

JULY 2017

SPARKS

Focused on people. Built on power.

HIGH WEST ENERGY



It's Time to Give SmartHub a Try

You may like writing a check and mailing in your bill, but did you know there's an easier way to make sure that your bill is paid? We introduced SmartHub a few years ago as a convenient feature for our members; this year alone, it has an average monthly usage of 29.6%, which is about 1,688 people.

SmartHub lets you manage all aspects of your utility account online or with your mobile device. It provides convenient account access and two-way communication to your utility provider online or via your mobile device. You can manage payments, notify customer service of account and service issues, check your usage and receive special messaging from your provider, all at the touch of a button.

The best part about using SmartHub is that it's free and secure! Creating an account takes less than three minutes. Enter your profile information, choose High West Energy as your provider and then you're ready to begin. SmartHub is available on Android and iOS smartphones and tablets, as well as on our website.

If you need help using SmartHub, visit highwestenergy.com/smarthub-instruction for a list of frequently asked questions. You also may call High West Energy at (307) 245-3261 during regular business hours to speak with a member service representative.

www.highwestenergy.com

>> What's On That Pole?

This illustration shows basic equipment found on electric power distribution poles. Not all poles have all this equipment on them. They vary according to location and the service they provide.

>> Primary wires run on top. Each usually carries 7,200 volts of electricity from a substation.

>> A crossarm holds power lines, allowing required clearances between lines.

>> Surge arrestors protect the transformer from lightning strikes.

>> A secondary service drop carries 120/240-volts of electricity to the end user. It has two "hot" wires from the transformer, and a bare neutral wire connected to the ground wire on the pole.

>> Telephone and cable TV lines are typically the lowest wires.

>> A head-high "birthmark" shows the size of the pole, as well as where and when it was made.

>> 40-foot poles are sunk six feet into the ground.

>> Insulators (made of porcelain or a composite) prevent energized wires from contacting each other or the pole.

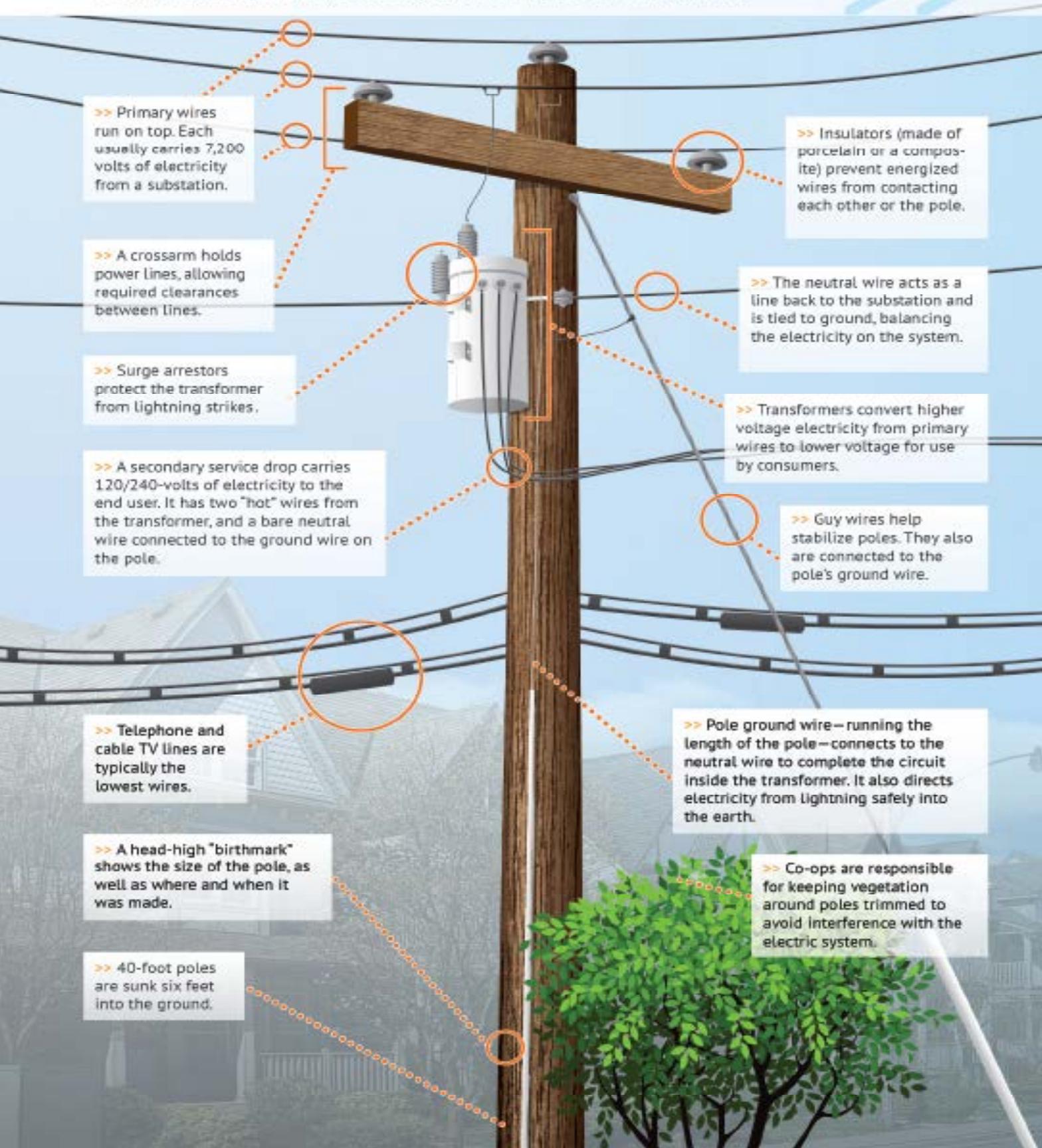
>> The neutral wire acts as a line back to the substation and is tied to ground, balancing the electricity on the system.

