

Watts New

May, 2022

From The Desk Of... Don Smith, Manager

Summer is just around the corner!! Yes, it is hard to believe but we are advancing rapidly through the seasons and heading for warmer weather!

In my last article I mentioned that we were preparing for our Annual Membership meeting and that is now in the rearview mirror! It was great to see everyone in person! Overall, we have heard good reports on our first get together in three years. We certainly had a few hiccups in the new building, and we have discussed changes for next year. Hopefully, we will be able to make the waiting in the registration line a little shorter or at least provide for a little more comfort. We are always looking to improve. Thank you for attending and a big thank you to our staff for all the work they did to prepare for the meeting!

As for happenings at the meeting, we had to say good-bye to Candy Geringer as a Board member. Candy served us for six years and did an excellent job! The first six years can be a steep learning curve for Board members and Candy engaged the learning, taking in lots of information! Thank you Candy, for your service and dedication!

Candy was replaced by Amy Miller. As you may know, Amy is a native of Platte County and comes from a farming and ranching family. Amy certainly has knowledge and experience in the agriculture industry and a financial background, and I am sure she will serve you well as your new Board member! Welcome Amy! We look forward to working with you!

As the weather warms, our line crews are able to get back out in the field and get their line work done. We are in the process of rebuilding a line along Pioneer Road that has lived beyond its useful life. For safety, reliability, and overall service, this line needs upgrading to serve the additional load that has been added in the area.

In the near future, we will have our tree trimming contractor begin work, as well as our contract crews start pole testing and treatment. Our pole test and treat program takes about 10 years to make it through the entire system. The testing part of the program has two main purposes. First purpose is to identify poles that need to be replaced before they fail to prevent a safety hazard. The second purpose is to identify any poles that can be treated to extend their life. The goal of treating the pole is to identify conditions such as rot and then treat it to extend the life of the pole. The average cost of an individual pole replacement can be about \$2,000, and when you have 30,000 poles on the system, this can be an astronomical cost to replace poles that fail prematurely. We look to get around 50 years from a pole so we need to try to get as much life as possible from each and every pole! The test and treat program is one way we preserve the system and make it safer. With this 10-year rotation, we try to see into the future regarding the condition and life of the pole. We do our best!

Both the tree trimming and pole testing programs are done by outside contractors and supervised by REA linemen. If you have any questions or concerns about anyone you see working around our lines, please give the office a call and we will look into it. Many of the lines are on your property and we want to respect your property.

As we go into May and celebrate Memorial Day, please remember that this holiday was established to remember and mourn those military personnel who gave their lives in defense of our freedoms in this great country. Thank you to all who have served and especially to those that gave their all!

As always, it is a pleasure to serve you the wonderful member-owners of Wheatland REA. You don't have to go far from our area to be reminded of why we live and work in this area in the great state of Wyoming! As a colleague who works in another state said, not long ago, "I think Wyoming may be the last sane state in the Union!!" Oh, how true!



**Watts New is a publication of
Wheatland Rural Electric
Association.**

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From the office of RKA....

Happy May Day! May is a busy time for spring sports, graduations, schools and colleges finishing and members in their fields planting. It is also a busy time here for us at the co-op. It seems like once the weather starts getting nicer, our workload continues to grow!

As a reminder, May is also the month that we start our 10-hour days. Beginning May 2nd, our office hours will be Monday-Thursday from 7:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. We are closed on Fridays.

Please remember to call our office telephone number (307-322-2125) for any outage that you may have. I mention this because in different situations that we have had, members have called and apologized for calling their outage in, assuming that someone else had called. We ALWAYS want you to call in no matter what. Sometimes outages may be affecting different areas and there may be different scenarios causing the outages. So, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE CALL!

This time of the year is also when we start getting ready for our annual audit. Even though it is approximately 2 months away, we still have a lot of tasks to complete before the audit begins. One of the major tasks is annual inventory. If you want to see linemen totally cringe, tell them that it is “inventory time.” This is one of the tasks that the linemen are responsible for that absolutely pushes them to the edge. Every material item that is on the vehicles, in the warehouse, and out in the yard must be counted. Of course, it must balance to the inventory sheet, meanwhile we still have open jobs that might have material tickets outstanding. Inventory averages a week in time but could take 2-3 weeks depending upon how “out of balance” it is. So, if you see any linemen running around with the “deer in the headlight look,” you will know why.

