



Outage stats stay positive

By Tim Velder, PRECorp Marketing/Communications

Over the past decade, PRECorp members have experienced a decreasing number of power outages, according to recent data from the cooperative’s System Operations team.

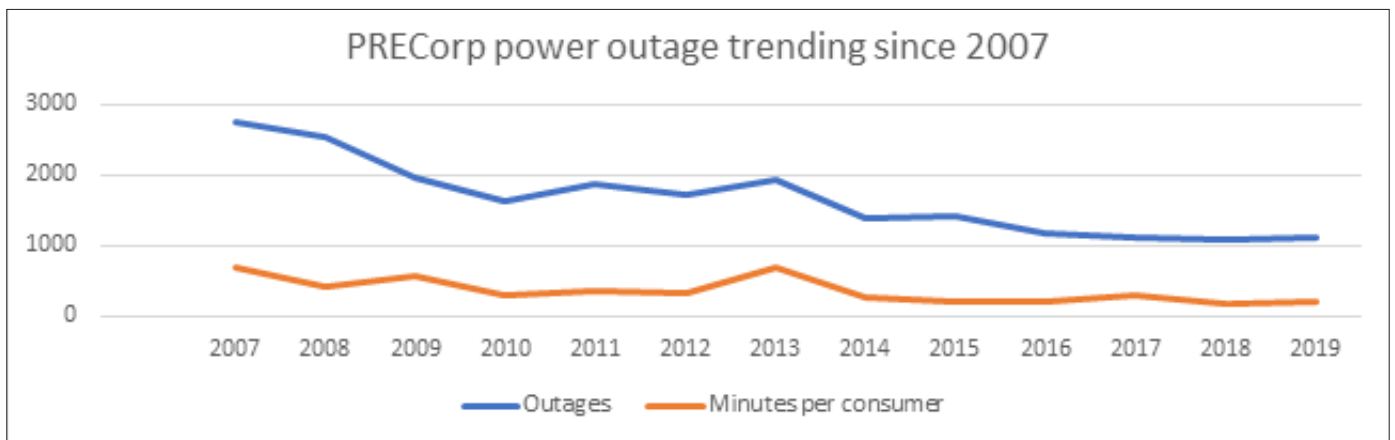
In 2019, PRECorp crews responded to 1,100 outages. PRECorp members, on average, were without power for about 198 minutes in total for 2019; that’s a little more than 3 1/3 hours per member for the entire year.

These numbers (see below) are a dramatic decrease from outage reports from 2009, which show 1,949 outages, leaving members more than 9.5 hours (573 min-

utes) without electricity for that year. The reliability improvement is a multi-year process of shoring up the power systems in the PRECorp service territory and leveraging technology to do a safer and faster job of restoring power when it does go out.

“We have been fortunate to have few high-impact weather outages,” said PRECorp VP of System Operations Rich Halloran. Halloran said line crews and design technicians are dedicated to detailed inspections and maintenance of all distribution lines and service drops, all the way up to large substations and high-volt-

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Regular business: 1-800-442-3630 • Report an outage: 1-888-391-6220
www.precorp.coop

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MIKE EASLEY,
CEO

Our Vision:

We will be pioneers of excellence in the Cooperative Network while delivering extraordinary value to our members, embracing a visionary outlook, leveraging accelerating technologies, empowering our team and engaging our membership.

Our Purpose:

Positively influencing and improving lives for those we serve by providing reliable energy and services while paving the way for access and affordability.

