

New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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From the General Manager/CEO



Critical connections behind the power

By Rick L. Eichelberger

APRIL 11, 2016, is National Lineman Appreciation Day so it is appropriate that we take a moment to recognize the people who often work in brutal weather conditions to ensure we all have safe and reliable power. In fact, linemen are often first responders during storms and other catastrophic events, working to make the scene safe for other public safety officers. However, while linemen work in highly visible settings, there are many behind the scenes who also labor tirelessly to help keep the lights on. However, they do so with little or no public recognition or acknowledgement. While linemen can do their job out in the open — whether it is restoring power after a natural disaster, maintaining the lines or building new service — there is a lot more work taking place behind the scenes.

The power behind your power

The lineman out in the field works with thousands of volts of electricity high atop power lines 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to keep electricity flowing and maintain the energy infrastructure. As the general manager/CEO of the cooperative, I must ensure that all the players (employees) know their roles and perform them at a high level. I must also recruit and retain talent.

Promoting a culture of safety

Outside Operations Manager Rodney Decker ensures that the overall system is well maintained. He is responsible for planning ahead for future needs and continually monitoring existing equipment and resources. An equally

important area of focus is safety. Working with electricity is an inherently dangerous task, and helping to foster a culture of safety for all workers is a major priority.

Calling for energy efficiency

The member service representatives (MSRs) answer calls and questions about billing and energy use. They work with members to identify high-use periods and discuss ways to save on monthly bills. The Member Services Department is responsible for ensuring that you are treated appropriately, and it all starts at the time you sign up for membership. At New Enterprise Rural Electric, this department is also responsible for the monthly bills being sent to members and paying all the cooperative's bills.

Delivering timely savings

The accounting and finance functions are handled by Office Manager Brawna Sell, who is responsible for the financial well-being of the cooperative. It includes billing, collections and overseeing any loans the co-op has received. As you know, the co-op generates an electric bill that we send to you either electronically or through regular mail, often on a date that you have specified. We do so to ensure we can apply the latest technology, help lower your energy costs and send timely, accurate bills to you.

Continual learning and training for co-op employees is crucial to having a skilled workforce that helps keep the co-op operating at an optimal level.

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Start now to improve your home's energy efficiency

THE winter months are just about over. This past winter was a mix of above-average warm spells and below-average cold periods. The warm periods helped to keep heating bills down. However, when the cold weather hit our area, electric use went up, and people with electric heat saw large increases in their monthly use.

No matter if you heat your home with electricity, heating fuel, coal or another type of heat, you want to be sure your home is as energy-efficient as it can be. Performing a do-it-yourself home audit could save you money.

Winter months aren't the only time electric use can be high. In the summer, air conditioners cause bills to be high. An energy audit can help you save money year-round.

An energy audit is something you can do yourself by walking through your home looking for problems. This will help you determine where in your home you are using the most energy. As you go through your home, keep a

checklist of areas you have inspected and what problems you found. Keeping a checklist will help you decide which problems need to be taken care of sooner than others.

Energy auditing tips

- ▶ Check for air leaks or drafts, such as holes or cracks around your walls, ceilings, windows, doors, lights, and plumbing fixtures, switches, and electrical outlets that can leak air into or out of your home. Sealing drafts can save you anywhere from 5 to 30 percent on your heating and cooling needs per year. Pay special attention to your attic and basement. Many times, these are where the largest gaps and cracks are found.
- ▶ Check for open fireplace dampers.
- ▶ Make sure your appliances and heating and cooling systems are properly maintained.
- ▶ Study your family's lighting needs and use patterns, paying special attention to high-use areas such as the living

room, kitchen, and outside lighting.

- ▶ Check out your hot water heater. Heating water is close to the top of the list when it comes to the money you spend on energy. Hopefully, after your audit, you have identified where your home is losing energy. Now it is time to make a priority list. What will save you the most significant amount of money over time? A few suggestions to improve your efficiency are:
 - ▶ Put caulking around any cracks or gaps. Replace missing weather stripping.
 - ▶ Appliances and heating and cooling systems may not be working properly because of dirt and neglect. Cleaning or repairing the system's air filters can help to lower your energy bills, plus give you a better air quality in your home. Remember, your appliances and heating and cooling systems need a yearly checkup, too.
 - ▶ Look for ways to use lighting controls — like occupancy sensors, dimmers or timers — to reduce lighting energy use. Replace standard (also called incandescent) lightbulbs and fixtures with compact or standard fluorescent lamps.
 - ▶ If your hot water heater is working properly, you may want to try some of these energy saving tips: Insulate your hot water pipes with convenient pre-formed, pre-cut pipe insulation. Wrap old heaters with insulating jackets. Before installing an insulating jacket, make sure a wrap won't void your water heater's warranty. The bottoms of conventional water heaters aren't insulated. Place a piece of insulating foam sheathing between the water heater and the floor. Lower the water temperature — a setting of 120 degrees is adequate for home needs.
- Just by doing a few inexpensive home improvements, you can save money on your electric bills. Why not start these projects now and have them done before winter rolls around again? 

April is National Safe Digging Month

Planning a home improvement job? Planting a tree? Installing a fence or deck?

WAIT! Here's what you need to know first: Whether you are planning to do it yourself or hire a professional, smart digging means calling 811 before each job. Homeowners often make risky assumptions about whether or not they should get their utility lines marked, but every digging job requires a call – even small projects like planting trees and shrubs.

The depth of utility lines varies and there may be multiple utility lines in a common area. Digging without calling can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm you and those around you, and potentially result in fines and repair costs. Calling 811 before every digging job means underground utility lines will be marked for free, helping to prevent undesired consequences.

