



# PRECorp News

SEPTEMBER 2020

## PRECorp marks 75 years at Sundance Annual Meeting

The 2020 Annual Meeting, a 75th Anniversary event, was supposed to be a much bigger celebration than presented on Saturday, August 22, at Sundance High School.

The national COVID-19 pandemic restricted the size and length of public gatherings in hopes the spread of this respiratory virus can be blunted. More than 360 members mailed in their ballots, with only 90 attending in person.

Even though an in-person quorum of 100 members was not received, the PRECorp Board of Directors voted to declare exigent circumstances and allowed the 2020 director elections to proceed.

PRECorp hosted 90 members in person, and 362 voted in advance.

The elections determined that Alison Gee was elected from Campbell County over Barry Hayden by a margin of 220-191. Clay Branscom narrowly won the vote for Walt Christensen's seat from Weston County over Lucas Keeler by a vote of 206-204. Philip Habeck from Crook County and Mike Helvey from Sheridan County ran unopposed.



Photos by Tim Velder/PRECorp

PRECorp members serve as election judges, tallying votes during the Annual Meeting Saturday, August 22, at Sundance High School.

PRECorp officials presented annual reports, and time was set aside for special presentations.

Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon joined the meeting live and outlined his connection to the cooperative as a Powder River Energy member. He also addressed

**Continued on page 4...**

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### In This Issue

CEO Straight Talk

Rate Case approved

PRECorp helps Upton

Tavegie Scholarship awarded

Foundation supports Climb Wyoming



**MIKE EASLEY,**  
CEO

*The following is an excerpt from my CEO address Saturday, August 22, at the Annual Meeting. The complete meeting video is available on our YouTube channel.*

When you take a look at all the things that have happened in the past 20 years and, you especially look at what has even been happening for us in the past 10 years, the group sitting here has been engaged, informed, and involved. You have attended annual meetings and telephone town halls to learn about our issues and challenges. I'm not going to go through all the details of that because you have been along for the ride.

Through all these things that we've been experiencing, we've come together at a pretty difficult time. We've got some challenges ahead of us with COVID-19 and with how we are going to get through the rest of what's going on. I think a story will explain it best.

I don't know about you but the things that have happened to us all this past year have taken me to my knees. When you don't have any place else to look but up, sometimes you can be inspired. I want to tell you a story about this guy named Bob.

*Bob's in a flood and it's raining. And it keeps coming. This is a flood of epic proportions. The water gets up to his porch, and he gets a little worried. Water comes into his house: he gets a little more worried. He goes up in the attic, busts a hole in his roof and is on the roof of his house, and the waters keep rising.*

*Bob is a man that knows how to get on his knees. So, he prays. He says, "God, help me. You know I trust you. Help me get out of this mess." The next thing you know, a boat comes up. He looks in the boat. Guess who's in the boat. Bob's brother. He says, "Hey, Bob. Come on down. I got this boat. I rigged this up from stuff we had behind the house."*

*Maybe he was a rancher. He put a bunch of wire and stuff together to get this boat to float.*

*Bob looked at his brother and said, "I ain't getting in the boat with you. I'm mad at you. I don't want to be trapped with you in a boat. I'm just going to pray more and God's going to help me."*

*So, Bob's brother went off. The next thing that happens, the water keeps getting a little bit higher. This time a canoe comes up. Bob looks in the canoe, and who's in the canoe?*

*Bob's neighbor. But they haven't really been neighborly very often. They had a falling out. It might have had something to do with the fence. I don't know, but they had a falling out. The neighbor says, "Hey, Bob. Come on in. Get in this canoe. There's room for you. Let's go to safety."*

*Bob says, "I don't know if I want to do that. You go ahead. I'm a praying man. God's going to get me out of this mess."*

*The canoe went away. Then a raft came. This was a party boat. There were young kids in this raft, and people that Bob never knew. They talked in ways that he never heard before and played music he didn't like. They asked him, "Hey! Why don't you get in with us? We'll go to safety."*

*Bob said, "No, you guys are too different than me. I'm not going to do it. I'm going to pray."*

*The water eventually comes up, and Bob drowned. He's at the pearly gates. Bob asked Saint Peter at the pearly gates, "What the heck, man? I've been a praying man all my life. I've gone to church. I've done good things. I have treated my neighbors right. I've done the right things. Why didn't you save me?"*

