

FEBRUARY 2015

# SPARKS

Focused on people. Built on power.

HIGH WEST ENERGY

## MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

# Service is the Heart of our Community



Brian Heithoff, CEO/General Manager

I'm seeing red (and pink). Valentine's Day could be a great holiday, but the cards, balloons, and candy cramming aisles this time of year sometimes miss the mark. I need a card for our community.

It's great to let loved ones know you care about them, but let's go a step further. As a member-owned cooperative, we're committed to powering our community and empowering you to improve your quality of life. How can life be better? We need hearts for service.

On February 14, you may be planning to take time to send a card to a police officer or firefighter. Or give candy (or an apple) to a school teacher. Or visit a retirement home and spend time with the folks who built our community. Or send balloons—or better yet, a donation—to a local charity. After all, these champions are the heart of our community.

Our staff will be visiting some of the "hearts of our community" in February to deliver Valentine greetings and treats. It's one small way High West Energy can say "thank you" to those who serve our community every day.

But why stop there? Through Operation Round Up®, members like you are donating valuable dollars to strengthen our community and support those who need it most. The program offers support to individuals, communities and organizations in and around the cooperative's service area in times of loss or need due to such events as death, sickness, emergency, fire, natural disaster, etc. This may include providing support to programs related to heating assistance, shelter, public safety and other basic human needs. Disabled veterans may also be eligible for assistance.

On Valentine's Day (and every day), let's celebrate service and the people who are the heart of our community.



[www.highwestenergy.com](http://www.highwestenergy.com)

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board meetings are typically held on the fourth Monday of each month.

**District 11 – Troy Freeburg**  
Bushnell, NE (308) 673-5336

**District 12 – Gary Smith**  
Carpenter, WY (307) 649-2375

**District 13 – Ed Prosser**  
Cheyenne, WY (307) 632-6068

**District 14 – Jerry Burnett**  
Hereford, CO (970) 895-3386

**District 15 – Dan Acheson**  
Kimball, NE (308) 235-2300

**District 16 – Jamie Fowler**  
Cheyenne, WY (307) 214-9191

**District 17 – Russ Nielsen**  
Potter, NE (308) 250-4262

### LEADERSHIP TEAM

Brian Heithoff, CEO/General Manager

Lloyd Sisson, Engineering Manager

Karen Rintelmann, Chief Financial Officer

Jeff Bruckner, Operations Manager

Konnie Rask, Energy Services Manager

Lorrell Walter, Public Relations and Marketing Manager

### OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Friday  
7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Closed weekends & holidays

### CHEYENNE SERVICE CENTER

3302 I-80 Service Road  
Cheyenne, WY 82009  
Open Monday – Friday  
10:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

## High West Energy to Host Telephone Town Hall

As a non-profit cooperative, High West Energy is always striving to provide its members with quality service and good value. In an effort to keep members up-to-date on everything that is happening at the cooperative, High West Energy is pleased to host its first ever Telephone Town Hall.

High West Energy members will have a chance to ask and answer questions from CEO/General Manager Brian Heithoff during a Telephone Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 10.

The event moderators will call High West Energy members prior to the event. If you are not at home, but would like to access the conference, please contact Susan McGaugh at (307) 245-4305 to request a call-in number prior to the Town Hall meeting.

Heithoff will share pertinent information about the cooperative, including:

- Financial projections for 2015
- Construction activity
- Headquarters expansion project
- High West Wiring update
- High West Digital Solutions update

In addition to presenting information on the topics above, Heithoff will hear your questions about matters relevant to High West Energy and its family of companies. We hope you'll join us!

[www.highwestenergy.com](http://www.highwestenergy.com)

# What's Happening With High West Digital Solutions

It was out of a concern for community (one of the co-op principles) that High West Energy formed High West Digital Solutions in May 2013. The company is a full-service IT provider offering support across a wide spectrum of computer-related issues. High West Digital Solutions is rooted in computer repair, but also offers support from everything from complex network management to personal computing problems, including virus removal, basic website development, software issue resolution and computer sales/installation.