Our Moonshot:

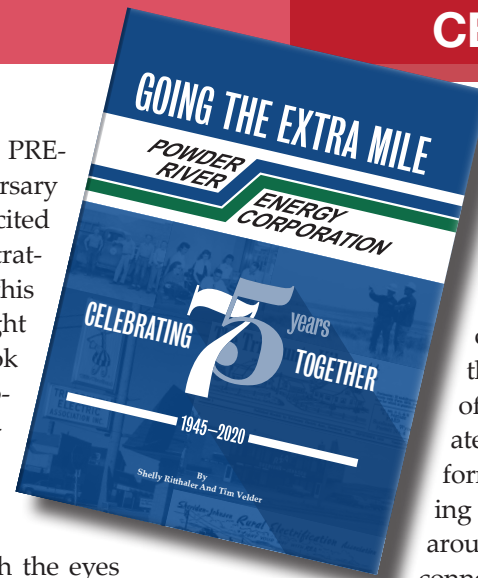
Drive down costs so that the first megawatt hour of energy usage is at or near zero by 2050.

This year marks PRECorp's 75th anniversary and I am really excited to talk about strategy and vision in this year's first Straight Talk article. I took an interesting approach in preparing to talk a bit about our future by taking a look at the past through the eyes of Shelly Ritthaler and Tim Velder. Shelly and Tim are working on a book to commemorate our 75th anniversary. This book, *Going the Extra Mile*, both celebrates a proud history and a legacy of selfless leadership by so many people in our noble mission to electrify Northeast Wyoming.

As I turned the pages in the manuscript our story unfolded in its telling and in the many pictures before me. I think all of us have had the experience of looking at our family albums and seeing the younger versions of ourselves and an earlier version of the world we live in. I could see many changes over the years in people, places, and things. I also had the old saying "The more things change, the more they stay the same," running through my mind.

You might recall that I spent most of our time together in my articles to you last year telling the story of our Vision, Purpose and Moonshot. As I think about that today, especially in light of our 75th, I don't think we have changed all that much. Sure, our pictures are color, we dress a bit different, and our tools and equipment are much improved, however, the things that matter most have not changed.

Our people are passionate and committed to the membership as we spend our lives and our time working at delivering the best value to you. The team is also relentless in doing everything we can to improve the lives of those we serve by providing reliable energy and services and paving the way for access and affordability. These efforts and the val-



ues and principles that drive them are unchanged from those of our founders 75 years ago.

The world we live in has been changing this entire time and I think we would agree that the rate of that change continues to accelerate each year. Technology is transforming so many things and changing our relationship with the world around us. We are becoming ever so connected with our devices and the various applications they support, but at the same time many people are feeling less connected to the things that matter most.

At PRECorp we are truly committed to paying attention to what matters most. Our highest priority is everyone's safety. The safety of our team members as they go about their work, and the safety of you and the public at large, is top of mind for us. Following that, we strive for high quality at the lowest possible cost for the service we provide.

This is an ongoing and ever-changing balancing act as we react to, and plan for, the changing world in which we live. We have great tools, systems, and technologies to help us do this. Much like our founders, we use what we have available to meet our Vision and achieve our Purpose.

I hope that you continue to be engaged in the business of your electric cooperative, just like the members did so many years ago. Keeping in touch by reading these articles, attending our Telephone Town Halls, "Liking" us on Facebook, are all things you can do to stay informed about your cooperative. In August we are going to have our 75th Annual Meeting and celebration and I sincerely hope you will mark that date on your calendar today and plan to attend. It will be an awesome time and a great meeting and your chance to get a copy of the wonderful book *Going the Extra Mile*.

I look forward to keeping in touch and connecting with you soon.

Mike

General Rate Case information update

Powder River Energy is seeking a 4.23% rate increase in a general rate case with the Wyoming Public Service Commission (PSC).

Changes affect residential and industrial classes. A PRE-Corp Residential member using the average amount of 1,175 kWh, will see an \$11.23 increase in their monthly bill, which includes a \$1.50 increase in the basic charge. The case is being filed in order to capture fixed costs being lost due to declining sales, and to bring the basic charge closer to cost of service.

PRECorp is seeking to change the billing of Residential Seasonal services, for example, stock well services, from annual to monthly billing. This change will take effect with the date of the rate change, September 1, 2020.

PRECorp is also filing to reintegrate much of the Coal Bed Methane (CBM) classes into General Service and Large Power classes in acknowledgement of less dedi-

cated use of system investments by CBM members.

