Keeping You CONNECTED

September/October 2020

CEO Message, pg. 2 Remote Learning, pg. 4 2020 Triangle Photo Contest, pg. 5



Published for members of

CONTENTS



OUR COVER

Andrea Keller took 5th place in Triangle's 2019 Photo Contest with this photograph of a beautiful sticky geranium. Andrea captured this beautiful blossom in Castle Town near White Sulphur Springs.

Holiday Closures

Labor Day Monday, September 7th

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FEATURES

- **CEO** Message 2
- **Financials** 3
- **Remote Learning** 4
- **Photo Contest Voting** 5
- **Photo Contest Voting Cont** 6

- 7 Cook's Connection Dishing up our Readers' Best Recipes
- 8 Community Crossword Featuring Moore, MT
- Swap & Shop 9
- 10 Who's Who

CONTACT US

Call 406.394.7807 or 611 or 1.800.332.1201 Pay by Phone 1.888.815.1040 Website www.itstriangle.com **E-mail** www.itstriangle.com/contact-us Visit Mon - Fri 8am - 5pm, 2121 Hwy 2 NW Write PO Box 1220, Havre MT 59501 24/7 Internet Tech Support 1.877.730.8215 **Call Before You Dig** 811 or CallBeforeYouDig.com Triangle Mobile 2121 US Hwy 2 NW, Havre Website www.itstriangle.com

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Craig Gates, CEO

CEO MESSAGE

In March, Triangle Communications (Triangle) made the difficult decision to close our doors to the public for the safety of our members and our employees. We had hoped that the pandemic would be under control by now and we would be able to resume normalcy. That has not happened, and we are now under the Governor's request that a mask be worn in all public locations. As such, we will continue to keep our doors closed for now. When this situation subsides or we can have unmasked conversations with you, our member, we will again open our doors to the public. In the meantime, please continue to make appointments if you need to and call us for additional help or information.

As you may know, the Triangle Board of Trustees had decided in order to better serve our membership we were going to hold our annual meeting in two locations this year in October. One meeting in the North, located in Havre and one in the South, located in Big Timber.

However, due to the increase in COVID cases throughout the State of Montana; the Board has made the difficult decision to cancel our annual meetings at both locations. Given the rapid growth of COVID spreading across our great state and volatility of not knowing who or when someone may contract the virus, the Board has weighed in on the side of caution for 2020. Due to the fact that our bylaws do not allow for an Annual Meeting outside of the month of October, the Board will continue to look at the future and decide if it is best to hold a Special Meeting or wait until the next Annual Meeting to handle the cooperative's business.

In this month's magazine you will find the information that would have been included in the annual meeting notice. There are messages from the President of Triangle's Board of Trustees and the financial report from Triangle's CFO.

Please take the time to look over this information to keep up to date on the operations of your cooperative. Voting for Trustees to represent Districts 1 and 3 will have to take place at either the Special Meeting or next year's Annual Meeting.

Because we are an essential services company, it is our top priority to continue supporting you, our members. You will continue to receive the same friendly and expert level of support you expect from our customer service and tech support teams. I have asked our team to continue to ask questions about your health and those in your household. This is for your protection and our employees. Our technicians that may visit your home for an install or repair are provided with personal protection equipment and disinfectant to keep everyone safe.

Our Havre and Big Timber office staff are available by appointment for in person assistance. Please call 1-800-332-1201 between 8am – 5pm to schedule an appointment. Visit our website at www.itstriangle.com for information on services, help or payments options.

Your Board of Trustees and I thank you for your understanding as we find our way through this difficult time. Please stay safe and stay healthy.

BOARD PRESIDENT MESSAGE

This year's message is different than any I have written in the past due to the circumstances we are in with COVID-19. By this time I'm sure you know the Board of Trustees cancelled the annual meeting for safety concerns. We felt there was too high of a risk of transmission of the virus. With the number of members, guests, and staff that attend it did not seem like the benefits of having the annual meeting outweighed the risk.

