




Big Horn Rural Electric Company

Your Touchstone Energy© Cooperative 

Welcome to Big Horn Rural Electric Company

Congratulations! You're now a proud new member/owner of Big Horn Rural Electric Company (Big Horn REA) - a business owned by the people it serves.

Use this owner's manual as a guide to your cooperative. You'll find you receive quality electric service at the lowest cost, you elect the people who represent you on the board of directors, and you have access to a variety of services designed to meet your needs. Welcome to the utility that you and other members actually own.

By receiving electric service from Big Horn Rural Electric Company, you are continuing the dream begun by the rural friends and neighbors who formed this electric cooperative in 1937. When municipal and investor-owned utilities refused to serve this area because it was too costly to bring power to folks "in the country", local leaders decided to provide the service themselves by forming a cooperative.

Today, our programs reflect a spirit of cooperation forged through partnership with members. It is a way of doing business that sets us apart from other utilities, and it is the foundation for our continued growth and success.



The Benefits of Membership

True Cost of Service

Big Horn Rural Electric Company operates as an IRS 501(c) 12, not-for-profit. Since you own the cooperative, it is self-defeating to make a profit from you.

Capital Credits

Big Horn Rural Electric Company operates on a not-for-profit basis. Any excess monies after expenses are paid and allocated to each member's capital credits account based on how much that member paid the cooperative for the electric service.



Each year, the board of directors determines when some portion of capital credits may be returned, while ensuring the co-op's financial health. Be sure to keep Big Horn REA informed of your current address so that your check may be delivered to you when a capital credits return occurs.

Election Process for the Board of Directors

December

The board of directors appoints a nominating committee.

January

Nominating committee meets to go over By-Laws and Policies

February

Letters are sent to each member in the districts to let them know which district is up for election seeking candidates.

March

Nominating committee meets and nominate director candidates. Nominations may also be received by petition.

April

Each member is mailed a District Meeting invites with date, time, and place.

May

Big Horn Rural Electric Company's District Meetings are held. Mail-In ballots, candidate info and company financial information is mailed.

June

Mail-In ballots are due and directors are officially elected.

Ownership Regulation

You have a voice in running your co-op by electing members to a board of directors who provide oversight for the cooperative. The directors determine the general direction of the co-op by setting policies, making financial decisions and establishing goals.

Ownership

Big Horn REA is a democratically-governed private electric utility owned by the members it serves. Co-op members influence the way in which the co-op operates by electing a board of directors to represent them. This board of directors is made up of members just like you.

Local Accountability

Your co-op is accountable to you, not to managers or investors who run things from far away. Co-op employees are people you know. You may see them at the grocery store, ball games or at worship because they and their families live here, too.

One way Big Horn REA gives back to members is to help the communities we serve. Co-op employees volunteer their time and talents. Here is another way we help:

Operation RoundUp

Through Operation RoundUp, participating members agree to have their bills "rounded up" to the nearest dollar, with 100% of the funds going to local charitable causes.

Big Horn REA RoundUp Foundation's board is a separate board from the Big Horn board and administers the funds. Applications are available at www.bighornrea.com/roundup-donations.



Payment & Billing Options

Pay by Bank Draft

By signing up for bank draft (ACH), members can have their monthly power bill automatically deducted from their bank via electronic funds transfer from a checking or savings account on or about the 21st of each month.

Key benefits:

- Prompt payment of electric bill
- We handle the payment for you, no worry on your part.
- One less check to write each month.

Access Your Account Online

At www.bighornrea.com, view your current bill, a billing history, or pay your bill online. You can make payments with confidence that your transactions are safe.

You have the ability to pay by credit card, debit card or by e-check (use the information from your checking account). The card company does charge a convenience fee of 2.45% on each transaction (this is not a Big Horn REA fee). To use the e-check feature, a \$1 fee per account is charged.

If you would like to access your information online, click on Pay My Bill, then on New User to set up your online account. You will need your account number and the last four digits of your phone number that was wrote down on your membership application.

