

27th year 10th Issue

November 2016

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#### CO-OP CONNECTIONS LOCAL BUSINESS PARTICIPANTS:

- Herren Brothers True Value
- Same As It Once Was
- Country Corner Hair Shop
- Rough and Refined
- Miller Soap Company

(CHECK WEBSITE FOR REGIONAL AND NATIONAL DISCOUNTS)

Want to be a Business Participant?  
Call our office for more information.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

*Scholarships help make training even more affordable. Don't let money be an obstacle to your career. Wyoming needs lineworkers, and that's why scholarships are available to help you attend an accredited, regional training program.*

#### > WREA LINEMEN SCHOLARSHIP

A minimum of \$3,000 each year to one or more individuals, including recent high school graduates or GED recipients, who plan to attend an approved regional lineworker training program.

#### > ADKINS LINEMEN SCHOLARSHIP

\$1,000 to one individual who plans to attend an approved regional lineworker program.

#### > DAR HACKWORTH LINEMEN SCHOLARSHIP

\$1,000 to up to three students who plan to attend an approved regional lineworker training program.

#### > OTHER CO-OP SCHOLARSHIPS

Most Wyoming cooperatives offer scholarships to students in their service territories. To find out more about local scholarship opportunities, contact your local co-op.

Find more information on scholarship requirements and how to apply at [wyomingrea.org](http://wyomingrea.org).

Applications for these scholarships are also available on NEA's website. Their due dates are not the same as NEA scholarships. If you have questions or are interested, we would love to hear from you.

Wyoming Rural Electric Association (WREA) supports making careers in linework a viable option with these great scholarships.



## 4 REASONS to be a Lineworker

### 1. Opportunities are growing

The thriving power industry in Wyoming is the state's economic cornerstone. Official estimates predict 13% growth in lineworker positions between 2012 and 2022—higher than the national average.

### 2. Pay is generous

The median pay for lineworkers in Wyoming is \$69,800 a year or \$33.55 an hour—more than the national median.

### 3. Work can't be outsourced

Line work needs a skilled, human touch. These jobs can't be outsourced to machines, which means job stability is high.

### 4. No 4-year degree required

Regional training programs and apprenticeships help lineworkers to develop practical job skills and knowledge without the hefty price tag and time commitment that come with a 4-year college degree.

*"No day is ever the same. There are always new challenges. I'm never bored, always thinking, and I never stop learning."*

Bart Wilshusen, Lineworker Crew Foreman

## NOVEMBER 14th - 20th IS NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

NEA currently has one Electrician Apprentice and three Linemen Apprentices. Both apprenticeships require four years of defined study, testing and hours in the field.

Jim Pontarolo  
Apprentice Electrician



Brent Juergens  
Apprentice Lineman



Charles Kleinberg  
Apprentice Lineman



Will Smith  
Apprentice Lineman



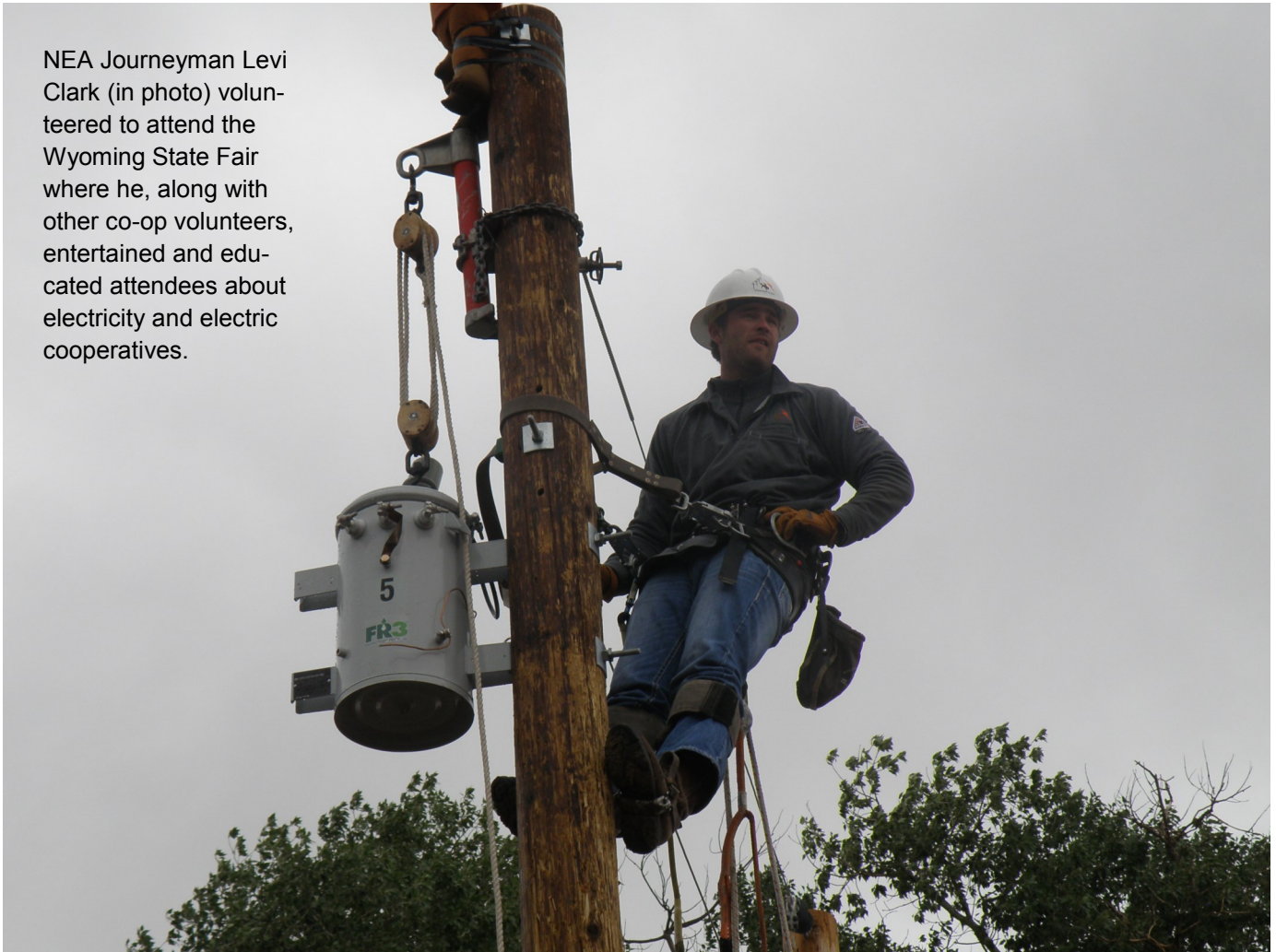
*Happy Thanksgiving from all of us at Niobrara Electric*

*Our office is closed November 24th & 25th.*





NEA Journeyman Levi Clark (in photo) volunteered to attend the Wyoming State Fair where he, along with other co-op volunteers, entertained and educated attendees about electricity and electric cooperatives.



Pole testing during 2016 focused on the Keeline to Glendo area and revealed 102 of the 3686 poles inspected/tested, failed. The failed poles will be put on the replacement list for 2017. Also to be replaced in 2017 are the 20 “soft” and split-top damaged poles noted during testing. These are scheduled replacement—Mother Nature will undoubtedly present us with unscheduled replacements throughout the coming year.

We have a 10 year cycle for completing testing of our entire territory. Crews patrol line while traveling daily throughout the system. Having designated inspection is critical for maintenance however, as it supplies us with a focused, tooled and close-up evaluation.

One storm with heavy ice, wind or lightning can damage insulators and poles and make for a bad situation that can be created overnight. We appreciate when members call or stop in to speak with us about loose, dangling or missing line/hardware that they have noticed. When tree limbs or debris become entangled in our power lines, we appreciate hearing from the land owners or other observers so we can clear the items timely and without incident.

**[www.niobrara-electric.org](http://www.niobrara-electric.org)**  
**[www.facebook.com/NiobraraElectric](https://www.facebook.com/NiobraraElectric)**



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**Touchstone Energy<sup>SM</sup>**

## Office Hours

**Monday—Thursday**

**7:30 am—5:00 pm**

**Fridays 7:30 am—  
4:00 pm**

**Electrician Department**

**7:00 am—5:30 pm (M-F)**

**Outages** ....1-800-322-0544  
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.

The big event in the last few weeks was the outage on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. The outage happened as a small but powerful storm passed over Lusk. Something faulted on the line (possibly lightning or a crack in an insulator, but we haven't found positive proof) causing a protection system inside the station to trip all breakers. This caused an outage to the entire NEA system, as well as to the town of Lusk.

The indications from the devices in the substation showed a possible problem with the transformer that Tri State owns, so we had to get one of their techs up here to inspect their equipment prior to turning the power back on. This takes time, since the tech may or may not be ready to go at the time of the call and he is traveling out of Scottsbluff.

Normally, we may have been able to utilize a backup line that runs right next to the line that is our normal feed from Glendo, but due to its age and condition, Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) has it out of service. This has prompted some talks with WAPA about using the feed that is planned for the western end of the system to build a new backup, it is promising, but this is still about two years out. In the meantime, we may have outages like this if it happens again.

Another backup is to run the generator in Harrison to power the town. Our linemen that are familiar with the switching and startup of the generator were both out of town, so we weren't able to get that running. There are some catches to running the generator over there as well. When the town is on generator and we can return to normal, we need to take an additional, but short, outage to disconnect the generator and additional time to return the system to normal and pick up load east of town. So, it is generally reserved for outages of longer or unknown duration. Had the results of Tri State's inspection proven that we needed to be off for a long time, we would have made the switch.

From the NEA side, we have closely inspected inside the station for other possible real causes of the fault, or for rodent damage that may lead to a false indication of a fault. We have also changed a few devices so that we can see if it was a device related problem. We are also working on getting more of our crews familiar with the steps needed to use the Harrison Generator. Without being able to confidently point to the cause of this outage and the similarity to the one in June, it is hard to say that it won't happen again, but if it does, we will be here to do our part in getting the lights back on, as well as keep the work moving on the west feed to give us a better backup.

Kenny Ceaglske

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### District

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

## September Board Meeting

- Director Hammond reviewed Tri-State business.
- Director Greer shared WREA business.
- Director Keener spoke on NREA business.
- General Manager Kenny Ceaglske reported on the four year work plan financing and upcoming capital projects.
- Line Superintendent Rick Bridge spoke about pole change outs, some upcoming work plan projects and outages.