Pretty much the talk wherever you go or whoever you talk to is about the inflation of cost for materials and supplies nationwide. It is profoundly affecting our co-op, not only in trying to find materials and supplies that we need, but also the increase in the cost of items needed has been detrimental. In just some approximations, we have experienced 30%-40% increase in price. We are not only feeling the pinch in increase in costs of materials but as you are aware, the gasoline/diesel price is putting a pinch on the budget also. The cost increase overall has caused a lot of extensive budgeting, computing, and reviewing capital projects, and the overall strategic planning in managing cash and cash flow. This is a challenging time for all, and management is working hard to make sure that we keep a safe and reliable system while trying to make it through this unprecedented time.

On the lighter side, my husband and son took some time and went West and fished on the Columbia River. They had a great time fishing for walleye even though it was at night and a bit chilly. So, they go fishing and come home with this....

We must be bored.....LOL

Until next month....

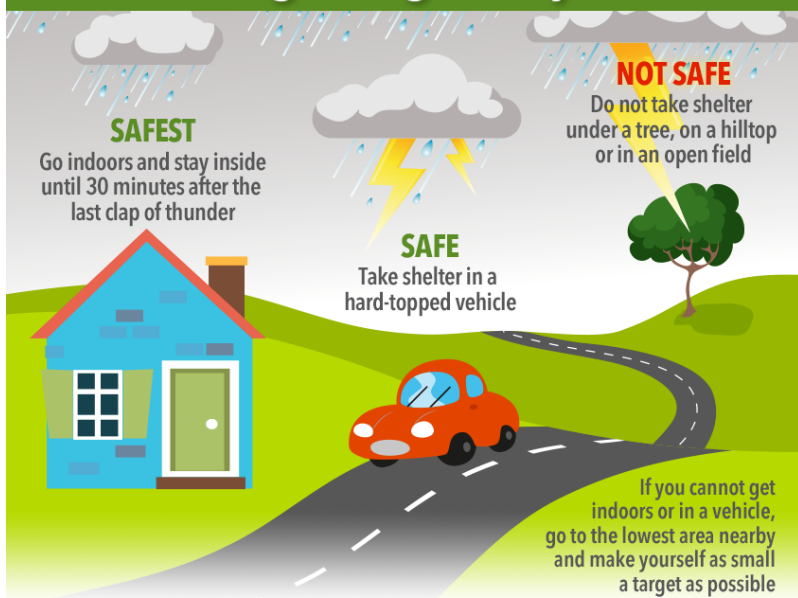


**Just a friendly reminder that summer hours began May 2nd.
7:00 AM to 5:30 PM Monday-Thursday
CLOSED FRIDAY
Lineman work the same hours,
so please schedule work accordingly.**



May Is Electric Safety Month!

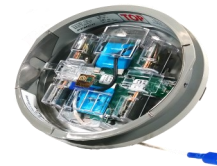
Lightning Safety



Speaking of lightning, "An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure!"

A meter socket surge protector may be the answer to your prayers.

Call the office to find out how to get yours!



ATTENTION ETS USERS:

Summer is a great time to have your electric thermal storage furnace and room heaters serviced. They will be ready to go in September, so give Al or Becky a call for more information.

(307) 322-2125



FYI FOR THIS SUMMER

TREE TRIMMERS: Wright Tree Service will be trimming trees beginning around June 1st. They will be trimming trees in the Chugwater and Wheatland flats areas.



If you see any trees close to the power lines, please call the office at 307-322-2125.

If you live in the areas we are trimming and need wood chips (free), let us know.

POLE TESTERS: INTEC Services will start testing our power poles on or around June 1st. They are testing poles on two circuits out of our Dwyer Substation.



REA will be CLOSED May 31st in observance of Memorial Day! We honor and give thanks to those that serve and have served our country to keep us safe and free!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to the US ARMY!
June 14, 1775

Congratulations!

Oh the places you'll go.....

Good luck to all those graduating. We wish you well whether you are heading to college, trade school or work. Make a positive difference in the world around you!



Electric Safety Drawing Contest 1st Place Winners

Kindergarten: Gavin Reinert

First Grade: Harper Tolle

Second Grade: Riley Britton

Third Grade: Isaac Campas

Fourth Grade: Selby Blankenship (picture shown)

Fifth Grade: Kaden Juarez

Sixth Grade: Ryder Young



**Sponsored by Wheatland REA
and Town of Wheatland**

Thank you to our three high school judges:
Kaylynn Heimsoth, Danielle Hershey, Gavin May