For the first time we were looking at having two meetings: one as usual in Havre, and a second in Big Timber, our southern area. For several years, the trustees have been researching how the coop could have a meeting in both places. The purpose of the two meetings is to get more of Triangle's membership informed and involved in our cooperative.

As we have cancelled the 2020 meeting, we will be planning on having meetings in 2021 in both Havre and Big Timber. You may be wondering why Triangle's annual meeting isn't just postponed a couple of months like some organizations have chosen to do. Triangle's Bylaws state that the annual meeting will be held in October and requires in-person voting with no mail in ballots. This is something the trustees will be looking at moving forward and may suggest a bylaw change in the future.

Due to COVID-19, it has been an interesting and somewhat stressful year for Triangle and its staff. Triangle was designated an essential service which entailed keeping services running for our members as well as keeping our staff safe. Also with most schools going to distance learning last spring, some needed additional bandwidth to provide educational service to their students. Triangle worked with these school districts so they could stay connected with their students.

Triangle has also continued with their fiber to the home upgrades. With COVID-19 and the cautions that are needed, we are not moving as fast as we had hoped. Safety of our members, employees, and contractors come first.

This past year Triangle offered a discount on one year of capital credits, using

the cost of money to calculate the discount. We are in discussion about offering another capital credit refund on the same basis although for more years. If we proceed as before, you will have the choice to accept or not.

Triangle is working on trying to keep expenses down while still providing the services required and requested. In closing, I would like to thank the Triangle employees for really stepping up and taking care of our members, schools, and keeping the services working in an extremely stressful time. I hope everyone stays safe and hope to see you at one of the 2021 annual meeting locations.

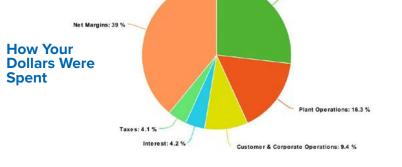


Rich Stuker, Board President

FINANCIALS

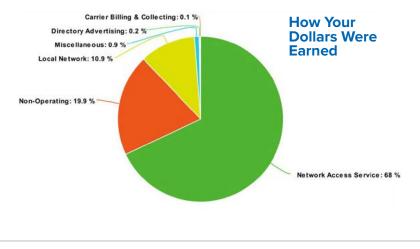
Balance Sheet December 31, 2019

Dep	preciation: 26.8 %
	<u>\$297,612,510</u>
	669,212 228,294,941
	56,812,244
	EC 910 044
0,902,000	\$11,836,113
	¢11 026 112
180,590	
884,733	
\$1,824,157	
ins	<u>\$297,612,510</u>
	¢207 642 540
<u>(134,887,131)</u>	207,990,154
342,877,285	
1,126,909	
341,750,376	
354,966	62,754,805
5,193,461	
734,661	
87,817	
4,450,725	
51,933,175	
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	\$26,867,551
3,392,820	
\$15,560,558	
	3,076,873 695,742 2,510 3,557,926 387,022 <u>194,100</u> 51,933,175 4,450,725 87,817 734,661 5,193,461 354,966 341,750,376 1,126,909 342,877,285 (134,887,131) SINS \$1,824,157 884,733 180,590 1,374,764 619,869 6,952,000



