



# SPARKS

October 2025

We're always amazed by the stunning scenery throughout our service area. This photo was captured by Leah Johnson, one of our very own members. If you love taking photos of sunrises, landscapes, or anything that shows the beauty around us, we'd love to see them. Send photos to [sparks@highwest.coop](mailto:sparks@highwest.coop). Your photo could be featured next!

## PROTECT YOURSELF AND DEVICES DURING OUTAGES

If you or a loved one relies on an electric medical device, a power outage isn't just an inconvenience—it could be life-threatening. Severe weather or equipment failures can knock out electricity without warning, so it's essential to have a plan in place to stay safe.

Please let us know if you or members of your household rely on an electric medical device, and we will note it on your account. While we already communicate about planned outages to members, this ensures we can notify you in advance so you have time to make the necessary arrangements. This is why being prepared is so important.

### Follow these tips to prepare medical equipment for a power outage:

**Document your devices.** Keep a file that includes the device's manufacturer, model, serial number, instruction manuals and a photo. This information can be useful for repairs, replacement or communicating with your utility or insurance provider.

**Know your backup options.** Find out if your device is compatible with backup power like batteries or a generator. Check how long it can operate during an outage. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations and keep device-specific supplies on hand.

**Keep devices maintained.** Make sure equipment is clean, calibrated and working properly ahead of time. Routine maintenance helps prevent surprises during emergencies.

**Charge up.** Keep your cell phone, backup power sources and battery-powered medical devices fully charged. Keep extra batteries on hand, especially during storm season.

**Create an evacuation plan.** Have a plan in case you need to leave your home. Identify locations of emergency shelters and power stations in your area. Talk with family or friends about places you can go that have power and are accessible.

**Stock up for two weeks.** Keep a two-week supply of medications, medical accessories and essentials like coolers and refrigeration packs for temperature-sensitive medicine.

**Consider manual alternatives.** Look for portable, dependable alternatives to electronic medical devices—for example, a manual wheelchair, walker or cane as a backup for an electric scooter.

**Review your insurance coverage.** Before disaster strikes, talk with your insurance provider so you know what's covered if your medical device is damaged during a weather event or power outage.

HIGH WEST ENERGY



IN THIS EDITION:

MEDICAL DEVICE PREPARATION

PREPARING FOR THE BIG HUNT

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

*High West Energy's mission is to serve our members and communities by providing safe, reliable, and reasonably priced energy and services.*

### CONTACT US

307-245-3261  
[www.highwest.coop](http://www.highwest.coop)

### MAIN OFFICE

6270 County Road 212  
Pine Bluffs, WY 82082

### OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Thursday  
7:30 AM - 5 PM

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mike Romsa, District 11  
Gary Smith, District 12  
Jessica Crowder, District 13  
John Thompson, District 14  
Damon Birkhofer, District 15  
Kosha Olsen, District 16  
Kevin Thomas, District 17

### LEADERSHIP TEAM

Jared Routh, CEO/General Manager  
Josh Gorman, Chief Financial Officer  
David Crouse, Chief Information Officer  
Konnie Keennen, Member Services Manager  
Carol Macy, Employee Services Manager  
Nate Begger, Operations Manager

**For updates, follow us on Facebook and LinkedIn!**

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*



# PREPARING FOR THE BIG HUNT

**As hunting season approaches, excitement builds for time outdoors. But before you head into the woods, make sure electrical safety is part of your preparation checklist.**

Power lines and utility equipment are often out of sight — and out of mind — especially in wooded or rural areas. Ignoring them can lead to serious injuries or even death.

**Before you climb that tree stand, look up and out:**

Never install a tree stand near a power line or on a utility pole. Electricity can arc — jump through the air — up to 10 feet from high-voltage lines. This means you don't even have to touch a wire to be at risk of electrocution. Always stay at least 10 feet away from overhead lines, poles and other electrical infrastructure when setting up or taking down tree stands.

Never shoot near or toward power lines, utility poles, transformers or

substations. Stray bullets or pellets could damage equipment, possibly interrupting electric service. Even more concerning, they could drop a power line to the ground, causing a hazardous scenario: those who get within 50 feet of a downed line could be shocked or electrocuted.

**Keep these tips in mind to stay safe and avoid costly or dangerous incidents:**

**Scout the area.** Before hunting, take time to scout your area during daylight. Look for power lines, poles and electrical equipment. Note their locations to avoid them later.

**Power safely.** If you're using a portable electrical generator on your hunting trip, don't use it inside a cabin or RV, or in a confined area. Make sure it's used outside where there is plenty of ventilation.

**Never climb a utility pole.** Even if it looks like the perfect vantage point,

don't do it. Poles carry high-voltage lines, and climbing them can be deadly.

**Don't use utility poles for support.** Tree stands or blinds should never be attached to or supported by power poles or electrical equipment.

**Know the danger of downed lines:**

If you come across a downed power line or damaged electrical equipment, stay at least 50 feet away, even if it doesn't appear to be live. Power lines can still carry electricity when on the ground, posing a risk of shock or electrocution. Call 911 or your utility right away to help prevent a dangerous situation.

Whether you're a seasoned hunter or heading out for the first time, staying aware of your surroundings could save your life.

For more tips on staying safe around electricity, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## STAY SAFE FROM ONLINE TRICKS THIS OCTOBER

Halloween brings ghosts, goblins, and plenty of spooky fun, but October is also Cybersecurity Awareness Month. Just as you would never open your door to a stranger in a creepy costume without caution, you should treat suspicious emails, text messages, and pop-ups the same way. Hackers use tricks like phishing messages, fake links, and scare tactics to steal your personal information.

**Protect yourself by following these simple tips:**

- Create long, unique passwords
- Avoid reusing passwords
- Enable multifactor authentication
- Regularly update your devices
- Use a password manager to securely store and generate strong passwords
- Refrain from clicking on unfamiliar links or opening random attachments

This Halloween, enjoy the treats but be mindful of the tricks lurking online. Staying alert will help keep the fright where it belongs in spooky movies and haunted houses, not in your inbox.

- Gary Smith, District 12

