

October 2011

HIGHLIGHTS

From Big Horn Rural Electric Company

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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



From the Manager's Desk Celebrate Your Cooperative *October is National Cooperative Month*



As October is recognized as National Cooperative Month, we would like to remind our members of Big Horn Rural Electric Company that you have value, ownership and control of your cooperative.

Over the past several months Big Horn has held several district meetings throughout our service territory. These meetings are an opportunity for you the member/owner to discuss issues with your local board members and become informed on issues affecting the cooperative - not to mention an opportunity to visit with friends and neighbors and enjoy a fine lunch.

Big Horn appreciates those members that took the time to attend the district meetings. President Delaney informed those attending the last district meeting in Shell on August 31, 2011 some of the following items:

1. Big Horn's mission is to provide safe, reliable, and competitively priced electricity.
2. Big Horn operates to provide electricity at cost - any margins above

the cost of service is allocated in the form of capital credits to the members.

3. Big Horn is a company that has been growing in the number of customers, revenue and assets. In 2001, Big Horn was serving 3,345 accounts, had \$6,022,380 in revenue and \$12,957,039 in assets. Ten years later at the end of 2010, Big Horn was serving 3,566 accounts, had \$12,748,231 in revenue and \$25,120,633 in assets.
4. Of the total revenue in 2010, 27% was provided from residential accounts, 5% from irrigation accounts, 21% from small commercial, and 47% from large commercial. Also noted was the 47% of revenue derived from large commercial is comprised of five accounts representing the oil and minerals industry.
5. In March 2011, Big Horn refunded \$480,000 in cash capital credit payments. In the past ten years Big Horn has refunded to its

members over \$2,300,000 in cash capital credit payments.

6. Big Horn is involved with the communities in which we serve and has made donations to fire departments, scholarship programs, Hands Across the Saddle, and other worthy projects.
7. Big Horn operates within the rules and regulations of the Public Service Commission, OSHA workplace requirements, and other federal and state laws. In doing so, most regulations require additional efforts and equipment be utilized, thereby increasing the costs to provide service.
8. Big Horn's power supplier, Tri-State Generation and Transmission has notified Big Horn that effective January 1, 2012 they will be increasing power cost rates by 4.8%. The last pass-through increase from Tri-State was in 2009. More information will be provided regarding the impact to Big Horn's rates in the upcoming months.

Your cooperative is operated and managed by directors and employees that are committed to ensuring that providing electric energy through a cooperative form of organization is as viable and important today as it was when Big Horn was first organized in 1937!

If you have any questions, please give me a call and be safe in work and fun activities.

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Wait! Have you....

If you are planning a new service - new home, grain dryer, irrigation, etc. - you should call Big Horn REA early in the planning. We can help you with the process and ensure that you have the power you need. There are many factors to be considered when adding something that uses electricity. Does a larger transformer or service need to be installed? Is there clearance? When will you need the electricity? Is Big Horn's system capable of handling the prospective load?

Big Horn's Line Superintendent, Jeff Stocklin, adds, "We want our members to be aware that there is certain information we will need before building a new service, or upgrading an existing service. We will need to know what type of service it will be. If it's for a residence, how large of service will you need? We want to make sure to size the service correctly. Some homes need a 100amp ser-

vice. Other, larger homes or those with all electric heat may need a 200amp or even a 320amp or 400 amp service. If the service is for grain dryers or irrigation we will need to know what motor size or total horse power. We'll need to know if it will be 240 or 480 volt and if it needs to be single phase or three phase. Also, we'll need to know how much you plan on operating the service so we can match the size of service to the load on the system."

Planning for a new service varies by the size of the project. "The larger the project, the more lead time we will need before we can start building," says Stocklin. "The larger projects normally involve ordering materials, which can take time. Also, our members need to be aware that new services often require right-of-way easements, whether it be from a neighbor or BLM or the Forest Service. These

easements can be very time consuming."

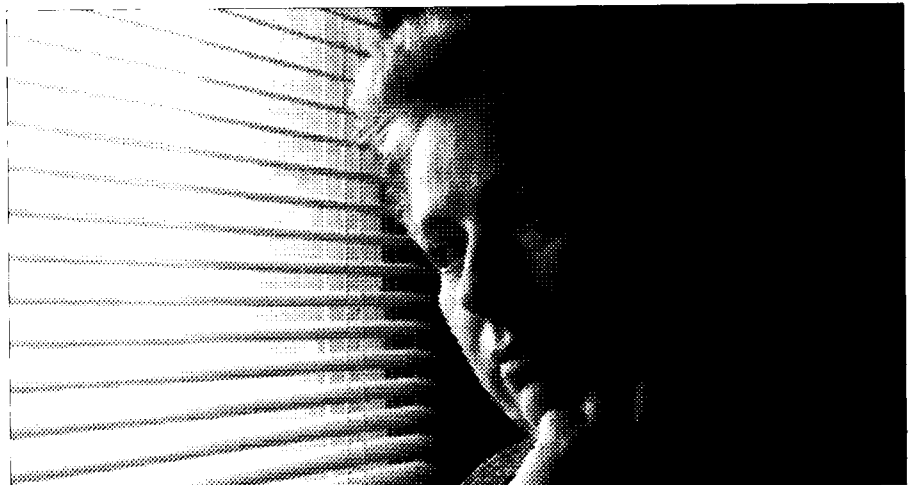
Big Horn REA has a very large service territory. Our crews are very busy throughout the year, building new services, upgrading existing services, building and maintaining lines, repairing outages, etc. We need at least two weeks lead time in order to schedule our work crews to build new services. We are not able to send crews to build the new service at a moment's notice, but we will do our best to get your project scheduled in the shortest time frame allowable. "Some projects need only a day or two of lead time, others need several months. We want to serve our members to the best of our abilities, but in order to do this, we will need a little help from you," shares Stocklin, "Big Horn is here to help. Help us help you."

