

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTION

Summer 2017 Blackfoot Newsletter

Online at [Blackfoot.com/CoopNewsletter](http://Blackfoot.com/CoopNewsletter)



*Team Blackfoot at the Special Olympics Montana field games.*

## Giving back in ways that matter to you.

Blackfoot's focus is to help make the communities we serve better places to live, learn and thrive.

Our employee volunteer ambassadors have been busy so far this year – and we've shared a few photo highlights, including our crew at Special Olympics Montana. Blackfoot was proud to continue our support of the summer games as a Silver Sponsor; and over 50 employees helped manage the turbo javelin, softball throw and shot-put field events.

We're excited to provide support for many of the celebrations and activities this summer that make each of your communities unique and special. Summer is a great time to enjoy all that Montana has to offer and we are thrilled to contribute and

participate in the local fun. Look for Blackfoot at these summer events you won't want to miss!

- July** Arlee Esyapqeyni Celebration Days  
Condon 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration  
Seeley Lake 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration  
Alberton Railroad Day  
St. Ignatius Good Ol' Days  
Drummond PRCA Rodeo  
Flint Creek Valley Days
- Aug.** Sanders County Fair  
Superior Lions Club Rodeo  
Trout Creek Huckleberry Festival
- Sept.** Helmville Labor Day Rodeo



*Blackfoot ambassadors helped clean up the Clark Fork River behind the new Missoula College campus.*



*Boy Scout Troop #1960 led our members in the Pledge of Allegiance at our Annual Meeting.*



*Team Blackfoot trimmed trees and helped clean up in Thompson Falls for Beautification Days.*



Stay connected!

## Protect Yourself from Ransomware

### *What is ransomware?*

Ransomware is a type of malware that infects your computer, gains control of your files and restricts your access until you pay a ransom to have your files restored.

### **4 TIPS TO KEEP YOUR COMPUTER PROTECTED**

**Backup Your Files Often:** A reliable way to avoid losing files to a ransomware attack is to backup important files to an off-site location. This can be in the form of an offline external hard drive or you can leverage one of many online file storage and backup solutions, such as Dropbox.

**Keep Anti-Virus & Firewall Current:** Maintaining a strong firewall and keeping your security and anti-virus software current is critical to preventing malicious activity on your computer. *Blackfoot's TechHome Plans provide this service. Learn more at [Blackfoot.com/TechHome](http://Blackfoot.com/TechHome).*

**Enable Your Pop-Up Blocker:** Pop-ups are a primary tactic used by criminals to infect computers. To minimize the chance of accidentally clicking on an infected ad, enable your pop-up blocker within your browser.

**Click Carefully & Know the Sender:** Avoid opening suspicious emails, and never open an attachment from an unknown sender.

**NEED HELP?** We're here 24/7!

Call: 1-877-881-1155

Email: [support@blackfoot.com](mailto:support@blackfoot.com)

Click: [Blackfoot.com/Support](http://Blackfoot.com/Support)

## BLACKFOOT IN EDUCATION

### Easy Access Fall 2017 Tour

Easy Access is a Blackfoot member benefit, providing free computer training for our member-owners. Look for your community and an upcoming class below! All communities will have the same schedule for Level 1 and Level 2 classes. For more information, please visit [Blackfoot.com/EasyAccess](http://Blackfoot.com/EasyAccess).

**Level 1: 9am-Noon // Level 2: 1-4pm**

#### **Wed, 9/13: Arlee**

*Arlee Brown Building, 92439 US Hwy 93 N*

#### **Tues, 9/19: Plains**

*Dog Hill Bistro Building (Upstairs), 116 E Railroad Ave*

#### **Wed, 9/20: Thompson Falls**

*Thompson Falls Community Center, 1213 Main St*

#### **Wed, 9/27: Alberton**

*Alberton Community Center, 701 Railroad Ave*

#### **Tues, 10/3: Seeley Lake**

*Double Arrow Lodge, 301 Lodge Way*

#### **Tues, 10/10: Philipsburg**

*Granite High School, 407 Schnepel St*

#### **Fri, 10/13: Missoula**

*Blackfoot Training Room, 1221 N Russell St*

**Register today!** Call 541-5000 or email [easyaccess@blackfoot.com](mailto:easyaccess@blackfoot.com).

*Please include name, phone, community and date/time of class.*



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## Blackfoot Hosts 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Member Meeting

