



**Tomahawk**  
Rural Electrification Association

## Fall 2020 Newsletter

### TREA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

As the **Annual General Meeting** is the best way for the Board to communicate with our members we must ensure the health and safety of our community first. The Board has looked at many different options at how to hold our AGM and has concluded we will not be able to under the current health restrictions, according to the Alberta Government's Stage 2 relaunch during Covid-19 and until Stage 3 is announced or unless the Chief Medical Officer orders an exemption for AGMs or REAs. We are certain that our AGM will be larger than 100 people, which is contrary to current health restrictions. We are equally certain that our members' ability to exercise their rights to vote will be compromised by any other form of AGM. Under the authority in the RUA and with their fiduciary duty to act in the best interests of the membership, the Board has elected to refrain from holding an AGM until the membership can gather safely in one room. There are currently three directors who are up for re-election, these directors will hold their position until our AGM is held. We thank you all for your patience and we look forward to the next opportunity to get together!

### Principles You Need to Know to Farm Safely Near Power Lines

1. **Most overhead power lines** have no protective insulation. Any contact with them could be dangerous.
2. **Non-metallic materials** such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes, straw and hay, will conduct electricity, depending on their moisture content and surface contamination.
3. Electricity will seek every available path to the ground.
4. When people or other objects get too close and touch a power line, there is an instant flow of electricity through them to ground.
5. The flow of electricity through the human body can burn, severely injure or cause death. Less than one ampere of electricity through the body can kill!
6. Because you can not see electricity, stay away from downed lines. The area around them including the soil, equipment or other objects, could be energized. If you see a downed line call your utility provider.

Look around your farm and take note of the location of all overhead power lines. Also make sure you know where **underground power lines** are buried. Review your farm activities and work practices near these lines. Remember: If you **contact** a power line, a serious or fatal accident could occur. Watch out for overhead **power wires** whenever you operate portable augers, movable conveyors or any other farm equipment! Be particularly **careful** when working near overhead and underground electrical power lines.

# New Distribution System Operator

Tomahawk REA Board is pleased to announce that Battle River Power Coop (BRPC) will be our new Distribution System Operator (DSO) and RRO default provider beginning midnight January 3, 2021.

Tomahawk REA Board reviewed proposals, and the current context, and determined that BRPC is the most cost-effective option for our members. BRPC, like Tomahawk REA, is a not-for-profit organization where their members are the center of their business. Their focus is on balancing the needs of their members and community with operating a safe, efficient, and cost-effective business. In our collegial relationship with BRPC through our membership in the Alberta Federation of Rural Electrification Associations (AFREA) we have come to respect the BRPC mission to maintain a first-class relationship and service to its members, treating them with the respect and professionalism they deserve. They have extended this approach to us and provided a very competitive DSO option for Tomahawk REA members. BRPC is also an REA and shares the same seven cooperative principles.

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Member Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training, and Information
6. Cooperation among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community

BRPC employs qualified, dedicated people who respond and serve the membership, and now Tomahawk members as the DSO, by keeping the power on, promote timely power restoration, facilitate new construction to increase the membership base, monitor and maintain vegetation management and infrastructure replacement programs. These tactics maintain a safe, reliable system.

BRPC has 49 staff and two supporting consultants, Organizationally, the cooperative is a relatively flat, decentralized management structure that empowers managers and staff to bring forward ideas and make decisions through a grassroots approach, accountable to its Board comprised of 15 directors. Accountabilities and responsibilities are documented through robust policies and defined job descriptions. Management controls are created in alignment with BRPC's vision and strategic plan to guide leadership in the prudent rollout of their goals and objectives.

BRPC's work with and for Tomahawk REA will grow our mutual commitment to innovative electricity that is flexible in meeting the needs of our members by implementing new technology and developing member and community-oriented programs.

They plan their proactive operations with their maintenance programs to ensure minimal planned, unplanned outages and restoration times. Planned outages are scheduled by BRPC for staff to safely perform maintenance and upgrades to infrastructure and equipment. Unplanned outages are caused by events such as an accident involving a power pole, inclement weather, equipment failure, or issues with upstream generation or transmission. Proactiveness, cooperation and preparation mitigate the impacts of unplanned outages.

## New System Distribution Operator continued...

The Tomahawk Board of Directors wants you to know that this decision was not made lightly. We had hoped to provide a detailed, in-person report to you at our AGM, but unfortunately Covid-19, is delaying our ability to do so. When it became clear that the DSO with EQUUS could not continue, the Board conducted thorough research into alternative options and debated the options at length. Again, we hope to provide you more detailed reasons for this shift when we are able to conduct our AGM in person when Alberta enters Stage 3 pandemic re-entry plan.

