



Come to YOUR Annual Meeting

Registration

9:00 am to 10:30 am

Shorter Meeting

10:30 am to 12:00 noon

Register by 10:30 am

Every member that registers by 10:30 am will receive a \$50 bill credit

Have lunch on us

Lunch served at noon

FREE Childcare!

Childcare will be offered by Lil' Red Wagon Childcare

Grand Prize

One lucky member will win a \$500 bill credit!



Outages are Unavoidable

Outages are unavoidable in electric utility systems. Overhead distribution wires will break as automobile drivers crash into wooden utility poles, or from the weight of ice on lines during winter storms. Wind can blow tree branches into lines, which will short circuit the distribution line, causing fuses or reclosers to interrupt the electric current. Distribution transformers or high-voltage switchgear will sometimes fail. Mother

Nature will cast her spell on the weather and lightning or hail will cause problems. For these reasons, no reasonable utility will guarantee continuous electricity to its customers. Rules and regulations approved by the Wyoming Public Service Commission specify that the utility is not liable for damage caused by outages, except for "gross negligence" on Big Horn REA's part.

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FACEBOOK



Big Horn REA is now on Facebook! As a part of our commitment to our members we will use this page to update you on current happenings with your cooperative – outages, Annual Meeting, District meetings, scholarships, Energy Camp, updates on our new office, safety and much more! If you have suggestions for items we can post, please call our office at (800) 564-2419. <https://www.facebook.com/BigHornRuralElectric/>

CLOSED

Big Horn REA offices will be closed Monday, February 19th in observance of Presidents' Day.



Outages

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Will the co-op pay for food that spoils?

Unless the outage was caused by negligence on Big Horn Rural Electric's part, our insurance will not pay for food that might spoil due to electric service interruptions. Food in a chest freezer will keep for 72 hours if you do not open the freezer frequently. You can also place heavy blankets on the freezer to slow defrost.

Will the co-op pay for damage to appliances, electronic equipment or other personal property damaged in a power loss or during power restoration?

Again, unless the outage was caused by negligence on Big Horn Rural Electric's part our insurance company will not pay for damage. Following a storm, it's possible that service restored in one spot could be temporarily impacted by work elsewhere, including an accident or emergency condition that requires us to temporarily turn power off at the request of police or fire. We encourage customers to consider precautions, such as unplugging, turning off or limiting use of electronically sensitive and/or non-essential appliances.

Take Precaution

Homeowners can protect digital electronics with surge suppressors. As the term implies, these devices suppress a fluctuating power supply by diverting excess voltage to a ground wire. There are several types of whole-house surge suppressors available, although none of them are able to fully stand up to the enormous power spike caused by lightning.



"It's important to remember that many of your devices may be connected to other outlets, like satellite, cable, phone, and Internet lines," Kendal Wambeke, Line Superintendent, adds. "Surge protectors are available with options to protect these conduits as well. And make sure the manufacturer guarantees to cover the cost of replacing any damaged equipment that was attached."

10 Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Looking to lower your bills this winter? Use the 10 tips below to conserve energy.

- 1 Seal air leaks and insulate well to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.
- 2 Reduce waste heat by installing a programmable thermostat.
- 3 Turn off lights when not in use.
- 4 Lower your water heater temperature. The Dept. of Energy recommends using the warm setting (120 degrees) during fall and winter months.
- 5 Unplug electronics like kitchen appliances and TVs when you're away.
- 6 Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home.
- 7 Close blinds and curtains at night to keep cold, drafty air out.
- 8 Use power strips for multiple appliances, and turn off the main switch when you're away from home.
- 9 Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.
- 10 Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

Stay Away...Stay Alive

Each year a number of accidents involving contact with high-voltage power lines occur, often resulting in serious injury or death. Big Horn REA is committed to distributing electricity safely, but **WE NEED YOUR HELP** to ensure your safety and the safety of our employees.

Federal and state governments, in an effort to prevent these types of accidents, have enacted laws to provide safer working conditions in areas around high voltage power lines. These laws generally make it illegal for an individual to work closer than 10 feet to or to permit any tool, equipment or other object within 10 feet of an energized overhead power line. Please remember that high voltage power lines are NOT insulated.

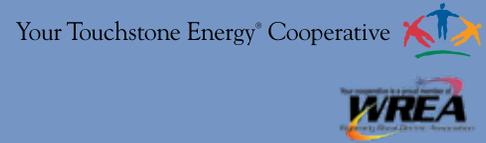
In case of a contact, please take the following steps: keep everyone away from the equipment. Caution the operator not to leave the equipment until the power line has been de-energized by Big Horn REA and grounded. If it becomes necessary to leave the equipment, jump entirely free with both feet together so that no parts of the body are in contact with the equipment and the ground at the same time. Call Big Horn REA and 911. Do not touch any person, vehicle or equipment that is in contact with the wires. If a person does contact electrified equipment, CPR can be administered after the victim has been cleared from the contact and moved a reasonable distance.

Underground facilities may look harmless, but they are as dangerous as overhead power lines. If you should find a transformer that is open or has been knocked off its pad, stay away and notify Big Horn REA immediately.

The following safety tips will help prevent accidental contact with overhead power lines; however, the most important element of accident prevention is to **make safety the number one priority.**

- Always look for power lines before beginning any type of construction work. Pre-job planning is a major factor in preventing accidents.
- Call Big Horn REA for a safety check of the area if power lines are present.
- Never work closer than 10 feet to a power line.
- Lower truck beds, aerial lifts, booms and other construction equipment before passing under power lines.
- Keep ladders, scaffolding, antennas and other equipment 10 feet or more away from power lines.
- Designate one person as a "watcher" on the ground to guide machine operators whose vision may be obstructed.
- Keep fellow workers aware of the hazards of power line contacts
- Never touch a fallen wire or any object that is in contact with a wire. Always assume that a fallen wire is energized and keep clear of it.
- Never use aluminum or metal ladders near power lines.
- Even though they look harmless, ALWAYS stay away from pad mounted underground transformers and enclosures.

Manager's Message



The year of 2018 is upon all us and the statements of "Be Safe" and "Safety: Think About It" will continue to be made by Big Horn REA throughout the year. Big Horn had multiple incidents of equipment and vehicles coming in contact with power poles and energized lines last year. We are very fortunate that no one was injured or killed. On the positive side, in 2017 Big Horn's crew conducted ten line safety demonstrations with area first responders and schools. Big Horn reminds everyone to contact us immediately if there is an incident with our equipment so we can respond promptly and de-energize the line and keep everyone safe.

The 2018 budget was approved by the board at the December 2017 board meeting. In 2018 some of the items Big Horn

will be working on and committing resources towards include: building/upgrading lines to improve system capacity and reliability; testing poles; refunding capital credits; completing construction of the new office building which is scheduled for completion by July 1, 2018; and tree removal. One item that is always part of our plans every day is to provide reliable electric energy with quality service to our member/owners.

Big Horn has recently started a Facebook page to keep our members and citizens informed of community events, outages, safety reminders, and of course other items rela-

tive to your cooperative. Further, to learn more about your cooperative, please plan on attending the annual meeting on March 17, 2018. Your involvement is important.

Thanks for being a member of Big Horn REA and allowing the board and employees to serve you.

Be Safe.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Looking for an easy way to make your home cozier? Try using an area rug to increase the insulation levels of your floors. Area rugs are stylish and can keep cool air from entering through your floors. Your toes will thank you!



HIGHLIGHTS

is an official publication of
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ELECTRIC COMPANY**

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Carrie Hunt	

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).

Big Horn Rural Electric Company is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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