

Watts New

June, 2022

From The Desk Of . . . Don Smith, Manager

It is a beautiful spring day outside as I write this! 80 degrees and no breeze! I know, enjoy it while we can!

Lots of things are happening around the REA as we are getting in full swing of construction season. We have been replacing about five miles of line along Slater Road for the last several weeks. This line should be completed very soon, and we will start replacing poles in other areas that are failing. By the time you get this issue of WREN, we will have our tree trimmers here as well as our pole testers. We recently completed the Finnerty Substation at the tank farm near Guernsey to feed a new pumpstation, and we are waiting to hear on the potential of another pumpstation on the north end of the system. In addition, we continue to build new services, all while continuing with the regular maintenance. All of this keeps everyone very busy!

Another project that we recently heard about, which does not directly involve Wheatland REA, but will affect some of our members, is a new transmission line being proposed by Black Hills Energy. This line project is called "Ready Wyoming". This will be a transmission line about 260 miles in length, running from Rapid City to Cheyenne, passing by Glenrock. Black Hills has sent letters to our members along the proposed route. Overall, the construction will start sometime in 2023 (hard to believe that is next year!) and then will be completed in 2025. At this time, we have requested information regarding the proposed route through our area. We are not directly involved in the project but we want to be informed should you be curious. If you have questions on the project, please visit us or give us a call. If we don't have the information, we will do our best to find out what we can!

We continue to deal with supply chain issues. Cost and availability are a nightmare! I don't need to tell you what fuel costs have done and that everything else is following suit. I just heard this morning that, at this time, 40-foot poles, one of our main pole sizes, are not available at this time. We ordered a new digger truck for delivery in late 2021, it was then moved to mid-2022 and we are now told that it will not be delivered until early 2023. This will be more than a year late! It used to be that if a supplier missed a delivery by this much, we would tell them that we would get it somewhere else. We can no longer take such a stand because all suppliers are facing the same issues. While this example is a large truck, it's similar to our equipment and supplies at an increased cost. We are in a period of *you don't get what you need, you don't get it when you need it, and you pay enormously increased costs*. A perfect storm for poor customer service. We are doing our best to stay ahead of these issues; however, it is becoming more difficult!

Unfortunately, these increased costs have put a burden on everything we do, and it has become necessary to look at our rates. Nothing is planned at this time, but we are looking at it. When the need arises to adjust rates, we will keep you informed which will likely be toward the end of the year.

On a positive note, Flag Day is June 14th. This is a very special day to show your love and support of this great nation by flying the flag. I always enjoy seeing the displays of flags around town and feeling the patriotism that abounds in this great state. I love seeing the colors and thank you to everyone that flies their flag!

As always, it is a pleasure to serve the fantastic members of Wheatland REA and work with such a dedicated group of employees that love their jobs and love to serve you. This dedication is a testament to the culture in Wyoming and especially in the counties we serve. Thank you to everyone for letting us serve you. Hope you have a great summer! Let us know if you have any questions.



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From the office of RKA.....

Wow! Springtime of 2022 is here! It is hard to believe that summer is officially just around the corner this month. All the summer activities of gardening, outdoor sports, picnics, and vacations have already begun! Hopefully, our weather will continue to be as good as it has been for us!

That time of the year again when we prepare for the audit. Our audit this year will be in the month of July. We are also beginning a complete hardware/software conversion of our system.

This will be a complete 180 degree change of what we are doing now. All personnel will need to learn a new system and its functionality in each department. This is an exceptionally lengthy process that will not be fully completed until May 2023. So, if you see me with a glazed look on my face, you will know what is causing it.

The summer months are also busy for the linemen. They are working on various capital projects, new services, and upgrades all throughout our territory. We also have tree trimmers and pole testers working in our territory for the summer. As I had mentioned before, both activities are not only safety measures but also help keep the system reliable.

In last month's article, I spoke about the supply chain nationwide and how it is affecting us here at the co-op. Unfortunately, it has not gotten any better and the availability of materials to run our co-op is increasingly getting harder and harder. I am sure that you noticed that your previous month's bill had come in a brown envelope rather than the normal white one that you receive. This is because of the supply chain doldrum. The company that supplies the envelopes for the bills cannot get white paper right now. NO, I am not kidding. This company is the nation's #1 supplier of envelopes, and again, cannot get white paper. I will tell you that this is nationwide as I received an invoice in the mail a couple of weeks ago and it was in a brown envelope also. This conundrum is continuing to affect us here not only budget wise but also the cash flow. We are still seeing a 30%-40% increase in materials and supplies. As management, we try hard to avoid rate increases but it is a conversation that we must have especially during this inflationary period that we are having right now. Of course, we will keep you posted about the increase of rates.

On the family home front, we are staying busy fishing and enjoying the great weather we are having. Before the fishing extravaganza really got heated, my hubby headed to Canada for a week for geese hunting. Fortunately, no new furry friend was brought home this time!!! I am thinking that it was difficult enough to get himself back and forth over the border, let alone a four-legged animal! LOL! But I am loving the pup that was brought home from his last trip. He is fitting in well with the other two!

Until next month....



CALENDAR CONTEST TIME!



It's time for our annual calendar contest for the Wheatland REA 2023 calendar. This year the theme is highlighting Wyoming wildlife. Of course, there are a few rules. The contest is open to REA members only and photos must be captured within our service territory. **Pictures must be 300dpi at 8.5" X 11"**. If your picture is chosen for the calendar cover the prize is a \$25 gift card and for one of the monthly pages, you'll win a \$10 gift card. The contest ends July 22nd. We look forward to seeing your entries! Please send photos as a jpeg to b.condie@wheatlandrea.com.



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FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!!

It's time for the annual fireworks display, brought to you by the Wheatland Volunteer Fire Department (WVFD)! Fireworks sold at the WVFD stand pay for the explosive showcase we all enjoy every 4th of July. It is truly one of the best displays in the region! If you purchase fireworks this year, please buy them at the WVFD stand. The show starts at dusk, at the Platte County Fairgrounds.

Wheatland REA will be closed Monday, July 4th in observance of Independence Day!

(Fireworks stand is located by the Sinclair gas station, on the west side of exit 78)

One-Call of Wyoming
Wyoming 811
 Know what's below.
 Call before you dig.

Before you call us for a locate, you need to call



It is the law!

A wise OLD man (AI) once said, “take care of your heating needs in the summer and your cooling needs in the winter.” Now is a great time to have your home furnace inspected so you are ready when it turns cold again. Call for a list of local HVAC contractors.

