

February 2012

# HIGHLIGHTS

From Big Horn Rural Electric Company

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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



## Manager's Message

The year of 2012 marks the 75th year of business for Big Horn Rural Electric Company. Big Horn REA began in 1937 for the purpose of providing the electric energy needs of the people that it served. Big Horn REA was incorporated as a cooperative - a business organization owned and controlled equally by the people who its serves for their mutual benefit.

Big Horn is still providing the electric needs whether they are for a residential, oil field, or agriculture type service. The mission of

Big Horn has not changed since the connection of the first electric service. That mission is to enhance the quality of life by providing safe, reliable, and competitively priced electric energy. In the hurried pace of life and events, the value of electricity is sometimes forgotten. Try to imagine what it would be like to not have the power available at the "flip of a switch". Whether it be for simply turning on a light bulb, running a corn bin dryer, or an oil field pumping station, the availability of electric power is invaluable.

As a cooperative, the employees and board of directors of Big Horn REA place a high value on providing quality customer service to our members. Big Horn is in business to serve our members.

Every member is invited to attend your upcoming annual meeting on March 10, 2012. This is your opportunity to take part in the decisions that affect your company by electing a board member and being informed of the business activities. Please make plans to be involved and attend your cooperative's annual meeting.

## Annual Meeting Plans Underway

Every year, Big Horn's board members, employees and Annual Meeting committee members strive to bring our members an informative and interesting meeting. The plans for the annual meeting to be held on March 10, 2012, which will be Big Horn's 75th Anniversary celebration, are

no exception! Within a month after last year's annual meeting, the Advisory Committee met and reviewed the survey comments regarding that meeting. All the comments were reviewed and the positive items as well as the negative were evaluated. The Committee has since met two more times

and put together the plans for the Annual Meeting, which we hope will be our best yet!

We feel that this year's annual meeting will again provide a great opportunity for you to become informed and take an active role in your cooperative. You will also be able to visit with friends and neighbors, view displays, receive registration gifts and much more!

The Nominating Committee has placed two names in nomination for the Director seat for Directorate District #5 which includes the Lovell, Cowley, Deaver and

continued on page 3

### Inside...

<b>75th Anniversary.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Electricity is Still a Good Value.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Energy Tip of the Month .....</b>	<b>4</b>

# ANNUAL MEETING 75TH Anniversary

**B**ig Horn Rural Electric Company has proudly served its members for 75 years! Since it was first incorporated on April 2, 1937, Big Horn has operated under the Seven Cooperative Principles. These principles ensure that our members have a say in the cooperative's business by electing a board of directors from among the members. They provide a way for our members to invest in and improve their system while also giving them an opportunity to share in the profits of the cooperative. The business

area. We have a local office in Basin with outposts in Lovell and Ten Sleep. We work with other businesses in the community to keep the Big Horn Basin economically strong.

The first concept of Big Horn REA was planted in 1935 at a summer picnic sponsored by the County Farm Bureau and held on the Davis Ranch east of Greybull, Wyoming. Ranchers, farmers and their families in attendance listened to Big Horn County Agent, K.E. Van Wagenen, explain how much easier their lives would be with electricity. Several communities were being separately canvassed to determine the interest in bringing electricity to the area. The Washington Office recommended combining efforts

the line and turning on the lights to 225 family farms in the Greybull Valley and Emblem Bench area. It was just 352 days from the date the first loan was granted.

Big Horn's system continued to expand and now provides electricity to 3,400 services in Big Horn, Park, Washakie, Johnson and Sheridan Counties in Wyoming; and Carbon and Big Horn Counties in Montana.

Big Horn REA was created to provide power to its members at the lowest cost consistent with good business practices. Although tools, equipment and technology have advanced, the principles on which we were founded are just as strong today as the day we began business in 1937.

Please join us Saturday, March 10, 2012 at our Annual Meeting where we will celebrate our 75 years in business. It will be your opportunity to hear how much has changed in those 75 years, elect a board member for District 5 (Lovell, Cowley, Frannie, Deaver areas), have a wonderful lunch, have the chance to win a door prize or the \$750 Grand Prize and visit with your friends and neighbors! Be sure to read this newsletter next month to read the candidate profiles, and check your mailbox for your Annual Meeting invite!



of the cooperative is handled by local board members and employees that live in and are familiar with the

of Incorporation on April 2, 1937. At 5:45 p.m., February 1, 1938 M.M. Roush threw the switch energizing

# Electricity Is Still a Good Value

**E**lectricity. We use it every day, and in today's technological world, we could barely function without it. While the price of everything seems to be increasing, including your electric bill, we believe it is still a great value for the money.

Did you know that through the years, the price of electricity has remained an outstanding value especially compared to the rising prices of related commodities? According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the cost of electricity has increased just 3.5 percent over the last ten years.

We work diligently to provide for your power needs at the lowest possible costs. Because we are

a non-profit electric cooperative, we sell electricity at the lowest cost consistent with good business practices. Though factors – such as rising fuel prices – are often beyond our control, we work to manage expenses to keep our members' bills low.

Costs to distribute electricity from the cooperative to your home or business are managed locally at the cooperative. We have little or no control over the costs of producing electricity, which include the price of fuels, transportation and construction, among others.

At Big Horn, we work each and every day to keep electricity a great value, even as the cost of other commodities continues to increase.

As always, we strive to keep rates as low as possible through sound, accountable management and careful oversight of your cooperative's assets. When hiring contractors, we use a bid process to ensure that we are keeping costs as low as possible. We also participate in strategic business relationships with our vendors which allow us to receive a better price on our materials and fuel. The "on-time" delivery we receive minimizes our time spent in managing inventory.