The company was founded under the leadership of Terry Steege, information systems engineer and Dave Crouse, information systems analyst. Steege and Crouse are veterans of High West Energy, serving as the cooperative's IT department for a combined 28 years. Shortly after opening its doors, Bret Steger joined High West Digital Solutions as information systems technician. High West Digital Solutions is a growing company, and recently added Jeff Skelton (pictured at right) to the team as an information technology technician.

For more information about High West Digital Solutions, or to schedule an appointment, please call (307) 245-4333 or visit [www.hwds.com](http://www.hwds.com).



## Space Heater Safety Tips

With extreme cold temperatures in the region, many will look for supplemental heating sources for their homes. Space heaters can be a good alternative for those who want to warm one area of their home without turning up the thermostat on the central heating system. However, space heaters are also responsible for 32 percent of house fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association. High West Energy offers the following safety tips.

**Materials** – What are the components of your space heater made of? Parts like metal grating can be hot to the touch and may burn anyone who gets too close. Make sure you purchase a heater that is cool to the touch and has guards over the coils just in case little fingers get too close.

**Placement** - While it can be tempting to place a small heater on a shelf so it is not in the way of pets and children, it is safest to leave the heater on a level floor on a nonflammable surface. Keeping the space heater on the floor can keep it from falling over, preventing fire hazards. Also, remember that space heaters and bathrooms are not a good combination, unless the heater is designed for bathroom use. Moisture can damage the heater.

The most important rule about space heater placement is the three-foot rule. Whether you are using the heater in the bedroom, living room or kitchen, space heaters should always be kept three feet away from flammable materials and out of the way of children and pets.

**Special Features** – Does your space heater have an auto shutoff function if tipped over? Auto shutoff can be a lifesaver. If you currently own a space heater without auto shutoff, consider purchasing a heater with this important safety feature.

**Cords** – You should never use an extension cord when plugging in a space heater as it can cause overheating. The space heater should be plugged directly into a wall outlet, and should be the only thing plugged in to the wall outlet. Also make sure cords aren't in a high-traffic area so they are not a tripping hazard. Finally, do not use space heaters with frayed or cracked cords.

**Use** – Never leave a heater unattended while in use. If you are leaving your home or going to bed, make sure to unplug the heater.

Following these tips and making sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions can keep you safe this winter.



### FEATURED PERSON

## Craig Schuessler Crew Foreman

Nebraska native, Craig Schuessler, has been with High West Energy for just over 30 years. Born in Sidney, Neb., he was raised in Potter and has spent most of his life living in that community. Craig is a graduate of Potter High School and spent a year at North Platte Vocational Technical School. Prior to working at High West Energy, he spent five years at Far-Mor Co-op.

Craig began with High West Energy in June 1984 as an apprentice lineman and was recently promoted from lineman to crew foreman, supervising the Potter team.

When asked what he likes most about working for High West Energy, he says, "Every day you could be doing something different and our customers are our friends."

Craig has three biological and three adopted children. He spent 32 years as a member of the Potter Fire Department and 28 years as an EMT. In his spare time, Craig enjoys golfing, hunting and camping.

## Child Takes Home Basin Electric's Top Award

At the 2014 Basin Electric annual meeting, Wayne Child, a former High West Energy board member, received the highest award Basin Electric bestows, the Cornerstone Award. The Cornerstone Award is given to acknowledge individuals for their tremendous work in support of electric cooperatives and rural America.

Wayne Child was first elected to the High West Energy's board of directors four decades ago. He had been a Basin Electric director since 1985 representing Tri-State G&T in Denver, CO. He served as a Basin Electric director for 28 years, the longest-serving director in Basin Electric's history. Of those 28 years, Child served as president for 12 years.

Throughout his career and after his retirement, Child has been recognized for his outstanding achievements by those organizations for which he's worked.

"As a director, Child exemplified servant leadership, said Paul Sukut, Basin Electric CEO and general manager. "He served the members, first and foremost. In his gentle way, he enriched the lives of those lucky enough to know and work with him. He helped build a better Basin Electric."

Child's staunch service to cooperatives was so highly regarded that High West Energy board members unanimously voted to name a new 345-kilovolt substation after him in 2012.

