

Watts New

September, 2020

From The Desk Of . . . Don Smith, Manager

It is hard to believe that fall is almost here. A summer like no other, hot and dry! Our large power load is down, and irrigation load is up. It goes with the rest of 2020, a year of abnormalities and extremes. I personally hope these are not the new normal!

There has been quite a bit going on at the REA, even outside the pandemic stuff. We have had public safety issues, and worked at the state fair. We have folks working with businesses on new large loads at the Guernsey Tank Farm. We have had contractors in town doing our annual line re-clearing, as well as contractors testing and treating our wood poles. We have watched various wildfires spring up in our area. We also received the loan of a Tesla electric vehicle. I will highlight a few of these areas.

On the safety side of things, PLEASE DO NOT PUT ANYTHING into or near a power line or our equipment! This includes plastic pipe, boards, sticks, branches, ANYTHING! Some of the power lines in this area run at 345,000 volts. Our linemen's tools are specially designed, tested and treated to deal with the appropriate voltage, whereas a piece of PVC pipe is neither designed nor tested for working around voltages and can result in severe injury or death. If there is something in the line, just call us or 911, and we will get it taken care of! We think the world of you and don't want any of you to get hurt!

Also, along the lines of safety, there have been a few wildfires flare up in the area. I would like to compliment the firefighters and other first responders for getting on these fires quickly and getting them contained in short order! This year, 2020 events or not, with the extreme weather conditions we've experienced, it's not the year to let a fire get out of hand! Our first responders leave their families, jobs, and other responsibilities to make sure we are safe, and our resources are protected. Thanks for all you do!

In August, Wheatland REA, Tri-State G&T, and the other electric cooperatives in Wyoming, worked at the Wyoming State Fair. We were concerned that it would be cancelled at the last minute, considering all of the pandemic restrictions. However, Al Teel continued to press forward with the planning, in case it did happen, and it did! I have not seen the attendance numbers, but my perception is they were down a little, but not that bad considering everything. Those folks that were there seemed to be having a great time and enjoyed being out and interacting with others. I was thrilled to run into a few of you up there, and enjoyed the few minutes we had to talk!

Prior to the State Fair, Wheatland REA received the loan of a Tesla electric vehicle (EV) to test and get out in the community, and we had it on display at the fair. While EV's have been around for a few years in more urban areas, their exposure in more rural areas has been limited. I have driven it around a bit, and pushed the distance of the battery, and I think it performed well. I am not saying it will be a replacement for my ¾ ton truck anytime soon, but as a pavement vehicle, it has been comfortable. With planning, charging has not been much of an issue. The idea of EV's being tested by an electric company is that they are just another electric load, and the more load we serve, the more our costs are shared. Like I said, this is a pavement vehicle, and while I will not admit to how fast I had it up to, let's just say it will easily reach highway speeds in a very short time!

Looking ahead, October is National Cooperative Month. Since you do not receive the WREN magazine with our articles until about mid-month, we want to let you know now that we are planning some celebrations in October. Please watch for announcements on our website, Facebook page, and in your bill. We look forward to celebrating with you!

As always, it is a pleasure to serve you, the fantastic member-owners of Wheatland REA! Hope you are doing well through all of 2020. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns. Thanks again! Stop in and see us!



**Watts New is a publication of
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**REA SUMMER HOURS
Monday - Thursday
7:00 AM - 5:30 PM
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From the office of RKA...

Welcome to September 2020! As the summer is ending, I hope everyone got kids back to school and college safely and we have a bountiful harvest season.

Here at the co-op, we have been staying busy. In August, we participated in both the county parade and the state fair parade. We also had a booth all week at the State Fair, which was manned by employees of co-ops from around the state. Kudos to Big Al for taking on the huge responsibility of organizing this event! It is not an easy task.



I would bet that I am not the only person that is looking forward to some cooler temperatures. I'm sure that you all noticed your summer bills had an increase in usage. Our power bill for July 2020, from Tri-State Generation and Transmission, was the largest I've seen since I've been here! We haven't received the power bill yet for August, but I'm confident it is going to be another large one!

Every September, it is time for the cooperative to run the capital credit allocations for the previous year's margins. This year, the mailing of our allocation notices will be delayed until October. Because this year's audit was held later than normal due to COVID19 concerns, the audit report and approval from the Board of Directors is also delayed. The allocations cannot be processed until the Board approves the audit of the 2019 financials. Just a friendly reminder, this is only a notice of what is being allocated to your account, and not the amount of the capital credit retirement check that you will receive in 2021. If you have any questions, please call the office.