>> Transformers convert higher voltage electricity from primary wires to lower voltage for use by consumers.

>> Guy wires help stabilize poles. They also are connected to the pole's ground wire.

>> Pole ground wire—running the length of the pole—connects to the neutral wire to complete the circuit inside the transformer. It also directs electricity from lightning safely into the earth.

>> Co-ops are responsible for keeping vegetation around poles trimmed to avoid interference with the electric system.



HAPPY Independence DAY!

Our offices will be closed
Tuesday, July 4, to
celebrate the holiday.
Normal business hours will
resume Wednesday, July 5.

To report an outage, please call
(888) 834-1657.



FEATURED PERSON

Tanner Hinton

Apprentice Lineman- Pine Bluffs

Tanner Hinton is no stranger to line work. His father is a line superintendent for the City of Kimball.

Upon his high school graduation, he decided to pursue a career as a medical doctor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. After a few semesters, he realized that he didn't want to work inside every day. When his younger brother, Trevan, decided to go to line school at Western Nebraska Community College in Alliance, Tanner put down the stethoscope and picked up some pole climbing gear. After he completed his degree, he started as an intern here at High West Energy. His talent and hard work ethic was recognized, so he was brought on as an apprentice lineman. "I really enjoy the linemen I work with. We have a special brotherhood here, and that really allows us to do better out in the field."

On his time off, Tanner enjoys spending time with his fiancé, Laura, and daughter, Reese. They just welcomed their son to the world in June. He also likes playing recreational softball, fishing and hunting; he says his long-term goal is to successfully harvest a grizzly bear with his bow.

Why Electric Co-Ops Replace Utility Poles

You probably don't pay much attention to the utility poles found throughout High West Energy's service territory, but did you know these tall structures are the backbone of our distribution network?

Strong, sturdy utility poles ensure a reliable electric system, which is why we routinely inspect the 76,000 poles found on our lines. Throughout the year, our crews check poles for decay caused by exposure to the elements. They know which poles are oldest and conduct inspections through a rotational process. Typically, a standard wooden distribution pole is expected to last more than 50 years.

