

PRECorp News

APRIL 2018

PRECorp explores Automated Metering Infrastructure technology

For most Powder River Energy members, the electric meter attaches to the outside of the home or on a pedestal near their structures.

It rarely attracts attention and is often times ignored but is a critical piece of electrical infrastructure for the cooperative, providing data not only for the monthly measurement of energy use and billings but more granular data, daily at this time, to assist the cooperative in working with members to better understanding their energy usage.

The Powder River Energy Board of Directors is reviewing plans to replace the current automated meter reading (AMR) system (and meters) with a more robust and feature-rich automated meter infrastructure (AMI) system over the next two years. The new AMI system comes with an improved solid-state meter and a two-way communi-

cation network that not only receives readings like the older AMR system but can transmit signals to the cooperative when it is experiencing a problem, like when there's been a power outage.

The AMR meters are becoming a technological dinosaur. On a daily basis, the AMR meters report member kilowatt hour (kWh) usage, demand, and power factor data back to the PRE-Corp offices, from which monthly bills are generated. The existing AMR system, known as 'the turtle system', is decades old.

While the system continues to perform as intended, its functionality to provide useful operational data and functions for the cooperative and our members is limited. In addition, our AMR manufacturer has informed

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What is an AMI meter?

- Two-way communications between the meter and the cooperative.
- Real-time meter reading through low-frequency radio signals.
- Real-time oversight for system operations (outage, voltage problems).
- All transmitted data is encrypted.
- An AMI meter has no idea what a consumer uses the electricity for, and it doesn't care.

Regular business: 1-800-442-3630 • Report an outage: 1-888-391-6220

www.precorp.coop

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MIKE EASLEY,
CEO

This month's CEO Straight Talk is my third article in a series of four articles introducing and explaining PRECorp's strategy and our new Strategy Map. So far I have introduced our Moonshot, Purpose, and Vision, as well as our Member and Financial Perspectives. This month I will be talking about our Internal Process Perspective and our three Strategic Themes. These Strategic Themes are the real drivers for the outcomes we measure in our Member and Financial Perspectives and are guided by our Moonshot,

Purpose, and Vision.

The first Strategic Theme that I want to discuss is "Monitor, Predict, and Harness the Power of Accelerating Technologies". This means that PRECorp will be keeping an eye on accelerating technologies to see how we might be able to use them to reduce costs and increase your level of service. One example of how we are harnessing accelerating technology is in the outage response and meter reading systems.

When I came here 17 years ago, there was a part-time person who handled the outage calls after hours. The calls would come in, and that person would begin making calls to get the crews out. We would depend on more calls from our membership to actually pinpoint the location and magnitude of the outage. If that person was on the phone, you simply heard a busy signal.

We now use an Outage Management System that is able to automatically determine outage location and magni-

tude based upon who is calling in to our outage response center or reporting outages online through the SmartHub application. In the very near future the meters themselves will be communicating directly with the Outage Management System to help determine location and size of the outage. This will reduce overall outage response time as well as help us to communicate outage information in near real-time while doing it cheaper and faster than ever before.

Our second Strategic Theme is "Mitigate Wholesale Power Supply Risk". Wholesale power costs represent over 75% of the cooperative's overall expenses. The competitiveness of PRECorp's wholesale power costs have become increasingly challenged when you compare prices to wholesale markets. While the markets don't reflect any long-term commitment for supply, we know we have to improve the overall outlook of long-term power supply.

Cheap natural gas, increased efficiencies of wind power, battery storage, and regulatory challenges are working against power supplies that are predominantly coal-based. We have a long-term relationship for power supply with Basin Electric that has served us well in the past, and we have work to do in order to keep it working for us in the future. One example of how we have helped to mitigate wholesale power supply risk is by offering a special rate for electric heat usage to residential members. These rates help members save money, they help the cooperative increase its sales, and they help Basin to increase the operating efficiencies of its base load coal plants. We have started looking at how we might expand

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this offering beyond the residential membership. If we are able to do this, we help more members, Basin Electric, and your cooperative run more efficiently. Our third Strategic Theme is "Member Engagement and Community Development". At the heart of the cooperative experience is the member-owner relationship and our shared interest in keeping our communities healthy and vibrant. We tend to think of communities as physical places, but in today's changing world, and in the future, communities also include our social networks. We also hear a lot about economic development, and most people tend to think this means recruiting new businesses.

