

April 2013

HIGHLIGHTS

From Big Horn Rural Electric Company

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Your cooperative is a proud member of
WREA
Western Rural Electric Association



Thank you!

Big Horn would like to extend thanks to our members for making our 74th Annual Meeting a success. We appreciate the time that each member took to attend. Annual Meeting pictures and prizewinners are on the web at www.bighornrea.com.

Inside...

Time to Burn	3
Planning a New Service.....	3
Important Information for Irrigators	3
Co-op Connections ..	4
Tip of the Month.....	4

74th Annual Meeting

Big Horn Rural Electric Company held its 74th Annual Meeting on March 9.

More than 350 people - including 198 members and their friends and neighbors - came together on a spring day at the Greybull High School Gym which had been decorated with bright flowers and green and purple table settings.

Students from the Lovell FFA chapter joined the children and grandchildren of REA employees to serve beverages to the members and pass out information to the tables.

The business meeting began promptly at 11 a.m. with reports from Board President Thomas Delaney, Treasurer Don Russell and Manager Jeff Umphlett.

The co-op had a very good year with strong earnings, Russell said. Nearly 47% of the co-op's power sales come from five large power customers in the oil and gas and minerals sectors. Residential and commercial customers comprise another 47% of sales with irrigation sales making up the final 6%. Russell noted that based on Big Horn's current financial position, the Board authorized the refund of capital credits for those member/owners who received service from 1978-1981 in the amount of

\$675,000.

The Board spent a great deal of time in 2012 reviewing the 4.8% wholesale power cost increase from our power supplier, Tri-State Generation and Transmission, President Tom Delaney said. Each rate class had an adjustment to their rates effective January 1, 2013.

Big Horn REA spends 72% of its revenue on the purchase of power from Tri-State Generation and Transmission. Other expenditures are dedicated to maintenance and operations, improvements to the system, insurance and administration, member service and capital credits paid to members. President Delaney emphasized that the Board and employees are conscientious about controlling costs and performing their jobs effectively and efficiently.

President Delaney also stressed that the company is committed to keeping the lights on. Big Horn REA members were out of power for less time than the state-wide average. In fact, of the 8,760 hours available in 2012, Big Horn members received quality power for 8,757 hours. This translates to a 99.97% service availability.

During his report, Manager Jeff Umphlett thanked the membership

continued on page 2

continued from page 1



Above: Members take their best guess at the “Counting Change” challenge at the Operation Roundup booth.

for their support and commented on the co-op’s mission and its impressive safety record. Umphlett recognized the employees of Big Horn REA who were in attendance and expressed appreciation for their dedicated work for the cooperative.

Tom Delaney ran unopposed for his seat representing District 2 and will serve another three-year term and John Joyce was unopposed for his seat in District 3 and will also serve another three-year term.

Shawn Taylor, Executive Director of the Wyoming Rural Electric Association, offered an update on the recent session

Annual Meeting photos taken by Nathan Oster.

Below: Big Horn members were treated to some fun at the Basin Electric booth, as representative Michael Riedman had a Segway with him.



Above: Members enjoyed a delicious roast beef meal.



Above: President Delaney and Manager Umphlett answer a question from the membership.

of the Wyoming Legislature, which he said produced no legislation that related directly to co-ops. Taylor shared that as a whole, co-op members need to get more involved at the National level in order to make our voices heard in issues such as the “war on coal”.

Time to Burn

It's that time of year again when all across Big Horn's service territory, members are preparing for spring planting. Burning fields and ditches is a common method used by many of our members to clear off the debris and weeds.

Big Horn would like to remind you to please use caution when burning around poles. Power poles are treated with a protective coating that prevents moisture from entering the core of the pole and causing deterioration. If a pole is scorched or blackened, the protective coating is

damaged. What might appear as just a slight burn or discoloration to the pole is in fact generally damage to the pole. This significantly shortens the life of a power pole and can lead to the pole becoming unstable and creating a hazard and/or an outage.

Fire damage to poles can be very expensive for Big Horn and its members. Depending upon the type of pole and the hardware that it carries, **several thousand dollars can be involved in replacing even one pole.** In order to recover these expenses, Big Horn Rural Electric will bill and require the party responsible to

pay the costs for replacing the pole and the related charges.

It is much cheaper to prevent a pole from catching fire than to pay for a new one.



Outstanding Capital Credits

Big Horn Rural Electric Company maintains a list of members who had capital credit checks mailed to them in 2011 but did not cash them. In most cases, the checks have been returned by the postal service because it could not locate the members at the addresses on file.

If you received electrical service from Big Horn REA any time during the years of

1976-1979 and you did not receive a check in 2011, a list of members who have outstanding checks may be found on our website at www.bighornrea.com. If you do not have access to the internet, you may call our office at (800)564-2419. Please keep in mind that the capital credit amounts are not necessarily large. However, we desire to get the money due to those who earned it, and clear up our records.

Planning a New Service?

