Did you know that if you receive your power from a rural electric cooperative, you are a member-owner of the co-op with all other residents and businesses that the co-op serves? As a member owner of the co-op, you have a voice in how your co-op can best serve you and other member owners in your community.

Rural electric cooperatives were created out of the innovative idea that power should be available to all. They were created to supply power in rural areas where for-profit power companies determined that it wasn’t profitable to supply power.

**From kerosene lamps to cooperative power**

“I am old enough to have been born into a world lit at night by the mellow light of a kerosene lamp. I can say I was born before electricity. You could see every star in the sky then! One of my responsibilities was to clean the kerosene lamps and trim the wicks, both at our small home in Lame Deer and at my grandparent’s (Major and Nellie Robinson’s) ranch on Muddy Creek.

It was exciting to hear from my parents and grandparents that we would someday have electricity in our own homes. Parents and grandparents both explained that it would be planned and put in place by an organization owned and operated by the people themselves.

It came from a concept devised in the 1930’s called the Rural Electrification Act which later on spawned the Tongue River Electric Cooperative, joining other co-ops that brought electricity into the distant country areas. TRECo (as we know it) eventually took over servicing even BIA needs. But I was especially proud to learn that my father would now be a part of this organization, because they were sending him to learn how to erect the poles and attach the wires that crossed the reservation, lighting up the homes, and bringing us reception for radios.

Many things changed through the years except for one. We still belong to that organization that we are shareholders in. Some are on the board, some draw a paycheck from it, some make decisions about what direction it will take, but we are ALL partners and stockholders in this Cooperative.”

*Sandy Spang, TRECo member-owner*
Here are ways to get involved and help create a more affordable, clean, and just cooperative as a member-owner at TRECo:

- Run to represent your cooperative district on the TRECo Board of Directors
- Vote for board representatives that serve you
- Connect with TRECo members in your community through Northern Plains’ meetings
- Attend Board of Directors Meetings

Questions? Want to get involved?
Contact Sydney at sydney@northernplains.org or call (406) 672-1704.
Please take our short informational survey

You can help us in our fight to bring about more democracy, representation, and clean energy opportunity at TRECo by filling out and returning this survey.* Only include your contact information if you’re comfortable. We’d love to follow up with you!

1. Did you know YOU are a part owner of TRECo?

2. Do you feel TRECo charges a fair price for your monthly electric bill?

3. Do you mind telling us approximately how much you pay each month for your electric bill?
   - $0-100
   - $100-300
   - $300-500
   - $500-800
   - more than $800

4. Are you aware that TRECo provides credits on your bill for solar power generated on your home and sent into the grid?

5. Are you interested in clean energy opportunities like solar power or energy efficiency upgrades? If so, what stops you from pursuing them?

6. Have you attended a TRECo Annual Meeting before? If not, why haven’t you attended?

7. Do you know who your representative is on the TRECo board?

Name __________________________

Email __________________________

Phone # __________________________

Address __________________________

* This survey was developed with the help of the Institutional Review Board at Chief Dull Knife College.

Once completed, you can drop this survey off at the following location:

Littlewolf Capitol Building
600 Cheyenne Ave
Lame Deer

You can also take a photo of this page and email it to Sydney at sydney@northernplains.org or text it to (406) 672-1704.