



What, exactly, is an Electric Cooperative?

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Have fun and be safe
while Trick-or-
Treating!!

If you were walking down the street and a person randomly asked you what an Electric Cooperative is, would you have an answer for them or would you be just as stumped as they are? A large percentage of people, especially young adults, do not know the answer to the above question. The only thing that matters to them is that they have electricity so they can go about their day-to-day business. So, today you will be given a little lesson on what an Electric Cooperative is.

Electric Cooperatives are:

- Private, independent, non-profit electric utilities
- Owned by the customers they serve
- Incorporated under the laws of the state in which they operate
- Established to provide at-cost electric service
- Governed by a board of directors elected from the membership which sets policies and procedures that are implemented by the co-op's management

Distribution cooperatives, such as Niobrara Electric, are the foundation of the rural electric network. NEA delivers electricity to customers. Generation & Transmission Cooperatives, such as Tri-State G&T, provide wholesale power to distribution co-ops through their own generation or by purchasing power on behalf of the distribution members.

In addition to electric service, many co-ops are deeply involved in their communities promoting development and revitalization projects, small businesses, job creation, etc.

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Cooperatives adhere to seven cooperative principles, which is what makes us different. These principles are:

- **Voluntary and Open Membership** - Cooperatives are voluntary organizations open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political, or religious discrimination.
- **Democratic Member Control** - Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.
- **Members' Economic Participation** - Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefitting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.
- **Autonomy and Independence** - Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.
- **Education, Training and Information** - Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation.
- **Cooperation Among Cooperatives** - Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional, and international structures.
- **Concern for Community** - While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

(Information from www.nreca.coop/about-electric-cooperatives)

So, what does all this mean to you, our customers - or should I say, owners? Being a member/owner of an electric cooperative isn't just about getting money back (20-25 years down the road) on an annual basis (Capital Credits). Being a member/owner gives you the right to voice your opinions, concerns, etc. about the cooperative. Not only are you able to voice these opinions, concerns, and such, but you also have the power to see that beneficial changes are made. How? Attend the Annual Meeting every May (3rd Thursday) or if you would like, you may sit in on monthly board meetings (4th Monday every month). We are here to serve our members/owners so please don't be afraid to speak up if you have any questions or concerns.



All NEA Linemen recently re-certified in the invaluable skill of Pole Top Rescue, during a summer safety class provided by Montana State Electric Association.

Using only field tools, linemen are taught how to recover an unconscious /incapacitated worker from a pole.



Nebraska Line Foreman Matt Edwards & Apprentice Levi Clark, demonstrating their proficiency with handling a full sized mannequin and safely lowering it to waiting crew members, while working 25 feet above ground.



www.niobrara-electric.org
www.facebook.com/NiobraraElectric



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PO Box 697

Lusk WY 82225

Phone: 307-334-3221

Fax: 307-334-2620



Touchstone EnergySM

Office Hours

Monday—Thursday

7:30 am—5:00 pm

Fridays 7:30 am—
4:00 pm

Electricians Department

7:00 am—5:30 pm (M-F)

Outages1-800-322-0544
or 307-334-3221

Phones are answered 24 hours a day. Phones will be answered by Niobrara Electric Association during office hours and the Niobrara County Sheriff's office will take all other calls and dispatch NEA personnel.

LIEAP is a state and federally-funded program that helps people pay home heating bills November through June. The program is open to homeowners and renters. It helps cover the costs of electricity, natural gas, propane, wood, diesel heating oil, coal and pellets when these are used for heating a home.

Applications for LIEAP program are available beginning October 1, 2013 and are accepted until February 28, 2014.

To get specific information about your application or to ask that an application be mailed to you, call: 1-307-347-6181.

People who are approved for assistance through LIEAP may also be eligible for Weatherization services to make their homes more energy efficient and further lower heating costs.

The Weatherization Assistance Program helps households save money on home heating costs by improving energy efficiency. Weatherizing homes often means adding more insulation, sealing leaks around doors and windows, and it always includes basic health and safety checks. An energy audit determines which weatherization measures will get the biggest bang for the weatherization dollars spent on each home. Weatherization can save 5-25 percent on home heating bills.

To get specific information about your application or to ask that an application be mailed to you, call: 1-307-347-6181.

Information taken from Wyoming Department of Family Services website.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District

John Hester	1	Keeline, WY	President
Andy Barnette	2	Lusk, WY	
David Keener	3	Marsland, NE	Sec./Treas
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Jim Dunn	3	Harrison, NE	
Kenny DeGering	2	Lusk, WY	
Andy Greer	1	Lance Creek, WY	
JD Wasserburger	2	Lusk, WY	Vice President

Boardroom News

August Board Meeting

- **Attorney Stecher discussed collections.**
- **Line Superintendent Rick Bridge gave an operations and safety report.**
- **Discussion on Oneok #7, construction of new line between Lusk and Manville starting early September, Tri-State work in substation & equipment needs.**
- **Director Keener reported on NREA, Director Greer reported on WREA & Director Hammond reported on Tri-State.**