

MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

Looking Back at 2014



Brian Heithoff, CEO/General Manager

Happy New Year. I hope you had a wonderful holiday season. In taking a quick look back at 2014, I am thankful and happy to report that we seem to have met most of the key metrics established at the beginning of the year.

The reliability of the power we delivered was better than the past several years, which we know is a primary need. It is validation of some of the investments we have been making in maintaining and improving the quality of our infrastructure. We are committed to our initiative to improve the

reliability of our system, thereby reducing the number and length of inconveniences to you. We are working diligently to systematically alleviate some of the problems we experience.

From a safety perspective, we completed another year of having no lost-time accidents. Obviously, we feel fortunate and will continue to be diligent so that accidents are minimized. We work hard to provide a safe work environment so that our employees go home each night the same as when they arrived.

The cooperative's computer services and wiring businesses are providing needed services in the tri-state region. Both are experiencing growth which we believe is an indication of the value they provide in terms of providing the same high quality service you have come to expect from High West Energy.

Looking ahead to 2015, we expect to continue having many requests for new delivery points from oil and gas companies. While the price of oil may impact drilling activity down the road, there seems to be little impact thus far. That said, we are in constant contact with energy companies and their sub-contractors in order to understand their needs and therefore are

able to plan accordingly. We are also seeing an increase in new housing, which we look forward to serving.

We are in need of additional warehouse, vehicle storage and office space at our Pine Bluffs headquarters. Construction has started and we are hopeful to be able to be more efficient in carrying out our mission come this spring. We are very cautious about spending money on facilities. However, things have simply come to a point where the costs of an inadequate and inefficient facility are greater than investing in an expansion.

Let me end on some good news regarding your pocketbook. Despite the rate increase worries that come from operating in an environment where regulations that we consider to be unnecessary and/or have more costs than benefits, are coming at us frequently, I am happy to report that unless there is some catastrophic situation that arises, we will not be increasing our electric rates in 2015.

With that, let me end where I started, which is wishing you a prosperous and happy 2015.



\$7000 in Scholarships Up For Grabs

High West Energy is offering six \$1000 scholarships and two \$500 scholarships in 2015, in addition to several scholarships available from affiliate organizations in the region. A complete scholarship list was published in the December issue of SPARKS. Details about the scholarship and the application can be found on our website by contacting Lorrell Walter at (307) 245-4337 or lwalter@highwestenergy.com.

High West Energy Scholarships

Postmarked by February 2, 2015 or dropped off at the Pine Bluffs office or Cheyenne Service Center by 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 5, 2015.

Dar Hackworth Lineworker Scholarship

Due by May 1, 2015

Neil T. Adkins Lineworker Scholarship

Due by May 1, 2015

WREA Lineman Memorial Scholarship

Due by March 1, 2015

NREA Women in Rural Electrification Scholarship

Scholarships offered at each of the lineman schools in Nebraska; call the individual school for information.

www.highwestenergy.com

HIGH WEST ENERGY, INC. • PO BOX 519 • PINE BLUFFS, WY 82082-0519 • LARAMIE COUNTY (307) 245-3261 • TOLL FREE (888) 834-1657 OUTAGE CALLS 24 HOURS A DAY

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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 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 Holds Annual Meeting and Elects Board Members

High West Energy is pleased to welcome Gary Smith to the cooperative's board of directors. Smith was elected to represent District 12 at the annual meeting, which was held on Saturday, November 15. Dan Acheson was re-elected to represent District 15.

Smith has been a High West Energy member since 1978. He is retired from the Department of Defense after 25 years of service. He is the former owner of an irrigation repair and water well service. Smith is a veteran of the United States Navy and served three tours of duty in Vietnam. He served 10 years on the Laramie County Fair Board and 16 years for Laramie County Fire District #4 as a board member and volunteer firefighter. Smith and his wife, Lorraine, have two sons.

Acheson became a member of the cooperative in April 1976 and has been a director for High West Energy for 12 years. He received a bachelor's degree in agricultural education from the University of Wyoming in 1969 and a master's degree in vocational education in 1975. Acheson is co-owner/broker for L.E.S Realty in Kimball, Neb. and is a former agricultural education instructor at Kimball County High School. He and his wife, Sherry, have three grown children and nine grandchildren.

