

# SPARKS

This past year has brought many challenges for our industry including abnormal inflation rates, supply chain issues, higher fuel and energy prices, among other hardships. Not only are we facing these issues as an industry, but High West Energy is also facing a rate increase from our power supplier, Tri-State Generation and Transmission, that will go into effect within the first quarter of 2024.

High West Energy has not increased its retail rates since May 2016; however, to offset costs, we are forced to increase our rates in 2024 due to our power supplier's rate increase and the continued rising costs of industry needs. Unfortunately, we are not able to avoid a rate increase to our members, but we are actively minimizing costs within the cooperative when and where we can. Our mission is to serve our members by providing safe, reliable, and competitively priced energy and services, and we will continue to do that during this trying time.

During the past two years, we have focused heavily on cutting unnecessary costs for the cooperative and evaluating our cost of operations. While making decisions, we always consider how we are spending our members' money and if the cost will be beneficial to our membership. There are many cost saving measures we have taken to effectively utilize revenue including purchasing more affordable vehicles, moving to a paperless environment within the office as well as when conducting business, offering additional payment methods, and utilizing one software (NISC) instead of purchasing multiple

software packages. In addition, we are continually looking for cost savings with materials, capital items, and negotiating cost increases with suppliers and agencies to minimize the impact on the cooperative. Last year, we also moved to four 10-hour workdays, combined High West Wiring and High West Digital Solutions under High West Energy, moved to an online annual meeting, and started designing Sparks in-house rather than outsourcing this publication.

While there are more ways that we have effectively utilized our members' money, we do hope you understand how the rising costs of everyday amenities including electricity have deeply impacted our industry, as well as High West Energy's operations. We are hopeful that early communication about the rate increase will not only help you better prepare your finances but will also help you understand that we are doing everything in our power to keep this rate increase competitive and reasonable for our entire membership. In the following months, we will communicate with you about what the rate increase will be, when our rate increase will go into effect, and what we can do as a cooperative to guide you during this time.

We do hope you understand the effects of this process and the work we are doing to effectively utilize the revenue received. We appreciate your membership, and we are here to serve you as your local cooperative. If you have any questions, please contact our office at 307-245-3261. We will continue to communicate with you to keep you informed of what is to come.

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Closed on Fridays

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## Holiday Cranberry Jalapeño Dip

**Ingredients:**

- 12 oz. fresh, uncooked cranberries
- 1/4 cup green onion
- 1-2 fresh jalapeño peppers
- 2 tsp cilantro
- 3/4 cup to 1 cup sugar
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 16 oz. cream cheese

**Instructions:**  
Use hand food chopper to chop cranberries. Chop green onion, jalapeño peppers, and cilantro. In a medium-sized bowl, add cranberries, green onion, cilantro, and jalapeño. Add sugar, lemon juice and salt on top of cranberry mixture and stir gently until blended. Cover with plastic wrap and place in refrigerator overnight. Take cranberry mixture and stir all ingredients together. Then strain out all liquid using a colander with small holes. Whip softened cream cheese with hand mixer until smooth and spread over bottom of a pie plate or 9x9 dish. Pour cranberry mixture atop cream cheese. Enjoy!

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**  
**Dec. 25-** Closed for Christmas Day  
**Jan. 1-** Closed for New Years Day



**HIGH WEST ENERGY**

<b>Board of Directors</b>		
Michael Lerwick	District 11	307-630-1277
Gary Smith	District 12	307-649-2375
Ed Prosser	District 13	307-630-8364
Jerry Burnett	District 14	970-895-3386
Damon Birkhofer	District 15	308-235-7296
Kosha Olsen	District 16	307-214-4940
Kevin Thomas	District 17	308-879-4396
<i>*Meetings are typically held on the fourth Monday of each month.</i>		
<b>Leadership Team</b>		
Jared Routh	CEO/General Manager	
Dave Crouse	Chief Information Officer	
Josh Gorman	Chief Financial Officer	
David Golden	Engineering Manager	
Konnie Keehnen	Member Services Manager	
Carol Macy	Employee Services Manager	
Marv Powell	WAFB Operations & Wiring Manager	
Nate Begger	Operations Manager	

# Happy Holidays!

This year has been full of exciting events and we can't wait to go into 2024 with our members! Thank you for being a member of High West Energy and making our year one to remember!



Anthony Kuehn (left) and Colt Alexander (right) at Discovery Days hosted by the Wyoming Air National Guard.



Brooke Darden (left) and Jared Routh (right) with the Novice Bull Riding champion of the 2023 Hell on Wheels Rodeo.



Konnie Keehnen (left) and Francis Jaramillo (right) helping at the Military May Barbecue.



Brooke Darden (left) and Sally Brelsford (right) helping at the Pine Bluffs Senior Center wellness vendor fair.



High West Energy employees pose for a photo for Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October.



Bobby Sonnie (left), Max Childers (middle), and Colt Alexander (right) representing High West at the Cody Hotline School golf tournament.



During Linemen Appreciation Month, students in our service territory drew pictures for our linemen.



Derek Walls (left), Rachel Manley (middle), and Rachel VanDeMark (right) enjoying the 2023 Pine Bluffs Trunk or Treat.



Hunter Garoutte taking part in our Pole Top and Bucket Rescue safety training. We hold many safety trainings during the year to ensure our employees stay safe in the field.



Dean McCluskey (left), Bryan Warden (middle), and Brandon Wheeler (right) supporting Breast Cancer Awareness Month. During October, our linemen, electricians, and drone pilots wear pink hard hats in support of breast cancer awareness.