Fall is the time we start planning our 2021 budget. It is truly a challenge because there are so many factors that play into our financial status every year. You know Mother Nature, don't you? Well, that is a big one, as is another factor that we all know, COVID19! It plays a factor in so many areas, including the day to day work. It is a time for management to look at "what we have done in the past" and realize that might not necessarily be the "norm" upon which we can still depend. We have to rethink, revisit, and come up with new ideas that will be the best for the cooperative.

Hmmm, home front... We are completing the remodeling of our patio which then results in another job and another, etc. We have some painting to do, replacing the siding on both the house and the detached garage, and putting up a fence, and the list goes on and on. This does keep the hubby busy and active, but then there is hunting around the corner, and not to mention fall fishing. Remember last month when I made the comment of just using a large blanket, an old lawn chair, and a cheap cooler? Well, you might drive by and see if that is becoming reality!!!

Until next month...



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The power of human connections®

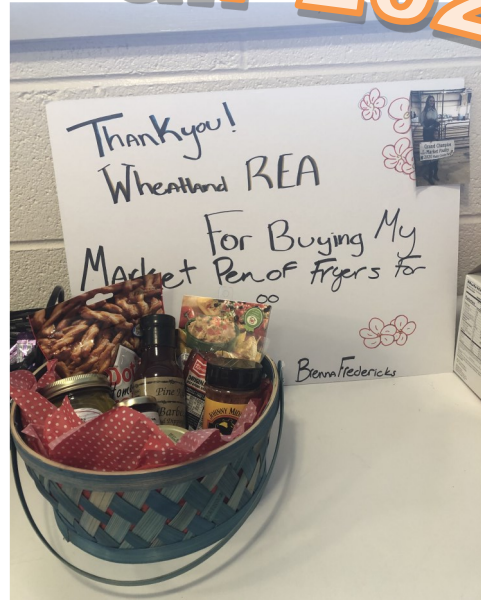


Platte County Fair 2020



Our float didn't win anything, but we came together as a team, built the float, and supported our community during the fair.

We wish to extend a special "THANK YOU!" to Don Race for loaning the REA one of his decorative windmills. Don makes windmills and several other types of decorative pieces that fit nicely into most landscaping schemes.



Not only does 4-H teach work ethic to our youth, it teaches them courtesy and manners that will serve them well into the future. This is a very nice "thank you" from Brenna Fredericks.



**OKTOBERFEST
SEPTEMBER 24TH
DOWNTOWN WHEATLAND
COME AND
SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY!**



**REMEMBER TO CHANGE YOUR
FURNACE FILTER EVERY
3 MONTHS**

Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)
Winter 2020-2021

Applications are available online
October 1, 2020 to February 28, 2021:

Department of Family Services
<http://dfsweb.state.wy.us>
-OR-
Wyoming LIEAP
<http://lieapwyo.org>

Applications can also be picked up at your local Department of Family Services office.

LIEAP assistance dates:
November 1, 2020 (Dec. 1st bill) through May, 2021 (June 1st bill).

Call 1-800-246-4221 if you would like to request an application or if you have questions.

WYOMING STATE FAIR 2020



HIGHLIGHTS BY THE NUMBERS

1. Wheatland REA Director, Candy Geringer.
2. Courtney Conkle, State Fair GM, tries her hand at climbing.
3. Jason Wright, lending a hand on fair set-up day.
4. Wheatland REA Director, Sandy Hbranchak and young climber.
5. Brent Jensen, and Benito Maya of PRECorp, giving climbing lessons.
6. Darci Tamlin, manning the information booth.
7. Darci Tamlin and Poston Anderson helping fair visitors.
8. Darci Tamlin giving a "tour" of the Tesla EV.
9. Poston Anderson and Al Teel teaching Director Hbranchak how to climb.
10. Parade entry: Tesla and banner highlighting that electric vehicles are powered by Wyoming coal, natural gas and wind. It won 1st place in the service/non-profit division.
11. We had two sanitizer stations, and a tank full of cold water for passersby.
12. Poston Anderson & Clay Becker teaching electric safety.
13. Parade entry: Wheatland REA's digger truck promoting the Wyoming electric co-ops' sponsorship of the state fair.
14. Thank you Wheatland Country Store for donating the stock tank to ice the water we gave away at the fair- 4,560 bottles!

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