

July 2012

HIGHLIGHTS

From Big Horn Rural Electric Company

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Manager's Message

In this month's newsletter you will find some information on the outage that Big Horn experienced starting on June 4 at approximately 5:15pm. I want to thank everyone for their patience and understanding during the hours without electricity. Big Horn strives to provide reliable power and keep outages to a minimum. Our crews and contractors review our lines for loose wires, damaged poles, broken insulators and other equipment problems. The wind storm that created the outage is a reminder of how susceptible a system can be to

extreme weather conditions.

One thing that was noticed with the severe wind was the number of outages and problems related to broken limbs and fallen trees into the power lines. Big Horn spends money and time removing trees every year for system reliability. We will continue to contact members to allow us to remove trees that are in or near the power lines. These situations certainly create safety hazards and outages. We are thankful over the years to the members who have allowed us to remove trees. Tree removal helps Big Horn

reduce outages and saves the company and members money by not being required to continually trim the same trees approximately every three years.

After seeing the outside crew members working on the lines and the office staff coming back to work to answer phone calls, I can certainly assure everyone that our employees are knowledgeable and dedicated to the members that we serve. Again, thanks for your patience during outages.

If you ever have any questions or concerns, please give me a call.

NRECA Grassroots Summit

In May the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) held a Grassroots Summit where nearly 2,000 leaders in the Cooperative movement came together to discuss how to strengthen the cooperative movement through political advocacy. Many issues were discussed and questions asked. At the heart of the Summit was this question: "How

can the electrical cooperative movement leverage the strength of its 42 million members to make sure our nation enacts common-sense energy policies that are environmentally responsible, while keeping electricity affordable and reliable?"

The hard part is how we go about defining terms such as "environmentally responsible." I think we all have a pretty good grasp of

what "affordable" and "reliable" mean, but even here, there is interpretation. You might find it interesting to know that across the 900 different electric cooperatives, covering 75 percent of the nation's land mass, cooperatives find friends on both sides of the aisle. Affordability, reliability, and environmental responsibility are not partisan issues.

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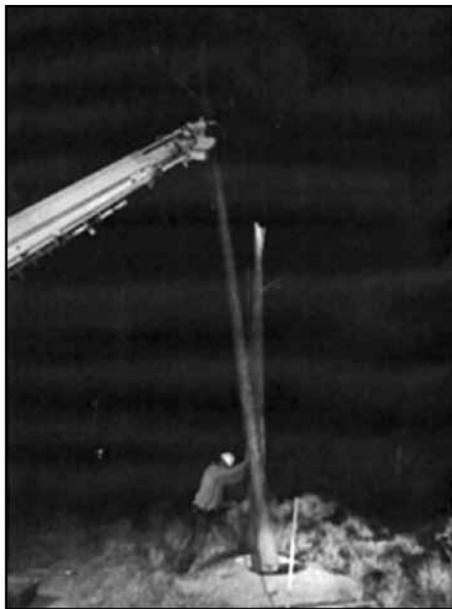
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Big Horn REA will be closed July 4th, 2012 in observance of Independence Day

When Mother Nature Roars...

At approximately 5:15 pm on Monday, June 4, a wind storm went through the area creating power outages to electrical customers in the basin area. Big Horn Rural Electric crews received reports that a substation that feeds the town of Greybull was out of power. The wind storm caused breakers to operate in Big Horn's Nahne Jensen transmission



substation on the Greybull River Road. This in turn caused outages at three of Big Horn's distribution substations. Those substations were the Greybull, Emblem and John Allen. After coordinating efforts with Big Horn's power provider, Tri-State Generation and Transmission at the Nahne Jensen substation it was determined there were distribution line problems. Big Horn's crew members patrolled the lines and noted that there was a broken pole east of the Greybull substation and lines were down in the Emblem and Burlington areas. Some of the line problems were from trees and limbs breaking and

coming in contact with energized lines. At about 8:30 pm the power was restored to the Greybull substation serving customers in the Greybull and Shell area. After

making repairs in the Emblem area, power was attempted to be restored to the Emblem/Burlington area at approximately 9:30pm. The Emblem substation would not re-energize meaning there were additional line problems. Crews continued to patrol lines and at approximately 10:30pm, the crews found nine transmission poles were broken and laying on the ground between the Nahne Jensen substation and Emblem. Crews worked through the night to get the poles and lines repaired. Nearly all power was restored to Big Horn's customers at approximately 1:00am.