If you are planning a new service - new home, grain dryer, irrigation, etc. - you should call Big Horn REA early in the planning. We can help you with the process and ensure that you have the power you need. There are many factors to be considered when adding something that uses electricity. Does a larger transformer or service need to be installed? Is there clearance? When will you need the electricity? Is Big Horn's system capable of handling the prospective load?

Big Horn's Line Superintendent, Jeff Stocklin, adds, "We want our members to be aware that there is certain information we will need before building a new service, or upgrading an existing service. We will need to know what type of service it will be. If it's for a residence, how large of service will you need? We want to make sure to size the service correctly. Some homes need a 100 amp service. Other, larger homes or those with all electric heat may need a 200 amp or even a 320 amp or 400 amp service. If the service is for grain dryers or irrigation we will need to know what motor size or total horse power. We'll need to know if it will be 240 or 480 volt and if it needs to be single phase or three phase. Also, we'll need to know how much you plan on operating the service so we

can match the size of service to the load on the system."

Planning for a new service varies by the size of the project. "The larger the project, the more lead time we will need before we can start building," says Stocklin. "The larger projects normally involve ordering materials, which can take time. Also, our members need to be aware that new services often require right-of-way easements, whether it be from a neighbor or BLM or the Forest Service. These easements can be very time consuming."

Big Horn REA has a very large service territory. Our crews are very busy throughout the year, building new services, upgrading existing services, building and maintaining lines, repairing outages, etc. We need at least two weeks lead time in order to schedule our work crews to build new services. We are not able to send crews to build the new service at a moment's notice, but we will do our best to get your project scheduled in the shortest time frame allowable. "Some projects need only a day or two of lead time, others need several months. We want to serve our members to the best of our abilities, but in order to do this, we will need a little help from you," shares Stocklin, "Big Horn is here to help. Help us help you."

Important Information for Irrigators

Energy Credits

Big Horn Rural Electric Company would like to inform our members that we give rebates for electric motors that meet the required efficiency standards. You can receive up to \$16 per horsepower for an energy efficient electric motor. If the electric motor is used to replace a fossil-fueled engine or is a new installation, you can receive an additional \$1.50 per horsepower for wiring assistance. An energy credit application must be completed and an invoice or bill of sale is required. The rebate must be applied for within 180 days of installation. For more information, contact the Basin office at 568-2419 or 800-564-2419.

2013 Irrigation Instruction Form

If you have not mailed in your 2013 Irrigation Instruction Form, Big Horn needs this information as soon as possible. If the form is not returned, we will assume that you do not want the irrigation service energized. A minimum charge will be billed on all irrigation services in place whether they are energized or not. The non-use minimum is the greater of \$19.00 per horsepower or \$200.00 which will be billed in May - you will receive this bill the first part of June.



**CO-OP
Connections
Local
Discount**



Big Horn REA is pleased to announce that we have secured our another local discount for those members using their Co-op Connections cards.

A great big thank you to :



DAVID'S CANDY SHOP

212 S 4TH ST
BASIN, WYOMING

**A candy store specializing in bulk candy for gifts & decorating.
We give old-fashioned, personalized service. Just come to our
counter and make your request!**

**Present your Co-op Connections card at time of services to receive
10% OFF ANY PURCHASE**

If you own a business and would like to join the Co-op Connections program as a local vendor, please contact Sheila at Big Horn REA, 307-568-2419. Please encourage those businesses you use the most to join our program!



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Keep energy efficiency in mind as the ground thaws and you plan spring landscaping. Properly selected and planted trees, shrubs, and bushes can create a wind break that lowers home heating bills in the winter and insulates your home year-round. Before you start, check on the right plants and techniques for your climate at EnergySavers.gov.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

HIGHLIGHTS

is an official publication of
**BIG HORN RURAL
ELECTRIC COMPANY**



Touchstone Energy®

Box 270 VOLUME 34 NO. 3
Basin, WY 82410 (307) 568-2419
FAX 307-568-2402 1-800-564-2419
bhrec@bighornrea.com
www.bighornrea.com

MANAGER: Jeff Umphlett
jeff@bighornrea.com

Board of Directors

Tom Delaney President
Greybull • 765-4732
tomdelaney@bighornrea.com

Kathy Gilbreath Vice President
Meeteetse • 868-2261
kathygilbreath@bighornrea.com

John Joyce Secretary
Manderson • 568-2514
njoyce@tctwest.net

Don Russell Treasurer
Basin • 568-2019
donrussell@tctwest.net

Charles Monk Ass't. Secretary
Lovell • 548-6686
charliemonk@bighornrea.com

Staff and Crew

Warren Adams Fred Sherburne
John Balch Gael Sosa
Todd Herman Jeff Stocklin
Carrie Hunt Ron Tilley
Sheila Kampbell Kendal Wambeke
Floyd Mitchell Colton Whisonant
Bill Phillips

For Outages or Trouble
Call the office number: **ANYTIME**
(307) 568-2419 or 1-800-564-2419
After 5 p.m., weekends and holidays
all calls will be answered by our professional answering service, who will contact the appropriate person(s).