Comparative Statement of Revenues and Expenses

OPERATING REVENUES	2019	2018
Local Network Revenues	\$7,297,089	\$5,389,490
Network Access Service	45,599,981	44,021,709
Billing & Collection	79,808	78,531
Miscellaneous	715,985	712,753
TOTAL OPERATING REVENUES	<u>\$53,692,863</u>	\$50,202,483
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Plant Specific Operations	7,864,491	7,186,457
Plant Non-specific Operations	3,154,929	4,166,061
Depreciation	17,979,177	16,755,407
Customer Operations	3,028,657	2,880,945
Corporate Operations	3,292,034	3,331,156
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$35,319,288	\$34,320,026
OPERATING TAXES		
Other Operating Taxes - Property	2,719,393	2,813,787
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES & TAXES	\$38,038,681	\$37,133,813
NET OPERATING MARGINS	\$15,654,182	\$13,068,670
FIXED CHARGES		
Interest on Long-Term Debt	2,841,919	3,087,359
Other Interest Expense	0	875
TOTAL FIXED CHARGES	<u>\$2,841,919</u>	\$3,088,234
NONOPERATING INCOME (EXPENSES)		
Interest and Dividends	1,912,858	1,729,029
Miscellaneous Income and Charges	118,535	139,953
Triangle Comm. Syst. Income	11,371,293	6,600,400
Nonoperating Income Taxes**	(18,920)	(32,867)
TOTAL NONOPERATING INCOME	\$13,383,766	\$8,436,515
Nonregulated Net Income (Loss)	\$(58,273)	\$8,516
NET MARGINS FOR PERIOD	\$26,137,756	\$18,425,467
TOTAL EQUITY		
BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$204,783,084	<u>\$188,380,317</u>
Other Adjustments to Equity	(68,463)	32,882
Deduct Retirement of Capital Credits	(2,557,436)	(2,055,582)
TOTAL EQUITY		
END OF YEAR	<u>\$228,294,941</u>	<u>\$204,783,084</u>



FINANCIAL REPORT

Triangle Telephone Cooperative had another good year in 2019.

Our balance sheet remains strong with total assets of over \$297.6 million. Our equity position has increased from 72.15% at the end of 2018 to 76.7% at the end of 2019 and our debt is



Mark Majeres, Chief Financial Officer

down over \$8 million for the same period. Triangle Telephone invested almost \$20 million into our plant in 2019. Most of the investment in plant was to upgrade Turner, Rapelje, Hobson and part of Big Timber to Fiber to the Home.

Operating revenues on the income statement were up in 2019 by almost \$3.5 million while our operating expenses for 2019 increased by roughly \$1 million leaving us with Net Operating Margins of \$15.6 million. Our nonoperating margins increased by about \$5 million in 2019 mainly due to the increased profitability of Triangle Communication System (Triangle Telephone Cooperatives wholly owned subsidiary). With the increase in operating margins as well as an increase in our nonoperating margins Triangle Telephone ended 2019 with Net Margins of \$26,137,756.

In 2019 Triangle Telephone Cooperative retired and paid out \$2,557,436 in capital credits to estates and through our general retirement.

REMOTE LEARNING: A NEW AND UNEXPECTED PART OF OUR LIVES

2020 has been a year of challenges. For the first time in more than a century, our nation has been rocked by a pandemic that has shaken us to our roots. Most of us were caught unprepared—not the least of which have been our educational systems. Even now, great uncertainty remains with regards to the upcoming school year, but all indications suggest that remote learning will become at least a semi-regular fixture in our lives for the foreseeable future, as we seek to keep ourselves—and especially our children safe and healthy.

Intel, a leader in the technology industry, has produced Parents' Guide to Remote Learning, a resource manual to help parents get their arms around some of the larger challenges that learning from home will bring. We'll break down some of the key messages here, and provide you with a link to the full guide at the end of this article.

Establish a routine—a combination of on-screen and non-screen activities

The need to invest time in creating a routine cannot be overstated. It will help keep your kids on track, establish expectations for the day, and allow you to support their learning. An ideal routine would include a combination of virtual, physical, and project-based activities.

Create dedicated spaces for learning

Establishing spaces at home that are specially dedicated for learning can help nurture your child's creativity, enhance their focus, and increase their motivation. Remember to consider that, in order to be comfortable and engaged during the day, your children will need to have enough space to move around.

Technology for learning

Some school districts are able to supply devices, but many families are discovering that they don't have enough for everyone to work, study, and play. You may need to step in with some new devices to fill in the gaps. And, of course, more devices and more people who need access to the internet means taking special care to ensure you have reliable service that meets the bandwidth requirements of your new situation. We'll be happy to help you with that!