In addition to board elections, members voted on several bylaw amendments. A summary of these changes can be found on the cooperative's website: www.highwestenergy.com. Choose the "About Us" menu and select "Public Records" and then click on the "Revised Bylaws" link.

Speakers at the meeting included Brian Heithoff, CEO/general manager of High West Energy; Russ Nielsen, president of the High West Energy board of directors; Troy Bredenkamp, general manager of the Nebraska Rural Electric Association, Shawn Taylor, executive director of the Wyoming Rural Electric Association and Mike McInnes, executive vice president/general manager of Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association.



Lead lineman, Bart Wilshusen, visits with Cheyenne resident, Bill Goosetree.



Per tradition, High West Energy linemen serve the meal to our members.



Amanda Birch, Carol Macy and Karen Rintelmann pause for a moment during registration to smile for the camera.



Outgoing board member, Don Wisroth, visits with Jerry Steele who recently retired as the Potter foreman after more than 40 years of service to the cooperative.



Margaret Burnet and Sandy Bruckner visit during the craft fair.



An iPad was among the raffle prizes given away during the annual meeting.



Remember the Winter "Blinks"

When winter storms begin to roll, they're sometimes accompanied by irritating "blinks" as the electricity appears to turn off and on in rapid succession, signaling to some High West Energy members that perhaps something is wrong with their lines.

"Though it could possibly be something more, likely your lights are flickering because the system is doing just what it's designed to do," says Jeff Bruckner, operations manager. "The power cutting off and on can be a nuisance, but it's all about safety."

High West Energy's electricity distribution system is programmed such that when any foreign object – such as a tree branch, another wire, etc. – comes in contact with the energized wires, the system automatically locks open (or stops the flow of electricity) until the problem can be determined. During storms, wind can blow wires together or cause tree branches to briefly touch a line. Also, sometimes wet snow will pile up on the wires, and then discharge – or abruptly fall off – causing the wires to bounce and interact with each other or nearby objects. Any of these occurrences will prompt the system to automatically cut power to avoid potential fires or further damage to the system, as well as give the interfering object a chance to clear the line.

"The 'blinks' happen because High West Energy's automated distribution system will quickly try to re-energize the line, recognizing that the interference may be only temporary," says Bruckner. "If, however, the system senses a continued problem, an extended outage is

projected. At that time, our dispatch sends crews, which are on call 24-7, to the location to determine the cause of the outage and begin repairs."

If members experience a few blinks, it's not necessary to call High West Energy immediately, according to Bruckner. If, however, after about 15 minutes the power has not been automatically restored, members are encouraged to call (307) 245-3261 to report the outage.

Safety Tips During an Outage

- Don't try to remove or clear trees tangled in power lines.
- Stay away from any downed lines and call your power company or 911.
- Do not touch a power line with any other object (brooms, boards, plastic, etc.) and do not touch any object in contact with a power line (car, tree limb, person, etc.)
- Turn on a porch light so the co-op workers know when your power has been restored.
- Avoid light sources that require a flame or fire (use flashlights or battery-powered lanterns).
- Avoid cooking inside with charcoal. Use grills safely and only outdoors in well-ventilated areas.



FEATURED PERSON

Jerry Steele

Retired, Lineman

Jerry Steele began his career at High West Energy on March 12, 1973. Prior to his retirement, he was the second most tenured employee at the cooperative.

His first day on the job was beautiful, with temperatures in the 60s. Some would say it was the calm before the storm. That evening, he was summoned by the foreman to respond to an outage, which was the beginning of a shift that lasted for three days and three nights, as a result of a spring blizzard which caused his vehicle to be stuck in a snowbank. Nevertheless, he wasn't scared away and worked his way up in the cooperative over the years.

Jerry and his wife, Jeanne, have three children and four grandchildren. In his retirement, he plans to do more of the things he enjoys: camping and yard work in the summer and involvement in the Potter community, which includes church, Boy Scouts, the Potter Melodrama Troupe, the American Legion and the foundation board for the Nebraska Veterans Cemetery. Jerry has tremendous community pride and spends a lot of time working to preserve the church and Legion Hall buildings by assisting with repairs and maintaining the grounds. Congratulations and best wishes, Jerry!