



December 2016

Tammy Mills, Editor



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

What a ride!

It is now the day following Election Day as I write this month's article and it certainly has been a ride! Just goes to show how inaccurate the survey polls can be. We need to be careful not to be swayed by public opinion. We need to do our own research on these issues and then vote our consensus. I hope everyone took advantage and exercised their right to vote! Where ever you put your mark, whatever your opinion, I hope you voiced it! I personally am grateful for this great nation and the freedoms we are able to enjoy, such as the right to vote!

Speaking of voting, we are beginning to gear up for our Annual Membership Meeting, scheduled for March 15, 2017! In addition to the director elections this year, we will also be presenting some recommendations for changes to the Association By-Laws. As I mentioned last month, this process has included a complete review of the By-Laws by several board members, staff members, and our attorney, Steve Sherard, over the last several months and comparison to Wyoming state statutes, as well as best practices. We will be reviewing these recommendations at area meetings scheduled for December at various locations in the territory. The dates, times and locations for these area meetings are listed in this edition of the WREN.



At the area meetings this year, we will be discussing the upcoming rate increase. We are doing our best to keep the increase to a minimum. As part of the assessment of the rates, we completed a new Cost of Service Study (COSS) for the overall system. This COSS looks at the Association's cost on all the various rate classes, and calculates what it costs to serve the average of each class. This COSS shows that this year, we should not see the significant adjustments we saw last year when needed to change the method we charged for the different components of your bills; this year should be more simplified percentages. We will have the details and examples of these adjustments to the different rate classes at the area meetings.

After this election I think I am going to be a little retrospective...This is a very dynamic time in the utility industry and the country as a whole. In my career I have never seen such a volatile period with no end in sight. Historically, the electric utility industry has been very stable, even to the point of being stagnant, and maybe that is one reason why we are seeing so much volatility now. We have been poised for change. Electric utilities have been extending power to consumers for over 100 years and we still string virtually the same type of wire to the same type of wood poles as we did back then. Electricity is still, for the most part, generated by turning wires inside a magnet. The fuel to turn the wire may vary, but it is the same basic method we have done for over 100 years. While these are tried and true methods, and they still work, there is always room for improvement and we need to be aware and be willing to look at new methods and materials. As with any impending change I have always felt that it is best to be part of the process than to have to take what others throw at you. One way to say this is that "It is better to be at the table than on the menu." We will continue to do our best to look for options and ways to provide input to this change and ensure we are doing whatever we can to protect and serve you, our member-owners.

As always, it is great to be here at Wheatland REA and work with such great employees, board members and you! If you have any questions or comments please stop in and say hello! Have a great Christmas everyone and I hope to see you at the area meetings!



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

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From the Office of RKA.....

I want to wish you all a very joyful Christmas and prosperous New Year! With the closing of the year on the calendar, we are busy working on getting ready to close the 2016 books, year-end process for the computer system, and of course, preparing for the annual meeting.

This year our annual meeting will be held Wednesday, March 15, 2017. We have two board members up for re-election. We will again have the Wellness Fair for our members. More information on the annual meeting will be forthcoming as we head closer to the date.

With the New Year, there are always changes. Sometimes change isn't always well received but change is change. Here, at the cooperative, we are definitely not without change! 2017 is filled with challenges, with the changes ahead.

One of the difficult changes is a rate increase. Tri-State Generation and Transmission is looking at approximately a 4.6% rate increase to us. The Board is working diligently in making this increase work. As always, if a rate increase is approved by the Board, you will be notified. We know that it seems that the only thing happening here is the fact that your rates are increasing each year. Please know that we are well aware of it and understand your concerns. Unfortunately, an increase of 4.6% cannot be absorbed by this cooperative without some rate influx. Changes in the energy industry, EPA regulations, and industry-related increases in expenses is forcing Tri-State to invoke this rate increase to us.

Something that the Board has been working on that isn't really a change, but more of an upgrade, is the revision of our Articles and By-Laws. We will be holding area meetings to go over these revisions. This process was more of a "cleanup" of wording to comply with state statutes, and other small details. The area meetings will include a question and answer period, and you will vote on the revisions at the annual meeting. Again, please watch for more details and information on when and where.

Budget....such a simple word and yet it makes my job adventuresome at least. Our 2017 budget is without a doubt going to be difficult (at best) to maintain and be able to implement successfully. I am not a weatherman and don't have a crystal ball. If I did, it would make the budget easier to decide and help with things, such as: are we going to have a rough winter, moisture in the spring, hot summer, etc.? We will see. If any of you can foresee what is going to happen, please call! I will gladly add you on to the payroll. LOL!

Well, I haven't talked about my furry friends for a while. Drake, the youngest dog, is really a cat with nine lives but he's now down to probably 3 or 4. It seems like every 3 weeks he has to go into the vet clinic for something. Fortunately or unfortunately, whichever way you want to look at it, they are all legitimate problems. The last vet that looked at him said, "Man, this dog has one heck of a long chart for only being a year old." Like you are telling us anything we didn't know? Both kids are in college, hopefully getting smarter, and working on careers that they will enjoy as they set out in the real world someday.

Until 2017.....

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## CHRISTMAS SHOPPING?

Make your Christmas \$ go further...  
Shop these fine merchants...they give our  
members discounts!

(You must present your "Co-op Connections  
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ASSOCIATION



## 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!

APPLICATION DEADLINE...FEBRUARY 15TH  
DON'T BE LATE!

## PEST-A-CATOR

Don't let rodents ruin your holidays. Come  
into the Wheatland REA and  
purchase a **PEST-A-CATOR 2000**



## AREA MEETINGS!

For more information please read Don Smith's  
article.

### Wheatland Area Meeting

Tuesday, December 13th at 2:00 p.m. at  
First State Bank Conference Center

### Glendo Area Meeting

Thursday, December 15th at 10:00 a.m. at  
Glendo Town Hall

### Chugwater Area Meeting

Thursday, December 15th at 3:00 p.m. at  
Chugwater Senior Center



**MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR**



*We will be closed on Dec 26th, 2016  
and Jan. 2nd, 2017*



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 connections are waterproof.

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



**80th ANNUAL  
MEMBERS' MEETING**

**MARCH 15, 2017**

PLATTE CO.

4-H BUILDING

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