One easy phone call to 811 starts the process to get your underground utility lines marked for free. When you call 811 from anywhere in the country, your call will be routed to your local One Call Center. Local One Call Center operators will ask you for the location of your digging job and route your call to affected utility companies. Your utility companies will then send a professional locator to your location to mark your lines within a few days. Once your underground lines have been marked, you will know the approximate location of your utility lines and can dig safely, because knowing what's below helps protect you and your family.

Pennsylvania 811 encourages Commonwealth residents to visit www.pa811.org or www.pa1call.org for more information about digging safely.

From the General Manager/CEO

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This learning element is also one of the Seven Cooperative Principles and extends to our members. For example, the cooperative sponsors youth on an educational trip to Washington, D.C., as part of the co-op's Youth Tour program each summer.

Staying in sync

Many different people work closely together to serve you because you, the member, are at the heart of everything we do. Unlike other types of businesses, as a cooperative, our concern for community is one principle that sets us apart. The electricity we provide literally powers our communities. And it takes every person in the co-op to deliver on this promise. Across the country, more than 900 electric cooperatives provide safe, reliable and technologically advanced service to 40 million Americans, while maintaining a unique consumer-focused approach to business. 

Budget Billing

If your electric bills were high this winter, you may want to try our Budget Billing program. When you are using Budget Billing, the computer looks at your previous 12 months' use, averages it and rounds it to the nearest \$10. This is done each month. Should your budget amount need to be increased or decreased, the computer will automatically do this. This helps many people with those large winter bills.

There are only three requirements to be put on Budget Billing:

1. The account balance must be zero.
2. All budget payments must be paid on or before the due date each month.
3. You need to have been receiving electricity from this account for one year.

If you are interested in being on Budget Billing or have questions, please feel free to contact Wendy at extension 4612.

Online banking payments

Did you know that when you use your bank's website to pay your electric bill, some of the banks actually still mail us a check for your payment? They don't process the payment automatically by debiting the amount from your checking account.

For those still sending us checks, depending on the date you enter for payment and the time it takes for the check to reach our office, your payment may not arrive before the payment-due date. Payments received after the due date are charged a penalty.

Instead of going to your bank's website, why not log onto to our website, www.newenterpriserec.com? You can pay your bill using a checking account or MasterCard/Visa card. Your payment is posted to your account within a few minutes, avoiding mail deliveries and unnecessary penalties.

You can now schedule your payments 30 days in advance through our website. So you choose the date the payment is posted to your account and removed from your financial account.

Another option is to have your account set up on Auto Pay. With Auto Pay, your payment automatically drafts from your checking/savings account or is charged to a debit/credit card (MasterCard and Visa only accepted). This will draft/charge on the 20th of each month unless the 20th falls on a weekend or holiday; then it will be drafted the following business day. Your checking account and/or credit card information is stored confidentially and securely. If you are interested in this program, please contact Wendy at extension 4612 to set this up.

Auto Pay Program provides convenience

WITH New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative's Auto Pay Program, you can eliminate writing a check each month. You no longer have to remember to buy stamps so you can mail your payment to the office. No more forgetting to drop your payment off at the office.

Our Auto Pay Program automatically withdraws your electric payment from your checking or savings account on the 20th of each month. All you need is a good credit rating with New Enterprise REC to join. It's easy to sign up and it is FREE. Applications are available on our website, www.newenterpriserec.com, or at our office. While you may download and print the application from our website, you need to return it in person or by mail with your signature and a voided check. If you have more than one account number, be sure to write all your account numbers on the

application. Joint name accounts must have both signatures on the application.

You will still receive a billing statement each month. Statements show your electric use and the amount to be withdrawn.

Auto Pay can be cancelled by request. To cancel, just provide us with a letter stating you would like to cancel the Auto Pay Program. Joint name accounts need to have both signatures on this letter. The letter must be in our office by the first of the month.

Should you have two insufficient funds payments while on the Auto Pay Program, the cooperative will cancel your Auto Pay Program arrangement.

This is a great program to make your life a little easier. Should you have any questions, give Wendy a call at extension 4612 or email her at wconley@newenterpriserec.com. 

KIDZcorner

What the well-dressed lineman is wearing

New Enterprise Rural Electric Co-op Lineman John Simington Jr. knows better than to go to work half-dressed. He has special clothing and tools that allow him to work on live power lines and do his job safely.

But you don't have the same outfit or expertise as John. That's why you should never touch any electric line, even if you think it's off. Electricity helps us in many ways, but it can be very dangerous, even deadly. Call New Enterprise REC if you see a downed power line.

1. FIBERGLASS SHOTGUN STICK

Allows linemen to perform some tasks from the ground.

2. HARD HAT

Protects head from falling objects and bumps; also insulates head in case of electrical contact.

3. FIRE-RETARDANT SHIRT

Protects against flames, flash fire and electric arc.

4. CLIMBING BELT

Securely supports lineman's weight when climbing poles; also holds tools and supplies to free hands as necessary.

5. FIRE-RETARDANT JEANS

Made from 100 percent natural fibers; they must be fire retardant to protect linemen in case of fire or sparks.



6. HOOKS

Are used for climbing poles when a bucket truck can't be used or more assistance is required.

7. SAFETY GLASSES

Protect eyes from debris, flying objects and other hazards.

8. RUBBER GLOVES

Insulate hands and fingers from live electrical circuit; allow linemen to repair lines without disconnecting your power.

9. LEATHER PROTECTORS

Protect rubber gloves from punctures.

10. SAFETY STRAP

Wraps around a pole for support and protection while linemen are climbing.