

# Watts New

August, 2019

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

Welcome to August! All I can say about the weather this month is, “hold on!” I hope everyone has been able to endure with minimal damage.

A couple of months ago, I mentioned the happenings in Colorado with their Public Utilities Commission and Tri-State Generation and Transmission. Well, things have accelerated. The Colorado Legislature has said they intend to regulate Tri-State; New Mexico has done this in the past through a protest method. New Mexico and Colorado do not have Wyoming's best interest at heart; they are only interested in what benefits them. The problem with any single state attempting to regulate Tri-State is that Tri-State deals in interstate commerce. This means the product they sell, electricity, is sold across state lines. While I am not a legal scholar, my understanding is that under the constitution of this great country, states cannot regulate interstate commerce. That authority is left to agencies chartered for just that, such as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, or FERC. When states attempt to flex their muscle and exert undue authority, such as this, the only recourse Tri-State has is to file a court action. As with any court action, lots of dollars are spent. Members' dollars. Your dollars, and we are talking lots of dollars! Historically, Tri-State has not been regulated by FERC because their Board of Directors has locally regulated them. This arrangement is no longer good enough for Colorado and New Mexico. Seeing some of the writing on the wall, Tri-State started looking at the possibility of voluntarily moving to FERC. This decision was not taken lightly. A lot of research was done before taking this to the Tri-State Board for a vote. The Board approved the move during the July Board Meeting.



Earlier this month, your Board of Directors met to discuss these issues and see if this is something we would support. The Board decided to support this move and directed me to send a letter reflecting this to Tri-State. While I agree this is what needed to happen, those who know me will understand a letter supporting regulation was difficult for me to write. This is an excerpt from the letter:

*“...While we feel we can better regulate ourselves through our local control, this is no longer an option as some states have made it clear of their intent. Typical of more conservative values, we are generally not supportive of oversight from outside entities. However, given the intent of the states, we support the concept of Tri-State being federally rate-regulated rather than having oversight from the regulators of the individual states...”*

It is too bad it has come to this; however, as another Tri-State member manager said, “This is the best of the worst options.” This move does not get Tri-State away from Colorado altogether, only on the rate issues. However, this is a big one. For those of you that are asking, yes, we have suggested that Tri-State move to Wyoming, but that is for another discussion. We have confidence that Tri-State is negotiating the murky waters of the political environment as best they can, and most importantly, in the best interest of their members. We continue to have a very strong voice from Jack Finnerty on the Tri-State Board, and we support him all we can!

The vote at Tri-State for this move was strong, with only two votes recorded in opposition. There are outside influences that are not happy, and will battle this decision. We will keep you posted as issues move forward.

Hope to see you at the Wyoming State Fair in Douglas from August 13 – 17! As in the past few years, your Wyoming Electric Cooperatives will have a booth with demonstrations and displays. Stop by the booth and say hello! As always, it is a pleasure to serve you!

[www.wheatlandrea.com](http://www.wheatlandrea.com)

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## **REA SUMMER HOURS**

**Monday - Thursday  
7:00 AM - 5:30 PM  
Friday  
CLOSED**

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

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From the office of RKA...

Hello to August 2019! I am sure everyone is busy getting ready for many happenings; Platte County and State Fairs, school, and sending those kids to college. I hope everyone had a fun and safe summer.

The cooperative has been very busy this summer participating in various activities. Along with the Fairs, we were part of the Kiwanis Club "Day of Discovery," First Responder Electric Safety School, held at the Wheatland Fire Training Center, and various other safety demonstrations. If you happen to be at the State Fair in Douglas, please stop by our booth representing Wyoming Co-ops. Cooperatives from around the state will be volunteering during the week at the booth. We will be having instructional demonstrations, and will also be giving out some prizes! Please stop and say, "Hello"!

We have completed our annual audit. Again, I am happy to report that there were no deficiencies of financial concern for the co-op. What that means to you, as a member-owner, is that we are doing our best to provide for your Co-op's financial stability. The audit is very important to you as a member. It also makes the Board of Directors' decisions easier when it comes to deciding every year to pay back capital credits. If you have any questions about the audit, please contact me. I would be happy to sit down with you and discuss it.

I want to talk about our new website, which we transitioned to a couple of months ago. A few members have had difficulty with the new site, and didn't have problems before. If you are having issues, PLEASE contact us. We have an employee that is our technical person. He is our "computer guru", so again, please call us. We don't want you to be frustrated and not be able to use our new site.