... taking care of existing business and helping them get to the next level is essential to keeping our communities vibrant and healthy.

While recruitment is a part of economic and community development, taking care of existing business and helping them get to the next level is essential to keeping our communities vibrant and healthy. This helps to position them to someday diversify with a newly-recruited business. Several years ago, PRECorp was able to secure a low interest loan from Basin that we could redeploy to help support small business and create economic development.

We were successful in working with a local bank to de-

ploy a portion of this loan to help start a new retail business in one of our smaller communities. This business continues to thrive, and the community is a better place with the business in their town.

We have just launched an economic development website to present to the wider world the unique opportunities of our communities, many of which have had no presence like this before. I am excited about how we might be able to engage members and their communities to make us all stronger and our collective voices louder.

Each of these Strategic Themes has four Objectives. Guided by our Vision, these Objectives will create and spin out new processes and initiatives that your PRECorp Team will pursue in order to drive the outcomes we are looking for in our Member and Process Perspectives to help us fulfill our Purpose and ultimately achieve the Moonshot.

Events calendar

The PRECorp Board of Directors meets the third Tuesday of the month at 9:30 a.m. in Sundance, Gillette, and Sheridan. Meetings might be moved to avoid conflicts with state or national cooperative events. The tentative dates for 2018 are as follows:

- April 17 - Sundance**
- May 22 - Gillette**
- June 18-19 - Sheridan**
- July 17 - Sundance**
- August 21 - Gillette**
- September 17-18 - Sheridan**
- October 16 - Sundance**
- November 20 - Gillette**
- December 17-18- Sheridan**

Other events to remember:

- **Saturday, April 28:** Apprentice Lineman Scholarship Banquet, 5:30 p.m., Gillette Cam-Plex Energy Hall. (See Page 7 for details.)
- **Wednesday, May 16:** Telephone Town Hall, 6:30 p.m., call 1-844-881-1317.
- **Saturday, June 2:** Durham Ranch Buffalo Stampede 5K/10K Walk/Run.
- **Wednesday, August 22:** Telephone Town Hall, 6:30 p.m., call 1-844-881-1317.
- **Saturday, August 25:** PRECorp 73rd Annual Membership Meeting, Gillette Cam-Plex Energy Hall and Heritage Center Theater.

Foundation helps local charities

By Tim Velder, PRECorp Marketing Communications

The Powder River Energy Foundation Board of Directors recently made donations to four area charitable organizations for the betterment of the communities they serve.

A unique donation the Foundation is able to provide is processed and frozen meat. The Foundation has several hundred pounds of donated beef, pork, and bison, for donation to local charities, food pantries, and other non-profit organizations who help their local communities.

Last month the Council of Community Services in Campbell County received 200 pounds of ground bison burger for its Soup Kitchen.

“Our Soup Kitchen operates continuously throughout the year, serving 20,000 meals in 2017 alone,” said spokesperson Mikel Scott. “It will be put to good use preparing and serving healthy, homemade, and nutritious meals to those in our community who are homeless and hungry.”

A portion of the donation - a retail value of approximately \$2,000 - will also supply their Food Pantry program for families in need to prepare meals at home.

Sheridan Senior Center (Hub on Smith) Help at Home Program

The Foundation also presented a \$4,000 donation to the Hub’s Help at Home Program. This program serves approximately 250 households in Sheridan County. It provides everyday care and support for senior citizens so they are able to stay in their own homes. Home health aides assist these residents with basic personal care. No family is turned away due to inability to pay and payments are based on a sliding income scale. This means donations from the Foundation go a long way toward offsetting the real costs of providing quality care to enrolled seniors in Sheridan County.

“Support for the Help at Home program will benefit the communities in Sheridan County by providing health services to a population that may otherwise be institutionalized,” said Hub Executive Director Rindy West. “They are more financially secure and well cared for than other alternatives.”



PRECorp photos

Gillette Soup Kitchen Manager Dottie Cook, left, and PRECorp Foundation Board President John Flocchini crate up frozen buffalo burger donated by the Foundation.

Kid Prints, Inc.

Kid Prints, Inc. is a combination daycare and preschool in Sundance. The Foundation donated \$1,000 for food and tuition assistance so Kid Prints can provide services to low-income working families.

Funds will be used to provide meals, and pre-school supplies such as books, educational games, educational activities, art supplies, and paper. “This will be a great opportunity to help out our daycare and preschool program along with the families,” said Director Robin Moore. “Our mission is loving, teaching, and nurturing children in a home away from home.”

