

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



Principles in action *Seven cooperative principles give all co-ops guidance*

By Rick L. Eichelberger

OCTOBER is National Cooperative Month. This time of year, more than 40,000 cooperative businesses serving 120 million people in the U.S. take time to discuss and celebrate the value of the cooperative business you own. While I applaud any effort that brings more attention to co-ops, my feelings are best represented by a T-shirt slogan, "October is Co-op Month — But I Cooperate All Year Long!"

Cooperatives around the world operate according to the same core principles and values adopted by the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA). Cooperatives trace the roots of these principles to the first modern cooperative founded in Rochdale, England, in 1844.

All cooperative businesses have at their foundation these seven cooperative principles to follow:

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

One of the ways co-ops demonstrate they are different from investor-owned businesses is by actually living the principles. Principle 7 (Concern for Community) is our focus this month, and there are many examples that demonstrate how New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative employees do this. Our employees have purchased and assembled Easter baskets for "Baskets for Eli," helped with Little

League Baseball, benefit fundraisers for people with illnesses, the Southern Cove Rod and Gun's Youth Program, and at Bedford County Therapeutic Riding Program, have run races for different charities, and chaperoned a high school dance-a-thon. Our employees are concerned for their community.

This is how New Enterprise REC got started. Ordinary folks realized they would be better off working together if they wanted to bring electricity to their community. They set poles, strung wire and maintained the first electric lines in our area. Four of the five main organizers went to Washington, D.C., to get federal approval to start a cooperative.

This pattern of Concern for Community has continued to this day. New Enterprise will be accepting food or monetary donations for our local food banks throughout the remainder of 2016. Please drop your food items off at the cooperative. Monetary gifts can be dropped off at the cooperative or mailed to New Enterprise REC, P.O. Box 75, New Enterprise, PA 16664. Checks can be made to New Enterprise REC. We will divide the collected money so each food bank gets its share. Some suggestions for items to donate include: canned meats and stews, soup, peanut butter, pasta, rice, baby products, cleaning supplies, paper products, or health and beauty products.

So while we take special note of the value of our cooperative in October, we are delighted to be a part of our community delivering vital services to you all year long. ☀

And the lights came on.....