*Saint Peter looks and says, "What do you mean, 'Why didn't you save me?'"*

*"Well, yeah. I drowned," Bob says.*

*Saint Peter replied, "Look Bob, we sent a boat. We sent a canoe. We sent a raft after you. You didn't get in."*

*So, you ask, "How are we going to get through this mess of COVID 19 and other issues?"*

Look at what we did 75 years ago: We came together as neighbors. We came together as friends. We came together as people that didn't think the same. We came together with people that maybe had money, and some that maybe didn't. But over the past 75 years, Powder River Energy - its leaders, its members - have built an amazing organization, that I promise you is going to withstand COVID-19. It's going to withstand the decline of coal. It's going to withstand whatever happens politically. Because the magic that we have is each other. That's who's going to keep us going. When you think about it, the lesson that Bob needed to learn is...It's people. God works through people.

I just challenge you to look around. Look at your neighbor. Look at yourself. Look at your family. As things continue to get tough - and they will - it's people that are going to get us through it.

That's how God works. That's my message to you at our 75th Anniversary. It's people. God works through people. He has got this, and so do we.

# Wyoming PSC approves PRECorp rate case

## *Program changes, additions are part of the new structure*

On July 27, the Wyoming Public Service Commission (PSC) approved the General Rate Case for PRECorp.

This case is headlined by a general rate adjustment applied for electric usage beginning September 1, 2020.

The final increase proposed and filed for approval by the PSC was reduced slightly to \$6,435,631, or an overall increase of 3.88%, across all member classes with varied impacts to each class.

The Residential basic charge will increase \$1.50 from \$25.50 to \$27, and rates will increase an average of 8.35%. The General Service basic charge will increase \$5 per month, to \$40 for single-phase and \$45 for three-phase, and rates will increase about 8.09%.

Along with the adjustment in rates, there are several other changes effective September 1 that are designed to realign business customer rates, consolidate other rates, improve the billing process and provide new rate options to

cooperative members. PRECorp mailed letters in August to members who may be impacted by the rate consolidations and billing changes. These are summarized in the following capsules. Please call PRECorp Member Service at 1-800-442-3630 if you have any questions about the changes and how they might affect you.

### **Annual/Seasonal billing**

This change has the most obvious effect on rural members who are accustomed to being billed only once or twice per year for energy usage for agricultural pumps or seasonal housing. PRECorp will transition to monthly billings all residential annual/seasonal accounts that were normally billed two times per year (October and January). This transition improves member service and helps us better manage billing costs.

We have timed this transition with the implementation of PRECorp's Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) metering system. Members with multiple accounts

are offered options such as Invoice Group Billing, to put all accounts in the same billing cycle on one billing statement; and AutoPay, to ensure timely payment through our online automated payment feature.

### **Payment must arrive on due date**

Another change to the PSC rules is related to when payments must be received. The revised rule requires payments to be received in our office, or paid electronically, by the due date. Some instances in the past allowed for a postmark date to waive late fees. From now on, any payment received after the due date – postmarked or not – is subject to a late fee.

### **Three-phase Residential service rate**

PRECorp is adding a Three-phase Residential rate class to its General Service rate schedule. As part of adding this new classification and rate, and to maintain accurate service/account informa-

**Continued on page 8...**

## Events calendar

The PRECorp Board of Directors meets the third Tuesday of the month at 9:30 a.m. Meetings might be held telephonically to accommodate COVID-19 pandemic recommendations. The remaining dates for 2020 are as follows:

**September 15**

**October 20**

**November 17**

**December 15**

Other events to remember:

- **Veterans Day Holiday, Wednesday, November 11:** PRECorp offices closed, call 1-888-391-6220 with an outage.
- **Wednesday, November 18:** Telephone town hall, 6:30 p.m., call 1-888-886-6603.
- **Thanksgiving Holiday Thursday and Friday November 26-27:** PRECorp offices closed, call 1-888-391-6220 with an outage.
- **Christmas Holiday, Thursday and Friday, December 24-25:** PRECorp offices closed, call 1-888-391-6220 with an outage.
- **New Year's Day Holiday, Friday, January 1, 2021:** PRECorp offices closed, call 1-888-391-6220 with an outage.