As you may also know, the Board continues to wait for a sales proposal from FortisAlberta Inc., this DSO agreement is just a short two-year contract. Given the current fluidity of business in Alberta during Covid-19, we are not expecting this proposal to come to the Board before we can gather for our AGM. If this changes, we will let you know as soon as possible. The Board was left with the decision to find a new DSO, as taking on the work for themselves would result, primarily, in too much cost increase to you, our members.

While there are sure to be some members who would have preferred other DSO arrangements, the Board wants to assure you that BRPC has presented a very competitive DSO proposal that makes financial sense and is keeping with our values as a grass-roots, not-for-profit business model. Some of the key decision factors were that BRPC provides a reduction in fees that will be charged to you for services that include, but are not limited to, the replacement of all our 694 non-compliant meters to AMI meters at a competitive rate. Given that all existing meters were up for replacement by December 2021, this was a large deciding factor for the Board. BRPC will include options for additional services that our REA and our members may require, at competitive rates, including capital projects, new construction, vegetation management, pole testing, ground testing, etc. Finally, BRPC presented a competitive commitment to response times in rural Alberta to our members in the event of an unplanned outage. They are geographically close, and their proposal included response times that were impressive, and proposed new means to mitigate risks on our system that will, hopefully, result in less unplanned outages over time.

Tomahawk REA is impressed with BRPC's goal to maintain a high standard of safety, operations, maintenance, construction, vegetation management and administration at the lowest cost possible while creating a good working relationship with contractors, member-owners, other utilities and everyone they interact with. "Keeping the lights on" is on the top of their operational list. Tomahawk REA Board is confident that BRPC will provide Tomahawk REA and its members with safe, reliable and cost-effective service and are looking forward to working closely with BRPC in the coming months to ensure that our distribution system is run efficiently and effectively now and in the future.

**RRO/RETAIL INFORMATION:** As noted last month, please be aware that effective January 4, 2021 your monthly electricity bills will come from Battle River Power Coop if EQUUS is your current retailer. **Please note: you must pay your bills to EQUUS if there are amounts owing by the transition date: any amount owing to EQUUS is payable to EQUUS. If you are with any other retailer, your billing will stay the same.**

For more information about our new DSO and RRO provider, we encourage you to visit Battle River Power Coop's website at <https://www.brpower.coop/>.

## Feedback/ Suggestions/Inquiries

Please let us know if you have questions you want to be answered or topics covered in the upcoming newsletters. We value your feedback and are always looking to improve our communications with members!

Email: [office.trea@gmail.com](mailto:office.trea@gmail.com) or Phone or Text 780-514-8732

# **Paul Harvey 'So God Made a Farmer'**

## **Speech to the FFA November 1978 Kansas City, MO**

And on the 8th day, God looked down on his planned paradise and said, "I need a caretaker."

So God made a farmer.

God said, "I need somebody willing to get up before dawn, milk cows, work all day in the fields, milk cows again, eat supper and then go to town and stay past midnight at a meeting of the school board."

So God made a farmer.

"I need somebody with arms strong enough to wrestle a calf and yet gentle enough to deliver his own grandchild... somebody to call hogs, tame cantankerous machinery, come home hungry, and have to wait for lunch until his wife's done feeding visiting ladies -- and then tell the ladies to be sure and come back real soon -- and mean it."

So God made a farmer.

God said, "I need somebody willing to sit up all night with a newborn colt... and watch it die, then dry his eyes and say, 'Maybe next year.' I need somebody who can shape an ax handle from a persimmon sprout, shoe a horse with a hunk of car tire, who can make harness out of haywire, feed sacks and shoe scraps. And who, planting time and harvest season, will finish his forty-hour week by Tuesday noon and then, painin' from 'tractor back,' put in another seventy-two hours."

So God made a farmer.

God had to have somebody willing to ride the ruts at double speed to get the hay in ahead of the rain clouds and yet stop in mid-field and race to help when he sees the first smoke from a neighbor's place.

So God made a farmer.

God said, "I need somebody strong enough to clear trees and heave bails, yet gentle enough to yeap lambs and wean pigs and tend the pink-combed pullets, who will stop his mower for an hour to splint the broken leg of a meadowlark.

It had to be somebody who'd plow deep and straight and not cut corners. Somebody to seed, weed, feed, breed and rake and disc and plow and plant and tie the fleece and strain the milk and replenish the self-feeder and finish a hard week's work with a five-mile drive to church.

"Somebody who'd bale a family together with the soft, strong bonds of sharing... who would laugh, and then sigh... and then reply with smiling eyes, when his son says he wants to spend his life 'doing what dad does.'"

So God made a farmer.

### **Note to All Members**

All members are free to purchase electricity services through TREA's regulated rate tariff or from a retailer of their choice. The delivery of electricity to you is not affected by your choice. If you change who you purchase electricity services from, you will continue receiving electricity from TREA. For a current list of retailers you may choose from, visit <http://www.ucahelps.alberta.ca> or call 310-4822 (toll free in Alberta).