

# HIGHLINE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

*The Beacon*

APRIL 2020



## MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 57  
Holyoke, CO 80734-0057



## STREET ADDRESS

1300 S. Interocean  
Holyoke, CO 80734



**ph** 970-854-2236  
**tf** 800-816-2236  
**fax** 970-854-3652  
**email** info@hea.coop  
**web** www.hea.coop



facebook.com/HighlineElectric

**Our mission** is to provide our members with reliable, high-quality electricity and other needed services, which will improve their economic and social well-being and provide significant long-range benefits for our communities, our state and our nation.



HIGHLINE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION  
IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY  
PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER



Touchstone Energy®

# THE ECONOMICS OF POWER GENERATION . . . PAST

BY DENNIS HERMAN GENERAL MANAGER



We use the technical term “lumpy” to define investments made in the electrical grid. What we are trying to capture with the term is the relatively infrequent, extremely large investments in assets that are expected to provide service for several years, or even decades. While this investment pattern is true for a distribution cooperative like Highline Electric Association, with investments in substations and power lines, it is even more prevalent at the generation and transmission level for our wholesale power supplier.

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc., is Highline’s wholesale power provider. Tri-State is also a cooperative that is owned by its member cooperatives just as you, as a consumer-member, own Highline. Every distribution cooperative owner of Tri-State holds a seat on Tri-State’s board of directors.

Tri-State’s board governs the investment decisions of the cooperative. These investment decisions involve the construction or retrofit of power plants and high-voltage power lines. Each investment decision is on the scale of hundreds of millions of dollars. Take a minute to consider the implications of investing hundreds of millions of dollars, the return of which will be realized over the next four or five decades — it is a high-risk decision. What could possibly go wrong?

- The predicted load growth that warranted the new asset fails to materialize.

- Technology changes and makes the investment obsolete.
- The regulatory environment changes.

Thankfully, long-term contracts provide a means to mitigate the risk of these investments. By signing wholesale electric supply contracts with all the distribution cooperative owners of Tri-State, the risks associated with an investment can be spread over millions of end use consumer-members, creating safety in numbers. These contracts have terms that match the life span of the assets being built. Financiers have a level of confidence that the large fixed capital construction cost will be shared geographically across Tri-State’s four-state footprint and across a span of time sufficient to mitigate the risks of the investment.

There was a time when an investment in a coal-fired power plant felt like a safe bet. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Tri-State’s system was experiencing steady growth due to the development of electrified irrigation on the eastern plains of Colorado. In April 1977, President Jimmy Carter stated that too few domestic electric utilities “have switched to coal, our most abundant energy source.” Congress banned the use of natural gas for electricity production from 1978 through 1987. Investing in coal-fired power plants was as sure of a bet as you could make. What could possibly go wrong?

To be continued. ...

# PLANNING A YARD PROJECT? DON'T JUST DIG IN

April is National Safe Digging Month. It reminds us all that, as we begin beautifying our yards, we shouldn't just dig in. According to 811, the "Call Before You Dig" national hotline, an underground utility is damaged every nine minutes because someone didn't call before digging.

Whether it's a do-it-yourself project or you are hiring a professional, call 811 two to three days prior to starting any digging project to request that all underground utilities be marked. The service is free.

You may think it won't hurt anything to dig in an unmarked yard when landscaping; installing a fence, deck or mailbox; or even planting a small flower bed or bush; but damaging an underground cable can have serious consequences.

Hitting a line could result in serious injuries and disrupted service for you and your neighbors. It could also make a dent in your wallet for repair fees or other fines.

The 811 hotline points out that there is more than one football field's length of buried utilities for every man, woman and child in the United States. Before digging:

- **Call** 811 or make an online request two to three days before work begins.
- **Wait** the required amount of time for affected utility operators to respond to your request.
- **Confirm** that all affected utility operators responded to your request and marked underground utilities.
- **Dig carefully** around the marks.

Remember that privately owned underground lines will not be marked by location flaggers. Examples of private lines

and equipment include well and septic, underground sprinkler systems, invisible fencing and gas or electric lines that serve a detached building, as well as any lines (electric, water or sewer) from the meter to your home.

For more information about safe digging, give us a call at 970-854-2236. For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

**CALL  
811  
BEFORE YOU  
DIG**

## WHAT LURKS UNDER THE DIRT?

Before beautifying your yard, don't just dig in. Call 811 or your state's utility locating service before you dig.

An underground utility is **damaged every nine minutes** because someone didn't call before digging.