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://dfsweb.state.wy.us/economic-assistance/lieap/index.html>, 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 will be available beginning Oct. 1, 2011. It's often best to apply earlier rath-

er 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.



Tress and Power Lines

Big Horn REA would like to thank our members who have allowed us to cut trees that have grown into our lines. Big Horn is committed to providing safe and reliable power. By cutting the trees we are able to remove such hazards as a tree falling into a line creating a fire and a child climbing a tree near an energized line. Further, trees in the lines create outages and voltage problems.

Big Horn wants to remind our members that planting of trees under or near overhead lines should not be done. Big Horn must maintain proper line clearance distance between our lines and trees. The costs associated with tree removal or trimming could be charged to the property owner.

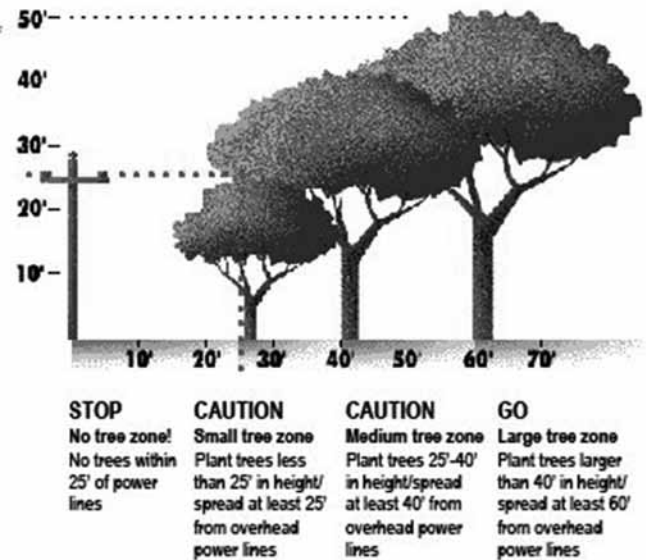
Just as important, trees planted near underground lines could also create hazards. Before you plant, make sure that you are aware of the location of the underground utilities. To be certain

that you do not dig into any lines and risk serious injury or costly service interruption, call Wyoming One Call for a line locate at 1-800-849-2476, or simply dial 811.

Big Horn REA wants to remind everyone proper selection and placement of trees away from either overhead or underground power lines

can eliminate potential public safety hazards, reduce expenses related to tree removal and provide more reliable power.

Maybe your trees near the power lines do not look quite as bad as shown in the photos, but if they are in or near the power line they will create a hazard. Please give us a call and we will arrange to meet with you to analyze and



discuss the best course of action.

Big Horn has contracted with a tree removal company to clear right of ways and problem trees. The costs to remove the tree will generally be a part of our operating costs, whereas later-on the homeowner may be required to pay for the costs associated for damage to lines from trees and for tree removal.



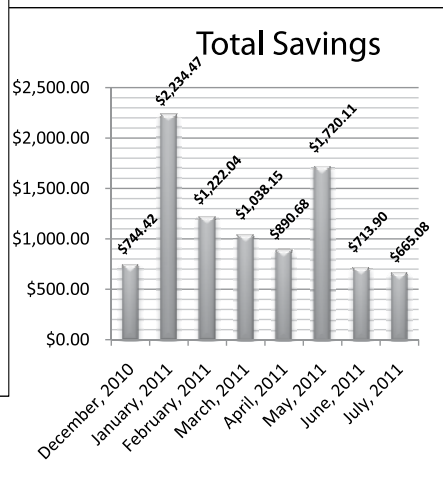
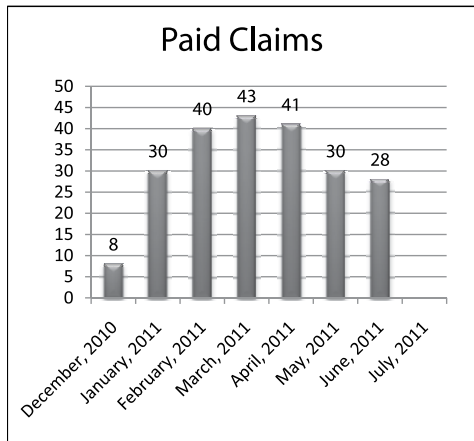
Co-op Connections Benefits

Since we rolled out the Co-op Connections cards in December, 2010, our members have saved nearly \$9,500.00 on prescriptions alone. This number is fantastic, when you take into account that only 254 prescriptions were filled.

We would like to encourage all of our members to take advantage of this wonderful benefit of the Co-op Connections card. If you have prescription coverage through your insurance

plan, please have the pharmacist check the price using the Co-op Connections card as well. Sometimes this will be the cheaper option for you.

As you can see from the charts below, our members are saving. But, we would like to see more of you cashing in on these savings. Not only can you save on prescriptions, but on many other products and services as well. Please check out all of your options at www.connections.coop.



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).



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

When buying a new appliance, check the black and yellow EnergyGuide label. This label provides an estimate of the product's energy consumption and efficiency. It also shows the highest and lowest energy efficiency estimates of similar models. Most major appliances—such as refrigerators, dishwashers, and clothes dryers—are required to have these labels.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy