



PRECorp News

NOVEMBER 2020

PRECorp Board reorganizes



Reuben Ritthaler



Philip Habeck



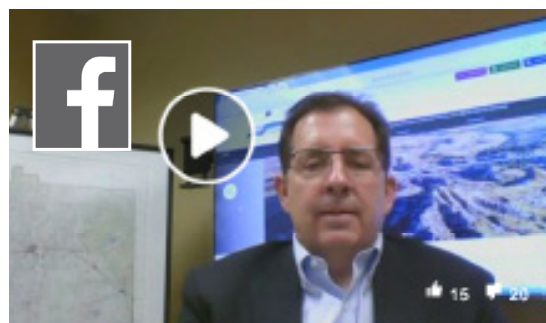
Gerry Geis

The Powder River Energy Board of Directors will have a new president after the departure of Weston County's Walt Christensen who stepped away from the Board after 30-years of service.

The gavel stays in Weston County however, as Reuben Ritthaler was elected president by his fellow Board members at the regular meeting in September.

Philip Habeck of Crook County was re-elected as vice-president and Gerri Geis of Campbell County remains secretary-treasurer.

New member Clay Branscom, Osage, who was elected during the August Annual Meeting, was officially seated at the September meeting.



Listen, watch, ask questions at CEO telephone town hall

PRECorp CEO Mike Easley will host a members-only telephone town hall at **6:30 p.m., Wednesday, November 18**. Members will be called at 6:30 p.m., but you may also call in toll-free at 1-844-881-1317.

Members are encouraged to ask questions and answer polls that will help us better serve you. Mike will be talking about the state of the cooperative, future plans, and whatever is on your mind.

Remember, there will be a \$50 gift card drawing for members who stay on the line until 6:45 p.m. If you want to watch via Facebook Live, go to the PRECorp Facebook page at www.facebook.com/precorp/.

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MIKE EASLEY,
CEO

I think you all might agree that 2020 is the year that just keeps on giving. As I write this column it is nearing the end of October and you will be reading it sometime in mid-November after the election. I am not making any predictions on the election except that I won't be surprised if we still don't know who won the Presidential election by the time this article is out.

The year 2020 continues to be full of surprises, and this past year humanity has shared a common threat. You might think I am talking about COVID-19, but I am not. The common threat we have all shared is the fear of the unknown, and our collective and individual reactions to it. It is true that COVID-19 has been a driver of this fear, but our shared experience is trying to make sense of things in the face of uncertainty. I am not discounting the impacts that many people have felt as COVID-19 has taken loved ones, sickened others, and generally disrupted our lives. In fact, my son and daughter and two grandsons are recovering from moderate cases and, for a day or two, I felt mostly helpless. It seemed like all my eggs were in one basket. Fortunately, everyone seems to be on the mend.

I think that our shared experience of dealing with this fear and uncertainty has given us all pause as we reflect on our priorities - the things that matter the most to us. Imagine that our priorities are like a stack of cards. The deck is ordered by importance based upon our past experience and our view of the future. Bring in COVID-19 and the uncertainty of things. That stack of cards starts to get re-sorted and re-stacked in a wild game of "52 Pick-Up."

I don't know about you, but many folks I have talked to are just feeling tired and worn out. If you are fatigued and a bit out of sorts, it's okay. Many of us feel that way.

This is about the time you might be thinking: "Hmm, Mike, what does this have to do with PRE-

Corp, my electric service, and keeping the lights on in Northeast Wyoming?" I think it has a lot to do with that.

PRECorp's mission is that of service to our members, and we rely on the capabilities and efforts of our team to serve you. It is important for you to know that our commitment to you and to our communities has not changed. At the same time, how we go about executing on that commitment has. For example, just check out the article on our various bill pay options in this month's PRECorp magazine. Think back to the time when the only way to pay your bill was by office visit or mailing a check. Our office hours have also shifted both to accommodate our staffing capabilities and to adapt to changes in walk-in traffic. These are just a few examples of how we are responding to changing priorities here at PRECorp.

It is important that we have awareness of these shifts in our personal lives and how we relate to each other and our communities. This will help us all to better relate to each other as we continue to make sense of things in face of this ongoing uncertainty. I hope that you can join me in my last Telephone Town Hall of the year as we continue this conversation and discuss any questions that you might have about PRECorp.

Lastly, did you know that being grateful and feeling gratitude is one of the best ways to push back against the feelings of stress and uncertainty? In a very short time, we will be celebrating the Thanksgiving Holiday. It might look very different than our past celebrations, but the chance to reflect and consider gratitude and its power in our lives has not changed from last year. What a wonderful opportunity to take a deep dive and reflect on what Thanksgiving is all about. It can help us all!

Perhaps we can all take some time during this holiday and work on re-sorting and re-stacking our decks.

I wish you the best possible Thanksgiving.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Celebrate the holidays with energy savings

As families and communities adjust to avoiding the spread of COVID-19 and other seasonal flus and colds, home gatherings are a traditional option for holiday celebrations.

But like most of us, you probably aren't thinking about saving energy in the kitchen when you're planning that perfect event at home. It only becomes evident a month or two later when you realize you had a houseful of people, some staying multiple days. Here are four ways you can save energy in the kitchen with minimal effort.

When possible, cook with smaller appliances. Using smaller kitchen appliances, like slow cookers, toaster ovens and convection ovens is more energy efficient than using your large stove or oven. According to the Department of Energy, a toaster or convection oven uses one-third to one-half as much energy as a full-sized oven. Be aware that plugging in too many of these units at one time can overload circuits and trip breakers.

Unplug appliances that draw phantom energy load. Halloween may be over, but it's possible you have energy vampires in your kitchen – these are the appliances that draw energy even when they're not in use, like coffee makers, microwaves and toaster ovens. The Department of Energy has estimated that one home's energy vampires left plugged in year-round can add

up to \$100-\$200 in wasted energy costs. Unplug them when they're not in use, or better yet, use a power strip for convenient control.

Help large appliances work less. There are small ways you can help your larger kitchen appliances run more efficiently. For example, keep range-top burners clean from spills and fallen foods so they'll reflect heat better. When it's time to put leftovers in the refrigerator, make sure the food is covered and allow it to cool down first. That way, the fridge doesn't have to work harder to cool warm food.

Use your dishwasher efficiently. Only run full loads, and avoid using the "rinse hold" function on your machine for just a few dirty dishes; it uses 3-7 gallons of hot water each use. You can also save energy by letting your dishes air dry. If your dishwasher doesn't have an automatic air-dry switch, simply turn it off after the final rinse and prop the door open so the dishes will dry faster.

Bonus tip: The best way to save energy is to not use it. Try a tasty, no-bake dessert recipe. Your sweet tooth (and energy bill!) will thank you.

By slightly adjusting a few efforts in the kitchen, you'll be well on your way to energy savings. Contact the PRECorp Member Service team at 1-800-442-3630 to learn about additional ways you can save energy and money at home.



Please note our Holiday office closures

Powder River Energy Corporation offices will be closed for these upcoming Holiday observances:

**Thanksgiving – Thursday, November 26
and Friday, November 27**

**Christmas – Thursday, December 24,
and Friday, December 25**

New Year's – Friday, January 1, 2021

**Presidents Day (All Employee Meeting)
– Monday, February 15, 2021**

To report an outage call 1-888-391-6220 or, use the SmartHub app on your mobile device.

PRECorp members have bill pay options



**Sundance/Gillette:
Cash, check,
debit/credit**

**SmartHub
app on
your phone**



**Mailed check
payment**

**Night deposit
cash or check
Sundance/Gillette**



**Sheridan
deposit box:
Checks only**



**Auto pay with
credit/debit or
bank draft**

**Anytime over
the phone with
toll-free IVR**



**Gillette outdoor
kiosk (cards
and cash)**

**Discuss options
with PRECorp at
1-800-442-3630**



As of January 1, 2021, PRECorp will no longer accept payments made at Pinnacle Bank in Moorcroft, First State Bank in Newcastle, Summit National Bank in Hulett, or First Tier Bank in Upton. Members can set up an automatic payment through Smart Hub or by calling PRECorp Member Service at 1-800-442-3630.

PRECorp members have a variety of payment options shown here. PRECorp continues to accept payment via mail, walk-ins and drop boxes at local offices; and automatic payment options.

Mailed payments must be received in our office by the due date, or your account could be subject to late fees.

Are there any bill assistance programs available?

Members who anticipate problems making ends meet with their electric bill, should contact PRECorp to discuss options as soon as possible. There are some alternatives our member service representatives can discuss that might alleviate some stress. Call 1-800-442-3630 to start the conversation.

LIEAP/WAP

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is administered by the Wyoming Department of Family Services (DFS). The purpose of the LIEAP program is to help low and fixed income families and individuals pay their heating bills during the winter months. Priority is given to households that include elderly (age 60+), disabled, and/or young children (age 6 and under).

Seasonal LIEAP benefits must be applied to a household's main heat source (the fuel your heat system uses to heat the home; not the power source needed to turn on the furnace). LIEAP is federally funded through a

block grant administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Anyone applying for LIEAP is also applying for the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). If an applicant has received WAP assistance in a prior year, this should be noted on the application.

