

# Watts New

JUNE, 2018

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

By the time you get this article, summer will be just days away. For today, it is a beautiful day; about 60 degrees, blue skies, and no wind! Then, as for our need of moisture, the forecast is evening rain for the next few days. Trees are budding out and fields are greening up; young livestock and wildlife abound. I love this time of year!

I hope everyone had a great Mother's Day and Memorial Day; two very worthwhile days to recognize those who have sacrificed for all of us! Memorial Day recognizes those fallen service members that have given the ultimate sacrifice for us while protecting our country and freedom. I hope we all contemplate what we have, and are thankful to our mothers, and our fallen service members.

As we go into the summer season, please keep an eye out for our young people. These kids have been cooped up over the last nine months and are now running and getting rid of all that youthful energy (oh, to have that energy again!). They are more interested in having fun than watching for traffic. Let's keep an eye out for them!

This is a very busy time for everyone here at the REA. Work has stacked up through the winter when crews could not get into the field, as well as projects for members who need new services connected. We are now able to get out and take care of these projects without tearing up land and equipment. Additionally, the office staff is preparing for our annual financial audit, and the preparation is significant.

It is also time for the annual material inventory. This requires checking and rechecking when and where the material was used. What jobs were completed, which ones are still in progress? What was ordered, what was scrapped? I am extremely impressed with the work the REA staff puts into this audit and the minimum level of corrections that need to be made each year. Over the last few years, the average correction has been in the 0.5% range. When you consider all the pieces and parts that go into this tracking, it is truly a credit to the REA employees! Thanks to everyone involved in this process for taking such good care of the REA!

Another credit for a job well done goes out to Tri-State, which has done a fantastic job with cost containment. As I reported to you recently, Tri-State is not projecting any significant rate increase in the next few years. One of the primary causes of rate increases is adding new generation, which is typically at a much higher cost than the older generation, and the new costs are then spread across to everyone. I recently learned that Tri-State is not anticipating any requirements for new generation until 2026, which will help to reduce upward rate pressures. This is not to say that Tri-State will not watch for new generation that may be cheaper, but they will be able to keep their options open and watch for the "good deals."

Now, this next comment is "the future according to Don". I believe Tri-State is poised for cost containment into the future due to previous decisions and investments. I do not have some magical crystal ball to foresee the future in ultimate clarity, but I believe Tri-State has invested wisely in projects that will pay off in the future. Currently, due to a surplus, power on the wholesale market can be purchased at a relatively low cost. However, in the not so distant future, as coal and nuclear plants shut down, wholesale power costs will see upward pressure. Tri-State has economically viable assets and will be able to minimize increases due to these investments. This is one of the benefits of locking into long-term contracts and working together as a group for the benefit of all. Time may prove me wrong, as this is subject to many outside pressures, not the least of which is political. For now, I will thank Tri-State for making the best decisions they can in the best interest of their member-owners.

As always, it is a pleasure to serve you, the member-owners of Wheatland REA! If we can be of help or if you have any questions, please feel free to give us a call.



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 Wheatland Rural Electric  
 Association  
 2154 South St.  
 Wheatland, WY 82201  
**www.wheatlandrea.com**  
 (307) 322-2125  
 (800) 344-3351  
**Tammy Gonzalez, Editor**

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From the Office of RKA.....

Well, here we are halfway through 2018! So far, summer has been kind to us in the weather department. Hopefully, the rest of the summer will be mild, with no crazy weather taking place.

I hope everyone had a safe and relaxing Memorial Day weekend. As I have said in my articles from previous years, let us not forget the true meaning of Memorial Day. I want to thank all past and present veterans for their service so I can have my freedom!

June is the month of our annual audit. This is especially important to not only us, as management staff, but also to you as members. The annual audit is to ensure that we are keeping accurate records and financial reports. Remember, as a cooperative, all our margins go back to you as capital credits. Once the audit is complete, I will let you know the results.

With regard to capital credits, if you received a capital credit retirement check from us this year, you have until the end of June to cash or deposit the check. At the end of June 2018, all outstanding capital credit checks will be voided. If you have a question about this procedure, please don't hesitate to contact the office.

In the past few months, we have received several telephone calls from members in regards to us coming to their property and locating the underground electrical lines before excavation or planting. Just for informational purposes, you are required to call #811, One-Call of Wyoming, to file a request before you begin. Wyoming state law requires this. Once you file a request, we receive notification from them stating the request was made. We are very diligent in getting out there to complete these requests once we receive them. If you have any questions about this, there is a One-Call of Wyoming web page, or there is information under the Wyoming Department of Transportation's web page.

Last month, I communicated to you about the new availability on the website to set up your payment for a certain date in the future, or to set it up for automatic recurring payments. If you have any questions or need assistance with setting it up, please call the office. We would be happy to help. I also mentioned we are looking at a "smart app" for your phone, and we are continuing to look at digital alerts and reminders. In addition, we are looking at e-bills, wherein instead of waiting to receive your bill in the mail, the system would automatically email it to you.

This month it seems like I have been on the road quite a bit and not getting very much "me time" in. I am hoping to take in some baseball games and continue to increase my time fishing on the lakes. Lee thinks maybe I should take in some fishing derbies and compete with him. Okay, like does he forget the struggle just to get the boat into the water?!?!? LOL! Last year, my son went with us and competed in a fishing derby. At the end of the derby, someone said it looked like we had a fire going on in our boat. We were hustling and bustling, changing lures, releasing snags, etc..... Yep, that's what I want to do again!!! LOL!



Until next month....



# Kids Discovery Day



Clay Becker, Lineman, explains to the kids how their equipment protects them while working.

This was the 2nd Annual Kiwanis Kids Discovery Day. Like last year, it was a well attended. There was a lot of cool equipment and vehicles there for the kids to check out. They really enjoyed being able to get in the equipment and see how it is operated.



LaRon Eller, Receptionist, helps one of our younger members with putting on a lineman's glove.



Al Teel, Member Services, talking to a family about the bucket truck.

## Happy Fathers Day From Wheatland REA!



Chase Gaines, Lineman and daughter, Reese

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