Online safety and monitoring

Now is a great time to review your cyber security. Make sure you've changed the default settings on your router, keep your device software updated, set up parental controls, and create strong passwords. It's also an excellent opportunity to take the time to teach your kids the value of strong passwords and the importance of not sharing them with anyone except you.

Parents' Guide to Remote Learning also provides useful information on developing a plan or routine that's based on whether your children are in elementary school, middle school, or high school, including a special section for helping students with special needs.

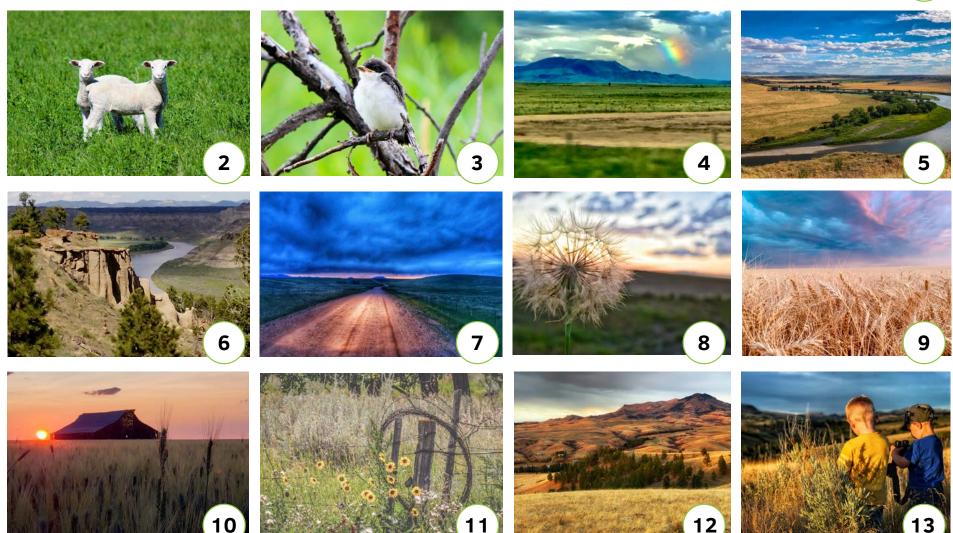
The Parent's Guide to Remote Learning is 24 pages in length, and we can heartily recommend taking the time to read it. It's available at the link below.

www.intel.com/content/dam/www/public/ us/en/documents/guides/parents-guide-toremote-learning.pdf

TRIANGLE PHOTO CONTEST

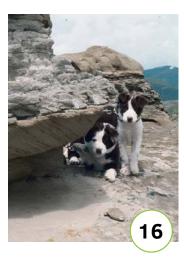
Mail in your vote or "Like" photos to vote on our Top 20 album on Facebook by 9/30! Mail in votes and Facebook Likes will be tallied to determine the winners. First place will earn \$200! Second through sixth place will each earn \$50.



















Triangle Photo Contest Ballot
Name:
Triangle Phone#:
Favorite Photo#:
Mail this form to:
Triangle Photo Contest, PO Box 1220
Havre MT 59501
One ballot per subscriber.

Seven Cooperative **PRINCIPLES**



Voluntary and Open Membership: Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership.

Democratic Member Control: Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.





Members' Economic Participation: Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative.

Autonomy and Independence: Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members.





Education, Training and Information: Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative.

Cooperation Among Cooperatives: Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together.





Concern for Community: While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable

development of their communities.

COOKS CONNECTION

Dishing Up Montana's Best Recipes

Thank you to everyone who has shared their recipes, keep them coming!

If you have a favorite recipe of any kind that you would like to share, we would love to have it.



Your recipe could appear here and earn a FREE GIFT!

