

JUNE 2015

SPARKS

Focused on people. Built on power.

HIGH WEST ENERGY

MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

Strategic Initiatives For the Future



Brian Heithoff, CEO/General Manager

In February 2014, the High West Energy board of directors and leadership team spent a full day charting a direction for the cooperative as part of the earliest phase in developing a strategic plan. We considered a variety of things, but ultimately decided to promote member satisfaction, financial stewardship, reliability and safety.

Developing a winning strategy for our organization is more important than ever in today's changing marketplace and business environment. I absolutely believe that the High West family of companies is on a path to

delivering greater and greater levels of value to our members and customers when compared to today and last year and the year before that.

Over the past year and a half, leaders of the cooperative have been meeting on a regular basis to discuss the overarching goals and focus areas and to develop specific initiatives within each of those goal areas.

In 2015, the leadership team has committed to 47 initiatives, ranging from launching Operation Round-up, to reducing the cycle of pole inspections to 12 years, to establishing a hazard mitigation plan, to developing an energy auditing program. We are focusing our decisions on the things that will best meet our mission and these organizational goals.

"With a clever strategy, each action is self-reinforcing. Each action creates more options that are mutually beneficial. Each victory is not just for today but for tomorrow."

Max McKeown
The Strategy Book

2014-2018 Strategic Initiatives

Listening to the Voice of the Member:

To increase member satisfaction with the High West Energy family of companies.

Ensuring Good Value for the Money:

To reduce operating costs per kWh.

To increase equity and modified equity as a percentage of total assets.

Always On:

To reduce our five-year distribution outage time per account.

To increase the trust level of our members/customers in the High West family of companies.

Quest for Zero:

To eliminate lost-time accidents

For more information on our strategic plan, visit <http://highwestenergy.com/coop-strategy>. We'll be updating this information as we move further along into the strategic planning process and welcome your feedback. Feel free to drop me a line with your input at bheithoff@highwestenergy.com.

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

FACEBOOK.COM/HIGHWESTENERGY @HIGHWESTENERGY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

District 11 – Troy Freeburg
Bushnell, NE (307) 287-2633

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

Jeff Bruckner, Operations Manager

Dave Crouse, Chief Information Officer

Konnie Keehnen, Energy Services Manager

Karen Rintelmann, Chief Financial Officer

Lloyd Sisson, Engineering 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

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HOME

MY ACCOUNT

YOUR COOPERATIVE

MEMBER BENEFITS

NEWS & INFORMATION

OUTAGE CENTER

ELECTRIC UTILITY SERVICE

ENERGY MANAGEMENT

SEARCH

CONTACT US | OUTAGE CENTER | PAY MY BILL



New Websites Launched for High West Companies

Over the past six months, the High West family of companies (High West Energy, High West Digital Solutions and High West Wiring) has been working to develop a cohesive web presence to better serve the members and customers served by each of the companies.

While the information on each of the three websites is company-specific, there are similarities among the sites that will improve the online experience for everyone, including a clean, professional look, simple navigation, improved content and user-friendly electronic forms.

"It was time to take our web presence to the next level," said Lorrell Walter, public relations and marketing manager. "The new design better reflects the High West brand and will provide a more robust experience for members and customers looking to engage with us online."

Throughout the High West Energy site, members will find additional content to help them manage their energy use. General improvements were made to enhance some of the more popular areas on the site, such as the outage center, while a new section devoted to energy efficiency was created.

"Our goal with these new sites is to improve the user experience," Walter said. "Whether a first time visitor, a returning member, or a prospective customer, the new websites offer a warm and welcoming look into how we do business at High West."

High West Digital Solutions: www.HWDS.com

High West Wiring: www.highwestwiring.com

www.highwestenergy.com

High West Energy to Debut Renovated Office Soon

In a process that began in mid-2014, High West Energy has taken the next step in renovating its Pine Bluffs headquarters to better serve its members. The addition to the building has been constructed adjacent to the original structure, on the east side of the building.

High West Energy moved into the headquarters building in the mid-1980s and the original building served the cooperative well for nearly 30 years. Now, after three decades of use, the office is too small to accommodate the growth of the co-op and its auxiliary businesses, High West Digital Solutions and High West Wiring.

“The decision to undergo a major renovation is not one we took lightly,” said Brian Heithoff, CEO/general manager. “We understand the importance of being responsible with our members’ money and thoroughly researched all of our options before moving forward.”

High West Energy awarded a contract to Horizon Homes, which is owned and operated by High West Energy member, Marc Woods. The roughly 19,000 square-foot, two story building has additional space on the second floor that will allow room for growth in the years to come.

“The timing of this project was almost perfect,” said Heithoff. “The past few years, we have experienced a significant increase in sales due to the oil industry, which affords us the opportunity to add-on without any rate impact to the membership. This was a critical consideration in the decision making process.”

The High West family of companies was likely going to need to make the decision to expand its facilities at some point within the next few years, regardless of the oil activity. However, the zero-impact on rates would not have been as certain.

“This new building will allow to facilitate better service to our members,” said Heithoff. “From a drive-up window that will allow members to make payments from the comfort of their cars, to a display area showcasing ways to incorporate energy efficient solutions in homes and businesses, we are working very hard to make the new facility a place where our members can find solutions to their energy, wiring and computing needs.”



FEATURED PERSON

Rick Scott Lineman

As the proverbial phrase goes, “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” That’s exactly what Rick Scott did when he was laid off from his position as an equipment and electronics maintenance technician at Micron Technologies in Boise, Idaho.