The filing requests PSC approval and implementation in September 2020.

Member meetings available

Members who would like to meet in-person with PRE-Corp staff can do so at one of three public availability sessions. Dates and times are as follows:

- **Tuesday, February 18:** 4:30 p.m., Gillette PRECorp office
- **Tuesday, March 17:** 4:30 p.m., Sheridan PRECorp office
- **Tuesday, April 21:** 4:30 p.m., Sundance PRECorp office

More information on the web

Go to www.precorp.coop/2020-rate-case for complete documentation in the case file, rate calculators to predict what your bill would be based on your usage, and a portal for asking questions. Call PRECorp Member Service at 1-800-442-3630 for more information.

Events calendar

The PRECorp Board of Directors tentative meeting dates for 2020 are as follows:

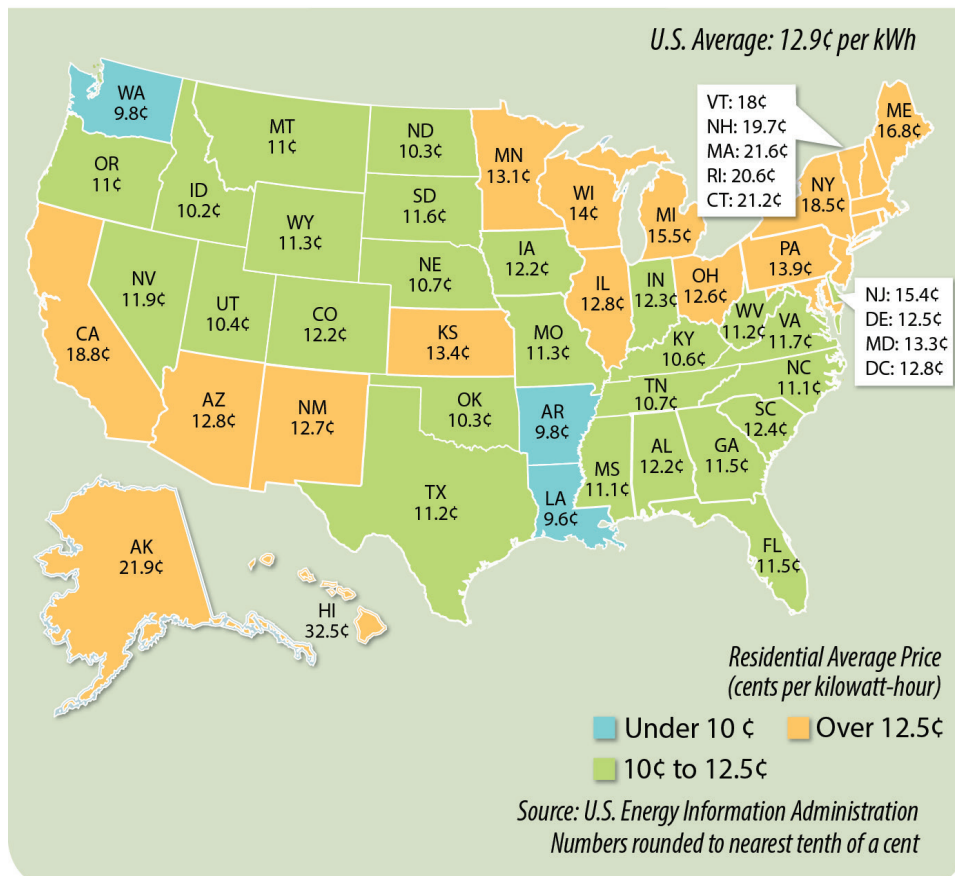
- January 21 - Sundance**
- February 18 - Gillette**
- March 17 - Sheridan**
- April 21 - Sundance**
- May 19 - Gillette**
- June 16 - Sheridan**
- July 21 - Sundance**
- August 18 - Gillette**
- September 15 - Sheridan**
- October 20 - Sundance**
- November 17 - Gillette**
- December 15- Sheridan**

Other events to remember:

- **Monday, February 17 - All Employee Meeting, PRECorp Offices closed.**
- **Wednesday, February 19:** Telephone Town Hall, 6:30 p.m., call 1-855-312-2107.
- **Friday, February 28:** Application deadline for PRECorp Scholarship and Swanda Scholarship.

