

June 2011

# HIGHLIGHTS

From Big Horn Rural Electric Company

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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



## Cultivating Safety. . . In a New Way

This spring, Big Horn REA teamed up with the Fourth Grade Foresters program to bring our safety message into some local classrooms. Fourth Grade Foresters USA was created to provide a simple and inexpensive

by workers with disabilities. Each package included planting and care instructions and a safety message teaching the children to be cautious not to plant their tree under or near a power line, or play in trees that are near power lines. The students were also given a newspaper with lessons, games and puzzles about electricity and an energy savings guide to take home.

Big Horn REA employees Warren Adams, Dan Johnson, Sheila Kampbell and Fred Sherburne visited classrooms in Burlington, Meeteetse and Ten Sleep to teach our members' children and their teachers about important issues like



Ten Sleep Line Foreman Dan Johnson teaches the Ten Sleep 3rd and 4th graders in Mrs. Hampton's class the importance of planting trees away from power lines.

energy efficiency, safety, and that now more than ever tree planting is important. It is one simple act that a child can do to make a real difference in their community, their state and country, and their world,

BUT planting the right tree in the right



Sheila Kampbell, Member Services, and Dan Johnson, Ten Sleep Line Foreman with the Ten Sleep recipients of the 4th Grade Foresters trees.



Basin Journeyman Lineman Warren Adams and Line Foreman Fred Sherburne with the Meeteetse recipients of the 4th Grade Foresters trees in Mr. Renker's class.

place is equally important in order to keep themselves and their families safe.

Since 2006 fourth graders have planted more than 265,000 trees all across America. That's the beginning of an entire forest planted by kids! Two of the seven Cooperative Principles are Education, Training and Information and Concern for Community. Big Horn REA looks for new and innovative ways to bring these principles to light for our members. We are excited to join with the Fourth Grade Foresters USA program to bring our message to these local schools.

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## From the Manager's Desk

**B**ig Horn Rural Electric Company is proud to be a rural electric power cooperative. Being a member of a cooperative has many advantages.

One of those advantages is cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Big Horn's board of directors is comprised of its members and is elected by the membership. Big Horn's directors continue to make themselves accessible to our members by bringing district meetings to the members. In 2010 there were four district meetings held in Big Horn's service territory. We will once again be scheduling district meetings for this summer. Notices of the meeting stating the time, date and place will be sent to all members in the particular district. We will also provide information in our newsletter and on our website. So please make plans to attend the district meeting in your area. Lunch will be provided and two \$75.00 energy credits will be awarded at each meeting. We look forward to seeing our members at these meetings.

Summer seems to be the time when we receive the most requests from our members for new services, upgrades or line changes. Please plan ahead and notify us so that we can meet with the member and review the proposed job and provide a timely written estimate for any work to be performed by Big Horn. The estimate will include such costs as material, labor, equipment and overhead (taxes, insurance, etc.). The estimated costs do not include a mark up or profit as we price the work at the actual costs to complete the job.

Big Horn will also be attending the upcoming local parades and cel-

ebrations in the communities within our service area. This year we again plan on handing out ice cream sandwiches during the parades.

Big Horn REA is proud to be involved with our local communities and remains committed to providing reliable electric energy with excellent customer service.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to give one of the employees, a Board Member or myself a call. We appreciate working for you the member/owners and are here to serve you.

Have a fun and SAFE summer.

### REMINDER:

June is the last month to sign up for Budget Billing. Budget Billing allows for members to pay the same amount every month for electric service.

- Sign up for this service during the months of April, May and June
- Must have a usage history for a period of 12 consecutive months
- Account for electric service must be current in payments
- Must complete a Budget Billing Plan Agreement

Contact Big Horn for details at 568-2419 or 800-564-2419

### Non-Discrimination Statement

Big Horn Rural Electric Company is the recipient of Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 or (202) 720-6382 (TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

# Keeping Cool:

## Tips for Beating High Summer Electric Bills

**D**on't let warmer weather turn into "summertime blues" when your monthly electric bill arrives. Here are some energy-saving tips from Big Horn REA.

**Adjust the thermostat.** As TogetherWeSave.com demonstrates, lowering a thermostat in winter can save as much as \$85 per year. During warmer months, raising the thermostat a few degrees can save money, too. Set the temperature between 78-80 degrees Fahrenheit, and you could save up to 8 percent on monthly cooling bills.

Programmable thermostats make it easy to save by offering four pre-programmed settings to regulate a home's temperature throughout the year.

**Be a "fan-atic."** While they don't replace air conditioners or heat pumps, fans move air and help you feel more comfortable. On milder days, fans can save as much as 60 percent on electric bills. Fans cool people, not rooms, so turn them off when you leave.

**Regular maintenance is essential.** Big Horn REA recommends that members have their HVAC systems serviced annually. This HVAC professional will check your entire system to make sure it runs efficiently. This will help to extend life of the system and save money.

