

August 2012

HIGHLIGHTS

From Big Horn Rural Electric Company

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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



Beware of Bill Payment Scam

As electric bills rise because of summer temperatures, a handful of consumer-members at electric cooperatives have fallen prey to a coast-to-coast telemarketing scam offering bogus help with energy bills.

Telemarketers are telling consumers that President Obama will pay their electric bills if they provide personal information.

Big Horn REA would like to warn our members about the scam in which residents are told that President Obama will help pay energy bills under a special federal program if they provide personal information, such as a bank routing number or their Social Security number.

Big Horn urges our members to guard their personal accounting and banking information and never share this information with family,

friends or strangers. Though many people wouldn't think of providing personal information to strangers on the phone, the scammer's pitch may be more persuasive than you think, especially if they already know the name of your utility company.

Better Business Bureaus in several states also have issued consumer warnings, as well as attorneys general in Mississippi, North Carolina, Arizona and elsewhere.

If you're suspicious of someone who calls you and claims to represent Big Horn REA, hang up on the caller and give us a call so you know we are on the other end of the line. "If you're ever in doubt, give us a phone call as soon as possible," says Manager Jeff Umphlett.

Please be aware that if a deal sounds too good to be true, it probably is.



Big Horn REA will be closed Monday, Sept 3, 2012 in honor of Labor Day

2012 Upcoming Events:

- July 29 - August 5
Big Horn Co. Fair, Basin
- July 30 - August 4
Washakie Co. Fair, Worland
- August 9 - 11
Hyart Film Festival, Lovell
- August 10
Big Horn County Relay for Life, Lovell
- August 10-12
Nowoodstock, Ten Sleep
- August 11-18
Wyoming State Fair, Douglas - 100th Anniversary
- August 17-18
8th Annual Pepsi Wyoming State BBQ Championship & Bluegrass Festival, Worland
- August 17-19
Wings & Wheels Air Show, Powell
- Sept. 1 - 3
Meeteetse 100th Annual Labor Day Celebration

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Hot, Dry Summer Means Extra Caution

With seemingly no end in sight to our hot, dry summer, Big Horn REA would like to remind our members that your safety is of the utmost importance to us. Hot, dry conditions make the threat of wildfires more of a concern, as we have seen in Wyoming and our surrounding states. Summer thunderstorms bring with them lightning and wind that can easily cause outages and fires. We will do everything in our power to prevent our equipment from causing any unforeseen issues such as outages and wildfires, but sometimes Mother Nature has other ideas.



Big Horn REA is asking for your help in keeping our power lines clear of anything that may cause issues. We may be asking you to allow us to trim or remove trees that are near our lines. We ask that you keep equipment, hay stacks, grain bins, etc. away from our lines. If you see something – tree branches, balloons, equipment – in our lines, please call the office as soon as possible so our linemen may correct the issue.

Electric utilities like Big Horn must manage vegetation around power lines for a multitude of reasons. Vegetation is one of the leading causes of outages on both distribution and transmission systems. Outages lead to increased costs, decreased revenues and dissatisfied members.

In addition, tree and power

line conflicts and downed power lines pose serious safety issues for both co-op employees and members. There are also issues regarding wild fires caused by tree and power line conflicts. These types of

fires create serious liability issues for the utility.

Finally, increasing regulations regarding vegetation around power lines have made compliance a primary reason to manage vegetation. The public, regulators and lawmakers have increased expectations of utilities regarding the prevention of future tree and power line related incidents.

In this regard, Big Horn REA will err on the side of safety. You may find that an outage will take longer to repair than you are used to. Due to this strict liability, and the increased risk of fire, Big Horn will be patrolling the whole section of



line before putting the power back on. Also, for those members on the mountain, after an outage, Big Horn will put the line on “one-shot” which will cause the line to go out if there is any form of problem where as normally you may just notice a bump. We would rather have you be out of power for a bit longer than have a spark from a tree branch laying on a power line cause a fire that destroys your property.