Average Prices for Residential Electricity

2018 figures, in cents per kWh



WIN 25 LBS OF MEAT.



More than
\$1 million in
donations to date!



In appreciation for your participation in Operation RoundUp[®], Powder River Energy and the Powder River Energy Foundation are entering members and new enrollees each quarter in a drawing for a chance to win one of four 25-lb. mixed bundles of locally-grown 4-H beef and pork. Funds from the Operation RoundUp[®], and other sources, have enabled the Powder River Energy Foundation to financially help drive more than \$1 million in assistance to local food pantries, senior and veteran needs, and other charitable causes here in northeast Wyoming.

If you are currently enrolled in Operation RoundUp[®] you are automatically entered in the drawing. If you are not a member of Operation RoundUp[®], **SIGN UP BY MARCH 31 by calling PRECorp at 1-800-442-3630; or by checking the box on the return stub on your bill.**

The drawing will be held Wednesday, April 1.

Outage stats...

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age transmission lines. “Crews also build to construction standards and apply avian protection in the work,” Halloran said.

In general, the power interruptions for members can be placed in one of two categories: controllable and uncontrollable.

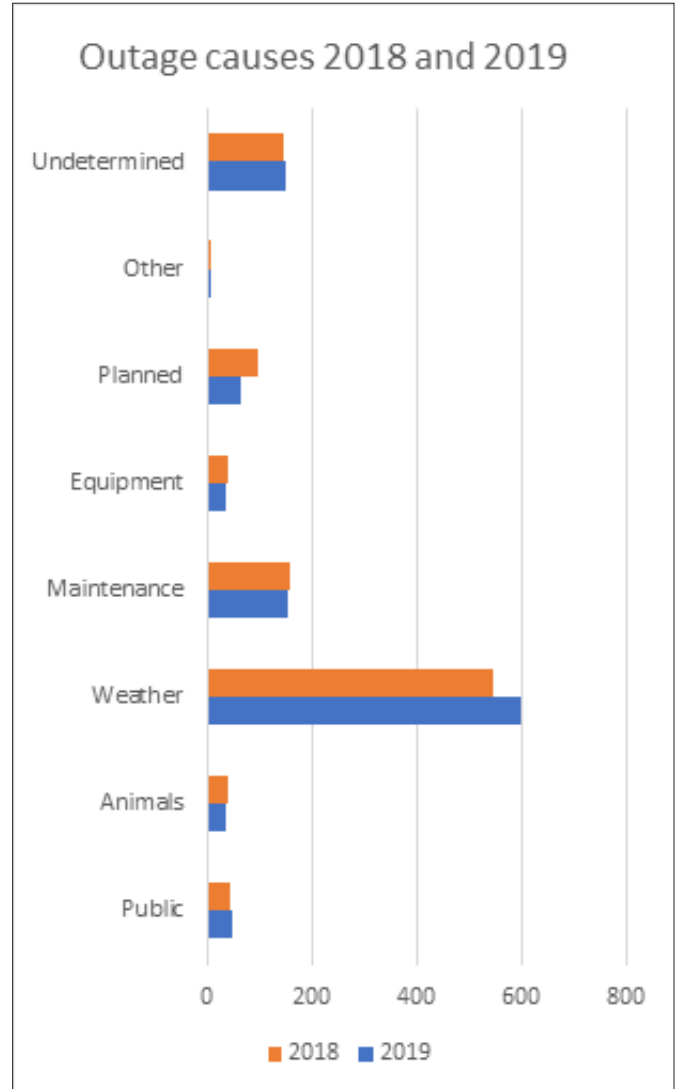
Controllable outages are due to maintenance, construction, high-load moves, aging equipment, and danger trees. Controllable outages are down significantly from six years ago because of preventative maintenance programs and planning for grid redundancies for faster power restoration.

