

# Watts New

December, 2017 Tammy Gonzalez, Editor

## From The Desk Of. . . Don Smith, Manager

Welcome to December! Where has the year gone?! I sincerely hope this edition of your WREN magazine finds you well and enjoying the holiday season! As we near the end of 2017, I have been reflecting on and thinking of, what an eventful year it has been; elections and politics overall, storms, disasters, economics, etc. Lots of changes up and down. Regardless of your beliefs or leanings, you must admit it has been an eventful year!

Over the past year, your REA has participated in a variety of activities. We have been involved with the State Fair, provided input to agencies on the Clean Power Plan, co-hosted the career fair, written letters to both state and national congressional officials, hosted the Veterans' open house, and participated in Kiwanis "Discovery Days." We have been able to participate in all of these activities and provide input on your behalf because of the support of your REA Board of Directors and the dedication of the fantastic employees here at the REA! Recently, I was talking to one of our employees and I asked him what he thought the best thing about the REA was. Without hesitation, he said, "the people." I could not agree more! It is the dedication of all 20 employees here at the REA that make things work as well as they do. These employees are the most dedicated group I have seen in my career! They work together extremely well. They watch out for each other. They help one another, not just at work, but in their personal time as well. They even enjoy spending time with each other after hours. My thanks to all the employees here at the REA; they are an extraordinary group!



Our employees are very involved in the community, as well as in professional organizations. They sit on various boards and committees such as Economic Development and 4H in the local areas, as well as national organizations. Recently, our own Rhonda Apodaca was asked to participate as a panel member for a discussion of fraud in electrical utilities. The conference was held in Denver and the panel consisted of three industry experts from the regions, covering 13 western states, from Kansas to Alaska and from Montana to Hawaii. All three panelists have experienced, and dealt with, fraud at some point in their careers. Virtually everyone I spoke with said this panel was one of the most beneficial discussions of the conference, and Rhonda did an excellent job! Rhonda has brought her experience in the banking industry to the REA and uses this to ensure we are protected, and your member dollars are safe and handled responsibly. It is great to have someone like Rhonda on the REA Team. Because she is so well respected in our industry, she was asked to help educate the cooperative leaders. Thanks Rhonda!

As I have mentioned previously, staff has been working with the Wyoming Public Service Commission on a mandatory rewrite of our rules and regulations. This has been a process literally years in the making! After our recent meeting with the Commission, we have just a few minor changes to make before we are done. This has been a massive undertaking, required by the state regulatory agency. It will be a huge relief to have this behind us. Thanks to all the staff that have assisted in this project!

I hope you all have the merriest Christmas this year and that you are able to spend time with your loved ones and those you cherish, remembering the blessings which have been bestowed upon all of us! Since we won't have a January WREN edition, I also wish everyone a truly blessed New Year!

As always, I cannot say it enough, it is great to be here in Wheatland at your REA! We truly have a great bunch of employees at the REA and they are always willing to ensure you receive the best service we can provide! Thanks everyone.

Merry Christmas!

[www.wheatlandrea.com](http://www.wheatlandrea.com)

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## REA WINTER HOURS

**Monday - Friday**  
**8:00 AM - 4:30 PM**

OUTAGES-OPEN 24/7

## OUTAGE PHONE NUMBERS

(307) 322-2125  
(800) 344-3351  
**24 hours a day**

## STAFF

Donald E. Smith  
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Rhonda Apodaca  
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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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From the office of RKA...

I would like to wish you all a very joyful Christmas and a Happy New Year! I hope the year 2018 will bring you much joy and prosperity!

With the closing of the year on the calendar, we, here at the cooperative, are getting ready to close the 2017 books, perform the year-end processes to the computer system, and of course, prepare for the annual meeting.

Our 2018 annual meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 14. Two board members are up for re-election, and we will again have the Wellness Fair. More information will be forthcoming.

