



It is cold out there folks! Yep, subzero highs over the weekend! This little cold spell has people scrambling, and the power industry is no different. Fortunately, Wheatland REA has come through unscathed, thus far. Now that I have said that, we will most likely have issues! Tri-State has also done fairly well through this event although it has shown some chinks in the armor. More on the weather impact later.

I am hopeful you will get this insert prior our Annual Membership Meeting on March 17<sup>th</sup>. It will be a different type of meeting, due to having to plan around restrictions, and not knowing what we will have in a month. Registration starts at 9:00 a.m. at the Platte County Fairgrounds. We will not have the usual Health Fair at this meeting, but we will be handing out vouchers for the Health Fair to be held in June. These vouchers will only be available to those who register for the Annual Membership Meeting. I hope you are able to come and see all the work your great REA staff has put into planning the event!

On to the weather. As I said, thankfully, Wheatland REA has not seen any issues due to this cold weather! However, the large transmission and generation grid covering the western U.S. has seen some limitations. Overall, Tri-State's system has handled the load pretty well, with some positives and some negatives. On the positive side, Tri-State's transmission lines have stayed solid, with no unplanned outages that I am aware of. Another positive is their thermal generation, including those units run by coal. For the most part, those units ran without issue. A very large positive is that Tri-State's combustion turbine gas plants were designed to run on either natural gas or fuel oil, so when the price of natural gas went sky high these last several days, Tri-State was able to switch over to fuel oil as a lower cost alternative fuel at the time. This flexibility can be critical at times like these!



Gas can be somewhat limited, both in production and flow, through the lines. When there are sustained cold temperatures, as with this weather, a strain is placed on the gas infrastructure when residential homes are using it heavily for their own heating. This residential use, in turn, limits available supply to power plants and other industrial users, and drives the price to extreme levels. In this case, gas which normally sells for around \$3, was selling for \$300. A classic example of supply and demand! This is why Tri-State's alternative fuel planning was great! Coal plants are not necessarily subject to this type of price fluctuation because they maintain huge supplies of coal on-site and aren't affected as much by disruptions in supply infrastructure.

A weakness that showed up across the grid was with the renewable energy sources. The cold and snow caused the wind turbine blades to ice up, forcing those turbines to be shut down. I am not sure of the total amount across the grid, but of Tri-State's 500MW of contracted wind energy, at one point only 2MW were operational. While the hydropower that Tri-State purchases did perform well during the height of the weather event, the great majority of the power generated was from the coal and gas generators. This definitely shows a weakness in the ability to rely only on renewable sources, with their existing technology.

Some may have the question of utility scale batteries and how they could have been used during this event. With current technology, batteries are not capable of releasing sufficient energy for long periods of time in order to sustain the electric demand during sub-zero temperatures over extended periods. In addition, battery performance is typically reduced during extreme cold. It would be difficult to rely on such technology, when literally, your life may depend on it. The utility industry, including Tri-State, is exploring options for alternative types of energy storage that could help maintain power in greater amounts over longer periods.

We are grateful to Tri-State for the past planning that went into providing us with a solid system during this weather. We are also very grateful to all the employees, especially those at Wheatland REA, who keep an eye on the systems to ensure we are able to maintain a reliable power system!

**See Don on page 3.**

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From the desk of RKA...

March is already here, and 2021 is flying by! That means we are that much closer to spring!

March is also the time of the year when we hold our annual meeting. This year it is the Combined 83<sup>rd</sup> & 84<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to hold our meeting last year. This year's Annual Meeting is March 17, 2021 at the Platte County 4-H grounds. We are doing the meeting a little bit differently, as we are having a drive up/car setting. You will still register and vote, but this year you will stay in your vehicle.

Because we are not having our regular-type meeting, like in previous years, we will be having the Annual Wellness Fair on Wednesday, June 16, 2021. The REA will be giving out vouchers for you to use at the Wellness Fair to get the basic blood panel done at no cost to you. Upon registering for the Annual Meeting, vouchers will be given to the member and their spouse or significant other. You must register at the meeting to obtain a voucher for the blood draw, as they will not be available any other way.

At the Annual Meeting, we will be handing out capital credit retirement checks. The REA, is paying the remaining margins for the year of 2004, and for the partial year of 2005. From our G & T, Tri-State, we are paying the remainder for 2002, and the partial year of 2003. Any capital credit checks that are not picked up at the meeting will be mailed to you. If you have any questions about capital credits, please give us a call!

The first quarter at the REA has been tremendously busy. We are still doing our best to keep up with the ever-changing pandemic. We still receive numerous e-mails, articles, etc. on a daily basis. Every day we adjust our daily tasks to what is taking place with COVID-19. This seems to be the "new norm" for a while. All employees are doing their best to maintain the high level of customer service we have set for this co-op. If you have a situation or problem which we have not answered or resolved for you, please give me a call. I would be more than happy to research it for you.

Well, hunting for geese is over and now it's time to move on. We are looking forward to the fishing season which is right around the corner. Last year, our fishing trip to Canada got cancelled, but I am keeping my fingers crossed that there may be a possibility to go this year! The patio is finished, and now the hubby is working on some "thing-a-ma-jig" to use as a heater. I picked out some cool firepits, but he is not on board. So, I am NOT holding my breath to see what exactly is going to keep us warm on those chilly nights. I am afraid it might be just a fancy space heater!! LOL!! We are also trying to put up a new fence for the dogs, and working on a small shed, but again, we are not on the same page. Maybe I will just continue to work, and he can continue coming up with cool ideas for the house.

Until next month, stay safe and healthy!!!



**Lee's thing-a-ma-jig, patent pending.**



**Don, Continued from page 1.**

If you would like more details on this cold weather event, please give me a call. I am sure you saw some news about Texas and other parts of the country with rolling blackouts and various problems. I am happy to discuss what I know about it with you .

As always, it is a pleasure to serve you the wonderful member-owners of Wheatland REA! During times like we have experienced this past year, I am truly grateful to live and work in this area with such great people around! If you have any other questions, please feel free to stop in and chat. Hope to see you at the Annual Meeting!

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### IT'S SPRING!

That means it is time to pick up and clean up after a long, cold, and windy Wyoming winter.

\*\*\*Remember\*\*\*

### CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!

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### ...DO YOU KNOW...

The 30/30 rule?

When lightning is 30 seconds away (six miles), seek **SUBSTANTIAL SHELTER**. Stay there for 30 minutes after you hear the last clap of thunder.

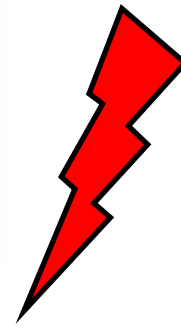
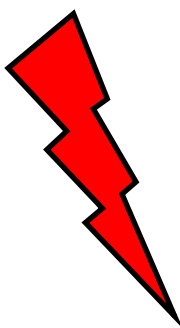
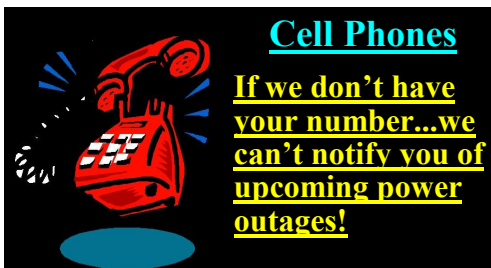
### BOTTOM LINE?

If you hear the thunder,  
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