Uncontrollable outages are due to weather, animals, or damage by the public. Weather is by far the largest single threat to PRECorp lines. As a rural electric cooperative in northeast Wyoming, members are spread far and wide, with miles of line going through rugged countryside exposed to the harsh climate. In 2019 alone, the weather-caused outages rose by 8.4%. Plain and simple – there were more severe thunderstorms that damaged power lines and substations in 2019.

However, with that problem in mind, PRECorp is working to lessen the impact with advanced metering infrastructure or AMI. Over the next year or so, PRECorp is phasing in the installation of a system that can speed up the response and repair times for outages. The AMI creates a long-term communications network where individual meters can notify PRECorp System Operations of the location of an outage as it happens, which reduces analysis and response times.

Accidental damage to the system by animals and people are two other factors. PRECorp is a responsible citizen when it comes to protecting animal species from touching high-voltage power equipment. “We retrofit structures where bird contacts [or other animals] occur, as well as our new construction, to make them safe. Despite increasing populations of certain birds in our territory, incidents have decreased since 2013,” Halloran said.

In 2018, 41 animals caused outages. That number went down to 36 in 2019. In response, the cooperative installs additional protective devices on equipment animals are attracted to for food or shelter.



People are the most important priority when it comes to electrical safety. Human-caused outages outnumbered those caused by animals in 2019. Many were due to accidental contacts with poles, overhead or underground lines. Three motor vehicle accidents knocked out power in 2019. PRECorp regularly reminds the public of the dangers of overhead power lines, and our staff would gladly offer field safety demonstrations for any business or organization upon request.

This is all part of the PRECorp purpose of positively influencing and improving the lives for those we serve by providing reliable energy and services, while paving the way for access and affordability.

6th Annual

2020 Apprentice Lineman Scholarship Banquet



SATURDAY, APRIL 18 - 5 P.M.
GILLETTE CAM-PLEX FRONTIER HALL

5 p.m. - Social hour, no-host bar

6 p.m. - Prime Rib Dinner

Auction - Following dinner, there will be raffles and auction opportunities for many guns and other prizes.

EVENT TICKETS:
\$50 per person
Call Bruce Olson at
307-680-4747
or Alyssa Himle at
307-257-9693

Buy a banquet ticket and get a chance to win a commemorative rifle!



LINEMEN SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Why donate?

Help us maintain a scholarship fund for future generations. Help us provide funds for scholarships for locally-grown apprentices who live, work, and contribute to our northeast Wyoming communities.

Keep our best and brightest in our communities where they can be active citizens and leaders. Train quality and hard-working linemen that provide safe and affordable electricity to rural northeast Wyoming.

This program is an employee-based initiative that supports the cooperative's mission and vision of being an employer of choice throughout the region and enhance service to our member/owners.

The Apprentice Lineman Scholarship Program is administered through the Powder River Energy Foundation, the charitable arm of Powder River Energy Corporation.



SPECIAL DRAWING!

Special limited-entry drawing for a Street Legal
2020 Polaris Ranger 1000 Side-By-Side.

\$100 per ticket with only 250 tickets sold!

For tickets call Bruce
at 307-680-4747
or Alyssa at
307-257-9693.



Street Legal!

Reliable and smooth,
yet powerful enough
to get the job done.
From the fun and
adventure
enthusiasts at Peak
Powersports of
Sheridan.

Drawing will take place April 18, 2020, if 150 tickets are sold. The drawing will be held later once 150 tickets are sold. Need not be present to win.

Riesland appointed to Foundation Board

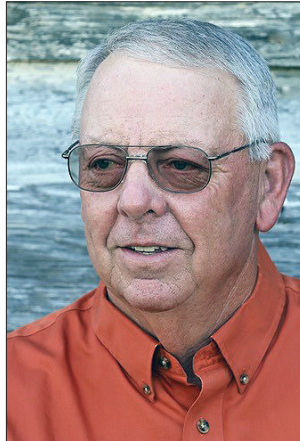
Newcastle native John Riesland, pictured at the right, has been appointed to a three-year term on the Powder River Energy Foundation Board of Directors.

