

October 2010

HIGHLIGHTS

From Big Horn Rural Electric Company

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Celebrate Your Cooperative *October is National Cooperative Month*

October is cooperative month and Big Horn REA is proud to be a part of the annual celebration. Big Horn Rural Electric Company was formed as a cooperative business in 1937.

What are co-ops?

Cooperatives are owned by their members—the people who receive services from them—and are found in many industries. For example, more than 900 electric co-ops serve 42 million Americans. According to the National Cooperative Grocers Association, 30 percent of farmers' products are marketed through more than 3,000 farmer-owned cooperatives in America. Familiar brands like SunKist, Land O'Lakes, Cabot Creamery, Ocean Spray, and Sun-Maid are all co-ops formed to help farmers distribute products.

In banking, 10,000 credit unions provide financial services to 84 million members across the nation. Co-ops have also been formed to provide child care, insurance, and housing. Nearly 30,000 cooperatives operate at 73,000 locations nationally.

Guiding Principles

The cooperative movement traces

its roots to a store started by weavers in the town of Rochdale, England in 1844. The Rochdale model revolved around a set of guidelines drawn up by one of its members, Charles Howarth. When introduced into the U.S. by the National Grange in 1874, these "Rochdale Principles" fueled a cooperative explosion.

Although stated in many ways, the Rochdale Principles hold that a cooperative must provide:

- 1. Voluntary And Open Membership:** Membership in a cooperative is available to all who can reasonably use its services, regardless of race, religion, sex, or economic circumstances.
- 2. Democratic Member Control:** Co-ops are democratically controlled, with each member having one vote. As a result, control remains in the hands of all customers. Directors are elected from the membership.
- 3. Members' Economic Participation:** Cooperatives provide services "at cost" and remain not-for-profit regardless of the value of benefits delivered. Any money left over after all expenses are paid—margins—belongs to the members. Each member's share in the margin is determined

by the amount of his or her use of the co-op's services.

- 4. Autonomy And Independence:** Cooperatives are self-sustaining, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If cooperatives enter into agreements with others or raise money from outside sources, they do so on terms that maintain democratic control as well as their unique identity.
- 5. Education, Training, and Information:** Keeping members, directors, managers, and employees up to date on issues so they can effectively govern the co-op. Communication, particularly with young members and opinion leaders, helps generate necessary public support for cooperatives.
- 6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives:** Mutual support helps cooperatives improve services, bolster local economies, and deal more effectively with social and community needs.
- 7. Concern For Community:** Cooperatives develop communities with programs supported by the membership.

All co-ops use the same philosophy, following seven key principles. By upholding each principle, co-ops provide an efficient consumer resource focused on service, not profit. To learn more about your electric cooperative, visit www.bighornrea.com. For details on different types of cooperatives, visit www.go.coop.



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Stocklin New Line Superintendent

Former Ten Sleep Line Foreman, Jeff Stocklin, recently took over the reins as Line Superintendent in the Basin office. Jeff has been an employee of Big Horn REA since July, 1991.

Stocklin was recognized by the board of directors at their board meeting in September, 2009 for his dedication and involvement in the Cody Hot Line School. Jeff is an instructor at the training facility that is held every year to teach utility line workers about such things as: line equipment installation and maintenance; proper methods of working on energized lines; and overall safety work habits.

Jeff is also involved with the 4H program, sits on the Ten Sleep Land-fill Board and the Washakie County Predator Board.

Jeff and his wife Georgia have three children, Megan, Clay and Halli and are expecting their first grandchild this fall.

Jeff states one of the most rewarding things about being an instructor is, "Seeing the guys understand something that they didn't before and finding out it isn't so tough after all". He shares that the best part of his job is helping the members.

Board President Tom Delaney noted that Jeff's dedication to Big Horn REA and our members is sincerely appreciated. Jeff truly exemplifies Big Horn's mission of providing quality customer service to our members. We wish Jeff the best as he begins the next phase of his career!