## Annual Meeting ... from page 1.

the financial affairs of the state and what the future will look like. "We have had tough times before," Gov. Gordon said. "Wyoming has had this continuing boom and bust cycle. But through that boom and bust cycle, the resiliency of ag and the resiliency of companies like PRECorp, has really shown the character of Wyoming. And I am very confident...that Wyoming's days are better and will become the best that we've had."

U.S. Senators John Barrasso and Mike Enzi sent video greetings to the membership. A free lunch and prize drawings were also held.

Walt Christensen of Weston County, who stepped down from the Board of Directors, was honored with a special plaque of appreciation after more than 30-years of service to the cooperative membership.

Christensen was also presented with the Earl Christensen Award. Walt credited much of his success on the Board to his wife Launa, who covered the home front while he devoted time on the Board. Unbeknownst to Christensen, the Board voted to put Walt Christensen on the cooperative's wall of honor for his passion for rural electrification in northeast Wyoming.

Continued on page 5...



Retiring PRECorp Board President Walt Christensen, left, accepts the Earl Christensen Award from fellow Board member Reuben Ritthaler, right, at the Annual Meeting Saturday, August 22, at Sundance High School.



Gov. Mark Gordon (and PRECorp member) joins the Annual Meeting live on the big screen Saturday, August 22, at Sundance High School.

## Annual Meeting ... from page 4.

Walt commented on his tenure: "This is very humbling. My dad would be particularly humbled. Dad, if you're up there listening, thanks for everything you have done for me." Christensen plans to present this award at future annual meetings.

CEO Mike Easley gave a short non-traditional speech. See page 2 for an excerpt of his comments.

Board Secretary-Treasurer Gerry Geis gave a brief financial report.

The meeting closed with a raffle drawing for the Apprentice Lineman Scholarship Program. Arlyn Gustafson was the winner of the 2020 Polaris Ranger side-by-side. The raffle grossed more than \$23,000 for the program, which awards tuition scholarships to local students entering electrical line worker school.

While not a new practice, PRECorp live-streamed the meeting for the first time. YouTube and Facebook showed the video of the meeting, and it is archived on PRECorp's YouTube channel. To view the entire meeting on YouTube, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHwR7lUkH-U>



Above: PRECorp members Chuck and Myrna Tesch of Pine Haven provide a '57 Chevy to help display a vintage logo from PRECorp's past at the Annual Meeting Saturday, August 22, at Sundance High School.

Below: Masks and social distancing were prevalent at the 75th Anniversary PRECorp Annual Meeting Saturday, August 22, at Sundance High School. Shown are Member Service Representatives CJ Griffith and Linda Tokarczyk entering in-person member registrations.



# PRECorp assists Upton with study

The Upton Economic Development Board (UEDB) recently pulled together funding and resources of more than \$40,000 for a feasibility study for the community of Upton.

The project would examine business sectors, current and future needs, site-specific business opportunities, and synergies with existing businesses. "The plan would include a Small Business Resource Center and a Small Business Center-Business Park. The project site is located on eighty acres owned by the UEDB in the Town of Upton," said Stephanie Salazar, UEDB Executive Director.

This will be funded by a \$25,090 Rural Business Development Grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (U.S.D.A.), \$6,000 of in-kind labor from UEDB to manage the U.S.D.A. grant and study, and a \$10,000 grant from Powder River Energy Corporation's (PRECorp) WyREC program.

The WyRECs program offers the sale of renewable energy credits to companies within and outside of the state of Wyoming with sustainability objectives interested in reducing their environmental impact. Proceeds from the WyREC transactions are available to reinvest in economic development projects specifi-

cally located in the PRECorp service area. The WyREC program is made possible because of PRECorp's membership in Basin Electric Power Cooperative, which has significant wind energy projects throughout its service territory.

"This is an innovative means for PRECorp to meet its Vision 2030 strategic theme of 'Member Engagement and Community Development,' by facilitating business creation and development to benefit communities," said PRECorp VP of Member Service Jeff Bumgarner.

Cheyenne-based cloud hosting, colocation, and hybrid IT provider Green House Data and PRECorp have partnered in the WyRECs program since 2014, when this initiative was launched.