**Look for ENERGY STAR equipment.** When it's time to replace your cooling system, TogetherWeSave.com recommends replacing it with an ENERGY STAR-qualified model.

Doing so could reduce your energy costs by as much as 30 percent. Tax credits and rebates on qualifying ENERGY STAR appliances may be available so check with Big Horn REA for more information.

**Bigger isn't always better.** Too often, cooling equipment isn't sized properly and leads to higher electric bills. A unit that's too large for your home will not cool evenly and might produce higher humidity indoors.

Instead of getting burned this summer by high energy bills, visit [www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov) or Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives energy-saving website, [www.TogetherWeSave.com](http://www.TogetherWeSave.com), for more money-saving ideas. Or call Big Horn REA or visit our website at [www.bighornrea.com](http://www.bighornrea.com).

## Electrical Safety Vacation Checklist

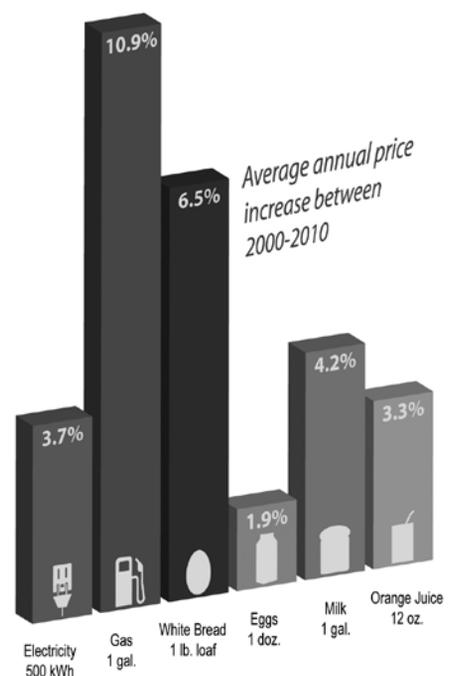
**S**ummer vacations are hard to pull off these days, so it's important that trip-takers have peace of mind while away. Fires can start when lightning storms strike electronics or small appliances; burglaries tend to increase because folks aren't at home.

The electrical safety checklist below will help you decrease the risk of problems occurring while on vacation:

1. Turn off all electrical appliances, including toaster ovens, stoves, and curling irons.
2. Unplug television sets and computers—these items are especially susceptible to lightning and power surges.
3. Use a timer on indoor lights. Look for one that can be set to a random pattern rather than regular times throughout the day.
4. Install motion-detecting lights outdoors.
5. Set the thermostat to 80 degrees in the summer and 55 degrees in the winter if you plan to leave for an extended period of time.
6. Give your house key to a neighbor and make sure he or she has a phone number where you can be reached.

### Electricity Remains a Good Value

Electricity continues to be a bargain, especially when compared to other consumer goods. As demand for energy rises and fuel prices increase, your electric cooperative is committed to providing safe, reliable electricity and keeping your electric bill affordable.

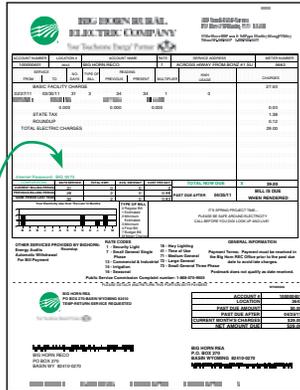


Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Mainstream Graphics

## Quality Member Service Update

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS. . .

**1. I've tried to log into your online billing, but it tells me there is no email on file for me. What am I doing wrong?** *When you log into Big Horn REA's online billing system for the first time, you will need to use your Big Horn REA account number in the first box, and in the second "Password" box you will need to use the password that can be found on your billing statement that is mailed to you each month. Once you are logged in, the system will ask you to change your password.*



**2. I attempted to use my Co-op Connections card at the pharmacy, but they told me my prescription would cost more with the card than without it. Why?** *It is quite rare but it has happened in the past. Basically, the contracts signed between the pharmacies and HealthTrans set up pricing parameters for certain drugs. Due to fluctuations in the prescription drug arenas, sometimes the usual & customary amount can be lower at a certain pharmacy than the contracted/ agreed upon rate for that particular drug.*

**3. Why do you charge me extra to pay with my credit or debit card?** *The added 2.45% convenience fee is NOT a Big Horn REA fee – it is a fee charged by the credit card companies to use this "convenience". This added fee is what allows Big Horn REA the capability to offer credit/debit card payments as an option.*

THANKS FOR YOUR QUESTIONS!!



## Energy Efficiency

### Tip of the Month

Does your home have a window air conditioner? Make sure that your window unit is properly weather stripped, and clean the filter monthly. Keep "fresh air" vents on window A/C units closed.

Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

# HIGHLIGHTS

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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).