

Watts New

April, 2022

From The Desk Of . . . Don Smith, Manager

It is certainly Springtime in Wyoming! We had some snow this week, which was very welcomed, then it is a beautiful day as I write this, and next week there is a potential winter storm heading our way. Never boring weather!

As I write this article, we are preparing for our Annual Membership meeting next week! Our last actual face-to-face meeting was in 2019. It was 2 years ago that the pandemic situation was rapidly ramping up and last year our "Snowmeggedon" struck! And let us not forget the recent flooding at the 4H building which almost kept us from meeting there again. Those are two years that I will not miss. We are planning to see you at the Annual Meeting at the Agri-Plex.

In preparation for the meeting, I was preparing the report for the Annual Meeting booklet and reflecting on these last two years. At times, it has been one challenge after another. Restrictions, weather, supply chain issues, regulatory challenges, as well as the regular day-to-day things that come up. As the old Marine saying goes, "Adapt, Improve, and Overcome". That is what we have done at the REA! Every obstacle and every challenge provided an opportunity to adapt and overcome. In some cases, we had to learn new ways of doing things. In other situations, we had to get creative just to get through. Even today we are offered challenges and opportunities to improve, and the employees continue to always adapt and keep the lights on! It is a testament to our fantastic employees and the dedication they have to you, the member-owners of this REA!

You will receive this article in your April WREN magazine and as you have heard me say before, April is a month that we recognize two of the greatest employee groups, the Linemen and the Administrative Professionals! The linemen are out there in the weather. They are the visible ones braving the cold, the snow and the incessant wind (especially this past year). They are the ones that get the call in the middle of the night to fix the line to get your heat back on when it is darn cold outside. We thank them and their families for all they do! The Administrative Professionals work behind the scenes to keep it all flowing. They ensure the supplies are coming in so the linemen can get the field work done. They don't get to enjoy the bright sunny days that can sometimes make up for the subzero windchills and ice crystals blowing in the face. The Administrative Professionals maintain a smile when someone is upset because their power is out or need to be told that their bill needs to be paid. These are professionals too! We recognize both groups this month and say thank you for their dedication and professionalism!

We continue to fight the fight in the broader realm of Tri-State, Colorado, and at the federal level. I recently received a schedule on some of the cases being heard by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). We anticipate seeing some decisions early this summer, and some of the larger case decisions being scheduled for the end of the year. Regardless of how these decisions come out, don't think that it will end there, as whatever is decided can be appealed by a dissatisfied party in federal court. On the Colorado side, just about as soon as we finish the arguments on the current Electric Resource Plan (ERP), Tri-State is required to file another ERP in 2023. We will see what the future brings.

As always, it is a pleasure to serve you, the fantastic member-owners of Wheatland REA. It is also a pleasure to be able to work with the awesome employees of the REA. I think we live in an area where honor and integrity still abide! Thank you for all you do! If you ever have any questions, please stop in or give me a call.



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From the desk of RKA....

Happy Spring to all of you!!! Yes, it is here! This month is Line Worker Appreciation Month and specifically April 11, 2022, is Line Worker Appreciation Day. My article is specifically geared to our line workers and their dedication to our co-op.

I know that you have noticed the Wheatland REA crews out and about, working on power lines and other electrical equipment in our territory. It is no secret that their job is tough but it is a job that is essential and must be done, often in challenging conditions. Here are some interesting facts about electric line workers that I would like to share with you.

The work can be heavy, in more ways than one. Did you know the equipment and tools that a line worker carries while climbing a pole can weigh up to 50 pounds? That is the same as carrying six gallons of water. Speaking of poles, our line workers are required to climb poles ranging anywhere from 30 to 85 feet tall. Needless to say, if you have a fear of heights, this might not be the best career path for you.

Line workers must be committed to their career because it is not just a job. It is a lifestyle. The long and ever present danger can truly take a toll. In fact, being a line worker is listed in the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S.

Line workers sometimes work non-traditional hours and outdoors in difficult conditions. While the job does not require a college degree, it does require technical skills, years of training, and hands-on learning. Did you know to become a journeyman line worker that it can take more than 8,000 hours of training (or about four years)? That is because working with high-voltage equipment requires specialized skills, experience, and an ongoing mental toughness. Shortcuts are not an option, and there is no room for error in this line of work.

Despite the many challenges, Wheatland REA's line workers are committed to powering our territory. During severe weather events that bring major power outages (remember March 2021?), the line workers are among the first ones called. They must be ready to leave the comfort of their home and families unexpectedly, and they do not return until the job is done, sometimes many days later. That is why the line worker's family is also dedicated to service. They understand the importance of the job.

Nationwide, there are approximately 120,000 electric line workers. Here at the REA, we have 15 employees that are line workers and other operational employees that are responsible for keeping power flowing 24/7, 365 days a year. To do this, they maintain 1,805.95 miles of power lines across four counties and 4,186.67 square miles.

Being a line worker may not seem like a glamorous job, but it is essential to the life of our community. Without the exceptional dedication and commitment of these hardworking men, we simply would not have the reliable electricity that we depend on for everyday life.

So, thank you, Wheatland REA line workers! We so appreciate all that you do!!





APRIL IS LINEMAN APPRECIATION MONTH!

When the weather is bad, the lights are out, and your house is getting cold... these guys are out there, in the cold, the wind, and the snow, working in the dark to find and fix your problem. We have an amazing group of hard working, dependable guys! If you see them out and about tell them **THANK YOU!**

ETS MEMBERS

A quick reminder: At midnight on April 30, 2022, all time-of-day members with “electric thermal storage heat” will automatically switch back to the standard residential electric rate for the months of May, June, July, and August.

SUMMER HOURS

May 2nd - Sept. 30th
Monday through Thursday
7:00 AM to 5:30 PM

BUDGET BILLING

April is sign-up month... Don't forget to call the office today! (307) 322-2125



Plan to attend!!

May 14th from 9AM - 3PM
At the Platte County Agriplex

This show will feature everything you will need for your home and garden. Come develop ideas for your own projects. There will be an arts & crafts area at the show.

KIWANIS

KIDS DAY OF DISCOVERY

Join us May 7th at the Wheatland Fire Training grounds for a fun family day of exploration! Quiet hour is from 9-10 am and the event ends at 2 pm. This will be in conjunction with “A Book and A Bite”.

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ELECTRIC SAFETY CLASSES

We have been busy teaching electric safety classes to our schools and communities. Join us, it may save your life!



**THANKS FOR EVERYTHING YOU DO
TO KEEP US RUNNING SMOOTHLY!**



HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR 85TH ANNUAL MEETING



**Congratulations
Amy Miller, our
newest director!**