Pay at the Bank

The following banks accept payments from our members:

Bank of Greybull

Bank of Lovell

Bank of Powell

Security State Bank—Basin

You must have your bill stub(s) with your payment to ensure credit to the proper account(s).

Pay by Phone with Credit, Debit Card or Check

You can pay by phone with your credit or debit card or with a check. Simply call our office at (307)-568-2419 or (800)564-2419 and we can help you make a payment to your account(s).

The card company does charge a convenience fee of 2.45% on each transaction (this is not a Big Horn REA fee). To use the e-check feature, a \$1 fee per account is charged.

WE ACCEPT



Pay in Person

You may always pay your bill in person at our headquarters office:

415 South St, Basin, WY 82410

Office Hours: M-F 8:00am—5:00pm

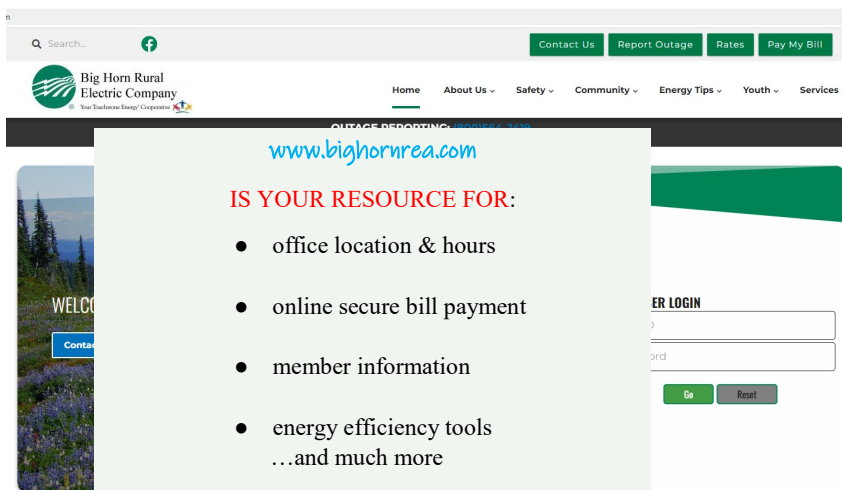
A drop box is available in the alley by the garage for after-hours or weekends.

Budget Billing

Members have the option of even monthly payments after living in a residence for one year. The member's electrical usage will be averaged for a 12-month period to calculate the monthly payments.

Program Guidelines:

- Residential Accounts only
- Sign up for this service any time
- Must have a usage history for a period of 12 consecutive months
- Account for electric service must be current in payments
- Must complete a Budget Billing Plan Agreement
- May is the "true-up" month—you will be billed for any portion of your electric bill that was not covered by your budget bill amount, or you will receive a check for any credit you have built up but not used. Your budget bill amount for the upcoming year will also be set.



Residential Rates and Service Charges

Big Horn REA is a not-for-profit business. The rates we charge are to cover costs, not produce profit margins. Our Commitment is delivering reliable power at the lowest possible cost.

Basic Facility Charge

The component of our rate that seems to cause the most confusion is the monthly facility charge. Each Rate classification has a "base facility charge" component. The basic facility charge on the Small General Service rate is \$50.00 per month. Members sometimes have the mistaken perception that they receive no service or benefit for this monthly charge.

However there are costs incurred just from being connected as a consumer, whether or not you use any energy.

In addition to Big Horn's base distribution system of substations, lines regulators, etc., an individual electric

facility requires a service drop, meter, transformer and distribution line. All those facilities necessitate continued maintenance to ensure that

power is available when called for. Interest, taxes, depreciation, insurance, line losses and other operating expenses associated with these facilities continue whether or not any electric energy is used. There are also ongoing customer support, billing and accounting expenses that are independent of the amount of energy used. The monthly basic facility charge is necessary to cover these costs.

Due Dates

You will generally receive your bill no later than the 10th of each month. Your bill is due upon receipt, but no later than the 25th of each month. For those accounts that have not been paid by the 25th of the month, a delinquent notice will be mailed and a penalty will be assessed when we push billing. If payment is not received within 7 days of the delinquent notice, disconnect procedures will be started.