Rick took the unfortunate situation as an opportunity to go back to school; he had previously taken classes at Boise State University. In deciding what he wanted to do next, Rick decided to become a lineman, knowing that qualified candidates were, and still are, in high demand.

After graduating from Northwest Lineman College in 2010, he left Boise to accept a position as an apprentice lineman at Niobrara Electric Association in Lusk, Wyo., a position that he held for more than four years.

“I like that High West Energy is a little bigger company,” says Rick. “This cooperative provides me with new opportunities and is teaching me different methods of getting the job done.”

Rick and his girlfriend of two and a half years, Shelle, reside in Pine Bluffs with his daughters, Kiley and Katherine. In his spare time, he enjoys playing guitar and singing.

Tree Trimming Effort in Effect

High West Energy has contracted with Arbor Masters and Affordable Tree to cut or trim trees in the power line rights-of-way throughout its service area. Contractors look for foliage growing under lines, overhanging branches, leaning or other types of “danger” trees that could pull down a power line if they fall, and trees that could grow into lines.

One of the initiatives in the cooperative’s strategic plan is to reduce the tree trimming cycle to five to seven years. Thus far, the majority of the service territory (everything east of the TA in Burns) has been completed.

There are three main reasons for trimming and cutting trees.

1. **Safety.** Children love to climb trees and sometimes do not look around first to see if the tree has grown up around power lines, which carry 7,200 volts or more of electricity. Accidental contact would be fatal.
2. **Reliability.** Vegetation—trees, shrubs, brush—growing too close to power lines and distribution equipment leads to 15 percent of power interruptions. Trees are a good conductor of electricity and whenever a tree branch touches the power lines, electricity travels through the tree into the ground, causing blinks or outages if the contact is enough to open the breakers on the line.
3. **Cost-effective.** Trimming trees away from the lines reduces line loos, electricity that we all pay for and no one benefits from.

In working to keep a safe, reliable supply of power flowing to your home or business, we need your help. Let us know if you notice trees or branches that might pose a risk to our power lines. Even more important, before planting trees in your yard, think about how tall they may grow and how wide their branches may spread. As a rule of thumb, 25 feet of ground-to-sky clearance should be available on each side of our utility poles to give power lines plenty of space. Choose tree varieties with care and plant with power lines in mind.

Thanks for your help as we work together to keep electricity reliable. To report trees you think may pose a problem, call Jeff Bruckner at (307) 245-4316. To find out more about proper tree planting, visit www.arborday.org.

Go “Green” with Renewable Energy Certificates

As a member of High West Energy, you now have a choice regarding the source of energy provided for your home or business. High West Energy is pleased to introduce **renewableblends**, a renewable energy certificate program.

Currently the power you buy from High West Energy is generated from a variety of sources, with 76 percent from traditional sources and 24 percent from renewable sources.

The **renewableblends** program offers members the opportunity to displace non-renewable sources (coal and natural gas) from the electric grid with renewable resources such as wind, solar and hydro-electric power.

For a minimal increase in your bill, you can change the blend to 50 or 100 percent renewable energy, with the balance coming from traditional resources.



| Traditional Blend | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Serving Size 1000 kWh/month* | |
| Energy Source | % Monthly Value |
| Coal (590 kWh) | 59% |
| Natural Gas (20 kWh) | 2% |
| Market (15 kWh) | 15% |
| Renewable Energy (240 kWh) | 24% |
| Hydro (160 kWh) | 16% |
| Wind (60 kWh) | 6% |
| Other (20 kWh) | 2% |

*Approximate value based on average household consumption. Diagram for illustration purposes only.

Average monthly bill: \$127.38

| 50/50 Blend | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Serving Size 1000 kWh/month* | |
| Energy Source | % Monthly Value |
| Coal (387 kWh) | 39% |
| Natural Gas (14 kWh) | 1% |
| Market (99 kWh) | 10% |
| Renewable Energy (500 kWh) | 50% |
| Hydro (160 kWh) | 16% |
| Wind (320 kWh) | 32% |
| Other (20 kWh) | 2% |

*Approximate value based on average household consumption. Diagram for illustration purposes only.

Average monthly bill: \$128.16
Increase in price reflects a \$0.003 per kWh charge on additional renewable energy in the portfolio.

| 100% Renewable Energy | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Serving Size 1000 kWh/month* | |
| Energy Source | % Monthly Value |
| Coal (0 kWh) | 0% |
| Natural Gas (0 kWh) | 0% |
| Market (0 kWh) | 0% |
| Renewable Energy (1000 kWh) | 100% |
| Hydro (160 kWh) | 16% |
| Wind (820 kWh) | 82% |
| Solar (20 kWh) | 2% |

*Approximate value based on average household consumption. Diagram for illustration purposes only.

Average monthly bill: \$129.66
Increase in price reflects a \$0.003 per kWh charge on additional renewable energy in the portfolio.

50/50 Blend Benefits include: door decal, subscription to the Renewableblends News, a quarterly electronic publication focused on energy efficiency and a listing on the High West Energy website.

100% Renewable Power Benefits include: door decal, subscription to the Renewableblends News, a quarterly electronic publication focused on energy efficiency, a listing on the High West Energy website, a listing in SPARKS and recognition at our annual meeting.

To sign up for the **renewableblends** program, visit www.highwestenergy.com/renewableblends