Arts in Education

The Foundation renewed its continuing support of the Gillette Cam-Plex Arts in Education Program with a \$1,000 sponsorship. The donation is dedicated to offset ticket prices for local schools to attend matinee or special weekday performances by the variety of talent booked at the Cam-Plex Heritage Center Theater.

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Sheridan Senior Center (Hub on Smith) staff present for a PRECorp Foundation ceremonial donation of \$4,000 to the Help At Home program are (from left) Carmen Rideout-Executive Director; Rindy West-Development Director; PRECorp Foundation Executive Director Jeff Bumgarner; Lois Bell-Help at Home Director; Kathy Watson-Access Care Coordinator, Help at Home; and Callie Drell-Board Chair.

Foundation...

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The performances include professional musicians, theater companies, and dance groups for grade levels ranging from Kindergarten to high school.

“The students and families of Campbell County and surrounding communities benefit greatly from the Arts in Education program,” said coordinator Jessica Howard. “Funds received from the PRECorp Foundation will be used to pay

the various fees which occur. This project targets youth and families and keeps ticket costs at a low, affordable price. These low prices encourage entire families to take advantage of the performances regardless of their economic status.”

Students are also given the opportunity to participate in week-long experiences such as Missoula Children’s Theater, Performing Arts Workshop, classes, and a Rock Band Camp.



Kid Prints, Inc. staff welcome a \$1,000 donation to the pre-school and daycare in Sundance. Pictured from left are Raven Adam-Tagart, Amanda Mollenbrink, Robin Moore, and Shelly Westover, with Foundation Executive Director Jeff Bumgarner and PRECorp Marketing Communications Specialist Tim Velder.

WyREC funds driven locally

The Powder River Energy Board of Directors has selected the Old Stoney Restoration project in Sundance to receive a \$13,750 donation from a recent sale of renewable energy credits.

The Old Stoney Restoration project is part of a community and economic development project. The Sundance community has been involved in a Main Street revitalization project and Old Stoney will be a centerpiece of community space, providing three new storefronts and meeting room space for groups large and small. It will also be the new home for the Crook County Museum and Cultural Center. The Main Street revitalization and Old Stoney projects seek to triple museum and retail tourism and local traffic, further stimulating economic activity in downtown Sundance.

The project organizers received a \$2.45 million grant from the Wyoming Business Council and are raising another half million dollars for Phase 1. The project will renovate the first three floors of the 1920s-era sandstone structure. A second phase will rejuvenate the top floor of the building where the large auditorium is located.

Cheyenne-based cloud hosting, colocation, and hybrid IT provider Green House Data and PRECorp partnered for the sale of 25,000 megawatt hours of renewable energy credits (REC), under PRECorp's WyREC program, to be



PRECorp CEO Mike Easley, right, presents WyREC funds to the Old Stoney Restoration Project during a March groundbreaking ceremony in Sundance.

used to offset Green House Data's carbon footprint across its nine nationwide data centers.

Reinvesting funds raised by the WyREC program is an innovative means for PRECorp to meet its Vision 2030 strategic theme of "Member Engagement and Community Development" by helping facilitate business creation and development to benefit communities.

The program offers RECs to companies interested in leveraging sustainable energy to power their operations and reduce their environmental impact.

The program is possible because of PRECorp's membership in Basin Electric Cooperative, which has significant wind energy projects throughout its service territory.

As previously mentioned, PRE-

Corp uses proceeds from the WyREC transactions to invest in economic development projects specifically located in the PRECorp service area and may be leveraged by businesses seeking grant and loan programs from the Wyoming Business Council (WBC).

"The WyRECs are a way to strengthen the renewable energy economy, as more businesses can make the case for contributing in a meaningful way," said PRECorp CEO Mike Easley. "For example, a business seeking an economic development grant can apply to PRECorp to provide assistance with the required cost-share component of a grant application to the WBC. Green House Data and PRECorp both are thrilled to reinvest in Wyoming businesses and com-

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WyRECs...

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munities through this innovative program.”

Green House Data has participated in renewable energy credit (REC) programs since the company’s founding in 2007 and has taken advantage of PRECorp’s WyREC program since 2014, when this initiative was launched.

Over the course of 2018, Green House Data will use renewable energy credits from the WyRECs program to offset energy consumption across each of its data centers, including at the company’s Cheyenne headquarters.