Occasionally, poles need to be replaced for other reasons besides decay and old age. Weather disasters, power line relocation and car crashes are potential causes for immediate replacement. When possible, High West Energy communicates when and where pole replacements will take place so that you stay informed of where crews will be working.

Here is a quick breakdown of how crews replace a utility pole:

When a pole needs to be replaced, crews will start the process by digging a hole, typically next to the pole being replaced. The depth of the hole must be 15 percent of the new pole's height. Next, the new pole must be fitted with bolts, cross arms, insulators, ground wires and arm braces – all of the necessary parts for

delivering safe and reliable electricity. Then, crews safely detach the power lines from the old pole. The new pole is then raised and guided carefully into position, and the lines are attached, leaving the new pole to do its job.

So, the next time you come across a High West Energy crew replacing a pole, use caution and know that this process ensures a more reliable electric system for you, our members.



Linemen for High West Energy replacing a utility pole to ensure reliable electric system to our members.

MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

The Path to Efficiency Independence



Brian Heithoff, CEO/General Manager

While fireworks and Independence Day parades are synonymous with the Fourth of July, no such fanfare comes to mind when discussing energy efficiency. Perhaps it should. If you think about it, energy efficiency not only benefits individuals and families, but the country as a whole. Energy efficiency combined with energy conservation and advances in technology in the utility industry, ultimately help our country on a path toward greater

energy independence. And that's worth celebrating.

For individual consumers, a reduction in energy use usually translates to a tangible financial benefit – more money in your wallet at the end of the month. If your co-op neighbors are also using less energy, collectively, it means the overall cost of providing that electricity could be lower and may result in reduced costs for co-op members. For many, this is reason enough to strive for greater energy efficiency.

There's no need to wait for the first exploding burst of fireworks in the night sky to start your energy efficiency efforts. Every American can take charge of their own energy use, regardless of the date on the calendar. Small steps can lead to a big difference for you and your neighbors, whether across the road or across the country.

Energy efficiency can generally be achieved two ways. The first is with mechanical change, such as replacing an older HVAC unit or less efficient appliance or with a new ENERGY STAR model or upgrading to new, insulated windows. Less expensive actions include

improving the seal of your home's "envelope" by caulking exterior windows and doors and sealing openings where pipes and ductwork meet the outside. Swapping out the last incandescent bulbs (inside and outside) with LEDs also makes a noticeable difference.

The second way to realize energy efficiency is through smarter management of your energy use. Leveraging smart thermostat technology is a good place to start. Program your thermostat to reflect your family's schedule. Many thermostat programs allow you to view and edit your thermostat schedule and monitor the amount of energy used. Sometimes, however, energy efficiency is simply a matter of changing old habits such as washing clothes in cold water instead of hot or running the dishwasher during off-peak times.

Regardless of the path you take on the road to energy efficiency and independence, High West Energy can help you on the journey. For information about energy efficiency programs, contact our Energy Management Advisor at (307) 245-3261.

www.highestenergy.com

HIGHWESTENERGY, 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**

OFFICE HOURS • MONDAY – FRIDAY • 7:30 AM – 5:00 PM

CHEYENNE SERVICE CENTER. • 3302 I-80 SERVICE ROAD • CHEYENNE, WY 82009 • **OPEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM**



THIS INSTITUTION IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

District 11 – Michael Lerwick | (307) 630-1277

District 12 – Gary Smith | (307) 649-2375

District 13 – Ed Prosser | (307) 632-6068

District 14 – Jerry Burnett | (970) 895-3386

District 15 – Dan Acheson | (308) 235-2300

District 16 – Jamie Fowler | (307) 214-9191

District 17 – Kevin Thomas | (308) 879-4396

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Brian Heithoff, CEO/General Manager

Ken Haas, Operations Manager

Dave Crouse, Chief Information Officer

Lindsay Forepaugh, Chief Financial Officer

Konnie Keehnen, Member Services Manager

Curtis Lund, Marketing Manager

Carol Macy, High West Wiring Manager

Marv Powell, WAFB Operations Manager

Lloyd Sisson, Engineering Manager