



April, 2017

Tammy Mills, Editor

From The Desk Of . . . Don Smith, Manager

Well, by the time you get this, another Annual Membership Meeting will have come and gone! At this point I cannot tell you how the meeting went because it hasn't happened yet! I will tell you we are frantically working to get everything in order for the meeting!

Periodically, in my articles, I write about electric cooperatives and the difference, as well as the benefits, of being in a cooperative. This month I would like to talk about Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association (Tri-State) and how we began our relationship with them.

Wheatland REA was first started in 1936 and our first Annual Meeting was in 1937, which makes this our 80th meeting. We were one of the very early rural electric companies in the country. From our origination, until about 1952, we bought our power from the Bureau of Reclamation (Bureau). However, in the early 1950's, the Bureau told the electric co-ops that with the rate of load growth, the Bureau could not guarantee they would have enough power to supply the rural sector past a certain date. Even those customers with long-term contracts were told that the Bureau would not be able to supply their total needs past 1956. This forced the issue, and a "cooperative" was formed. Another motivator was that under

the Bureau contracts, a cooperative had to project how much power it would need and pay for that much power regardless. Then if the cooperative exceeded the projected amount, they were penalized for the excess. In March of 1952, Wheatland REA joined with 14 other co-ops from Wyoming, Nebraska and Colorado to create Tri-State. While we did not have a seat on the original Tri-State Board, Wheatland REA was one of the original Tri-State members. Although there were other issues in the background, these were the main motivators. This consolidated group of 15 cooperatives gave us buying power, borrowing power, and the ability to be more flexible with our supplies. The combined group was more diversified in its load make-up and geographical area, which gave the possibility of lower rates.

The increased numbers made it more advantageous to secure loans to build generation and transmission facilities. As with any of us who need to borrow money for a house, land, or piece of equipment, the bank that loans the money wants some type of security that the borrower will be around and have the income to repay the loan. This security comes through long-term contracts with the Tri-State member co-ops such as Wheatland REA. The first long-term "all requirements" contracts were 35-year contracts signed in 1957. These contracts ensured Tri-State members would buy all of their power from Tri-State and not be tied to the Bureau of Reclamation. Members would also not have to pay for power that they did not use, or be penalized if they used more than projected.

These original contracts have been extended from time to time, as well as modified when appropriate. It is these long-term contracts, and our relationship with Tri-State, that ensure we will have the power we need and not be told, "sorry, in four years we cannot supply the rural sector any longer". Co-ops are typically not high profit areas and are easily overlooked by those looking to gain money for their stakeholders, or those who are looking for the vote from more populated areas. Organizations such as Tri-State are not there for the profits; like Wheatland REA, they are cooperatives. It is because of the "Tri-States" and "Basin Electrics" that we are able to enjoy the quality of life that we do, with modern conveniences, and do not need to read by oil lamps. As you are members-owners of Wheatland REA, Wheatland REA is a member-owner of Tri-State, making you a member-owner of Tri-State as well.

This is only a very brief history of the beginnings of Tri-State and our relationship. If you would like more information on this, or anything else for that matter, please stop in and see us. We are here to serve you! And, as always, it is truly a pleasure to serve you, our member-owners! Thank you!



Watts New is a publication of
Wheatland Rural Electric
Association
P. O. Box 1209
Wheatland, WY 82201
www.wheatlandrea.com
(307) 322-2125
(800) 344-3351

REA WINTER HOURS
Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 4:30 PM

OUTAGES-OPEN 24/7
OUTAGE PHONE NUMBERS
(307) 322-2125
(800) 344-3351
24 hours a day

STAFF

Donald E. Smith
General Manager

Jeff Dirks
Line Superintendent

Rhonda Apodaca
Office Manager

Jason Wright
Asst. Line Superintendent

Al Teel
Member Services

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Robert Brockman 322-2220
President

Britt Wilson 331-8405
Vice President

Jack Finnerty 331-2100
Secretary/Treasurer

Sandra Hbranchak 322-4393
Director

Candy Geringer 307-351-8716
Director

From the Office of RKA.....