Photocopy, print or type your favorite recipe and send it in one of the following ways:

Mail to Newsletter. PO Box 1220, Havre MT 59501 or

E-mail: newsletter@itsTriangle.net



Easy Fruit Salad

Submitted by Marjorie Olsen of Whitewater, MT

INGREDIENTS

3 apples, cut into pieces 3 bananas, sliced 1 (20 oz.) can pineapple tidbits, drain and save juice 1 can mandarin oranges Green grapes if you have them

³/₄ cup pineapple juice ¹/₃ cup orange juice 2 Tbsp cornstarch 1/2 cup sugar 2 Tbsp lemon juice

DIRECTIONS

Combine fruit. Cook last five ingredients until thickened and pour over the fruit.

Chicken Burritos

Submitted by HCE/Triangle Cooks- Cooking Up a Cure Cookbook

INGREDIENTS

Tortilla shells

Cheddar cheese

RECIPE

3-4 chicken breasts 1 (10 oz.) jar picante sauce 1 (10 ³/₄ oz.) can cream of chicken soup 6 oz. sour cream 1 can green chilies Chopped onion

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°. Cut chicken into pieces and brown in a pan. Add picante sauce to cooked chicken. Combine soup, sour cream, green chilies and onion. Spread some of the sour cream mixture on the tortilla shells, add chicken and roll up. Place in a 9x13 inch baking dish. Bake until hot. Remove and top with cheddar cheese and return to oven to melt cheese.

RE<u>CIPE</u> **Fudge Squares** Submitted by Ila McClenahan of Havre, MT

INGREDIENTS

2 cubes margarine 2 cups sugar 6 Tbsp cocoa 1 cup milk 2 cups flour 3 eqqs 1 tsp. vanilla ¹/₂ cup chopped nuts

FROSTING

6 Tbsp brown sugar 3 Tbsp cocoa 4 Tbsp butter or margarine 4 Tbsp milk

DIRECTIONS

Mix softened margarine, sugar and cocoa very well. Then add eggs and beat. Add milk and flour alternately. Beat well. Add vanilla and nuts. Bake in 10 X 13" pan at 375° oven until done, usually about 25 minutes.

Frosting: Mix all ingredients and boil 2 minutes. Cool slightly and add enough powdered sugar to spread over the squares. Cut into 24 squares with a half walnut on each square.

Note: This was my mother's (Gertrude Whaley) recipe. She made them for nearly every potluck dinner she went to and always kept some in the freezer for whenever someone would stop by for coffee.

COMMUNITY CROSSWORD

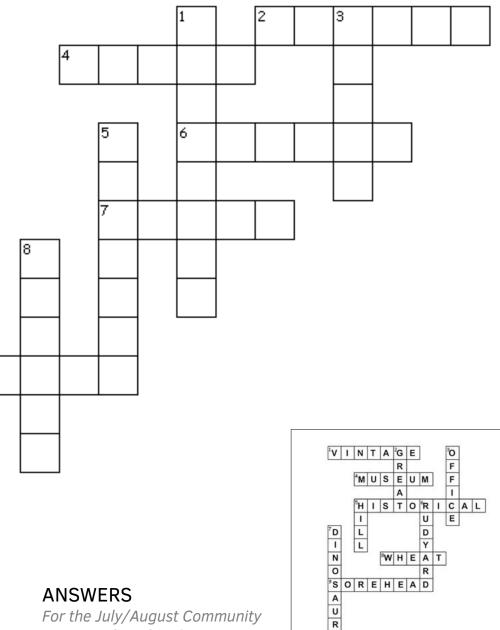
Featuring Moore, MT

Across

- 2. Moore is located in ____ County.
- 4. Richard Harlow, president of the Montana Railway Company, named the town after Henry _____ who helped financial the railroad.
- 6. Crystal Lake, south of Moore, and Lake State Park offer excellent camping, boating and fishing opportunities.
- 7. Moore produced more _____ than any other community in the Judith Basin in 1908.
- 9. Moore is surrounded by island mountain ranges.