If an applicant needs assistance with utility deposits, propane tank sets, disconnect or shut-off notices, or are out of propane, heating oil, wood, pellets, or coal, a request for assistance can be made on the application.

Applications can be filled out anytime through February 29, 2020. To download an application or for more information go to www.lieapwyo.org, or call 1-800-246-4221.

Application forms, informational brochures, and a listing of assistance agencies are available at PRECorp offices in Gillette, Sheridan, and Sundance. **Please note, applications cannot be turned in to PRECorp offices.**

Foundation awards first scholarships from Shayna Ritthaler Memorial

In October, the Powder River Energy Foundation awarded two \$1,000 preschool tuition scholarships to students at preschools in Upton and Moorcroft. These are the first in what promises to be many preschool tuition assistance awards as part of the Shayna Ritthaler Memorial Scholarship program.

This first round of scholarships was coordinated with the Weston County Children's Center/Region III Developmental Services.

Region III provides early intervention and special education services for birth to school-age children. Their service areas include Crook and Weston counties, with preschools in Newcastle, Upton, Moorcroft and Hulett. Their partnerships focus on kindergarten readiness and school success.

"This initial distribution of scholarship funds is only the beginning," said Foundation Executive Director Jeff Bumgarner. "We are working hard to expand the

scholarship to more students in more preschools in future years. This is a critical part of the Foundation's overall mission to help working families in need in northeast Wyoming. These students will benefit from extra days in their preschool programs to help them be ready to start kindergarten on Day 1."

The awards were made possible one year after the tragic death of Shayna Ritthaler, a high school student with ties to Moorcroft and Upton high schools. Shayna enjoyed her life with her sister Josalyn and their grandparents Reuben and Shelly Ritthaler on their ranch near Upton.

'72 Mustang raffle continues

In memory of Shayna, an anonymous benefactor has donated a



Shayna Ritthaler

1972 Mustang Mach 1 (pictured below), to be raffled off with the goal of creating a sustaining scholarship for years to come.

Tickets are available through the following outlets:

- Sundance, Sheridan, and Gillette PRECorp Member Service Offices
- Paradise Foods in Pine Haven
- Upton Lumber and Hardware
- NAPA Auto Parts in Wright
- Contact Jeff Bumgarner at jeffb@precorp.coop.
- Contact Tim Velder, Marketing Communications Specialist, with the PRECorp Foundation at timv@precorp.coop.

The fundraiser will sell only 500 tickets at \$125 each. As of press time, there were approximately 280 tickets remaining.

The drawing will be held Saturday, August 21, 2021, during the 76th PRECorp Annual Meeting in Upton. You need not be present to win, and Federal taxes are paid.



Be prepared for power outages

During a power outage, safely restoring electricity to our members is the highest priority, and PRE-Corp crews will respond anytime to get the lights back on.

Outages frequently last less than a few hours. However, severe damage to power lines and distribution systems may take days to repair, especially if treacherous weather conditions persist. It is important to be prepared for dangerous winter storms and possible power outages.

Prepare ahead of time to have adequate supplies and know how to safely emerge from a winter storm emergency. This is particularly important for families with special needs.

 **Follow us on Facebook during large outages.**

Winter outage survival notes:

- Have flashlight and batteries ready.
- Keep a supply of one to two gallons of bottled water per person, per day.
- Set aside non-perishable foods to last three to seven days.
- Inventory a seven-day supply of prescription medications.
- Fuel up your automobile. Gas pumps might not work in an outage.
- Charge mobile devices before the storm hits and use them sparingly.
- Be aware of the dangers of carbon monoxide with gasoline-powered generators.
- Get help if you are short on supplies.

3rd Annual Christmas Giveaway

Two separate drawings will be held for 25-pound bundles of beef and pork at 8 a.m. on Monday, December 7.

Operation RoundUp[®] members are automatically entered in the drawing. Not enrolled in Operation RoundUp[®]? Sign up today by calling 1-800-442-3630. Sign up by Friday, December 4, and be entered in the drawings on Monday, December 7.

Have a medical necessity?



In an effort to better serve our members with special health care needs, PRECorp is re-

questing information from our members who may have electricity-dependent residential medical equipment such as oxygen or dialysis machines.

Typically this information is gathered when members join the Cooperative and sign up for PRECorp electrical service.

However, if members have obtained the medical equipment since joining the Cooperative, members may want to share that information with us.

The purpose for knowing this information is to notify members with medical necessities of scheduled outages that might impact their service.

Members will need to provide a doctor's note for our files explaining the medical necessity.

