

# Watts New

August, 2022

From The Desk Of... Don Smith, Manager

It is HOT! Of course, I don't need to tell you that! Forecast today is over 100° and over 90° for the next two weeks and not much rain in the forecast!

A little trip down memory lane... if you recall a couple of White House administrations ago, in late 2015 the EPA issued their Clean Power Plan (CPP). This plan imposed significant impacts to fossil fuel generation overall and severely impacted Wyoming's economy of fossil fuel extraction. Governor Mead at the time, stated that the CPP impacted 70% of Wyoming's economy. In early 2016, just a few months after the CPP was issued, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a "stay" of the regulations. At that time, a SCOTUS ruling was anticipated no later than 2018. Here we are today, and the ruling has finally come down with the Court saying: It is "not plausible that Congress gave EPA the authority to adopt on its own such a regulatory scheme - a decision of such magnitude and consequence rests with Congress itself, or an agency acting under clear delegation from Congress." While this is a huge win for Wyoming's economy, it has taken a lot of time and money to get there, and significant damage had been done between the time of the issuance of the regulation and the stay by the SCOTUS.



This SCOTUS ruling does not eliminate the threat to fossil fuels however, the states can set up their own regulations that can regulate these emissions. States such as Colorado and New Mexico already have in place regulations that could impact Wyoming. In addition, there is proposed legislation called "Good Neighbor" laws that create ways where neighboring states can control what happens in their neighboring states. The SCOTUS ruling could add more urgency to those folks who would like to be able to reach across the state lines and tell us what is best. We may have won this battle, but the war is far from over.

On another front, there are a few legislators in Wyoming attempting to run some legislation that could have significant impact on your cooperative. Many years ago, the utility territories in Wyoming were created and assigned to the various utilities. Yes, this created territorial monopolies. This was done to ensure that as the utilities spent money on infrastructure, they were able to serve everything in their territory to recoup the money spent. There is good and bad to this concept but overall, it has worked well since the territories were created. We are not free to charge whatever we want; we have to justify our rates to regulatory entities. In the case of Wheatland REA, the regulatory agency is the Board of Directors elected by you. We are also overseen by the Wyoming Public Service Commission to a certain extent.

The legislation being proposed would allow some areas within certified territories to be deregulated where anyone can come in and serve load where we already have infrastructure. They are calling these Deregulated Industrial Zones. This legislation was originally proposed to invite the blockchain industry into Wyoming, however it has been amended to expand to other industries as well. This would be for larger electrical loads. The concept of deregulation has been attempted in other states and, in most instances has failed and ended up driving electrical costs higher for the more permanent residents and industry.

In painting blockchain with a very broad brush... if you have been watching the news on Bitcoin, you have seen the extreme volatility of this aspect of blockchain. Because of this volatility, we are not willing to risk your money to invite these folks in. Not that we wouldn't welcome the load, but we are very careful with YOUR money. We want them to take the risk as they are the ones making the big profits! We also need to make sure we can use the infrastructure we already have in place in ways that will ensure the most economic benefit to you.

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From the office of RKA....

Welcome to August 2022! Where did the summer go? All around me people are getting ready to send their kids off to school, dropping their young adults at college and getting ready for harvest time!

I hope that you got out and enjoyed the Platte County Fair. They had many events take place. Then right after our county fair is the Wyoming State Fair, August 16<sup>th</sup>-August 20<sup>th</sup>. The Wyoming Co-ops will have a booth with all kinds of information, games for the kids, freebies, demonstrations, and much more. If you are at the State Fair, please stop by the co-op booth.

We have just completed our annual audit and will receive the final report this month. A presentation will be made to the board either at this month's board meeting or the September board meeting. If the board approves the audit and findings, then we will proceed with capital credit allocations for the year 2021. In next month's article, I will discuss more about the capital credit allocations and what it means to you as a member.