Down

- 1. As early as 1908, Moore was home to a _____ and ice cream plant.
- 3. Moore is located in the Judith Basin in central Montana.
- 5. Moore was established in 1903 on the Montana Railway Company's " Railroad" line west of Lewistown.
- 8. The _____ River flows north of Moore.



For the July/August Community Crossword, Rudyard, MT

9

SWAP AND SHOP

Welcome to our Swap and Shop! Feel free to post and find classifieds from other members!

Onan Generator

Onan Marquis 7000m 6.8 KW generator- needs coil. Asking \$1250, call 406.547.2184.

Pop-up Screen Tent

Gazelle pop-up screen tent-portable protection for your picnic. Never used. Asking \$100, call 406.547.2184.

Briggs & Stratton Lawnmower

12.5 HP Briggs & Stratton lawnmower engine needs carburetor. Asking \$100, call 406.547.2184.

Wanting To Buy

1955 to 1958 Chevy car or 1/2 ton truck and 410 shotgun. Call 406.326.2287.

2003 Honda Motorcycle

2003 Honda VTX 1800 motorcycle highway bike with extras. Has 11,000 miles, call 406.378.2484.

House in Chester

House for sale in Chester. Three bedrooms and two baths with large great room plus front and rear vinyl decks. Many updates including new furnace and air conditioner. Large detached garage sits on 3 lots with underground sprinklers. Both house and garage have new metal roofs. Asking \$160,000 or best offer, call 406.292.3663.

John Deere Combine

1989 John Deere combine 6600 spreader. Includes 22-foot header, diesel, hydro with 3424 hours. Good machine, will cut a lot of acres yet, also a lot of extra parts, etc. Call 406.355.4479 and leave message (day or evening).

Wanting To Buy

1968-1972 1/2 ton Ford cab and front fenders. Preferably red, no rust, and in Sweet Grass county or surrounding counties. Call 406.932.5413.

Misc Items

Frame, box spring and mattress with headboard for regular size bed, excellent condition \$250. Projection screen, \$10. Miscellaneous decor \$5-\$10 each. Two small glass top tables, \$10 each. Framed pictures, \$10 each. Call 406.357.2696.

Wanting To Buy

Enamelware dishpan. Call 406.357.2696.

Looking For a Border Collie/Black Lab Pup

Looking for a Border Collie/Black Lab mix pup. Call 406.395.4725.

2008 MacDon Swather

2008 MacDon swather with 16-foot rotary header and 2,400 hours. Asking \$55,000, call 406.262.2393. Organic Meadow Native Grass 40+/- acres, \$40 per ton. Buyer responsible for all costs associated with bailing and hay immediate removal. No storage available on site. Call Joe at 406.932.6765.

Miscellaneous Items

Approximately 140 small square grass bales at \$2.50/bale. Thirty-two (32) Gaterman crop lifters in great shape at \$15 each and roll bar with off road lights for compact pickup for \$30. Call 406.398.5325.

283 New Holland Hayliner

283 New Holland Hayliner small square baler. Asking \$4,900, call 406.473.2202 or 406.671.6633.

John Deere 7720 Combine

1982 John Deere 7720 combine with 24-foot header and 4700 hours. Well maintained and always shedded in the offseason. Runs good and comes with many extra parts. Asking \$5,000, call 406.355.4936 for a list of all updates.

Vintage Grumman Canoe

17-foot vintage Grumman aluminum canoe, \$400 OBO. Call 406.547.2409. Pure New York Maple Syrup Sealed one (1) gallon jugs. \$42.00 per gallon. Call 406.374.2292, no calls on Sunday, please.

Buffalo Meat

Buffalo meat for sale by the half or whole. Call 406.697.0993.

Empire Direct Vent Wall Furnaces

Two 20,000 btu Empire direct vent wall furnaces, model DV-20E-3. Set up for propane. Asking \$1,000 each or \$1,500 for both. Call 406.932.6775.

<u>VW Trike</u>

Custom-built VW trike, 170 miles, 1776cc engine, big valve heads, Carter 2-barrel carb, s.s. springer front end, bus transaxle, suicide clutch. Asking \$5,000, trades considered. Call 406.547.2184.