From the Manager's Desk

As a member of Big Horn Rural Electric Company, you have value and ownership in your cooperative. That is, Big Horn is owned by those members we serve. The rates you pay for electric service is used to pay for such costs as: wholesale power; plant (poles, transformers, substations, etc) investment; loan repayment; maintenance and operations. Any revenues received in excess of expenses is allocated as equity (ownership) and is referred to as capital credits. This type of ownership by local members utilizing the services of the company is what makes a cooperative so special. Within the next several months, we will be sending all members a capital credit statement. This statement will reflect the balance of unretired capital credits that

each member has earned since becoming a member of Big Horn.

Another value of belonging to a cooperative is that each member has a say in the operations of the company. That is, the actions of your cooperative as directed by your local elected board members is achieved with our members' best interest. Your board of directors values our members participation in such events as the annual meeting and district member meetings. We are currently preparing to have a survey conducted of our membership. We want to measure our members overall satisfaction with Big Horn REA. Specifically the survey will measure satisfaction levels to such items as: electric reliability, outage response and employee service performance. Your participation will help ensure that

Big Horn is effectively utilizing our resources to provide excellent customer service.

As an added service to our members, Big Horn will soon be offering payments on accounts to be made with a credit card. We are also working on the necessary software to allow members to view their bills and billing statistics online. Please read the upcoming newsletters and information on our web site for details.

As we recognize cooperative month we would like our members to know they are owners of a community minded and a financially sound cooperative. We also want to say thanks for your patronage and allowing us to be your electric service provider.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to call me.

2010 Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp

Had a great time!

Met students from Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and Wyoming!

Built leadership skills that will last a lifetime!

One of the cooperative principles directed by your directors and practiced by Big Horn REA is Concern for Community. As a part of our communities, Big Horn is pleased to provide educational opportunities for our youth through the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp. It's important to Big Horn Rural Electric Company to educate the area youth about cooperatives and to help build tomorrow's leaders. Each year Big Horn sponsors students to attend the Colorado Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

This year, Tally Wells from Deaver and Jesse Bassett from Lovell attended the camp with approximately 85 other students from Kansas, Wyoming, Colorado and Oklahoma. "I liked this camp better than other camps I've attended because we got to have tons of fun and learn as we went. Plus, since nobody knows a lot of people it helps things to not be so segregated," stated Tally. "I would recommend this camp to my friends because it is amazing and different."

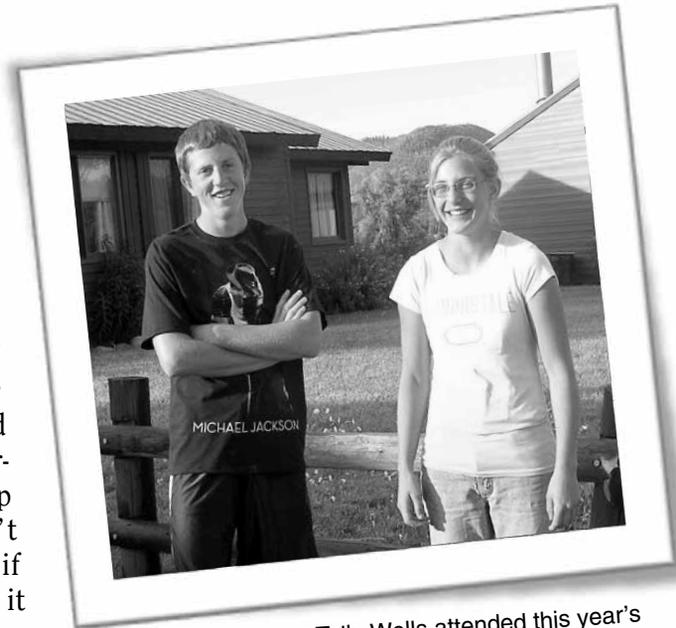
During this camp, the students learned about the cooperative business model, electric generation and visited the Trapper Coal Mine and the Craig Station Power Plant. They also learned valuable leadership skills and participated in legislative simulations. These campers agree that Big Horn should continue to sponsor students to this event. As Jesse said, "I think Big Horn should keep sponsoring this camp because it's fun and you learn a lot there

and meet new people." Tally added, "I think it allows more of an opportunity for kids to go and learn about energy and leadership and they don't have to worry if they can afford it or not."