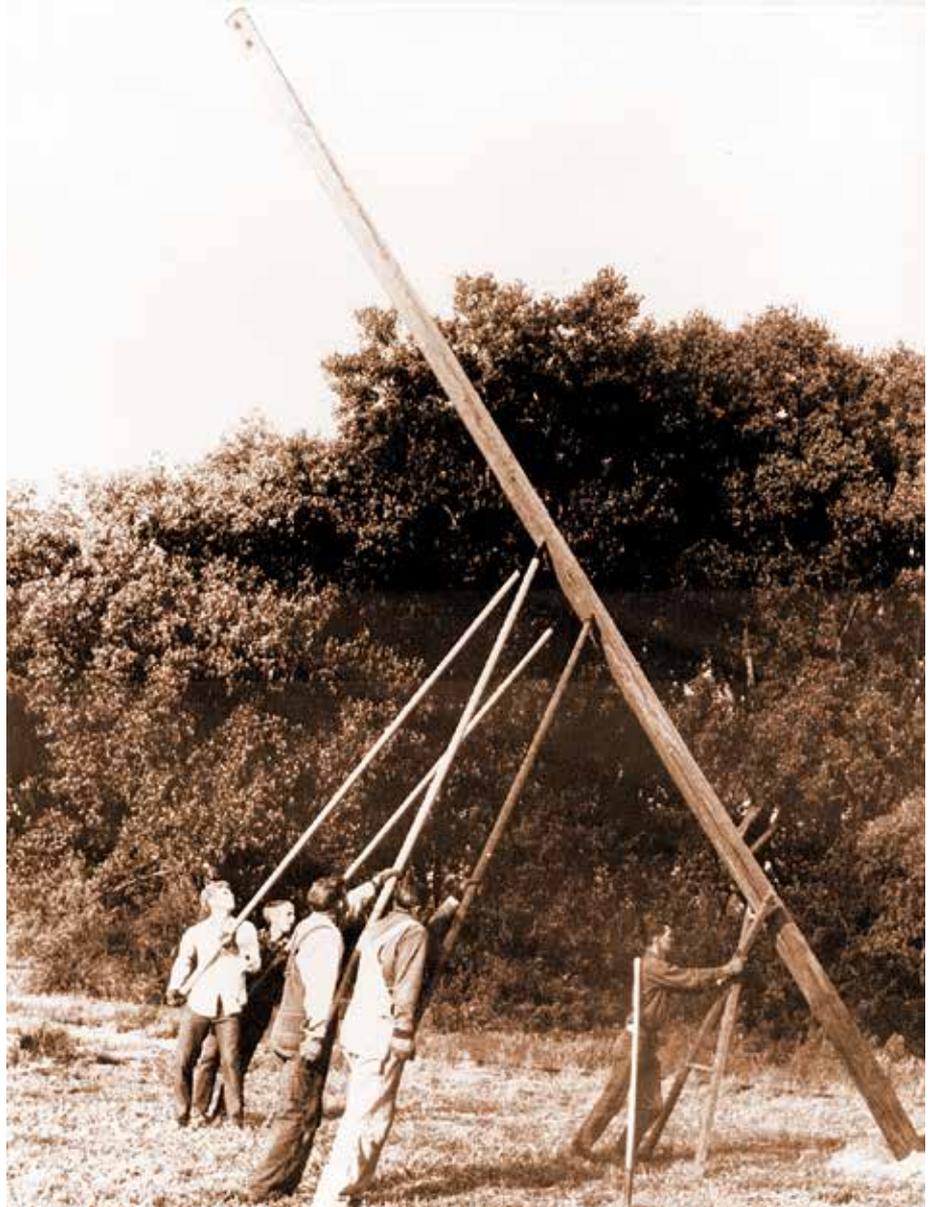
IT WAS January 1927. The weather was very cold, and the frigid wind was blowing as a crew of nine young men dug a hole along a country road. The cold and wind weren't the only problems they were dealing with. The ground was frozen so hard it made it difficult to dig holes deep enough to set poles. They were using spoon shovels and iron digging rods. Other challenges included water and layers of limestone — many times as they were digging, water would spring up or their shovels would hit limestone. The only way to get past the limestone was dynamite.

Lawrence Guyer wrote in his diary, “Helped to set light line poles this forenoon. Ground frozen.” Although his entry was short and sweet, most folks at that time know what it was like to set poles in the cold January weather.

Some of the crew members may have had second thoughts about the venture they were involved in. Was all this hard work really worth it? These young men were setting and climbing poles, stringing wire with little or no safety training. Their training was grabbing the pole-climbing gear and heading up the pole. Four or more men were needed to complete the dangerous and grueling job of setting a pole.

Families needed to build and maintain the line, and the Penn Central Power & Light Company of Altoona assured them they would energize their homes and farms with the wonder of electricity. Imagine what a difference electricity would make to these homes and farms. The promise of electricity encouraged the men to continue the backbreaking work.

All the hard work paid off on May 17, 1927, when Southern Cove Line was made “hot.” A few more farm houses and barns had the convenience



of the electricity. The Southern Cove Line wasn't the only privately owned electric line in the area. Lawrence Guyer, Lester Clapper, John Grubb and Harold Over recalled electric lines going up in Bakers Summit and Hickory Bottom. Diesel engines may have been supplying electric lines in the Woodbury and New Enterprise areas as early as 1925.

Unfortunately, nearly 10 years would pass before the majority of the homes and villages in the region — and throughout the nation — would have the marvel of electricity. Guyer stated the Cove area was a bit ahead of its time in electrification. The federal

government created the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) in 1936, and it soon was used to help rural residents form rural electric cooperatives.