Your cooperative is operated to ensure that you get the best value for your dollar - reliable and affordable electric energy.

## Annual Meeting

continued from page 1

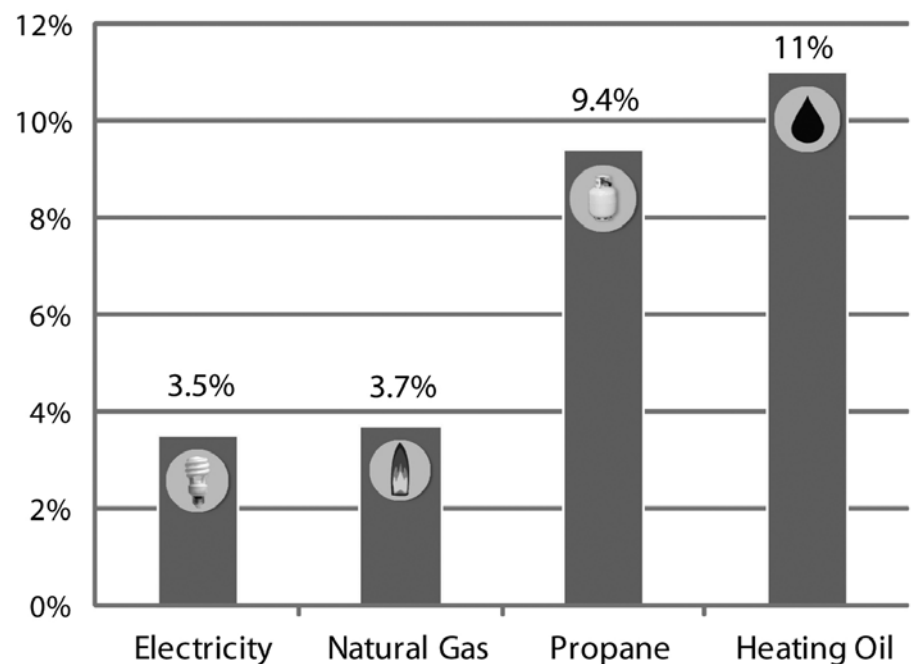
Frannie areas. Those two candidates are Steven C. Harper and Charles N. Monk. Look for their candidate profiles in next month's issue of Highlights. You are encouraged to carefully read the candidate statements so that you can make an informed decision when voting.

Big Horn's board members, employees, and Annual Meeting Committee members are dedicated to bringing you and your family an interesting and informative meeting. We are counting on you to make this annual meeting a success. Be sure to read the March issue of HIGHLIGHTS for more details.

During the week of February 21st, each member will receive in the mail their complete Annual Meeting brochure and proxy. Make plans now to attend!!

### Electricity prices remain stable

Compared to other types of home heating fuel, electricity prices have remained the most stable over the past 10 years. This graph shows the average annual price increase from 2000 to 2010 for each fuel type.



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) September 2011 data

## Stay Away...Stay Alive

Each year a number of accidents involving contact with high-voltage power lines occur, often resulting in serious injury or death. Big Horn REA is committed to distributing electricity safely, but we need your help to ensure your safety and the safety of our employees.

Federal and state governments, in an effort to prevent these types of accidents, have enacted laws to provide safer working conditions in areas around high voltage power lines. These laws generally make it illegal for an individual to work closer than 10 feet to or to permit any tool, equipment or other object within 10 feet of an energized overhead power line.

Please remember that high voltage power lines are NOT insulated. Please call us at 307-568-2419 prior to starting your work around power lines, and we will have an employee assist you in making your job site safe.

The following safety tips will help prevent accidental contact with overhead power lines; however, the most important element of accident prevention is to make safety the number one priority.

- Always look for power lines before beginning any type of construction work. Pre-job planning is a major factor in preventing accidents.
- Call Big Horn REA for a safety check of the area if power lines are present.
- Never work closer than 10 feet to a power line.
- Lower truck beds, aerial lifts, booms and other construction equipment before passing under power lines.
- Keep ladders, scaffolding, antennas and other equipment 10 feet or more away from power lines.
- Designate one person as a "watcher" on the ground to guide machine operators whose vision may be obstructed.
- Keep fellow workers aware of the hazards of power line contacts
- Never touch a fallen wire or any object that is in contact with a wire. Always assume that a fallen wire is energized and keep clear of it.
- Never use aluminum or metal ladders near power lines.
- Even though they look harmless, ALWAYS stay away from pad mounted underground transformers and enclosures.

In case of a contact, please take the following steps: keep everyone away from the equipment. Caution the operator not to leave the equipment until the power line has been de energized by Big Horn REA and grounded. If it becomes necessary to leave the equipment, jump entirely free with both feet together so that no parts of the body are in contact with the equipment and the ground at the same time. Call Big Horn REA and 911. Do not touch any person, vehicle or equipment that is in contact with the wires. If a person does contact electrified equipment, CPR can be administered after the victim has been cleared from the contact and moved a reasonable distance.

Underground facilities may look harmless, but they are as dangerous as overhead power lines. If you should find a transformer that is open or has been knocked off its pad, stay away and notify Big Horn REA immediately.



## Energy Efficiency

### *Tip of the Month*

Switch to energy-saving halogen incandescent lightbulbs to cut lighting energy use by 25 percent. These bulbs last three times longer than traditional incandescent bulbs and can easily be dimmed. Want to save more? Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) and light-emitting diodes (LEDs) cut lighting energy use by at least 75 percent. Learn more at [energysavers.gov](http://energysavers.gov).

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

# HIGHLIGHTS

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



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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).