

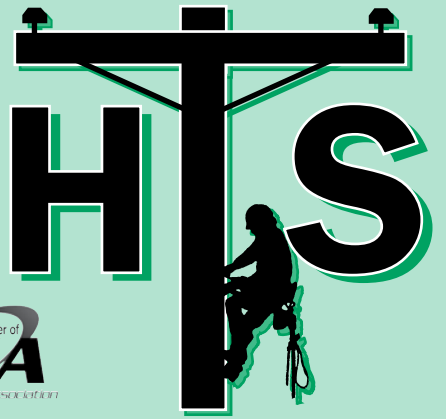
February 2014

HIGHLIGHTS

From Big Horn Rural Electric Company

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

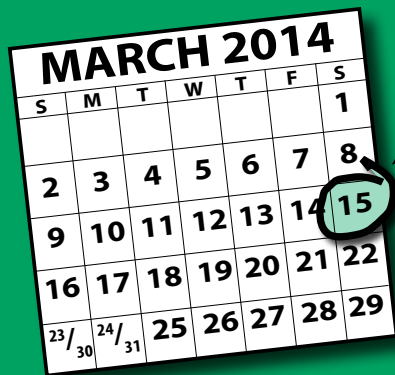
Your cooperative is a proud member of
WREA
Wyoming Rural Electric Association



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Big Horn REA offices will be closed February 17th in observance of President's Day.



Manager's Message A New Year Brings New Challenges

By the time you read this, the month of January 2014 will already be past. However, it still seems like just the beginning and Big Horn REA is looking forward to the opportunity of serving our member/owners. Every year brings local cooperative challenges and opportunities that we will be effectively evaluating and proper actions taken for the best interest of the cooperative. Big Horn will: continue to upgrade our lines and substations; perform pole testing; right of way maintenance which will involve mostly tree removal; and other line work with the purpose of maintaining/upgrading our lines and facilities to minimize outages and provide quality electric energy.

Further, Big Horn will continue to make sure our dedicated team of directors and employees are committed to providing you with reliable electric energy and quality customer service. We sincerely appreciate working for the member/owners.

There will be challenges to Big Horn and our power supplier Tri-State

Generation & Transmission through legal and environmental requirements. There is: the possibility of renewable requirements; EPA's plans/requirements regarding use of coal for power generation and clean air requirements; liability for wildfire damage being the responsibility of citizens and businesses rather than the U.S. Forest Service; and other issues that would make YOUR RATES GO UP. Please get involved and join the Wyoming Rural Electric Association's Grassroots Network at <http://www.wyomingrea.org/issues/grassroots.php>, or go directly to www.action.coop to send a message to the EPA - this will also sign you up for Wyoming's Grassroots Network. If you do not have internet access, contact us and we can still sign you up to receive pertinent information and be involved.

Further, to become involved and learn what your cooperative is doing, I invite you to attend your upcoming annual meeting on March 15, 2014. Hope to see you at the annual meeting and if you have questions please stop by or give me a call.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!!

Your Vote Counts

Plan on coming to the Annual Meeting!

We would certainly like to see you at the annual meeting on March 15th. If you've never been to an annual meeting before, give it a try! It's your chance to be involved in the business

YOU own. Plus we serve a nice meal, have childcare for the kids, and give out lots of prizes, including one \$250 bill credit! See you there!!! More information coming in your next newsletter and in your mailbox - be sure to check it out.

Buy a New Appliance? We May Have a Rebate for You

We would love to give you some money!

Earn extra savings! When you upgrade to energy efficient equipment in your home, you'll help lower your electric bill and qualify for rebates.

Rebates are available on **Energy Star** refrigerators and freezers, clothes washers, dishwashers, heat pumps, electric water heaters and air conditioners. In order to qualify, you must be a member of Big Horn Rural Electric, *you must let us*

know of your purchase within 180 days, the appliance must be installed in a location served by Big Horn Rural Electric, the appliance must be Energy Star or qualifying model and we will need a copy of the receipt. You may find Energy Star qualified appliances at www.energystar.gov.

Once you have made your purchase, give us a call! It's just that simple. We will gather some

basic information, have you mail us a copy of your receipt and we will submit the rebate form to Tri-State G & T (our power supplier). Tri-State will process the request and send Big Horn Rural Electric a check. *AND.....through 2014, Big Horn REA's Board of Directors has generously decided to match Tri-State's rebate amount!* Call us today to find out if your purchase qualifies.

TRI-STATE REBATE AMOUNTS

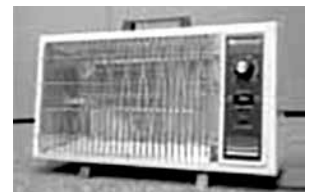
Heat pumps -	\$85 - \$150 per ton; \$150 additional per Energy Star unit
Water heaters -	\$50 per unit; \$25 per unit additional for lifetime tank warranty; \$25 per unit additional for low wattage elements. Super Efficient Unit - (primary heating by direct exchange ground source or air-source heat pump) - \$100 per unit; \$25 per unit additional for life time tank warranty
Air Conditioners -	\$150 per unit Energy Star rated air-conditioners 3 tons and over
Refrigerators -	\$40 per unit for full size Energy Star rated refrigerators
Freezers -	\$40 per unit for full size Energy Star rated freezers
Clothes Washers -	\$40 per unit for Energy Star rated clothes washers
Dishwashers -	\$30 per unit for Energy Star dishwashers
Electric Motors -	\$8 per horsepower for premium efficiency motors; minimum 10 horsepower