If service is disconnected due to non-payment, the delinquent bill, additional deposit and a reconnect fee must be paid to have service restored. There is an additional service charge if a trip is made after normal working hours to reconnect the service.

Failure to receive a bill does not release you from your obligation

Programs and Services

Energy Audits

To help keep your power costs low, Big Horn REA offers free energy audits. At your request, our qualified personnel will visit your home and offer improvement ideas for energy savings. The energy audit will help you prioritize energy saving measures.

Rental Yard Light

Big Horn REA members are eligible for rental yard lights. Yard lights provide safety and peace of mind, lengthen your outdoor evenings and discourage intruders. There is no installation charge for a rental yard light and the monthly fee is low. Call the office a (307)-568-2419 or (800)564-2419 if you are interested in having a rental yard light installed.

WREN Magazine

The WREN (Wyoming Rural Electric News) Magazine is our official publication. It features human interest, horticulture and energy efficiency articles, as well as recipes, events calendar and items for sale. Big Horn REA provides this magazine to members free of charge.

Highlights Newsletter

Your co-op's monthly newsletter, Highlights, is mailed to you as an insert in the WREN Magazine each month. Big Horn REA encourages you to read your newsletter for information on rate changes, revised policies, safety information and member meetings.



Energy Efficiency Rebates

Big Horn REA, along with our power supplier Tri-State Generation & Transmission, are happy to provide energy efficiency rebates to our members. Rebates are offered for Energy Star rated appliances, heat pumps, water heaters, outdoor power equipment, and qualified irrigation pumps.

In order to submit your appliance for a rebate, we will need to know the brand, model number, if it is energy start rated and we will need a copy of your receipt, 90-days after purchase or installment. If you have any questions about our rebate program, please call (307)-568-2419.



Scholarships

Each year Big Horn REA provides scholarships to students attending college, vocational school or line school. To be eligible student's parents or legal guardian must be a current cooperative member whose primary residence is served by Big Horn REA. Scholarship awards are funded by unclaimed capital credits. Interested students can contact their high school counselor, call the Big Horn REA office or download a scholarship application at www.bighornrea.com/scholarships.



Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp (Energy Camp)

Each July Big Horn Rural Electric Company sends a group of students (sophomores, juniors, or seniors) to the Colorado Electric Education Institute Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp, near Steamboat Springs, Colorado for a one week camp. All expenses are paid and transportation provided by Big Horn REA.

This camp offers a great opportunity for high school students to learn about the way a cooperative does business. They elect their own general manager and board members from among their peers and basically run the "electric co-op". They visit various points of interest, as well as learn about government and build on their communication and leadership skills.

A number of special presentations are highlighted at the camp including electricity safety, leadership skills, avian protection, and a simulation to help students understand the legislative process. The group will visit the Craig Station Power Plant and the Trapper Coal Mine which supplies Craig, CO.



Of course, there is plenty of time for recreation. Glen Eden Resort has a volleyball court, swimming pool, hot tubs, and tennis courts. There will be a dance, pizza parties, banquet, a

trip to the top of Mt. Warner, time to explore Steamboat Springs, and a raft trip down the Colorado River.

Application forms are sent to the Guidance Counselor at each of the area high schools in October each year. Applications are also available on our website—www.bighornrea.com/energy-camp. To be eligible, the student's parents must have their primary residence served by Big Horn REA.

Youth Tour to Washington D.C.

The annual Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. program is sponsored by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. It brings hundreds of high school students to our nation's capital each year for an exciting week of educational activities, tours and fun. Big Horn REA annually sponsors students who have attended "energy camp" the previous year. Applicants for Youth Tour are interviewed by staff at Wyoming Rural Electric Association to determine eligibility.



Safety Programs

Big Horn REA offers many programs to ensure electrical safety for you and your family. To be certain you are well informed, the Highlights newsletter routinely features safety tips and articles. In addition, Big Horn REA provides safety presentations for school, civic groups and other organizations. Big Horn created a high voltage trailer to use for educational purposes.



Big Horn Rural Electric Company is committed to providing you with reliable and safe electricity. Part of that commitment includes educating our members and the community about the power and danger of electricity.