In the past, I have historically written about a rate increase that would be imposed in the coming year. I am happy to report that Tri-State is NOT increasing their rates to their members for 2018. Therefore, Wheatland REA will have no rate increase for 2018. As management, this by no means makes our jobs any easier. Since revenue will not be increasing for next year, we need to make the day-to-day operational expenses, along with capital expenditures, work on the same revenue stream. As you all know, materials, taxes, and the everyday expense items are not getting any cheaper. As the manager of the "monies," expenses will be monitored for next year.

Budget...such a simple word, but it makes my job adventuresome, to say the least. I spoke a little in the last insert about the 2018 budget. It is without a doubt going to be difficult, at best, to maintain and implement it successfully. Every year for Christmas, I always ask for a magical crystal ball that would help foresee a rough winter, a wet spring, a hot summer, etc., but since I haven't received one, I will continue to work my "magical pencil." The Board of Directors are very astute, and realize that 2018 might be a little challenging. I am confident that management, with the guidance of the board, will be successful.

In the last quarter of 2017, I attended various conferences and trainings. At each of these sessions, there was an expert discussing cyber security and the threat to cooperatives. It is very real. For us to sit back and say, "it just can't happen to this small co-op," would not only be naïve, we would not be doing our 'due diligence' for you, as members. The #1 threat right now is phishing e-mails. These are e-mails you get from someone which will have an attachment for you to open. When you open it, "boom," you have just let the attacker into your computer. The phishing e-mail is getting so convincing, sometimes the e-mails could be from someone you know, and often times will request you to wire funds to a certain account. If you receive any suspicious e-mails, PLEASE, do not open them, just delete them. If someone is really trying to contact you, and you deleted their e-mail, trust me, they will call you. Here at the co-op, we are constantly working on upgrading our systems to be "cyber-safe" but we cannot do it without all employees doing their parts by being cautious of suspicious e-mails, odd websites, etc. If you have any questions about cyber security or what you can do to protect yourself, give me a call. I have tons of notes on it!

Well, still pretty quiet at the house. The dogs got in plenty of pheasant hunting this year. They were awesome! I went with them to watch them work, and I swear they had frustrated looks on their faces, because they were working hard, but a certain hunter couldn't seem to shoot the birds! It wasn't me!!!  
Until 2018...



## SCHOLARSHIP TIME!

It is time to start thinking  
about the Wheatland REA

### Scholarships!

Information is available at the  
REA office, at  
[www.wheatlandrea.com](http://www.wheatlandrea.com),  
and at your high school!



## The Electric Safety Drawing Contest Is Coming Up!!!

Contest is open to all children in grades  
Kindergarten through 6th Grade.

Winning Drawings are sent to the Cody Hotline School for the state-wide contest.

- 1st Place (Each Grade) \$100 Platte County Pride Certificates
  - 2nd Place (Each Grade) \$50 Platte County Pride Certificates
  - 3rd Place (Each Grade) \$25 Platte County Pride Certificates
- Deadline to Submit Your Drawing Is  
March 2, 2018



## PEST-A-CATOR

Don't let rodents ruin your holidays.

Stop by Wheatland REA and  
purchase a **PEST-A-CATOR 2000  
PLUS!**



We would like to thank our  
Veterans who brought their  
uniforms in for everyone to enjoy  
during our Veteran's Day open  
house. Thank you for your  
service to our country!

# STEFFES

## Heating Systems



Electric Thermal  
Storage  
forced air  
central furnace  
system with  
heat pump coil.

Electric Thermal  
Storage  
room heater  
(3.6kW to 10.8  
kW).



Get more information at:  
[www.heatforlessnow.com](http://www.heatforlessnow.com)

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**And a Happy New Years  
From Wheatland REA!  
We will be closed on  
December 25, 2017 and  
January 1, 2018.**

**As you decorate this year,  
please keep these safety  
practices in mind...**

**Use only outdoor approved  
electric lighting and wiring.**

**Make sure all of your con-  
nections are waterproof.**

**Spread your decorative  
lighting out to  
multiple electric circuits  
to avoid overloading.**



## **81st ANNUAL MEMBERS' MEETING**

**MARCH 14, 2018**

**PLATTE CO.**

**4-H BUILDING**

**Watch for your annual  
meeting book in the mail  
(last week of February-  
first week of March).**



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