



Commitment isn't just local, it's global

By Mary Klecker-Green

Basin Electric and its employees donate time, property and money to support communities

Through its charitable giving program, Basin Electric and its subsidiary Dakota Gasification Company donated more than \$860,000 in 2009 throughout its nine-state service territory.

According to Emily McKay, Basin Electric event planner/charitable giving coordinator, the cooperative's charitable giving program is intended to support the communities where its employees and members work and live.

"Our communities have supported us throughout the years by providing a strong work force and essential services, and as a cooperative, commitment to community is at the cornerstone of our mission," McKay says. "We believe in giving back to those organizations that give so much to their communities."

The cooperative traditionally supports nonprofits rooted in education and youth development, health and human services, and community development and enrichment. Basin Electric also has a member matching program, where it matches donations made at the local level by member cooperatives in nine states.



(From left) Eli Schumann, Jim Wenning and Mick Dettman of the Beulah, ND, Rural Fire Protection District, built a fire truck with volunteer time, grants and donations. A new fire truck would cost about \$70,000; they built it for \$5,800. Basin Electric donated the pickup truck from surplus through the Charitable Giving Program.

Additionally, employees also give of their time and talents through volunteer service and financial support. Employees have participated in causes for many organizations, including Ruth Meier's Stone Soup Kitchen, March of Dimes' Annual March for Babies, Medcenter One's Great American Bike Race, Rebuilding Together, the St. Baldrick's Foundation, and United Way's Annual Day of Caring.

In addition to the charitable giving program, each Friday,

Basin Electric's employees pay \$1 to wear jeans to work. The money collected supports a wide variety of organizations throughout the region. The cooperative also participates in the Bismarck Tribune's monthly "Jeans Day" program. In 2009, employees donated more than \$12,000 through the two Jeans Day programs.

"Many of our employees are strong forces in their communities," McKay says. "Their commitment to various groups strengthens our charitable giving program and puts faces to it."

Dressing casual for one day generates \$15,000+ toward Haiti Relief

On Jan. 14, Basin Electric CEO and General Manager Ron Harper put out both a request and a promise to employees.

“Every Friday we hold a Jeans Day, with proceeds going to area charities,” Harper says. For the Friday, Jan. 15 Jeans Day, “I announced the proceeds were going toward the American Red Cross’ International Response Fund for Haiti Relief. I asked employees to dig a little deeper into their pockets and announced that Basin Electric would match their donations dollar for dollar.”

With only a day’s notice, employees across the cooperative – from headquarters to plant facilities – responded to the effort with a collective donation of \$7,518.44. With Basin Electric’s match through its charitable giving program, along with donations from other North Dakota cooperative employees, the cooperative sent the American Red Cross’ International Response Fund checks totaling more than \$15,500.

“Once again, the generosity of Basin Electric’s people has impressed me,” Harper says. “Basin Electric’s community involvement is very important to me, and time and time again our people have stepped up to help their neighbors, their fellow co-workers and now a devastated country. I’m proud to work for an organization with such generous people – one that holds value in supporting causes of many shapes and sizes.”

Janel Schmitz, executive director of the American Red Cross - West Dakota Chapter, says the donation



Basin Electric CEO and General Manager Ron Harper (left) and Dennis Hill of the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (right), present a check to Janel Schmitz of the American Red Cross – West Dakota Chapter.

is an important step in bringing much needed relief to Haiti, which was hit by an earthquake Tuesday, Jan. 12, causing catastrophic damage and loss of life. Schmitz encourages other organizations to follow Basin Electric’s example.

“The American Red Cross is deeply appreciative of everyone’s gift at

Basin Electric in supporting relief efforts,” Schmitz says. “Less than one year ago, many of us were recipients of relief provided by the American Red Cross during the spring floods. It is a testament to the people of our region that they are returning that gift with generous hearts that readily respond to those in need.”

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