# Lineworker Appreciation Day

April 13, 2020 *IT TAKES A TEAM TO POWER A COMMUNITY*



## Top 5 Reasons Why We Appreciate Lineworkers

Although we appreciate each and every employee at Highline Electric Association, it takes a special kind of person to be an electric lineworker.

April 13 is Lineworker Appreciation Day, so let's take a look at the top 5 reasons we appreciate our lineworkers:

5. They are specially trained to work on power lines and related equipment.
4. They are dedicated to safely and efficiently restoring power when extreme weather or other conditions cause the power to go out.
3. They enjoy serving our communities.
2. They are willing to help other utilities with major outages at a moment's notice.
1. We couldn't provide excellent service without them or any of our other dedicated employees.

Highline Electric is monitoring the current situation surrounding COVID-19 and will conduct business accordingly. With all of the precautions being taken for COVID-19, the last thing you should worry about is having safe, reliable electricity. Highline has processes in place so we can continue to power your needs. Please watch our Facebook page, website or contact us via phone to find out the latest measures we're taking to keep our consumer-members and employees safe and healthy.

## Attention Load Control Participants

Irrigators are reminded that if they are signed up for load control for the year 2020 it will be starting in May. Please be aware of which option you signed up for. Control dates for all options include May 12-May 31, June 21-June 30 and September 1-September 10. If you chose 1A or 2A, this will include one day per week in July and August as well as the aforementioned. If you chose option 3, this will only be one day per week in July and August.

**HAPPY  
EASTER**  
*April 12*



**HEA OFFICES CLOSED ALL DAY GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 10**

## Information From Your Co-op

### Are EVs Right For You?

Visit [www.hea.coop/chooseev.aspx](http://www.hea.coop/chooseev.aspx) to find out if choosing an electric vehicle is the right decision for you. There, you can read about the benefits of EVs; learn various EV facts; plug numbers into a savings calculator and commute calculator; research and compare EV models; learn about incentives; and find local charging stations.

### Anniversaries

Congratulations to the following employees who observe an employment anniversary in April:

<i>Jeff Poe</i> .....	<i>16 years</i>
<i>Jason Depperschmidt</i> .....	<i>14 years</i>
<i>Eric Anderson</i> .....	<i>9 years</i>
<i>Matt McCabe</i> .....	<i>5 years</i>
<i>Carson Ebke</i> .....	<i>4 years</i>
<i>Josh Martin</i> .....	<i>3 years</i>

## Pesticide Safety

### Please protect our employees



Our employees face serious health risks when they unknowingly enter a field that was sprayed or chemigated with any chemical. Just as you would not subject your family or employees to risk, we do not want to subject our employees to risk.

#### Please consider the following:

- If you used any chemicals on a field, please notify Highline. You may call the office or you can place a flag at the entrance to the field. Please note the day when it is safe to enter the field and what chemical was used.
- Notification signs or flags are available free of charge at any Highline office.
- If calling during in an outage, please notify Highline if the field was sprayed.
- The initial and long-term effects of absorbing chemicals in the body are extremely hazardous to one's health. Please don't subject our employees to these dangers.

## Not Every Day is a Good Day for Burning

### Plan ahead before starting a controlled burn

**H**ighline Electric Association and Safe Electricity remind you to always plan ahead before burning. Depending on the weather, wind direction, humidity, ground conditions and other factors, your “controlled” burn could quickly go from orderly to chaotic. Once a fire becomes uncontrolled, it could quickly destroy anything in its path, including utility poles and related equipment.

A general recommendation for those with limited burn experience is the 60:40 rule, which is to burn with an air temperature of less than 60 degrees, a relative humidity of more than 40%, and a wind speed of 5 to 15 miles per hour at 6 feet above ground, according to the Oklahoma Prescribed Burning Handbook.

#### University of Illinois Extension also offers controlled burn tips that include:

- Follow state and local open burning laws.
- Stay outside with fires until they are completely safe and dead.
- Don't burn large trash piles under overhead power lines.
- Always leave a clear escape path between you and the fire.
- Do not start fires in areas where there are buildings and equipment with dry grass and debris around them.
- For farmers or ranchers planning a substantial field or ditch fire, inform your local fire department. Others in the area may call to report smoke

and you will prevent unneeded response runs by contacting the fire department ahead of time.

- Keep grass (both green and dormant) closely mowed. Keep tall grass, brush and trees out from under utility lines and around poles to protect power delivery and service.

If your controlled burn damages power poles or other utility equipment, you will be financially responsible for repairs to the damaged equipment. To inquire about controlled burns and how it may impact co-op service or your wallet, contact Highline Electric Association at 970-854-2236. **For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).**