“We are pleased to be able to work with a Wyoming-based partner who offers renewable wind energy credits that are compliant with EPA’s Green Power program, particularly with our data center in Cheyenne,” said Shawn Mills, CEO of Green House Data. “As we continue to add capacity, this relationship will only grow.”

AMI...

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PRECorp they will no longer provide system support for the meters and software beyond 2020.

The new AMI system proposals currently under review are capable of advanced features that will enhance the Cooperative’s ability to better manage its electrical loads and offer features that members will find useful in managing their energy usage as well.

The AMI system and meters record member usage and report that information back to PRECorp, just like AMR systems. However, the AMI meters can also respond to requests or send information on their own, such as voltage readings, allowing the cooperative to verify or be notified of a member’s power outage. This can save members money by avoiding an unwarranted trouble call when a breaker has tripped or by allowing members to notify the cooperative of a verified outage, often within seconds.

With this level of information, we can pinpoint the members affected, more quickly diagnose the location of the problem, and speed up restoration of service.

The AMI system will provide additional benefits as well, like the capture and recording of usage data. Today, the AMR system captures and records daily member usage, which the cooperative provides to members enrolled in Smart-Hub, the cooperative’s online member portal, under the “My Usage” tab. The AMI system will be capable of capturing and recording real-time usage data, providing better data to members to help diagnose high-use events or simply better understand and manage their electrical usage. The more granular usage data will also enable flexible pricing plans, like time-of-use plans, where members who shift usage to off-peak hours of the day can save even further.

PRECorp members have indicated in surveys and direct communications with the cooperative that they want more information and control over their energy

consumption and costs. It all starts with a way to measure electricity use on the system in real-time. Finding out 30 days later is like trying to drive your car using only the rear-view mirror. Timely measurement is the first step toward that goal.

Some might be wondering if investing in the new AMI system will have a negative impact on rates, and the answer is: No. The cooperative will be trading the depreciation outstanding on the old AMR system for the depreciation of the new AMI system as the investment occurs, resulting in no adverse impacts on the annual operating costs of the cooperative.



Save the Date!

The 73rd PRECorp Annual Meeting will be held Saturday, August 25, 2018 at the Gillette Cam-Plex Energy Hall/Heritage Center Theater.

PRECorp vehicles up for sale on eBay May 18

Retired PRECorp vehicles are on the auction block in special surplus equipment auctions on eBay May 18-28. The online bidding starts at 8 p.m. MST on May 18, and closes at 8 p.m. MST on May 28.

The items below will be listed in the vehicle auction May 18-28:

(All decals will be removed prior to sale, trucks will be cleaned.)

- 2011 Ford F350 cab and chassis
- 2010 Ford F150 crew cab with short box
- 4 – 2010 – 550 Arctic Cat Four Wheelers
- 2009 Ford F250 extended cab with long box
- 2008 Buick Lucerne
- 2006 Buick Lucerne
- 2006 Triton ATV trailer
- 2003 Ford Explorer
- 2002 Yacht Club ATV trailer
- 2001 Chevy Suburban

Note to bidders:

Prior to the opening of the sale on May 18, please obtain more information via e-mail at fleet@precorp.coop. This is the only source of information on these items prior to the

opening of the sale. Please do not inquire with our offices or outposts because they do not have information on these vehicles. Details of each unit along with pictures will be on eBay at the start of sale.

How to access the PRECorp unit information on eBay:

1. On May 18, go to www.ebay.com
2. At top of page to the far right click on "Advanced"
3. On the "Advanced Search Page", scroll down the page to "Sellers"
4. Check the box titled "Only items show from:"
5. In the blank box, type in: *vehiclesinwyoming*
6. Click on "Search", or hit "Enter"
7. The PRECorp vehicles for auction will appear on the start date and time of the sale.

Once the auction ends, eBay will send out a notification to the winning buyer and PRECorp. At that point, PRECorp will e-mail the buyer with information on how to make contact, payment, and where to pick up the unit.



2006 Buick Lucerne



2006 Triton ATV trailer



2010 550 Arctic Cat Four Wheeler (4 offered)



2003 Ford Explorer



2011 Ford F350 cab and chassis



2009 Ford F250 extended cab with long box



2002 Yacht Club ATV trailer



2010 Ford F150 crew cab with short box



2008 Buick Lucerne



2001 Chevy Suburban