

Neighbours Helping Neighbours Since 1947 70 Years and Counting!

This year marks a very exciting milestone for EQUS - our 70th anniversary! While EQUS has grown over the years with the amalgamations of numerous other Rural Electrification Associations (REAs), the original REA that started our remarkable success was Blackfalds REA, incorporated in 1947. As Canada's largest member-owned utility, 2017 will mark 70 years of co-operative success!

In the early 1940s when the Alberta government asked large corporate utility companies to bring electricity to rural Alberta, they declined citing cost as a factor. In response, Alberta farmers joined forces and formed co-operatives known as Rural Electrification Associations. Connecting with friends and neighbours, these industrious pioneers installed power poles, strung line and essentially powered the rural Alberta we know today. However, it is rumoured that the driving force behind the ambitious undertaking was farm wives who wanted the convenience of electric washing machines and lights for early morning and late night chores.

The most significant amalgamation for EQUS occurred when Central Alberta REA (CAREA) and South Alta REA joined forces in January 2013, making us Canada's largest member-owned utility. EQUS has always been a leader and fiercely committed to the goal of maintaining the strength and viability of the electric co-operative. This commitment is reinforced by the support of our members. EQUS' slogan "Powered by the Alberta Spirit" is a clear reflection of the membership who own and take pride in delivering reliable, quality electrical services to rural Alberta. It is that spirit that literally connected, powered and developed the rural Alberta we call home.

Operating as a co-operative, EQUS takes pride in our ability to meet the diverse needs of rural businesses, homes, farms, recreation and industrial

developments, efficiently and cost effectively. EQUS' 70th year marks an exciting time for your co-operative as more opportunities are becoming available than ever before. With our new Integrated Operations Agreement, we are able to offer choice to rural Albertans who want to experience the many advantages of receiving distribution services from a co-operative. What remains consistent are the core values that continue to guide EQUS: quality, responsibility, respect, knowledge and community.

We want to thank all members for your continued support over the past 70 years and into the future. Stay tuned for celebratory anniversary activities throughout 2017. We will be announcing them in the newsletter and on our website: www.equs.ca.



Photos: EQUS members fill out annual member survey at Central Area Member Appreciation BBQ (top) and EQUS staff and member in South Area (bottom).

Budget Billing Settlement

For those members who are on budget billing, please be advised all accounts have been settled for 2016.

On your invoice, you will see a YTD Budget Billing Settlement line that indicates if there is an amount owing or a credit due to you.

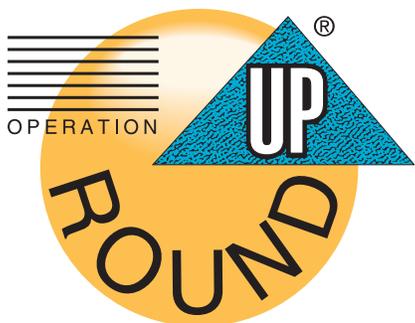
It is very important you continue to monitor the “YTD Budget Amount” and “YTD Actual Amount” noted on your utility bill throughout the year. This provides you with the dollar variance between the actual and budget values billed for your power usage. If there is any significant difference in these two amounts, contact your Member Service Administrator immediately to review the discrepancy.



Please remember if your usage for 2017 increases or decreases, this will affect your budget billing amount and annual settlement.

On your next month’s bill, the new budget billing amounts will be calculated based on last year’s consumption data at current rates.

Operation Round Up



The Operation Round Up committee, made up of EQUUS members, a board member and our CEO, are currently reviewing proposals for the funding cycle that ended December 31. Funding announcements will be made at the beginning of February.

The new funding cycle starts January 1 and runs to March 31. If you know of a worthwhile project in your community that will benefit youth or seniors, visit www.equs.ca/community/operation-round-up for more information and to obtain an application form.

Our MVP Program is Growing

Recently, EQUUS welcomed two new members to the Member Value Program; Black River Contracting Inc. and Bolt Electrical, Plumbing and Mechanical. EQUUS members receive 10% off materials and 15% off acreage development packages through Black River Contracting. Members also now receive 5% off services over \$5,000 through Bolt Electrical, Plumbing and Mechanical.

Are you looking for a cost-effective way to reach over 30,000 potential customers? Become part of the MVP today by following these easy steps:

1. Agree to offer a discount to EQUUS members who present their MVP card at time of purchase.
2. Sign an agreement with EQUUS confirming your commitment to honour that discount.
3. Provide EQUUS with your business profile (contact info, website link, etc.).
4. Allow EQUUS to use your logo to promote your offer and the MVP.

Contact Valdene Callin at vcallin@equs.ca or 403.227.7541 to learn more about the program. For a complete list of offers available through the MVP program, visit www.equs.ca/members/member-benefits/member-value-program/.

Overloaded Transformers and Breakers

To ensure the safety, reliability and protection of your electric distribution system, EQUS is monitoring all of its equipment starting January 1, 2017 to ensure it is working in accordance with its rating. If over a period of time your electrical load increases to the point where your transformer or breaker is overloaded, EQUS will inform you of this condition. If your transformer or breaker requires an upgrade, EQUS will work with you to ensure you have the appropriate equipment for your needs.