Green House Data uses renewable energy credits from the WyRECs program to offset energy consumption across each of its data centers, including at the company's Cheyenne headquarters.

For more information about the program or how to offset your energy consumption in Wyoming, contact Laura Ladd, WyREC program manager at (307) 413-3334, or [laura@hewittladd.com](mailto:laura@hewittladd.com).

# Reid Holmes wins Tavegie Scholarship

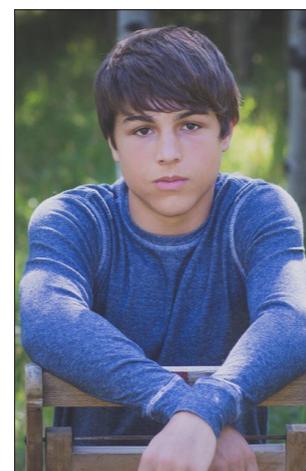
In memory of long-time Powder River Energy Foundation Board Member Kathleen Tavegie, the Foundation Board awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to a Weston County student who is pursuing an Elementary Education Degree.

Tavegie was a founding member of the Foundation Board in 2007 and passed away in 2019.

Reid Holmes of Newcastle is the recipient of the first scholarship for the 2020-2021 academic year.

"I am excited to start my journey at Sheridan College and the beginning to becoming an Elementary Teacher," Holmes said when presented with the special award. "I am excited to get to help young students in the beginning stages of their learning. Again, I would like to say thank you for awarding me this Scholarship."

The scholarship is open to any Weston County student. More information is available at [www.precorp-foundation.org](http://www.precorp-foundation.org)



Reid Holmes

# Climb Wyoming receives \$10,000 from Powder River Energy Foundation

With a \$10,000 donation to Climb Wyoming, the Powder River Energy Foundation has increased its ongoing support for low-income single mothers to discover self-sufficiency through career training and placement.

Climb Wyoming is a statewide nonprofit that creates brighter futures for struggling single mothers and their families. The program includes job training and placement in high-demand careers, such as truck driving and healthcare, as well as individual and group therapy, and life skills classes in personal financial management, parenting, and more.

“During these challenging times, we are so grateful for the support of Powder River Energy Foundation,” said Dr. Ray Fleming Dineen, Climb’s founder and executive director. “The need for Climb’s programs in Gillette is even greater during the pandemic. With the PRECorp donation, Climb will continue its role as a critical resource hub for low-income single mother families while offering career training in safe and responsible ways.”

The award was doubled to \$10,000 this year when the Foundation applied for and received CoBank Sharing Success grant dedicated to helping rural non-profit organizations.

“The PRECorp Foundation strives to support groups like Climb Wyoming. Climb’s successful programs continue to implement one of the Foundation’s general tenets which is to give a hand up to those in need in northeast Wyoming. We appreciate Climb’s ability to create these sustainable solutions for single mothers,” said PRECorp Foundation Board President John Flocchini.



PRECorp photo  
Powder River Energy Foundation Executive Director Jeff Bumgarner, left, presents a \$10,000 donation to Gillette Climb Wyoming Program Director Jenny Mashak.

The Foundation is a self-sustaining giving organization that gets its funding from a variety of sources. Some funds are made possible in part by the PRECorp Operation RoundUp Program, fundraisers, and large matching grants. When PRECorp consumer-members sign up for Operation RoundUp, PRECorp rounds up their electric bill to the next dollar.

“We address the basic needs of our communities by feeding the hungry, supporting our Veterans, and giving a helping hand to families in crisis, the elderly, arts and education. The Foundation’s goal is simple: to provide financial and philanthropic support to organizations and causes that have a direct impact in our local communities. The impact of these donations will be felt by the hard-working consumer-members of PRECorp throughout northeast Wyoming,” said PRECorp Foundation Executive Director Jeff Bumgarner.

The Foundation focuses its giving to charitable organizations in Campbell, Crook, Johnson, Sheridan, and Weston counties.

## Rate Case... from page 3.

tion, we are reviewing Three-phase General Service accounts to determine if the services are currently being used for non-residential or residential purposes.