Vintage VW Parts

Three motor blocks and crankshafts, rods, alternator, carb, dist, glass, and early style door. Asking \$250, call 406.547.2184.

2002 Ford Focus SE

Four-door 2002 Ford Focus SE with 6000 actual miles, has always been garaged. Needs a new fuel pump. Asking \$2,000, call 406.932.4700 or 406.665.5373 (cell).

Yamaha Motorcycle

2007 Yamaha motorcycle \$1,500 or best offer. Call for a picture, 406.350.0385.

Wanting to Buy

Looking to buy a 1955 to 1958 Chevy car or 1/2-ton truck. Call 406.326.2287.

Irrigating Pipes

Six-inch aluminum mainline irrigating pipes and fittings. 800-900 feet of pipe, 30 feet 8-inch suction line, water cannon, and PTO pump. Call 406.932.5508.

Swap & Shop is a classified advertising section of the Triangle Communications and Hill County Electric websites and newsletters. It is maintained as a service to customers and communities wanting to buy, sell and announce non-commercial items. To have an ad included, simply enter all the pertinent information on the online form. An administrator will review the information within two business days and if approved, the ad will then appear. It will stay online for 60 days unless you notify us to remove or change it. It will also appear in any of the newsletters printed during that 60 day window. Triangle reserves the right to abbreviate ads and if the section is full, we will display ads on a first come, first-served basis. If you're unable to enter your ad online you may mail or e-mail it to us using the contact info inside the front cover of this magazine. Happy swapping and shopping!

WHO'S WHO AT YOUR COOPERATIVE - FEATURING JODI KUEFFLER



Havre native, Jodi Kueffler joined the Triangle Communications family a little over two years ago as Executive Assistant to the CEO/General Manager. Jodi's main job responsibilities are to assist the CEO

MYSTERY PHOTO AND TELCO QUIZ

Two Lucky Subscribers Per Issue Will Win \$25!

We received 86 entries that correctly answer ONT stands for Optical Network Terminal and also identified our last issue's mystery photo as the ad for Triangle's 2020 Photo Contest.

Congratulations to Karen Dietzler and Gerald Goldhahn who were randomly drawn to receive a \$25 credit on their next Triangle bill.

Try your luck with this issue's quiz and mystery photo shown on the right.

Correction: The mystery photo in the July/Aug KYC was from Reed Point not Rapelje.



and help with events put on by both Hill County Electric and Triangle Communications. Her favorite part about working at Triangle is the great people and every day is different.

One of Jodi's first jobs was working at JCPenney's in Havre and in Great Falls. After college, she worked as a paralegal in various law offices. When she is not working, Jodi enjoys spending time with her family, hiking, fishing, reading and baking. Over the years, Jodi has volunteered her time with Head Start, her church and 4-H. When asked if she had a "signature" dish, Jodi said no, but she likes to bake. Jodi's favorite vacations have been to Minnesota to visit family. She then told me about traveling to Eastern Europe, not once, but twice. Jodi visited Hungary with family and later traveled with her cousin to Poland to teach English to high school students.

Thanks for answering all of my questions, even some you probably didn't want to. I still have a lot more questions about your world travels!

Two Chances to Win!

#1. When is the deadline to vote for the Triangle Photo Contest?



#2. Mystery Photo (right):

My name is:_____

My Triangle phone number is _____

Yes! I want to receive e-mail notifications about special events or deals in my area. My e-mail address is:

Entries must be received by October 5th, 2020 to be eligible for the drawing. Please return this slip with your payment or mail to: Newsletter, Triangle Communications, PO Box 1220, Havre MT 59501. You can also submit your answers at www.itstriangle.com/telco-quiz.



Go Internet Only!

Switching to an Internet Only plan could save you money while enjoying faster speeds!^{*}

> Call to learn more today! Plus, get a \$50 bill credit when you switch!