EMERGENCY SERVICES

When the Power Goes Out, So Do We

Time is of the Essence -

Although Big Horn REA takes preventive measures to maintain rights-of-way and sustain our electric distribution system, power outages are still caused from time to time due to fallen trees, lightning, human error or equipment failure. Regardless of the cause, rest assured the power restoration process begins as soon as an outage is reported. Our employees are committed to getting your lights back on as quickly as possible.

During a storm

If you experience a power outage, please call (800)564-2419. This number is answered 24-hours a day, 365 days a year. After hours, this number is answered by our answering service who are very knowledgeable of our system and will get our crews dispatched quickly.



Restoring Power

Restoring power after a major outage is a big job that involves much more than simply throwing a switch or removing a tree from a line. Our main transmission lines, substations and the main distribution lines from the substation must be repaired first in order to ensure power delivery down the line.

Next, crews repair the lines that bring power to the greatest number of members. After larger areas of members have power, crews repair service lines to individual homes.



If You or Someone in Your Home Requires Life-Sustaining Equipment

Please notify Big Horn REA if you, a family member, a tenant or anyone in your home is dependent upon electrically-powered medical equipment. A list of these households is kept by the co-op to ensure that every attempt is made to make these service restorations a priority.

What Causes Most Power Outages?

Believe it or not, falling trees are the biggest cause of power outages. That's why it is so important for you to plan before you plant any foliage in your yard. Also, be knowledgeable of the growth patterns of trees and shrubs before you plant, so when they grow, they don't become dangerously close to power lines. As a rule, trees that grow 30-feet tall should be planted at least 30 feet away from the electric lines. The farther away from power lines a tree is planted, the better. Also, keep in mind not to plant near transformer pad mounts or directly over underground lines. You should always call One Call of Wyoming before digging near underground lines.

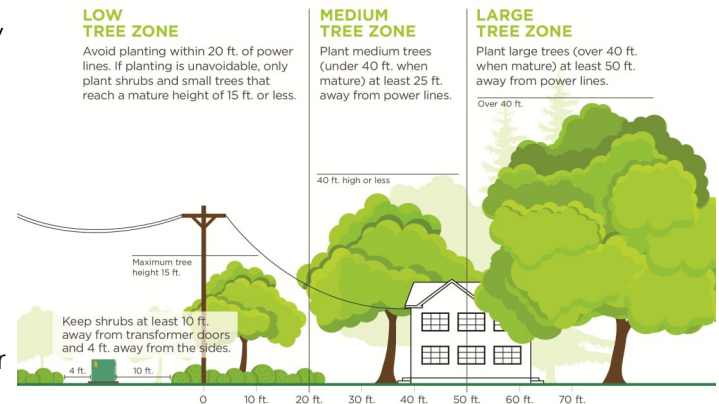
In an effort to provide reliable electricity to our members, Big Horn REA maintains the right-of-way on our system. Crews are constantly on alert for trees that

have grown too close to power lines. If you know of any trees that are growing on our lines, or look like they could fall on our lines, please call our office at

(307)-568-2419 or
(800)564-2419.

Plant Trees Safely

Before you dig, call 811 to locate buried utility lines.



Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Big Horn REA is one of more than 700 electric membership co-ops in 46 states that belong to Touchstone Energy®. These co-ops collectively deliver power and energy solutions to more than 17 million members every day. To be a member of Touchstone Energy, Big Horn REA agrees to operate with high standards of service to all members. These standards include integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community.

As a Touchstone Energy partner, we are dedicated to maintaining these standards in all we do...by providing electric service that is among the most reliable, affordable and efficient to be found anywhere in the country, by offering a wide range of programs and services carefully designed to improve our members' quality of life, and by being responsive to our members' needs.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

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

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866)632-9932 to request the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Center for Civil Rights Enforcement, 1400 Independence Ave, SW, Washington D.C 20250-9410, by fax (202)690-7442 or email to CR-Info@USDA.gov.

25 YEARS
OF SERVICE



Big Horn Rural Electric Company

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



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Office
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