Riesland represents Weston County, filling a vacancy that occurred with the passing of Kathleen Tavegie in July 2019.

Riesland was born and raised in Newcastle, graduating from Newcastle High School and later enrolled at the University of Wyoming where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree.

While at UW he met and married his wife Robin. After graduation they moved to Alamosa, Colorado, where John worked as a Field Specialist at the local Farmers Cooperative. After six months in Colorado, John and Robin moved back to Newcastle where John started his career working in the oil fields.

He and Robin have two daughters, Jamie and Katie. John



is and has been active in his community as a member of the Newcastle Masonic Lodge, Newcastle Order of Eastern Star, Kalif Shiners, and the International Order of Jobs Daughters.

He has also been a Trustee to Weston County School Board #1 since 1992 where he is on the board's Endowment Committee. His greatest love is working with the youth in his community. He and Robin ran the Weston County Gymkhana for five years, have been sponsors of the Newcastle High School Rodeo Club, served as a High School Rodeo judge, and served on the Weston County Junior Rodeo Committee.

Adding to his resume, John has served on the High School Scholarship and Katie Lynn Photography Scholarship Committees as well as the Northeast Weston County Recreation Board and has worked with 5th grade students at Mallo Camp for 23 years.

Deadline reminders for 2020 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 2020 scholarship information is available online at: www.precorp.coop//student-scholarships.

Descriptions and deadlines for some of the scholarships follow:

Swanda Scholarship - \$2,500

To a Crook County High School senior planning to enroll in agricultural or animal science studies at a university or vocational/technical school in Wyoming, North Dakota, or South Dakota. Seniors at Sundance High School receive preference this year on the program's rotating schedule. However, all seniors from Crook County are encouraged to apply.

The filing deadline for the Swanda Scholarship is February 28, 2020.

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 February 28, 2020.

Barb and Bill Geis Memorial Scholarship - \$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 Barb and Bill Geis Memorial Scholarship is March 2, 2020.**

PRECorp Lineman Scholarship - \$3,000 and up

The PRECorp Lineman Scholarship is available to qualifying applicants who plan to attend an approved lineworker training program. Awards begin at \$3,000, but can be more. **There is no filing deadline and applications are accepted year-round.**

PRECorp marks 75 years of service in 2020

This year, Powder River Energy Corporation marks its 75th year of serving our members in northeast Wyoming. Members will notice the special logo on our printed materials ranging from our newsletters to envelopes and more.

Many of our long-time members recall that the name Powder River Energy Corporation (PRECorp) is only 25 years old, with the merger of Tri-County Electric Association (TCEA) and Sheridan-Johnson Rural Electric Association (S-J REA) in 1995. However, those two cooperatives were 50 years old when they merged a quarter-century ago. So, doing the math, put us at 75 years of service to our electric cooperative members.



PRECorp will stay focused this year on the core business of providing safe, reliable, and affordable power to our members. But we will take a little extra time to reflect on our past and look toward our future.

Throughout the year, we will commemorate the anniversary with special articles in the PRECorp News, Power Lines, and social media. In particular, we will focus on

the publication of a 75th Anniversary book, written and compiled by local author and researcher Shelley Ritthaler. There will also be a celebratory event in connection with the Annual Meeting on Saturday, August 22, in Sundance. Be sure to watch for announcements about this event as the date approaches and make plans to attend.

Follow us on Facebook!

For outages affecting 250 meters or more, PRECorp will make every effort to post updates on the restoration to Facebook and Twitter.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Are you using your fireplace efficiently? Remember to turn down the thermostat when burning a fire, and close the damper when a fire is not burning.

Source: energy.gov



Please note: Powder River Energy Corporation offices will be closed for:
Presidents' Day – Monday, February 17, 2020 (All-employee meeting)

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.

