Lions Club Members – Chris Christensen, Robert Anderson and Brad Bauman.

Brad's 36 years of service with Sun River Electric is a true reflection of cooperative commitment, service and leadership. He began his cooperative journey as a summer laborer, then a full-time groundman and steadily advanced through a variety of roles, including warehouseman, staking engineer, and member services manager, before becoming CEO/General Manager. That progression gives him a deep and insightful understanding of the cooperative from every level, and a genuine appreciation for the people he has worked with during his career.

Brad's cooperative spirit also extends well beyond the walls of Sun River Electric Cooperative. He has been deeply involved in the Fairfield community, volunteering his time to many organizations. Through these commitments, he has demonstrated a long-standing dedication to youth, community service, civic responsibility and the betterment of the area he calls home.

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