

Go Country



SHAWN TAYLOR

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

When I told a friend of mine, who happens to also run an association, that we were having our Annual Meeting in Burgess Junction, his first reaction was to ask where that was. When I told him it was on top of the Bighorn Mountains, his second reaction was amazement that we could hold our meeting in such a remote part of Wyoming. I told him to leave it to the co-ops to go country for our annual meeting. And we do it well.

Once everybody in attendance embraced the fact that there was no cell or wireless service - or at least pretended to embrace it - we got down to both business and fun.

On the business side of things, we had a great presentation and conversation with Shawn Reese, the Policy Director for Governor Matthew Mead. We also heard from Ron Harper, CEO of Basin Electric, and Ken Anderson, General Manager of Tri-State Generation and Transmission. We also received business updates from CFC, Federated and CoBank, along with some much appreciated donations to our education and safety programs.

Our keynote speaker, Dan Kish with the Institute for Energy Research, provided some great insight into the national energy scene, both from inside the Beltway and from the perspective of the rest of the common sense folks in the rest of the country.

We wrapped up business by conducting a few elections. The WREA director from Basin Electric, Reuben Ritthaler, was elected to represent Wyoming on the NRECA board of directors. Bill Teter, director from Wheatland REA, was elected to be the President of WREA and will lead the board for the next couple of years. Dewey Hageman from Wyrulec Company and Andy Greer from Niobrara Electric Association round out the executive committee as Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer, respectively.

I'd like to especially thank Linda Schmidt for her guidance as President of our board for the last two years. Now for the fun - we started out the

week with a beautiful day golfing at the Powder Horn golf course in Sheridan. That was followed by a trap shooting competition in Lovell. Both events were part of our ACRE Tournament of Champions, along with bingo, cribbage, 8-ball golf, blackjack and a Wii bowling tournament. Everybody had a great time and congratulations once again to the folks from Carbon Power & Light for getting the ACRE tournament trophy back after losing it for a year.

We had two days of wonderful fall weather up in the mountains. Unfortunately, the day folks were supposed to go on an ATV trip around the area, it rained. Being tough people, they instead went down the mountain and took a boat trip on the river where they witnessed some great colors and wildlife, including several bighorn sheep.

We closed out the silent auction with some mean bidding wars, and in the end, we raised more money for ACRE than ever. After the auction there was great music (and even some dancing) provided by the Craft Brothers, a Sheridan band that I think could hold their own against the likes of the Zac Brown Band.

Finally, along with having no cell or wireless service, we also woke up one morning without power, and in some instances, without water. Sure, there were some grumbles, but as I stated at our meeting, if this blast to the past (no cell, wireless, power or water) was to happen to any group of people, the good people of the Wyoming rural electric cooperatives was the right group for it to happen to. Because, like I told my friend, we do country and we do it well.

Thanks to everybody for coming and participating, we'll see you next year at the Wind River Casino in Riverton. (I don't actually know if our meeting will be at the casino but I'm still guessing I'll see some of you there).