Safety Corner: *Space heaters can be expensive and dangerous*

Falling temperatures and rising energy costs have many looking for ways to lower heat bills. Big Horn REA reminds you to use caution when warming your home and garage with space heaters this winter:

- Make sure the heater has an emergency shut-off feature if it tips over.
- Check the cord and make sure heater is clean and in good condition.
- Place heater on level, solid, non-flammable floor surface; do NOT place on carpet, counters or furniture.
- Keep heater away from draperies, blankets, sofas and combustible liquids, such as paint and fuel.
- Never allow pets or children near an electric space heater.
- Never plug a space heater into an extension cord or into the same circuit as other appliances.
- Never leave space heater unattended. Unplug before leaving the room or going to bed.
- Don't be misled by expensive models that claim to lower heating bills. Electric heaters cost anywhere from \$30 to \$300; but no matter what the price, all 1,500-watt electric heaters use the same electricity to operate and deliver the same heat output. Be safe and stay clear of marketing hype.

As with any technology, before purchasing a space



heater you should understand how the device is used, as well as the energy claims of the manufacturer. Space heaters can heat only a small space. While they do have their place in warming a house, they simply cannot replace energy-efficient central heating or weatherization improvements in a home. While it may be technically possible to cut your heating bill by 50% using a space heater, it is impractical for most people.

Co-op Connections

A NEW CO-OP CONNECTIONS BENEFIT FOR YOU INTRODUCING CASH BACK MALL

The days of long checkout lines and crazy parking lots are a thing of the past. Today, more people are shopping online. Thanks to your Big Horn REA Co-op Connections Card, you can now earn cash back when online purchases are made from more than 5,000 of your favorite stores.

With Co-op Connections' Cash Back Mall, you can earn cash back on purchases of more than 300,000,000 products. To start earning your cash back visit <https://bighorn.foryourpeople.com> and click on the Download Your Shopping Assistant but-

ton.

By clicking the "Download Now" button and following the instructions, a free shopping assistant tool bar will appear at the top of your internet browser. This tool bar will keep track of the cash back you have earned. As you make online purchases at Best Buy, Walmart, Target, the Apple Store and other big name retailers, watch the money in your account pile up. From fishing and outdoor gear to clothing and big screen TVs, it all adds up.

When setting up your account you choose how you would like to



Cash Back Mall

receive your cash back, whether it is directly deposited into your account or a printed check, mailed to your address. You can also decide at what dollar amount you would like to receive your cash, \$15, \$25, \$50.

Whether you are buying gifts for loved ones, booking a trip or treating yourself, Cash Back Mall can put money back in your pocket. It's just another member benefit brought to you by Big Horn REA.

CHANGES IN PRESCRIPTION COVERAGE? TRY YOUR CO-OP CONNECTIONS CARD

In a recent interview, a practicing physician says that individuals may see fewer drugs being covered by insurance, due to changes from the Affordable Care Act (ACA) or "ObamaCare". These two passages really showcased scenarios where your Co-op Connections discount card might help:

- DR. SCOTT GOTTLIEB, PRACTICING PHYSICIAN: "Well, there are two issues. One is the co-pays on the drugs are very high. So, on average there is about 40 percent you're going to have to pay on branded drugs compared to about 25 percent in the private sector.

But the bigger issue is that the formula, the list of drugs or the plans covered in many cases aren't very long. And if the drugs aren't covered, then you're on your own. You basically have to pay for it entirely out of pocket. And the mon-

ey that you spend on those drugs doesn't count against your out of pocket limits and it won't count against your deductible. This could cost patients with special conditions, patients who need special drugs a lot of money. Literally tens of thousands of dollars a year.

- "...This was a plan in North Carolina they looked at, where a lot of specialty drugs for rheumatoid arthritis, drugs for multiple sclerosis, weren't in the formula, which means patients had to pay for those entirely out of pocket on their own."

The bottom line is that now is the time to use our prescription benefit more than ever before. Simply show the Co-op Connections card to your pharmacist when filling your prescriptions. Most pharmacies in our service area accept the card. The pharmacist will then be able to tell if you if your pre-

Co-op Connections® Card



scription qualifies for benefits. To date, our members have saved almost \$25,000.00 just by using the card! If you've misplaced your card and need a new one, please call our office at 1-800-564-2419.

We're always looking for ways to provide value to our members and our community, especially during tough economic times. So while our number one priority is to keep the lights on, Big Horn REA is committed to bringing additional value to our members and the communities we serve. The Co-op Connections program is just another way to accomplish that goal. That's the cooperative difference.



GET YOUR VOICE HEARD

It is vitally important to have rural Wyoming's and rural America's voice heard on energy policy issues. For example, the EPA wants to enforce impossible regulations on coal-fired power plants (where most of our power comes from) and classify coal ash as a hazardous material, as well as forcing Wyoming to use their Regional Haze plan which is much more costly than Wyoming's plan and has no additional visual benefit. Any one of these issues would cause our rates to go up! Please go to www.action.coop and let the EPA know the tremendous impacts these mandates could have on Wyoming! Let's stand up for rural America!



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Fighting winter chills? A crackling fire in the hearth warms the house, but don't let it heat up your electric bill. To cool energy costs, keep the fireplace damper closed when not in use. Caulk around the fireplace hearth. Double up on wood-earned warmth by lowering the thermostat setting to between 50 degrees and 55 degrees Fahrenheit. Learn more at www.energysaver.gov.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

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).