An EQUS representative will meet you on-site to review your existing electrical demand and determine the size of transformer required for your operation. This would include any future plans that may impact your decision to upgrade. The costs to upgrade will be provided and upon your approval, the upgrade would be completed.

If you have any questions regarding your electrical service size, please contact your Area Office.

Billing Cycle Change Reminder

To accommodate the change to a calendar month meter reading cycle, **your bill due January 25 will include an additional two weeks (November 16 to December 31, 2016)**. Note this is a one-time occurrence and will not change your payment due date.

Effective January 1, meter reading will reflect your usage for a calendar month. If you have any questions, please contact your Member Service Administrator.

Tips on Saving Energy in the Winter

If you're looking to save energy and money this winter, follow one or more of these energy-saving tips to help reduce the amount of electricity you consume!

- Make sure walls, attics and floors are filled with adequate insulation.
- Caulk, weather-strip and use foam to seal air leaks. Pay special attention to the areas around windows and doors, where pipes enter walls, around light switch and outlet boxes and anywhere two materials meet.
- To help reduce home heating demand, consider using motorized air intake and outlet dampeners, minimizing the exchange of air through openings and ducts.



Alberta Green Homes Summit

The annual Alberta Green Homes Summit will be held on **Tuesday, January 24** in Red Deer. The one-day Summit will include a panel discussion on energy efficiency and affordable housing in addition to keynote speaker Mike Johnson's thoughts on transparency in the industry. For more information and to register for the event, visit: www.eventbrite.ca/e/alberta-green-homes-summit-2017-tickets-27040114711.

ECC Gives Back

At EQUS we are committed to giving back to the communities we serve through organizational and staff initiatives. Our staff charity committee, EQUS Community Connection (ECC), organizes numerous fundraising events to support our charity of choice. For 2016 the charity of choice in our Service Area was our local food banks.

Some highlights of this year's fundraising include:

- raising over \$18,000 through our annual golf tournament;
- a silent auction at our Christmas party that raised \$4,200;
- a cookie stroll that had staff spending \$1,288 to enjoy their favourite cookies;
- monthly staff lunches, with food offerings prepared and donated by employees, that raised \$7,494; and
- staff and management contributing \$1,630 to the victims of the Fort McMurray fire.

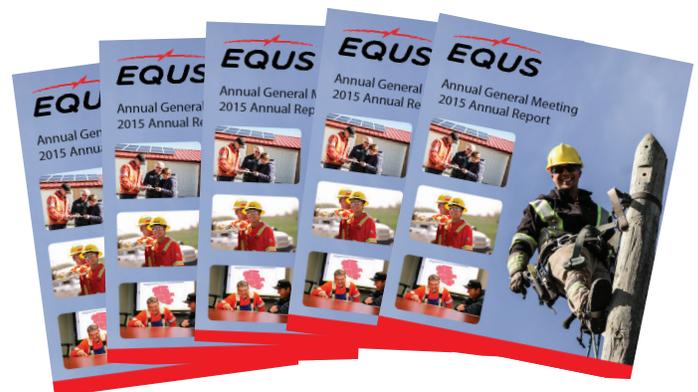
Together we raised over \$28,000 that supported the communities we work and live in.



Photos: Winning team from this year's annual golf tournament (top) and cookie donation baked by EQUS staff for the Central Area Cookie Stroll (bottom).

EQUS will be holding three consecutive Annual General Meetings (AGMs) throughout our Service Area at the end of March. The dates and locations of the AGMs are as follows:

- **Tuesday, March 21, 2017 – Coast Lethbridge Hotel & Conference Centre**
- **Wednesday, March 22, 2017 – Sheraton Red Deer Hotel**
- **Thursday, March 23, 2017 – Best Western Sunrise Inn & Suites, Stony Plain**



Additional details regarding each AGM, including the agenda, time and location, will be provided in the February newsletter and by visiting www.equs.ca/members/events/.

It is very important to note that your electrical distribution system provider will always be EQUS, regardless of who supplies your energy. Members who choose to obtain electricity (retail electricity services) from a party other than EQUS will not be disadvantaged or in any way be treated differently by EQUS. For a list of energy retailers, visit www.ucahelps.alberta.ca.

Mailing address: Box 6199, 5803 42 Street, Innisfail, AB T4G 1S8

To report a power outage in your area, or for other services such as construction or vegetation management, please call your local Area Office.

Main Office
Phone: 403.227.4011
Toll-free: 1.888.211.4011
Fax: 403.227.1007

North Area Office
Phone: 780.967.3340
Toll-free: 1.888.627.4011
Fax: 780.967.3018

Central Area Office
Phone: 403.227.7535
Toll-free: 1.877.527.4011
Fax: 403.227.7540

South Area Office
Phone: 403.625.4154
Toll-free: 1.888.565.5445
Fax: 403.625.3569