More than 600 member-owners and guests attended Blackfoot's 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Member Meeting held Saturday, May 6 in Missoula. Meeting highlights included Board President, Tom Eggensperger's opening remarks; CFO, Stacey Mueller's financial report; and CEO, Jason Williams' state of the cooperative overview. Williams detailed Blackfoot's strategic initiatives, including fiber infrastructure upgrades and the positive effects of recent FCC reform. Attendees enjoyed the Color Guard presentation from Troop #1960, Boy Scouts of America, Montana Council. The Montana Telecommunications Association was this year's Partner Spotlight. We also awarded over \$15,000 in academic scholarships to local students. All members received a tote bag and \$25 lunch gift card. Plus, we gave away great raffle prizes, including a laptop, a 50" Smart TV and \$1,000 in cash. View our 2017 Member Report online: [Blackfoot.com/2017Report](http://Blackfoot.com/2017Report)



## Q&A: Connecting With Your Local Trustees



**Cindy Lewis**

*District #1*

### What has surprised you the most about working with Blackfoot?

It's amazing how fast technology changes. I'm pleased that Blackfoot isn't just keeping up, but we are actually leading the charge. Our peer companies look up to us as leaders in the industry. Our website is a great resource for members who want to learn more.

### What do you wish people knew about your home district?

Seeley Lake is often thought of as a summer town, and indeed we have great sun activities. But we are truly a four season community. We have great snowmobiling, cross country skiing, hockey, hiking – so something for the whole family. It's a great place to live!



**John Teague**

*District #6*

### What is your favorite part about being a Blackfoot Trustee?

I enjoy being able to represent members and to have an influence in our company. My grandfather was a founding member and I don't want people to forget where we came from.

### What do you do for fun?

My favorite hobby is restoring old tractors. I have four tractors from my grandfather. They are all red and the oldest is a 1940 Farmall. I also enjoy talking about Blackfoot with other members. I'm happy that new regulatory rules are allowing us to be more flexible with our product offerings for our cooperative customers. We can now offer broadband without a phone line.



**Jim Blush**

*District #7*

### What do you wish our members knew that they might not know?

Our members share in our success. They're not just customers, they're owners – and that's what sets us apart. We deliver the latest technology paired with exceptional customer service. And we're fully prepared to serve the communications needs of all of our community members, from millennials to large businesses.

### How do you think Blackfoot will change in the next five years?

I'm confident that we will continue to grow as we focus on addressing our members' needs. I'm amazed at the growth we've experienced and I really give credit to our employees. Our success is due to years of great people at Blackfoot!

Get in touch with your local Trustee at [boardoftrustees@blackfoot.com](mailto:boardoftrustees@blackfoot.com).



1221 North Russell St | Missoula, MT 59808



**NEW! Robocall Blocker**

Stop unwanted nuisance calls. Call us to opt-in for this FREE service today!



**Get More At Home**

See Blackfoot's new home product offerings at **Blackfoot.com/MoreAtHome**.

**WIN A TABLET!!**

Our newsletter is online! Check out this issue and enter to win an Amazon Fire Tablet!

**Blackfoot.com/CoopNewsletter**

**A Message From Jason Williams**

*Blackfoot Chief Executive Officer*

Thanks to all of you that made our cooperative's Annual Meeting on May 6 a huge success! For those that attended, you heard first-hand how Blackfoot is investing in our future by replacing more than 100 miles of aging copper lines with next generation fiber-optics in the St. Ignatius area. While we constantly update and maintain our network, this year we are kicking off a decade-long copper replacement plan that will mean thousands of miles of new fiber-optics throughout our cooperative service territory.

In addition, Blackfoot has rolled out a new set of products and services that are more responsive to what you, our member-owners, want out of your Blackfoot experience. For example, we are now offering "stand-alone" broadband, meaning customers can choose to get broadband service without having to subscribe to a voice service line. We've added a new service, Robocall Blocker, which enables customers to block nuisance, automated telemarketing calls to

their home phones. We also introduced a TechHome service that helps keep your laptop, tablet and other Internet-connected devices secure from viruses and hackers. Be on the lookout for additional Blackfoot products and services in the coming months.

It's an exciting time at Blackfoot! None of it would be possible without the dedication of your cooperative employees. We have some of the most loyal, hardworking people that I have ever been around. Their commitment to Blackfoot is a commitment to you. Be sure to say "hello" as you see them out and about in your communities. Enjoy the summer!

