

May 2013

HIGHLIGHTS

From Big Horn Rural Electric Company

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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



Lovell Outage

On Thursday, March 14, 2013, at approximately 4:30 p.m., Big Horn REA received a call that there was a power outage in the Lovell area. Big Horn REA had a crew out quickly to assess the issue. A second call was received from



WAPA crews work to restore power to the Lovell Substation.



The WAPA transformer was isolated for testing.

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) that they were having issues at their Lovell substation. The Big Horn REA crew was able to perform line switching in order to restore power to some of those members who were affected. The crew then coordinated with WAPA who started testing and troubleshooting

the Lovell substation. WAPA found that a sudden pressure relay in the substation failed, which caused the transformer to lock out, which in turn created the power outage. WAPA flew in people and parts from around the state – they also brought in a mobile substation in case the substation could not be repaired. The power was restored at approximately 3:00 p.m. on March 15, 2013, to all who had been affected. Approximately 400 services were without power. Big Horn REA wants to thank its members for their patience and understanding during this outage.



A mobile substation was brought in from Cody to be put into service if the substation could not be repaired.



WAPA flew in people and parts from around the state in order to repair the substation.

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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

Manager's Message

Thanks to all the members who attended and those who executed their proxy at the March 9, 2013, annual meeting. As a member/owner of Big Horn REA, a member's right to participate and vote on matters affecting Big Horn REA is a value in receiving power from your local electric cooperative.

Since the annual meeting date, the weather has certainly changed making the official first day of spring 2013 on March 20th actually feel the calendar date is correct. With the change in weather, we have noticed people doing such things as yard work, farming, burning ditches, and setting irrigation pipes. Big Horn would like remind everyone to make safety a part of their job planning and activities.

If you are planning a new service, whether for a house, bin storage, irrigation, or whatever your needs would be, please contact Big Horn early in your planning process. One of your knowledgeable employees will meet with you to make sure the service requirements you will need are available and coordinate plans for any construction of lines or other line requirements.

Take time to be safe and thanks for being a member/owner of Big Horn REA.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

Find It Online

We've improved our website to serve you better. See us at www.bighornrea.com

Big Horn REA provides online information about cooperative membership and electric services:

- Secure e-billing for electric payments to pay by debit card, credit card or check
- On-line power outage updates
- Rebate information
- Safety information
- Contact information
- Energy saving tips

Visit us online for Rebates, E-billing, Energy Savers, Safety Info, Outage Info and More.

Powering Safely During an Outage

One of the great things about the modern American electric grid is that power almost always flows when we need it. Given our dependence on electricity, it's understandable why portable generators are popular when the power goes out and stays out for a while.

But generators can cause more harm than good if not used properly. In honor of Electrical Safety Month, recognized each May, we want to give you a few safety tips to protect yourself and our linemen who are working to restore your power.

First, never, ever plug a portable generator directly into one of your home's outlets—unless you have

had a licensed electrician install a “transfer switch” in your home. If you don't have a transfer switch, power provided by the generator can “backfeed” along power lines, which can electrocute a lineman working on those lines.

In addition, portable generators create carbon monoxide, the odorless, colorless gas that can quickly become deadly if the generator isn't exhausted outside. Attached garages with an open door don't count—the carbon monoxide can still seep indoors and poison inhabitants. Generators must go outside in a dry area, which might mean you'll need to rig a canopy to protect it from precipitation at a safe

distance from your home's windows, doors, and vents. How far is a safe distance? Even 15 feet can be too close.

Other things to keep in mind: Plug appliances directly into the generator using heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords, but don't overload it. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for maximum load. Shut off the generator before refueling, or a fire could start—and it's a good idea to have a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby, just in case.

Safety is a top priority at Big Horn REA, for our employees and member/owners alike. Contact us at 1-800-564-2419 if you have any questions.

Outage Restoration

Restoring power after a major outage is a big job that involves much more than simply throwing a switch or removing a tree from a line.

The main goal is to safely restore power to the greatest number of customers in the shortest time possible.

Substations are checked first..

Big Horn has several local distribution substations, each serving hundreds of consumers. When a major outage occurs, the local distribution substations are checked first. A problem here could be caused by failure in the transmission system supplying the substation. If the problem can be corrected at the substation level, power may be restored to a large number of people.

Lines feeding the substations are repaired first..

Although the lines supplying power to substations seldom fail, they can be damaged by storms, winds or tornadoes. Hundreds of Big Horn cus-

tomers could be served by a single sub-transmission line, so if there is damage here it gets attention first.

Then, distribution lines are repaired..

Main distribution lines are checked next if the problem cannot be isolated at the substation. These lines carry electricity away from the substation to a group of customers, such as a town, cabin group, housing development or farms/ranches. When power is restored at this stage, all consumers served by this distribution line could see the lights come on, as long as there is no problem farther down the line.

Finally individual services are restored..

The final supply lines, called tap lines, carry power to the utility poles or underground transformers outside houses or other buildings. Line crews prioritize the repairs to remaining outages based on restoring service to the greatest number

of consumers.

Sometimes, damage will occur on the service line between your house and the transformer on the nearby pole. This may explain why you have no power when your neighbor does. Big Horn needs to know you have an outage here, so a line crew can repair it.

Member/owners, the consumers themselves (not the co-op) are responsible for damage beyond the meter to the building. Big Horn generally cannot repair this. A licensed electrician may need to be contacted.

Special needs may be accommodated..

Individual households may receive special attention if loss of electricity affects life support systems or poses another immediate danger. If you or a family member depends on life support, call Big Horn to notify us of this situation **before** an emergency arises.

Put money in your pocket with rebates from Big Horn REA

Earn extra savings! When you upgrade to energy efficient equipment in your home, you'll help lower your electric bill and qualify for rebates. Co-op members can earn rebates on:

- Energy-efficient motors
- Commercial and agricultural upgrades
- Energy Star appliances
- Energy-efficient heat pumps and central A/C

To learn more about rebates, visit www.bighornrea.com or call 800-564-2419.

Generate Safely Safe Generator Operation

Keep this card in your home's emergency kit or with your generator.

- Never connect a standby generator into your home's electrical system. There are only two safe ways to connect a standby generator to your equipment:

Stationary Generator: An approved generator transfer switch, which keeps your house circuits separate from the electric co-op, should be installed by a professional.

Portable Generator: Plug appliances directly into the outlet provided on the generator.

- Set up and run your generator in a well-ventilated area outside the home. Make sure it's out and away from your garage, doors, windows, and vents. The carbon monoxide generated is **DEADLY**.

- Use a heavy-duty extension cord to connect electric appliances to the outlet on the generator.

- Start the generator first **BEFORE** connecting appliances.



Source: SafeElectricity.org

Developed jointly by the Energy Education Council & Rural Electricity Resource Council



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Properly installed shades can be one of the most effective ways to improve windows' efficiency. Lower them during summer; in winter, raise during the day and lower at night on south-facing windows. Dual shades, with reflective white coating on one side and a heat-absorbing dark color on the other, can be reversed with the seasons and save even more energy. Learn more at 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).