We appreciate your understanding if outages take a little longer, or if we are being overly cautious, but by working together we will hopefully get through the summer unscathed.



Outage Reporting

Big Horn does its best to provide excellent service and reliable power to our members. There are times, however, when your service may be interrupted due to unforeseen circumstances such as: weather, animals, trees or unknown causes. Some outages are “public caused” by car accidents, equipment in our lines or lines that are dug into.

The following procedures will be helpful to you should you experience an outage.

- First, check all the breakers in your home and out at the meter pole in your yard. These breakers may trip due to overloading or for unknown reasons sometimes. These breakers are considered “past the meter” or on the member’s side and employees of Big Horn are not allowed to work on the member’s side of the meter.
- If you find all your breakers are on, please contact your neighbor or look to see if you can tell if they have power. This will help the linemen decide if they have an individual outage or a larger line outage.
- Next call 568-2419 or 1-800-564-2419 anytime day or night, and report your outage. Please have the following information available:
 - o Your name and account number,
 - o Phone number,
 - o Service address,
 - o Time when power went out, and
 - o The cause of the outage if known.

We ask you to call and report the outage, even if you think someone

else may have already. This will give us a better idea of the area we have out of power, and will get the lights on faster. Big Horn is charged a flat rate by our after hours answering service and they also welcome all your calls.

Members that have service on the mountain may experience longer outages than normal, as it takes longer for the crews to patrol the line and locate the problem. Many times the linemen will have to walk into the forest to clear the trees from the line with chainsaws. We will make every effort to restore the power as quick as possible though. However, safety of our members and employees is paramount.

We appreciate the patience of our members and apologize for any inconveniences during these times.

Make School Days — Safe Days

Fresh haircuts, new clothes, and backpacks stuffed with markers, pencils and binders; everything a child needs to start a new school year. As millions of students return to school this fall, teachers will plan their school supply list, and parents will carefully make sure their child is prepared with each and every item. Safety also should be on every teacher and student’s back-to-school list.

Big Horn REA wishes each of our students a healthy, happy and safe school year! First Day of School is:

Basin:

Tuesday, August 21st

Burlington:

Wednesday, August 22nd

Cody:

Tuesday, August 21st

Greybull:

Tuesday, August 21st

Lovell:

Tuesday, August 28th

Meeteetse:

Monday, August 20th

Powell:

Thursday, August 23rd

Rocky Mountain:

Wednesday, August 22nd

Ten Sleep:

Thursday, August 23rd

Thermopolis:

Thursday, August 23rd

Worland:

Thursday, August 23rd

DISTRICT MEETINGS

We have had great attendance at the meetings held so far in Meeteetse and Hyattville. Thank you to all who have turned out! One of the benefits of belonging to a cooperative is local access to the Board of Directors that you have elected.

There are two meetings remaining. In August the meeting will be held at the Burlington Fire Hall on August 29th, and in September the meeting will be held at Shell Hall on September 26th. Look for the invite in your mailbox.

Lunch will be served from 11:30a.m. to 12:30p.m. The meeting will be held from 12:30pm to 1:00pm. Two \$75 bill credits will be drawn for from members in attendance.

We encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to visit with your board members.

CO-OP Connections Local Discount

ANNOUNCING

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

A great big thank you to :



MIDWAY CLINIC

388 US HWY 20 SOUTH
BASIN, WYOMING

Present your Co-op Connections card at time of services to receive a **5% discount** on all clinic level visits. Receive an **additional 5% discount** if you pay at the time services are rendered.

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

Look to your windows for energy savings. Use weather stripping on old windows, and, if you can, add storm windows. In hot climates, add solar film screening to west-facing windows to catch heat. For new units, consider double-glazed panes; in cold climates, "low-e" coatings on glass can help reduce heat loss. Find more ways to save at TogetherWeSave.com.

Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

HIGHLIGHTS

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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).