For more information or to update your information, contact PRECorp Member Service at 1-800-442-3630.

Powder River Energy Corporation will make every effort to restore electrical service as soon as possible during an outage. There is no guarantee the power will be restored within a given time frame. Individuals are responsible to have an alternative plan if power cannot be restored before any condition becomes critical.



New deadlines set for 2021 scholarships



Powder River Energy Corporation facilitates many scholarships for eligible high school and post-secondary students from northeast Wyoming.

To apply for any of the scholarships, students must satisfy the required criteria and complete the scholarship application. Updated 2021 scholarship information is available online at: www.precorp.coop//student-scholarships.

Descriptions and deadlines for some of the scholarships follow:

Basin Electric Scholarship - \$1,000

Applicant's parents or legal guardians must be PRECorp members. One student from the PRECorp membership service territory may be chosen. Another is nominated for consideration for the Members 1st selection.

The filing deadline for the Basin Electric Power Scholarship is February 1, 2021.

Powder River Energy Corporation/ Foundation Scholarship - \$1,500

To qualifying seniors and post-secondary students from 14 high schools and up to 5 at-large students in its service territory. Applicant's parents or legal guardians must be active PRECorp members.

The deadline for Powder River Energy Corporation Scholarship is March 1, 2021.

PRECorp Lineman Scholarship - \$3,000 and up

The PRECorp Lineman Scholarship is available to qualifying applicants who plan to attend an approved line-

worker training program. Awards begin at \$3,000, but can be more. **There is no filing deadline, and applications are accepted year-round.**

Kathleen Tavegie Scholarship - \$TBD

To a Weston County High School senior planning to pursue a degree in Elementary Education. The amount of the scholarship is determined by the funds available.

The filing deadline for the Tavegie Scholarship is March 1, 2021.

Geis Family Scholarship - \$TBD

Awards range from \$400 to \$1,000 to qualifying seniors from Coal Country FFA or Gillette FFA in Campbell County, who are pursuing careers benefitting the agriculture industry. The deadline for the Barb and Bill Geis Memorial Scholarship is **March 1, 2021.**

WREA Lineman Scholarships

The Wyoming Rural Electric Association offers various scholarships for prospective linemen. They include the Hackworth Scholarship and the Adkins Scholarship. Go to www.wyomingrea.org for more information. **There is no filing deadline and applications are accepted year-round.**

Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp

The Powder River Energy Board of Directors sponsors an all-expense-paid experience for high school age students of PRECorp members. Local youth are selected to represent PRECorp at the Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp in Steamboat, CO, July 17-22, 2021. The students tour industry sites, and enjoy the resort community. During the week, students have the opportunity to find out how co-ops work and find out what's happening in the world of electric energy. Applicants must be age 16 by June 1, 2021, and interested students must turn in an application by **Monday, January 18, 2021.** For more information, a video, and an application go to www.precorp.coop//student-scholarships.

SmartHub means smart management

SmartHub can help you take control of your PRE-Corp account like never before, giving you more time to focus on important things.

SmartHub has several features that make managing your account as easy as possible. Whether through the web, or your smartphone or tablet (Android or iOS), you'll be able to pay your bill, report outages, view your usage, contact Member Service and get the latest news.

As soon as you log in, you'll be able to view your billing history and make a payment with just a couple of clicks...or taps, if you're using the app. You'll be able to see your current bill, along with past bills, if you want to compare costs. Not only will you see your billing history, but you'll be able to view your actual use. This is especially helpful if you have multiple accounts to monitor.

SmartHub is also a dial-free way to report service issues or a power outage. During large outages, members might experience long wait times because of high call volumes. Just send us a message through SmartHub and your outage is reported.

Making payments through SmartHub is fast and easy. The first time you make a payment you'll be able to securely store your payment information for future transactions. The next time you need to pay your bill, it will only take a couple of clicks.

You'll also be able to see important PRECorp notices with SmartHub. You'll be able to select how you want to be notified about your bill, including email and text messaging.

Access SmartHub by visiting www.precorp.coop or by downloading the app on your mobile device through the Apple App Store (iOS devices) or Google Play Marketplace (Android devices).

SMART MANAGEMENT. SMART LIFE.
SMARTHUB.



On the go and in control. SmartHub is a web and mobile app that allows you to do business with us like never before:

- Manage your account
- Report service issues
- Receive important notices
- View and pay your bill
- Monitor usage 24/7

...All in the palm of your hand and online.



To report an outage call 1-888-391-6220.

Regular business: 1-800-442-3630

www.precorp.coop

Powder River Energy Corporation is an equal opportunity provider and employer.