

# Watts New

September, 2018

*From The Desk Of... Don Smith, Manager*

It's been a typical Wyoming summer season in that no season is "typical"! July was cooler than earlier in the summer, and brought more rain. It is interesting that our irrigation sales were higher than they had been since 2012 (which was a drought year), and then in July, those sales were lower than in the last several years. Year-to-date irrigation sales are down from 2017 but about on par for Historical Usage.

I hope everyone had a chance to visit the State Fair this year. Al Teel does a fantastic job organizing all of the Wyoming electric cooperatives and incorporating Tri-State Generation & Transmission and Touchstone Energy. Together they put together a fantastic booth and demonstrations. Al puts his heart and soul into this event; his efforts show by how much the booth grows each year, and the positive comments voiced by visitors. Al cannot do this alone, but he has wonderful help and support from the other great employees at the REA. Al leads this team effort, and I cannot say enough about how much we appreciate all he does for the fair, as well as every event he leads! Thanks Al, and all of the employees who put in so much time and effort to make these events beneficial for all cooperative members!



By the time this article reaches you, the activities at Basin Electric (Basin), and specifically Laramie River Station (LRS), may be old news but I think it is still worth mentioning. Since the REA is a member of Tri-State, and Tri-State is a member of Basin, the REA is also a member of Basin. We have been interested in the activities at Basin and LRS, both from a member perspective, but also from a community standpoint. If you have not heard, due to various economic pressures and the completion of several large-scale multi-million dollar capital projects, Basin has offered its employees (throughout the entire organization), an employee voluntary separation plan (EVSP). Within the Wyoming facilities, less than 60 employees participated in the EVSP, most of whom work at LRS. At this time, Basin continues to evaluate its operations and staffing to see which employee positions are now vacant due to participation in the EVSP, and which positions will need to be filled. A committee of employees from the various Basin locations has been formed to look at operations and determine where efficiencies can be improved upon. The final results have yet to be decided. Basin has always been, and continues to be a great corporate citizen that provides significant jobs to the community and tax base for the region.

These are very interesting times for the electric utility industry and none of us are exempt from the impacts of the various tips and turns which come at us. Everything from regulations, fracking technology, fluctuating fuel prices, and the pros and cons of distributed generation can all be threats to our industry and the way we do business. However, there can be opportunities as well. We need to keep our eyes open and ensure we continuously evaluate the business to run as efficiently as possible. Basin is looking forward in order to ensure they are positioned for the future.

As always, thanks to all our wonderful member-owners and the fantastic employees here at the REA! Please let us know if you have any questions; we are always happy to talk with you! Hope to see you all soon!

[www.wheatlandrea.com](http://www.wheatlandrea.com)



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The power of human connections®

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**REA SUMMER HOURS**  
**Monday - Thursday**  
**7:00 AM - 5:30 PM**  
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From the Office of RKA....

September 2018...I hope everyone had a safe and fun Labor Day weekend! It just doesn't seem like the end of the summer, does it? It is that time of the year: back to school, football season, and the beginning of the harvest.

We have been very busy here at the cooperative. Our staff participated in not only the County Fair, but also the State Fair in Douglas. The booth at the State Fair had the Touchstone Energy hot air balloon on display. It seems like it was a great hit! It is because of our membership in Touchstone Energy that we are able to have all of Wyoming's Electric Cooperatives represented at the fair, supporting our rural kids. They are our future leaders.

Our annual audit was presented to, and approved by, our Board of Directors at the August meeting. We received a satisfactory rating again this year. With every audit, one item we always review is internal/dual controls. We are always looking for new procedures and policies to implement that would increase security and controls in every department. These controls are a means of not only protecting the members, but also the employees.

Speaking of security and controls, I attended an accounting conference in August. At this conference, they had various general sessions and workshops, and I attended several involving cyber security, fraud, and e-mail scams. It was truly an "eye opener" with regard to all the incidents going on in the cooperative world wherein employees and members are being scammed.

One thing I want to share with you is e-mail fraud. The "scammers" are sending e-mails with attachments that will harm your computer. They also send "links" to "click on", and upon doing so, you will receive a message stating you must now pay a ransom to get access to your information and documents. **IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE THE E-MAIL CAME FROM, DON'T OPEN IT!** The e-mail can even look like it is coming from a person that you may know and exchange e-mails with. These "scammers" are making bogus e-mail addresses using people you work with or are in contact with. Right now, e-mail fraud and scams are the #1 fraud activity affecting cooperatives and businesses nationwide. If you would like more information in regards to this growing risk, please give me a call and I would be happy to share with you!

As you are aware, the cooperative is not for profit, meaning that at the end of our financial year, if we end up with a positive balance after all expenses are paid, we are required to allocate that positive balance back to you. Later this month, you will be receiving a notice from us advising you of the amount of your allocations for the business year 2017. Remember, this is just a notice of your FUTURE allocations; it is not notification of the amount you will be receiving in 2018 for capital credit retirements. The retirement checks are generated right before the annual meeting.

If you know me well enough, you know that if something is going to happen, it will happen to me. My greatest risk for incidents to take place is at the grocery store. Things like wearing a whole tub of yogurt on the front of my pants; having a stranger ram me with his cart (he thought I was someone else); and my most recent incident involving produce. I was speaking with a member and she was complimenting me about my article, which I so appreciate because sometimes I get writer's block. Anyway, we parted ways and no sooner had I turned around, I knocked a whole container of cherry tomatoes on the ground. She came around the corner and saw me at my best....bent over chasing tomatoes all around the linoleum floor! I am not sure just exactly what she thought at that moment, but "thank you" Ms. Roberta W. for the support!!

Until next month....



**Summer is almost over so it is time for us to switch back to our Winter hours.**

**On October 1, 2018, hours are:  
Monday–Friday  
8:00 am–4:30 pm.**



**GET YOUR PRE-SEASON CHECKUP!**



Southwest Plumbing & Mechanical is offering this service to Wheatland REA members who use Steffes ETS Furnaces and Room Heaters. Time flies! Some of you have had your ETS heating systems a long time. Giving your furnace a tune up may be a good idea.

Southwest's technicians are Steffes factory-trained.

**Call them at 307-322-1595 for details and pricing.**

## How old is your water heater?



**Wheatland REA has 40, and 50 gallon Marathon water heaters in stock. We carry the heating elements and thermostats for them as well.**



Everyone likes a hot bath, even the fuzzy ones.



**Alright, Wheatland REA members, e-billing is here and ready for your use! If you would like to receive notification when your bill is ready to view online, this option is for you. No more waiting for the mail or worrying that you'll miss it because you are out of town. With e-billing, you're notified as soon as the bill is generated! Sign up now and you'll be able to view next month's bill online. To enroll, you can either call our office at 307-322-2125, or you can sign up on our website, at [www.wheatlandrea.com](http://www.wheatlandrea.com).**

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# PLATTE COUNTY FAIR 2018



As always, Wheatland REA enjoyed the Platte County Fair. We had three teams participating in the Businessman's Challenge, and one of the teams placed first! We love to be able to hang out with each other in a fun environment outside of work. Can't wait for next year! Maybe we should try the pig wrestling next year...