



Volunteers for Renville-Sibley make grilled burgers and fries for participants during the American Cancer Society Relay for Life golf tournament in Olivia, MN.

# Extending a helping hand in our communities

By Brittney Rothmann

**A**s spring approaches on the heels of another frosty winter, Basin Electric closes the books on the charitable donations given in 2010.

Donations were made through Basin Electric's Charitable Giving Program. Formed in 2002, the program donates to various charities throughout Basin Electric's nine-state service territory. A portion of the funds given are allocated as matching funds for donations made by member cooperatives. Basin Electric also donates surplus office equipment such as computers and desks for organizations in need.



Emily McKay, Basin Electric charitable giving coordinator, says Basin Electric has a responsibility to members, employees and neighbors to support human services for those in need and to nurture development opportunities for youth.

Below are a few examples of the donations given in 2010. Donations were also made in Colorado, Iowa, Nebraska, North Dakota and Wyoming.

## South Dakota

Basin Electric made a matching donation with East River Electric Power Cooperative of \$20,000 to South Dakota State University located in Brookings. The donation is part of a larger matching pledge of \$100,000 over five years that the Basin Electric board approved for the school in 2008. Every year, Basin Electric and East River each give \$20,000 to the

university for construction of a new facility for the school's Electrical Engineering & Computer Science program.

The school is currently completing the first phase of a two-part engineering plan and will replace the old facility with up-to-date technology and equipment.

“Even though we are a small cooperative, we make a huge difference.”

*Darla Ruschen, Renville-Sibley*

Scott Parsley, assistant general manager, Member Services at East River Electric, says the original building was built in the early 1900s. “This new facility replaces an old facility that was inadequate in meeting today's technology needs.”

Parsley says by contributing to the new facility, cooperatives are providing opportunities for students to learn the latest technology, which is critical to the electric industry and the nation.

“It's important for our businesses to train future workers so they are ready to do the job when they come out of school. It's a very good investment in the future of the utility world and we're happy Basin Electric sees the value of providing this education for future leaders in our industry.”

## Minnesota

Basin Electric matched Class C member Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association's \$2,000 donation to the American Cancer Society Relay for Life golf tournament.

The tournament, coordinated by Renville-Sibley employees, has been held for seven years and consists of about 80 golfers playing 18 holes of golf. Proceeds are donated for education, advocacy and cancer research.

Darla Ruschen, office manager of Renville-Sibley, says, "Even though we are a small cooperative, we make a huge difference. It's huge to get support from Basin Electric to keep our small county relays going and we appreciate it."

Ruschen says even large medical facilities in Rochester, MN, acknowledge the efforts of the donations made by Renville-Sibley and Basin Electric. "A local cancer survivor from Renville County was at Rochester and he mentioned to the staff where he was from. They said a lot of money was donated from Renville-Sibley and it helped in the cancer research area a great deal."

With the cooperative's involvement in the tournament, Ruschen says, "It's our way of giving back to the community. It shows we are committed to our community."

## Montana

Basin Electric pledged \$5,000 over five years to the Culbertson Area Community Foundation, an organization that benefits a number of charities in the community. The first \$ 1,000 check was sent in 2010 and presented to the organization by Joe Fiedler, operations and maintenance supervisor at Basin Electric's Culbertson Generation Station.

The Culbertson Area Community Foundation will grant the money to local charities in need of funding.

Fiedler says giving back to the communities creates a better environment for the entire town and the workers at the plants. "It's important for Basin Electric to support not only the communities where our facilities are located, but the communities our member co-ops serve," Fiedler says.

Through involvement and its donations, Basin Electric and its employees contribute to a positive attitude in the community. "Our communities are helped not only through the donations we are fortunate enough to distribute, but our employees give of their own time and from their own pockets," McKay says.

Curt Pearson, project coordination representative for Basin Electric, says, "Basin Electric has a community involvement philosophy that goes back many years. It's important to be a part of the community and we encourage employees to be involved.

"When we give back we're saying, we believe in you, we're willing to invest in you and we will be here for a long time," Pearson says.

# One Commitment, Many Communities

A cooperative is  
only as strong as the  
**community**  
where its members  
and employees live.



Basin Electric knows  
this and developed its  
Charitable Giving  
Program to support service  
organizations that do so much.

It's a **commitment** we take seriously.



Each year, a portion  
of the program funds  
are allocated as  
matching funds for  
**donations**  
made by member cooperatives.



To learn more about the Charitable  
Giving Program, contact **Emily McKay** at  
**emckay@bepc.com**. To apply for funding:  
**[http://bit.ly/BasinElectric\\_CharitableGiving](http://bit.ly/BasinElectric_CharitableGiving)**.