



26th year 15th Issue

August 2014

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Government agencies are proposing legislation that, if enacted, will change what you pay for electricity. Become aware, educate yourself, be involved; you can make a difference. Go to www.action.coop for information with Cooperative Action Network.



Line crews have been busy putting the versatile, new equipment purchased by NEA to use. As seen above, the detachable pole grapple device works beautifully to set or remove poles. On page two, Nebraska Linemen Matt Edwards and Justin Huston use the detachable auger unit for drilling pole holes.



"In this sand country where we've have to use plywood under the digger truck to get around, now we just hook on and go right to it with the skid steer. And when we're done we don't leave as much of a "foot print" on the land. We're really pleased with its uses and how we can plan our work now." Matt Edwards, NE Line Foreman

Members who attended Annual Meeting heard Wyoming Rural Electric Association's Executive Director speak about the importance of Co-op members taking an active role and making their voices heard on issues at both the State and Federal levels through Grassroots action. There is a website created to educate, register and send messages to the appropriate people when members choose to take action, at www.action.coop.

We encourage our member's to use this website to educate themselves and to participate in the future of the Co-op by being active and making regulating and governing entities aware that poorly constructed proposals and ill conceived legislation does not go unnoticed and will not go unchallenged by those of us who ultimately pay the bill.

There is currently a discussion period open for comment on the Environmental Protection Agency's recently posted new rule to the Federal Register intent on curbing carbon emissions from existing power plants. As currently purposed, the standards are unachievable and will result in plant closures. Those closures will increase costs and those increases will pass down to the members, you & me.

It may seem a daunting task, with little expected gain, to push back against big government in areas of concern where they are taking a misguided direction. In truth, the collective voices of Co-op members can be powerful. This is an area where everyone has an opportunity to send a message and help make an impact without having to travel to the capital or schedule an appointment with your Representative, etc.

If you do not have web access on your phone or in your home and you would like to visit the grassroots website and/or gain more information, stop in at NEA headquarters. We can show you the website and share more information.

Get signed up with the SmartHub website on your PC!

[https://niobraraelectric.smarthub.coop/#login:](https://niobraraelectric.smarthub.coop/#login)

Contact the NEA office if you have any questions concerning the SmartHub. The Billing Department is happy to assist.

Office: 1-800-322-0544 or 1-307-334-3221

Current payment options are EFT Auto payment & E-Checks. Sorry, no Credit or Debit Cards at this time.

We encourage all members to sign up on SmartHub, even if you never intend to pay your bill online. With SmartHub access you can view your bill and the details of your account at any time rather than waiting on postal delivery and having to call and ask for account information. You can check usage, follow your own history and print information, as needed.

If you are an irrigator, we highly recommend using the Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). This is a convenient way to make sure your bill is paid on time, every time. Your other accounts can be set up as EFT as well or you can keep them separate. EFT accounts are automatically drafted on the 20th of the month, or if the 20th falls on a weekend, the next business day. This ensures irrigation payments always meet with irrigation payment due dates.



Congratulations, Levi Clark!

Levi recently completed his third year apprenticeship training and is now beginning testing in his fourth and final apprentice year.

Your hard work and commitment are paying off. We appreciate the work you do!

www.niobrara-electric.org

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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.

Please take a minute and get your voice heard on the EPA rules. I was recently at a meeting with Tri State and they were describing some of the nonsense that the EPA was pushing in the "war on coal", going as far as mandating run times on some natural gas units to limit the coal unit run times. Never mind that the coal unit meets standards (zero mercury emissions), and due to the location of the gas unit, it's maximum run time by permit is noticeably less than the EPA's target run time.

Some states have a mandated "economic dispatch" to guide which units run to fulfill customer demand based on cost of power to protect consumers from high cost, but the EPA is looking towards "environmental dispatch" with no regard for cost. Instead of running the clean coal units outfitted with the latest emission controls on them (which by the way cost a lot of money to upgrade to EPA standards), they would like to see us run the more expensive (5 to 10 or more times expensive) unit much more. Currently, Tri State runs the gas units under 20% of the time, usually only to cover emergencies or peak times, the EPA would like to see those units run closer to 70+% of the time.

Affordable electricity is one of the key factors in keeping life affordable. Not only is it a cost we see to light our homes, but also provide heat or AC and keep the fridge cool. It also is one of the base costs to provide water to crops, light and power the machines that process our food and other goods, and light up the stores that sell those items. You can see that if a major price change in electricity comes to pass, it will hit every level of the food chain, or manufacturing, so keeping the cost down is extremely important.

As was mentioned earlier in the newsletter, visit www.action.coop to get your voice heard. Stay tuned to <http://www.wyomingrea.org/issues/grassroots.php> to keep up on the issues, or sign up for the grassroots initiative. For the Nebraska counterpart, visit <http://www.nrea.org>.

General Manager Kenny Ceaglske

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Boardroom News

June Board Meeting

- Director Hammond spoke regarding Tri-State business.
- Director Keener discussed NREA business.
- Director Greer shared WREA information.
- Attorney Skavdahl spoke on collection matters.
- Line Superintendent Rick Bridge gave an operations report.
- Manager Ceaglske gave the managers report.