I had mentioned previously that we are beginning a conversion of our computer system. This task will take a lot of time and energy to achieve. We have already begun the process of downloading a lot of reports, answering a questionnaire on our processes, and had an on-site project team here at the co-op. Our "go to live" date for all the financial side is January 2023 and the "go to live" date for the customer side (billing, capital credits, etc.) is May 2023. As each month goes by, I will try to keep you informed. As we get closer, please be patient with all of us, **especially my office staff** as at certain times they will be training, reviewing, and running two systems at one time. If any of you have been through any type of conversion, you know it is not easy. Thank you for your patience and understanding with us!

In my previous articles, I have spoken about the inflation crisis and how it is not only affecting the cost of materials and supplies but also the availability of supplies. When my Operations Manager comes to me and we have a serious discussion about the lack of availability to find poles (yes, poles), then we do have a serious situation. When we can get our hands on some of the materials and supplies that we need, we unfortunately, are paying a premium price for them. This has forced us as management to look at a rate increase. It is nothing that we, as management, like to do. In fact, it is the worst part of my job. This rate increase will not be effective until fourth quarter of 2022. You will receive a letter from us 30 days in advance of the effective date of the rate increase. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me here at the office or at home.

So, the "serious" fishing is complete because my hubby and son are done with the summer competition fishing tournaments. Now it is time for fun fishing which I am excited for because I get to get back into the boat. When there is "serious" fishing going on, it means total focus and figuring out what baits and lures work and don't work. I am fairly sure I could stay focused!?!?!?

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From the office of RKA.... (Continued from page 3)

The pup is doing well except he is enjoying digging holes way too much. You would think after a couple of disciplinary sessions that he has had, he would stop but a pup is like a child and the attention span is short!!! Our lawn looks like a tee box on a golf course. I am hoping since fishing has calmed down that my hubby can focus on the fire pit that he wants to build. But there is a brief time span as hunting is just around the corner. If anyone would like to assist in the building of the fire pit, please let him know! I believe in teamwork!

Until next month.....



## ETS USERS

On September 1st, the winter schedule begins for on-peak/off-peak hours.

**The On peak hours are:  
12:00 p.m. (noon) until  
10:00 p.m.**

**The Off-Peak hours are:  
10:00 p.m. until  
12:00 p.m. (noon)**

**Additional Off-Peak Hours:  
All day Sunday, Labor Day, Thanksgiving,  
Christmas and New Year's Day**

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We cannot allow other people to come in and serve load in our areas. We will let you know how this goes in the future and we may be calling on you in the future to support our views with your elected officials.

We continue to fight on the various fronts to support your electric cooperative! As always, it is a pleasure to serve you, the wonderful member-owners of Wheatland REA! Please stop in and see us if you have any questions or concerns! Hope you are having a wonderful summer!

## STEFFES Heating Systems

**Electric Thermal Storage (ETS)** is the process of converting off-peak electricity to heat and storing this low cost heat for use in satisfying the comfort requirements of a home or business 24 hours a day. An ETS system contains electric heating elements that lie within special, high density ceramic bricks, which store the heat.

Do you need a new furnace before winter sets in? If so...**CALL US!**

**YOU WILL BE GLAD  
YOU DID!**

You could save as much as 51% over the cost of standard electric heat. Couple ETS with an air-source heat pump and save even more!



**ATTENTION FARMERS:** Any new motors this Year?? Rebates are available. New installations and replacements both qualify. For details, call the office at 322-2125 and ask for Becky. You have 90 days from installation to apply.





# BACK TO SCHOOL

First Day of School is  
August 24th

Be on the look out for  
buses, school zones and  
children walking.



## Dove season starts September 1st Remember...

NEVER SHOOT AT DOVES THAT ARE ON  
THE POWER LINES! Broken wires are  
not only expensive to repair...

**THEY ARE VERY DANGEROUS!**



## HUNTING SEASON IS HERE!

### MEMBER-OWNERS:

We spend a lot of YOUR money maintaining your  
electrical system each year. If you see anybody  
sighting in their rifle on one of our poles, please re-  
port it to the Sheriff's Department and call us.