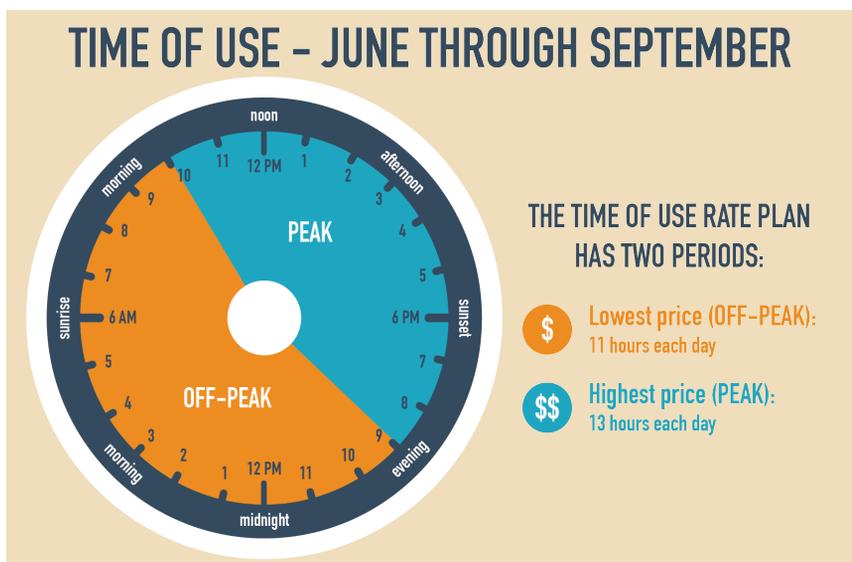
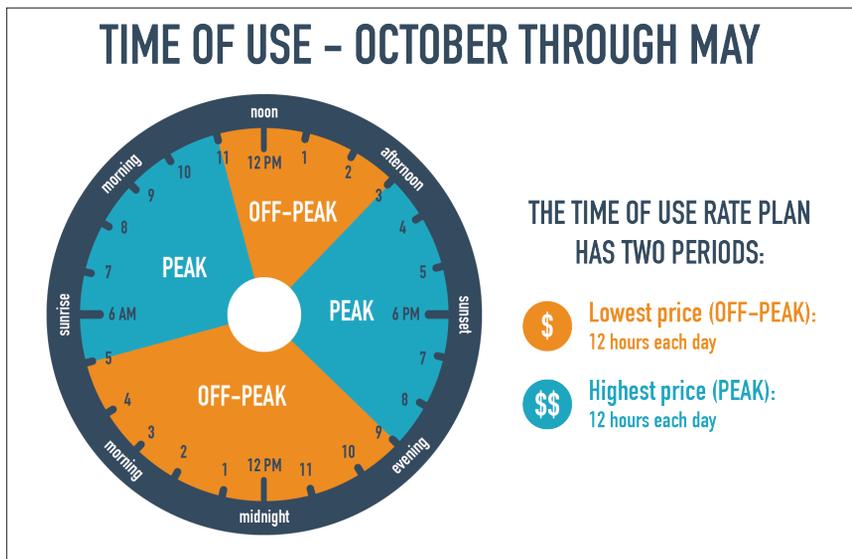
The basic monthly charge and the energy charge will be the same for both non-residential and residential three-phase rates. We simply want to code the accounts for more accurate identification of the loads being served and for regulatory compliance.

### Heat Rate offered across rate classes

On the monthly billing statement, the Residential Heat Rate and the Non-Residential Heat Rate options will be combined into one Heat Rate option and simply be referred to as the Heat Rate. This requires breaking out the single basic charge Heat Rate participants see today into two basic charges – one for your main meter based on the rate class of your account, and one for the heat rate meter.

### Time of Use program

Our Time-of-Use Rate option is one more way we continue our promise to provide members with affordable rates and options that fit their individual energy needs. The concept behind this program is fairly simple: rather than a single flat rate for each unit of energy used (e.g. kWh,) you pay different rates for the electricity you use based on the time of day and season. Under this voluntary rate option, when you consume



electricity is just as important as the amount of electricity you use.

On Time-of-Use, rates are lower during evenings and overnight because of the decreased demand for electricity during those times.. To help lower costs, you can shift energy use to off-peak periods (when electricity prices are low-

est). Our Time-of-Use Rate also changes seasonally, because electricity demand differs between summer months and the rest of the year. These rates can make a big difference for members particularly in the areas of heating and cooling; major appliances; and water pumping equipment.



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