April 2017....already into the fourth month of 2017. It really doesn't seem possible. I am hoping that April will bring nice lovely showers without the torrential wind that we had in March. Mother Nature was not showing her best personality in March between the constant wind and the snowstorms that we received. She must not like Wyoming that well!! LOL!

I hope that all of you were able to attend our Annual Meeting and participate in the Wellness Fair. I believe that is so valuable to all of us. I know of several people in the past who had their blood drawn, and from the results, found some critical medical issues that alerted them to take further action. I also hope that you stayed and enjoyed the meal that was provided by the Slater Women's Group and also looked at the vender booths.

At the Annual Meeting, we handed out the capital credit retirement checks for members. If you did not attend, we will mail them on March 16th. If you didn't receive one, it could be for the following reasons: (1) the total amount of your check was under \$20, and we do not issue checks for under that amount; (2) you might not have had service for the years that we paid out; or (3) you were past due over 30 days on your account. The years paid for Wheatland REA were for the remainder of 1998 and 1999, total year of 2000 and partial year of 2001. The years paid for Tri-State were the remainder of 1997, and partial year of 1998. If you still have any questions, please feel free to give the office a call.

April is Lineman's Appreciation Month. I would like to thank my fellow employees, the linemen, for all their hard work and dedication. Without a doubt, their focus is customer service and to get that electricity back on as soon as possible. A couple of weeks ago, I had a member stop me at the courthouse and tell me to thank them for their hard work. The member said he has always been impressed with their focus on the customers. If you see any of the linemen, please tell them "Thanks!"

So, nothing on the home front except that the dogs made it through the winter. There were a couple of incidents that were sketchy at best. Both of them had broken through the ice at the Reservoir, while chasing geese. My hubby was not too thrilled with this, as he ended up having to retrieve them from the water, and he also took a dip in the Reservoir. Fortunately, they all made it out safely. I believe that they are as ready for spring as we all are!!

If you have any questions, you know where to find me!

Until next month....



www.wheatlandrea.com



DON'T FORGET TO SHOP WITH YOUR CO-OP CONNECTIONS CARD!

Shop these fine LOCAL merchants...they give our members discounts!

You must present your "Co-op Connections Discount Card" at the time of purchase!

ARBY'S RESTAURANT-WHEATLAND
ARBY'S RESTAURANT-DOUGLAS
ASH'S SALES & SERVICE
BEAR CREEK ORIGINALS
BEST WESTERN TORCHLIGHT INN
BUFFALO LODGE AND GRILL
CHEYENNE COFFEE COMPANY
CHUGWATER CHILI
CONSOLIDATED MFG ENTERPRISES (CME)
COUNTRY GIRLS EMBROIDERY
DRUBE SUPPLY/HARDWARE HANK
FRENCHMAN VALLEY COOPERATIVE
HOBO'S CLOSETS
HOWSHAR HARDWARE
LARAMIE PEAK MOTORS
MICKE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT
MUREL'S GREAT TREASURES
PICTURE THIS PHOTOGRAPHY
REGISTER CLIFF PHARMACY
ROY'S TREE SERVICE
SHERARD REALTY, INC
SIMPLY CREATIVE
SOUTH STREET PHARMACY
TACO JOHN'S
TEEL GUN WORKS
THE PIE TIN BAKERY AND CATERING
THE SHARP SHOP OF WHEATLAND
WHEATLAND ALTERNATIVE HEALTH CENTER
WHEATLAND COUNTRY STORE
WYOMING PURE NATURAL BEEF
WHEATLAND RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

GRILLING SEASON IS COMING!



It is getting close to "BBQ" season. Is your grill ready to go for the season or do you need a new one? Come in and see Wheatland REA about our Meco Electric Grills.

With the season for grilling, also comes the season for bugs. Don't forget that Wheatland REA has you covered with yellow Bug Light bulbs. They help keep the area insect free.



NATIONAL LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY APRIL 18, 2017



Linemen are truly a rare breed. Our linemen make a living on the electrical lines that power our MEMBERS. So on this day, we ask you to let your linemen know they are appreciated.

www.wheatlandrea.com

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative
The power of human connections®