If you read Mr. Smith's article this month, he wrote a lot about Tri-State G & T and their "happenings" down there. If you are not aware, Tri-State G & T is the provider of our electricity. Because they are a cooperative, we are a member of Tri-State. If you recall from your capital credits check or allocation notice, you have seen how we break out our capital credit payout and Tri-State's capital credit payout. We pay back to you what we receive in capital credits from them. So, it is very important for us to stay on top of what is happening there. At their July board meeting, the Board of Directors for Tri-State voted to become FERC regulated. The short version of this is that they will have to follow all the guidelines under FERC (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission). Although we all shiver when the federal government gets involved, this will allow Tri-State to be guided by one agency, rather than by 4 states agencies. So, for example, if a member has a problem with Tri-State's rate structure, rather than going to their state's public service commission, they would go straight to the FERC council. All members will be treated the same under any protests, contested decisions, etc..... rather than the state in which they are located. This helps all of us, as members of Tri-State, as the playing field is level.

Fishing has slowed down a bit since the temperature outside has gone up. I think the fish are as lethargic as I am when it comes to the heat. Sorry, not a fan of the hot weather! Our son is back in town. He is enjoying his new job and loves being back in Wyoming. Our daughter is completing her Nursing Degree this month. We are so very proud of her! She has worked very hard. When I talked to her about what she was interested in, she said the trauma area. She said, "Mom, the more trauma, the better." Like ok, where did that come from?!?! I asked her about geriatrics as she really could open her own clinic for her family, and make lots of \$\$\$, but she just shook her head and walked away.... I tried. LOL!

Until next month...



**Dove season starts  
September 1, 2019.**

**Remember...**

**NEVER SHOOT DOVES OFF POWER LINES!**  
**Broken wires are not only expensive...  
THEY ARE VERY DANGEROUS!**

**Don't shoot toward a power line!  
Good hunting is being safe!**

# **STEFFES**

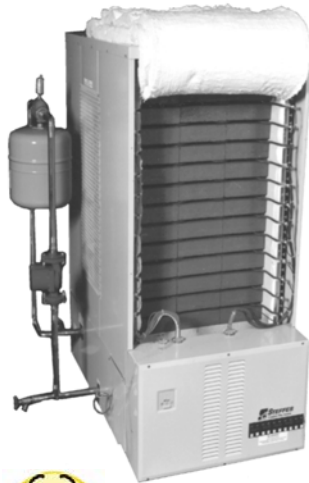
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**Electric Thermal Storage (ETS)** is the process of converting off-peak electricity to heat and storing this low cost heat for use in satisfying the comfort requirements of a home or business 24 hours a day. An ETS system contains electric heating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

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**YOUR PHONE  
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**WE  
NEED IT!**

*We must be able to call you concerning electric problems, like outages!*

**OUTAGE CALLS: 307-322-2125**

**DO NOT REPORT OUTAGES ON THE "CONTACT US" PAGE OF THE WHEATLAND REA WEBSITE!  
IT IS NOT MONITORED 24/7.**



**IF WE AREN'T AWARE OF YOUR OUTAGE, YOU COULD STILL BE WITHOUT POWER AFTER WE HAVE RETURNED POWER TO THE REST OF OUR MEMBER-OWNERS.**

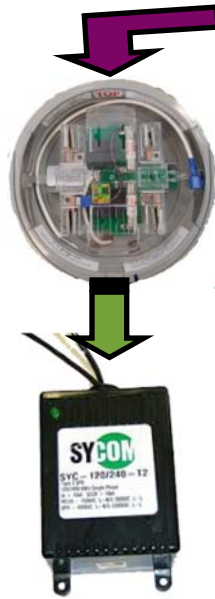
 **@WheatlandREA**

**IT HELPS TO KNOW YOUR LOCATION NUMBER!**

You can find your location number at the top of your bill, on the right hand side. It is the pole (location) number for your electric service. This one is: 8E-11-2. If you give your pole number to the call center, the linemen will find you much quicker when your power is out.



**Also...BEFORE CALLING**, please check your breakers in your home and the breaker under your meter. Doing this could save you a costly service call in the middle of the night. If these breakers are tripped, it usually indicates a problem with your wire or equipment.



Do you lease a meter socket or a direct-wired surge protector? It is hard to remember to do this, but you should check the indicator light (or lights) on the outside of your surge protector at least once per month, or after every thunderstorm. If the lights are on, your surge protector is working properly.

If a light (or lights) is out, it needs to be replaced because it clamped-down on a surge and protected your appliances. **You must have additional protection for your other items such as computers, TVs, game consoles, etc.** If any of the lights are out, call us and we will replace it.

**No lights equal no protection!**



# ETS Users

(Electric Thermal Storage Furnaces)

On September 1, 2019 the winter schedule of on-peak/off-peak hours begin. These hours are in effect until December 31, 2019.

If we receive no changes from Tri-State, we will continue until April 30, 2020.

**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)

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