Almost 1,500 Big Horn REA members were without power for at least a portion of the outage, in addition to approximately 1,800 Greybull residents. What began at 5:00 pm Monday was finally wrapped up at 6:00 am Tues-



day when the last pole went in the air and the Emblem substation was re-energized. Line Superintendent Jeff Stocklin said, "This storm popped up out of nowhere. With great teamwork from all of our employees, both outside crews and office staff answering phones and dispatching crews and the help of a our neighboring co-op Garland Light & Power, we were able to get our system restored relatively quickly for the amount of problems that were found. We want to thank everyone who was without power for their understanding and patience."



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:
 - Your name and account number,
 - Phone number,
 - Service address,
 - Time when power went out, and
 - The cause of the outage if known.
 - **IF YOU ARE IN A LIFE-THREATENING SITUATION, DIAL 911**

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.

Keep Us Informed

During a recent outage, it became apparent that Big Horn REA does not always have all the information we need, as we heard from several members who are on life-support (i.e. oxygen, etc.) that are not on our Life Support Notification list.

Big Horn Rural Electric Company, your Touchstone Energy Cooperative, is able to respond to the needs of our members because

we are locally owned and operated. One of the services we offer is the Outage Notification Program for Life Support Members.

Big Horn maintains a list of our members that rely on electrically-powered life support systems (e.g. respirators and oxygen equipment, etc.). This is important information for us to have in the event of an outage, scheduled or unscheduled, that may last for a few hours. We

will make every effort to contact affected members in advance should you need to make special arrangements.

If you or a member of your family (or a renter, whose name is not on the account) is dependent upon electricity for life support equipment, please complete the information on the following form and return it to our Basin office.

Outage Notification for Life Support Members

Member Name _____

Telephone and Cell Phone Numbers _____

E-mail address (if applicable) _____

Type of Life Support Equipment Used _____

Account Number _____ 911 Address at Account Location _____

Please mail, e-mail or fax this form to:
Big Horn Rural Electric Company
PO Box 270
Basin WY 82410
307-568-2402 (fax)
bhrec@bighornrea.com

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In Wyoming we are blessed with incredible access to all of our Federal legislators. This access has allowed us to develop and maintain close relationships with our elected officials. Senator Enzi, Senator Barasso, and Representative Lummis work very hard for Wyoming and are friends of the cooperatives and of Big Horn Rural Electric Company. We also work very closely with our State officials and enjoy a good working relationship with them as well.

This is good news for Big Horn Rural Electric and for our members; however, we do have an area of risk. It is human nature to become comfortable when things are going our way. This is a problem that many of our sister cooperatives in other states are experiencing, especially in places where their complacency has grown to the point where people have forgotten how to make their voices heard.

Being heard, or being politically active, has never been easier than it is today, especially if you are tech savvy. There is strength in

this new developing arena of high tech communications, but there is also an inherent weakness. I believe that it takes both a personal touch and using the newer communication mediums to be really effective.

One of the things that truly resonated from this Grassroots Summit was a quote from Thomas Jefferson who said, "We in America do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate."

Over the next several months we will be spending some time discussing how to leverage both technology and face-to-face communications to help us dust off our right of free speech and our tool kit for participating.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR...
Upcoming District Board Meetings
July 25 - Hyattville Community Center
August 29 - Burlington Fire Hall
September 26 - Shell Community Hall
Make plans now to attend the meeting in your area.
Watch your mail for the invitation!

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ELECTRIC COMPANY**



Touchstone Energy®

Box 270 VOLUME 33 NO. 6
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 Bill Phillips
Todd Herman Fred Sherburne
Carrie Hunt Gael Sosa
Dan Johnson Jeff Stocklin
Sheila Kampbell Kendal Wambeke
Floyd Mitchell

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).



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Water heating ranks as one of the top three energy-related expenses in your home. Save energy and money by installing a water heater blanker, using low-flow showerheads and faucets, and lowering the thermostat on your water heater to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Learn more at EnergySavers.gov.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy