



Watts New

July, 2015

Barb Moody, Editor

From The Desk Of . . . Don Smith, Manager

Here comes summer! I was in Denver this week and it was sunny and hot at 92 degrees! Next thing I knew, it was raining and hailing! That is one thing I love about this area: the weather is never boring!

I was in Denver to attend the monthly meeting with Tri State Generation and Transmission and listen to the discussion regarding a new rate methodology being proposed. I am not saying a rate increase because we are not sure at this time what the impact will be to the REA. Once the methodology is finalized with numbers assigned, we will have a better understanding of the impacts. Tri State did not have a rate change in 2015 so we were able to maintain our previous rates and are waiting to see what the future will bring for rate impact. This new methodology will be voted on in September.

During the meeting, we heard a report regarding the rules being discussed at the state and national levels. This report included a brief update on the Clean Power Plan (CPP). This is the plan that is being proposed by the EPA, and that we provided comments on last fall, on your behalf. Part of the update discussed a study that found that if the CPP is enacted the way it was originally proposed, it will cause electrical rates to increase significantly through the year 2030. We will continue to work with other utilities and do our best to bring this plan in line with what we believe are the best practices for your power supply as well as the environment.

We have had discussions lately about what makes electric cooperatives different than other electric utilities. So I thought I would take a moment and explain just a little. If we go back to a point that some people can still remember, a large part of the rural United States did not have electricity. Those areas that did have electricity were populated areas, mainly in and around cities. These areas were served by "Investor Owned", for-profit utilities or utilities owned by the municipalities. Whichever type of utility, there was money there that made financial sense. However, much of the nation was rural and it did not make financial sense to run power lines. In 1935-36 along came the Rural Electrification Act that provided financial resources to run the lines and get lights to rural America. The Electric Cooperative systems are owned by the members. The project was not profit based but was based on providing a service to the members and this is the way we still run the systems. Any money we have left after maintaining and operating the system is allocated back to Member-Owners and eventually we write a check to these members for their portion. This is called capital credit retirement.

We have heard comments that perhaps electric cooperatives have outlived their purpose since much of America is no longer rural. I wholeheartedly disagree with this thought and Wheatland Rural Electric Association is a perfect example of why these cooperatives still are needed today. We have roughly 1900 miles of power line and 3800 meters. That equates to right at two meters per mile of line. When you look at the cost of building a mile of line at about \$30,000-\$40,000 per mile and then figure that will serve an average of only two meters, you don't have to look too hard to see that very few for-profit companies would be interested in taking on such a liability. Our purpose is to provide affordable electricity and improve the quality of life for our Member-Owners. As we go forward we will provide more information and insight into electric cooperatives so you are more aware of the differences in types of electric utilities.

In closing, I would be remiss in not recognizing the month of July and the celebration of our Independence Day. It is an honor to live in this great nation and enjoy the freedoms we have been blessed with through the sacrifice of those who have gone before us. While we have other holidays that recognize sacrifice, dedication and other aspects of our freedoms, this is the one holiday that is dedicated to what started it all, our independence. As always, it is a pleasure to serve you, our Member-Owners. Thank you!



www.wheatlandrea.com

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From the desk of RKA.....

Happy 4th of July to all! Let us all remember why we celebrate July 4th and embrace our freedom and independence that we have. We really do live in a great nation where we are able to go places without fear, speak up for what we believe, and live a life of comfort and convenience.

Now off my pedestal and onto the cooperative news. The summer months are busy for us as we complete several projects. The linemen are outside constantly taking advantage of the weather and completing projects might be either further away or ones that take several days. Inside we are also keeping busy with projects. One major task is our annual audit. At the time of this article, I will not have the final report back from our auditor. When I do receive it, I will share with you any concerns or findings. The audit is really to protect your assets as members because remember, you own this cooperative. Once we get the final report and correct any findings on it, we then allocate our previous year's margins to patronage which is the capital credits that we pay you every year.

The second major project we had was a complete week of training with employees from our software company, SEDC. These employees were here to help us integrate, update, and install new features and benefits to our system. These changes allow us to utilize the system more efficiently and effectively. It is important for us to constantly "stay in the know" to help you as a member. Look forward to some new changes down the road....

In the WREN magazine for the month of May 2015, Mr. Shawn Taylor, Executive Director of the Wyoming REA wrote about the issue of the Clean Power Plan (CPP) and how it will affect us and the cost of doing business. In the coming months, Mr. Taylor plans to break down the CPP into various parts and explain the cooperatives' concerns in a way that justifies us to say "this costs too much" or "we can't do this because of lack of technology". I hope that you do take the time to read his article and understand that the EPA and this act is very real and will very much affect our cooperative. After you read his article, if you still have questions, please do not hesitate to call. We would be more than happy to answer any questions you might have.

If you haven't seen our newspaper ad or heard our radio announcement, I want to mention the change in office hours for the rest of the summer. Effective June 29, 2015, all staff will be working the four 10 hour day shifts. The office hours will be: Monday-Thursday 7:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. and then closed on Fridays. Due to feasibility and scheduling conflicts, we made the decision to have all staff on the same schedule for the whole summer. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call me anytime.

As summer is zipping by, it won't even seem remotely possibly that my kids will be starting their senior and sophomore years in college. We are trying to take in a lot of baseball and enjoying that very much. Both are "enjoying" working and living on their own. But I am still not a fan of the "empty nest syndrome". The dogs don't even like my jokes.