Every year a male and female from each state that participates are elected by the campers to return the following year as an ambassador. Ambassadors are given responsibilities in leading and directing the camp. Big Horn is proud to announce that 2010 attendee Tally Wells was elected as the female ambassador from Wyoming for 2011. Being elected as the Wyoming Ambassador indicates her level of leadership,

participation and contribution to the 2010 Leadership Camp. When asked if future students planning to attend the camp could contact her to ask about her experience, Tally's reply was, "Absolutely! I'd be disappointed if they didn't!"

Tally and Jesse are eligible to apply for the opportunity to attend the D.C. Youth Tour in June of 2011.



Jesse Bassett and Tally Wells attended this year's camp in Steamboat Springs.

Assistance for Bill Payment

The Wyoming Department of Family Services has limited funding available for home heating help through the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP). Applications will be available on the DFS website <http://www.dfsweb.state.wy.us/>, at local DFS offices, senior centers and at the Big Horn REA office. If you'd like DFS to mail you an application, please call 1-800-457-3659 or 307-777-7564. Applications are processed Oct. 1 - Feb. 28, 2011. You can apply anytime before February 28, but it's often best to apply earlier rather than later. LIEAP is a federally-funded program, and credits are based on household income and number of household members as well as the type of fuel used to heat the home.

The Department of Family Services also has limited funding through federal grants from the Department of Energy to weatherize the homes of qualifying applicants. Weatherization is a service that reduces a home's energy costs by sealing air leaks, tuning up furnaces, adding insulation and, sometimes, replacing appliances. It doesn't matter if you own or rent your home, if its energy needs are significant, and the resident's income qualifies for LIEAP, the home could be weatherized. To see if you qualify, fill out a LIEAP application.

Crisis Assistance is available for households facing an emergency home heating situation. That includes life or health-threatening situations. The program helps cover utility hookup deposits and/or back bills to prevent a shut off. Funds are also available to buy replacement furnaces. The maximum benefit is \$600, and payments are made directly to the fuel provider.

Additional assistance may also be available through Energy Share of Wyoming. Contact the Salvation Army at 877-461-5719 or Big Horn REA for more information.

Quality Member Service Update

Coming soon to a mailbox near you.....

As your electric cooperative, it's important for Big Horn REA to provide its member-owners with safe, reliable power. Yet our service goes beyond the wires. We're always looking for ways to provide value to our members and our community, especially during tough economic times.

That's why Big Horn REA, in conjunction with the other Touchstone Energy co-ops serving 22 million member-owners nationwide, is joining the Co-op Connections® program. This new card-based member benefit program is designed to deliver added value to our members by offering valuable discounts at participating pharmacies and national businesses. And it's free.

Whenever a Co-op Connections cardholder – whether from Big Horn REA or from one of the hundreds of Touchstone Energy co-ops across the country – shows the Co-op Connections card at a participating business, they receive a discount. You will be able to simply log on to the Big Horn REA web site - www.bighornrea.com - and check out the list of participants.

The card also gives you access to online savings at more than 95 national retailers like Barnes&Noble.com, Hertz Rental Cars, Best Western hotels and ProFlowers.com. You can check out



these great national discounts at www.connections.coop. One of the most valuable features of the Co-op Connections Card is the pharmacy discount. While it is not insurance, the discount can mean savings of 10 to 60 percent on prescription drugs. The logo and information on the back of your card is recognized at more than 60,000 national, regional, and local pharmacies.

Big Horn REA members will receive your Co-op Connections card with your electric bill which you will receive the first part of December, 2010. Once a member has signed the back of the card, it's ready for use at participating businesses nationwide.

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.

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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).



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Don't keep your refrigerator or freezer too cold. Recommended temperatures are 37° to 40° F for the main refrigerator compartment and 5° F for the freezer. If you have a stand-alone freezer, it should be kept at 0° F. Appliance settings may vary, so an easy way to check the temperature is to use a meat thermometer.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy