



30th year 7th Issue

August 2019

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If your name is listed on page 3, please contact NEA and ask to speak with Julie about unclaimed capital credits.

#### CO-OP CONNECTIONS LOCAL BUSINESS PARTICIPANTS

(CHECK WEBSITE FOR REGIONAL AND NATIONAL DISCOUNTS):

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

Every August all eleven WREA Electric Cooperative members, along with the City of Cody, coordinate together to put on the Cody Hotline School.

The all volunteer run school is held in Cody and instructors, steering committee members, vendors and others provide a five day, hands on, learning experience for students from Wyoming and around the nation. From novice to expert, the school offers instruction and safe practice opportunities for all.

"We are happy to invest personnel and students in Cody Hotline School—it's an excellent school, drawing professionals from all our border states and further out, like AZ and WA. Our employees enjoy the opportunity to share the benefit of their knowledge and experience. WY Line Foreman, Jason Fish has been attending as a Rubber Gloving instructor for several years and is part of a team making an important impact on new linemen learning this skill," according to Line Superintendent, Rick Bridge.

NEA also supports Nebraska's Rubber Gloving school, held in September each year. Journeyman Justin Huston has become an instructor at this school and will be returning again this year.

#### Congratulations, Jim Pontarolo.

In July, Jim completed his required hours and passed level 3 testing in his Apprentice Electrician course. He's now moving on to his final apprenticeship level.

**Job well done!**



## Youth Energy Leadership Camp **ORANGE TEAM**



In July, Niobrara Electric sent Hannah Rudloff to Youth Energy Camp in Halsey, NE. Hannah was a part of the Orange Team (above photo) at camp. In addition to numerous onsite, group lessons and activities related to energy and leadership, the campers toured the Gerald Gentleman Power Station and the Kingsley Hydro-Electric Power Plant for a first-hand look at the process of generating electricity.



Youth Energy Leadership Campers at the Kingsley Hydro-Electric Power Plant, learning about generation.

Alvin Alexander  
Douglas Armstrong  
William E. Jr. Armstrong  
Cheryl Betts  
Cabot Oil & Gas Production Corp.  
Verna Callaham  
CNI Realty & Jeff George  
Conner's Corner & Don Conner  
Sharon C Copeland  
Edward Cote  
Fred Decker  
Dietrich Petroleum  
Forcenergy Partners LP  
Mrs. Emery Gaukel  
The Gold Spur & Gary R & Mary J Brooks  
Larry F. Grant  
William H Hanley  
Hat Creek Comm Club Sammy Scott  
Elmer Hoff  
James S Holland  
Edwin W. Johnson  
Dorothy Keenan  
K N Gas Gathering  
Virginia M Mader  
Deane Mansfield  
Clayton McGuire  
Frank/ Kemp Modlin  
Mors Company/ Harlow Kolander Jr.  
John Murphy  
Lloyd W. Nation  
Shane Osburn

Edna Outhouse  
Ida A. Perlinski  
Mark E. Pollat/Lightning Creek Ranch  
Shannon Purslow  
Bill A. Rea  
Riley Sand & Ready Mix  
Rim Operating Inc/Rector Stephen W. Pres  
Dale D. Ryder & Patricia G.  
S&M Construction  
Stanley W. Sand  
Walter L. Schneider  
Sue Schutt  
Clarence & Coleen Siebken  
Pee Wee Smock  
Bill Snocker  
Paul Stoddard  
James C Stratton  
Vinton Summers  
Jerry Aschwege/Teen Center  
That A Way Ranch  
Susanne C, Tridle  
Richard Van Huele  
Stan Warnock  
Steve R. Whary  
Dave P. White  
Maxie Wickizer  
Marc J & Dawn I Wilcox  
Emma C Williams  
Vicki Woods  
Shannon Woods

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opportunity provider and  
employer."**



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

## Office Hours

**Monday—Thursday**

**7:30 am—5:00 pm**

**Fridays 7:30 am—  
4:00 pm**

**Electrician Department**

**6:00 am—4:30 pm (M-TH)**

**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.

Tri-State G&T recently made a big decision about who and how they would be regulated. They have made the decision to be regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Up until recently, Tri-State, and most co-ops, have had very little governmental regulation. As a member owned and operated cooperative, our regulation comes from the membership. Boards are elected by members to make the decisions for the best interest of the whole cooperative, and if the membership sees a need for changes, there is an annual election process to make those changes.

In recent years, there has been unrest at the Tri-State board table that has representation from 43 separate co-ops across Wyoming, Nebraska, Colorado, and New Mexico. As you can imagine, folks across all of that area can have some differing opinions on what is best, affordability, reliability, carbon foot print, reliance on fossil fuels, pushing into new technologies, etc. Rather than accept what the majority decision of the board was, or adapting to work within the constraints of what was decided, small numbers of co-ops have pursued intervention by the state utility commission.

All of the states that Tri-State serves, except Nebraska, have utility commissions. As the commissions in New Mexico and Colorado got involved, you could see the writing on the wall that they would look for the resolution that would best fit their respective states, not necessarily the whole membership of Tri-State. As these issues move forward, it would be easy to see the Wyoming PSC getting involved and if need be, Nebraska trying to find some way to fit in to the mix as well. This leads to a visual of 4 dogs fighting over 1 toy, the only way that all of them will be able to enjoy it is after it is torn to pieces.

Tri-State had been excluded from FERC jurisdiction in the past due to the fact that it was a RUS borrower and that it served "small rural cooperatives". Within a few years, one of the Tri-State members will be bigger than the "small" definition. Tri-State has been approached by utilities outside the co-op world to provide services and has in turn opened up the opportunity for members outside the co-op world as possible sources of additional revenue. These points, along with the fact that they were going to get pulled in all directions if left to the state regulators, helped lead to the decision to pursue regulation through one regulatory body, FERC. As a self-regulated, at cost provider, the thought of adding expenses to go under governmental regulation with all of its processes, time delays, and other issues is not appealing to any of the co-ops, but sometimes you have to pick from the lesser of the evils.

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	
Neal Wurdeman	2	Lusk, WY	
Andy Greer	1	Lance Creek, WY	
JD Wasserburger	2	Lusk, WY	Vice President

## Board Minutes

- Line Superintendent Rick Bridge reported on an incident where a backhoe made contact with a NEA line (no injuries), safety training, staffing changes, outages and the work plan project.
- Manager Kenny Ceaglske reported on the ONEOK project, other large loads, policy updates and the Annual Meeting.
- Director Keener spoke on NREA business.
- Director Greer spoke on WREA business.
- Director Hammond spoke on Tri-State business.