Have a great summer and Be Safe!!!

**Summer Hours: Monday—Thursday
7:00 to 4:30 Closed on Friday**



Ran this last month, but it's worth repeating!



What's this? It's your "pole number" (Well, somebody's pole number)! **Why is it important to you?** Because it is the number the linemen look for on our system map to find you. If you look on your meter pole, you will find a series of 2" aluminum numbers and letters similar to the ones in the picture above. If you give these numbers to the operator at the office, or to the call center after hours, you will help the linemen find you quicker, which means shorter outage times.

Pole Testing
Update For July, 2015
Pole testing started June 1st.
This year's circuits are:
West Circuit, Wheatland
Substation
North Circuit, Grayrocks
Substation

CHEYENNE COFFEE COMPANY: 10% off your coffee order when you present your Co-op Connections Card. 479 Olson Rd. Wheatland, 307-351-0247. Give us a try. We are sure to become your new "favorite" brand of coffee.

CHUGWATER CHILI: 10% off all purchases, in our store and on our website, www.chugwaterchili.com. 210 1st St., Chugwater, 307-422-3345.

CONSOLIDATED MANUFACTURING ENTERPRISES (CME): 10% off in-store items except welders, gases, cylinders, and coolers (not valid with other offers). We are fully equipped and capable of performing a variety of services. 2556 South St., Wheatland, 307-322-1803 or visit us at: www.cmewy.com. M-S 8:00AM to 5:00PM, closed Sunday.

COUNTRY GIRLS EMBROIDERY: 10% off purchases of \$50.00 or more. 1160 Hwy 313, Chugwater, 307-630-3999, M-S 8:00AM to 5:00PM.

DRUBE SUPPLY/HARDWARE HANK: 15% discount on all Carhart Clothing. 609 16th St., Wheatland, 307-322-4808, M-F 8:00AM to 6:00PM, Sat. 9:00AM to 6:00PM. Sun. 1:00PM to 4:00PM.

FRENCHMAN VALLEY COOPERATIVE: \$.03 discount per gallon of gas or diesel at the pump. You must show your card to the clerk prior to fueling. \$25 gift card with the purchase of four new tires. Located on the southwest corner of 16th St. and South St. Full service gas station, propane outlet, products and services for the agricultural customer. 305 16th St., Wheatland, 307-322-2988.

HOBO'S CLOSETS: 10% discount on room rent for six months with a six month agreement, plus one month rent free if pre-paid for six months. Total equals more than 1 1/2 months free for a six month agreement. Must present your Connections Card. We offer clean, dry and secure inside storage with 24-hour, 7-day access. 1001 14th St. Wheatland, WY. Call: 307-322-9554 or 307-241-0427 for appointment.

HOWSHAR HARDWARE: 10% off all VALSPAR paint. 18 S. Wyoming Ave., Guernsey, 307-836-2611, M-F 8:00AM to 5:00PM, Sat. 8:00AM to 4:00PM.

LARAMIE PEAK MOTORS: 5% discount on all mechanical repairs-parts and labor. Offer not available on already discounted menu priced maintenance items. Cannot be combined with other promotional offers. Present Co-op Connections card at time of service write up. 2305 16th St., Wheatland, 307-322-2355 or visit us at: www.laramiepeakmotors.com. M-F 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM, Sat. 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM.

MICKE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT: 10% discount on Wednesday's "all you can eat" chicken fried steak. Free coffee, tea or soda with the purchase of a meal. Fresh soups and salads made in-house. Please present Co-op Connections Card at time of purchase. 302 B St., Glendo, WY, 307-735-4616, 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM (winter) and 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM 7 days per week.

The REA Office is CLOSED on Friday, July 3rd to honor our Independence Day!

Nurses in Vietnam



Infantrymen in Iraq



Honor those who serve, and have served!



If you appreciate your freedom, next time you see a veteran or a current member of our armed forces...stop and say, "Thank you!"



Pictured above is a 100 Amp residential electric service. It is similar to the meter and breakers at your residence. Though your home's service may look slightly different, it still has a meter at the top and breakers behind a door below the meter.

Knowing this is important to you if power to your home is lost. If you lose power, the following steps are the best procedure for you to follow. 1. check to see if your neighbor's have also lost power. 2. check the breaker panel in your home for a tripped breaker or breakers. 3. If the breakers inside your home are on, go outside to your meter, open the door below the meter and check the breaker behind the door. If it is tripped, attempt to reset it. If it isn't tripped, it is time to call the REA.

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Meet the new guys!

On the left is Kolby Ginter. Kolby, a journeyman lineman, comes to us from McKenzie Electric Cooperative in Wattford, ND. Originally from Piedmont, SD, Kolby wants to be closer to the mountains and his family.

Center is Austin Gesinger, a third year apprentice. He worked for Bolt Power before making the move to Wheatland REA. Austin is originally from Pierre, SD, and likes the mountains, hunting and fishing.

On the right is Brandon Hauf, a second year apprentice. He is originally from Colome, SD. Prior to accepting employment at Wheatland REA, he worked for The Line Company, a power line contractor in Sundance, WY. Like most linemen, he likes to hunt and fish and enjoys about any activity in the mountains.