Why was the Cove area so far ahead of most of the nation? The area was isolated from nearby cities by rugged, often ice- and snow-covered hills, but the area was home to many thriving dairy farms by the turn of the century. Milk was transported daily to Philadelphia by train and to Johnstown by truck. The dairy farms were close enough together and prosperous enough to take advantage of the new technology.

By the mid-1930s, the farmers who had built their own power lines or used

generators began to see the advantages of joining others to form a rural electric cooperative. The private lines were difficult to extend to other farms and they were very expensive to maintain.

Lester Clapper stated, "One of the first winters after the lines were up, we had 2 feet of heavy wet snow and ice 4 inches deep on the lines."

When repairing the lines, people would hire someone who knew a little about electricity or they did the repairs themselves. Soon a new occupation became popular — the electrician.

On June 13, 1938, a meeting was held at the New Enterprise Bank to discuss the idea of joining together to form a rural electric cooperative. For years, people had been joining together to make electricity come to their small corner of the Cove. The Penn Central Power & Light Company did energize the lines, but it wouldn't come into the rural areas to build or maintain the lines. They said there was no money in the rural areas, and Penn Central Power & Light Company needed to make a profit for their stockholders.

So the same people who had built their own lines pledged their cooperation in working side by side with this new "light company." This new cooperative would provide electricity to them and add more electric lines in addition to maintaining the old and new lines. A group of five men — E.W. Van Horn, H.L. King, C.P. Holsinger, J.L. Guyer and H.R. Snoberger — were the main organizers of the new venture that would later be known as New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Approval was needed to start the new association from the federal government, so four of the five men headed to Washington, D.C., where they obtained the required approval.

New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc. was incorporated on Nov. 18, 1938. New Enterprise Bank President E.W. Van Horn was very involved with the new cooperative. He was greatly opposed to using government loans from REA to finance the cooperative. He saw an opportunity to help the local banks and the coop-

erative at the same time. The sales of bonds supported the formation of the cooperative. In addition to bonds, the cooperative borrowed \$25,000 from the New Enterprise and Woodbury banks.

By 1955, all monies were paid back; making the cooperative debt-free. This debt-free status has remained in place for over 75 years.

The cooperative has been located in two locations since 1938. The first office was on the second floor of the New Enterprise Bank building in the center of town. In 1960, a new office, warehouse and storage facility was built west of New Enterprise. An additional warehouse was built on the same location in 2001. Remodeling and a new office addition were completed in 2007.

When New Enterprise REC was first organized, it served much of Bedford County. In the first year of operation, 100 miles of new electric lines were added. Owners of the private electric lines like Southern Cove Line gave their lines to the cooperative. Many homes needed to be rewired to follow the REA specifications.

Electricity was one of the first conveniences installed in homes. Indoor plumbing and water pumps soon followed. With electricity came the electric iron and washing machines to help the women of the home. The men no longer had to worry about their barns catching on fire due to kerosene lamps.

The cooperative's territory was divided in late 1939 when another new rural electric cooperative — Bedford Rural Electric Cooperative — was formed. Bedford REC served western and southern parts of Bedford County.

New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative will be celebrating its 78th anniversary this year. For 78 years, the directors and employees have strived to supply reliable and affordable electricity

to our consumer-members.

Today more than 3,600 meters in Bedford, Fulton and Huntingdon counties are served by the co-op. The cooperative is governed by a seven-member board of directors who are elected by the cooperative membership each year at the annual meeting. Twelve people are employed to conduct the outside



and inside work on a daily basis.

The only glimpse of life without electricity to those of us growing up with this wonderful convenience is during an outage. We are so used to flipping the switch and having lights go on immediately. What about that fresh pot of coffee that is ready for us when we wake in the morning?

Thanks to the men and women who worked so hard to provide us with so many conveniences that we take for granted each and every day. Where would we be without these people who saw a brighter future with electricity? ☀

We would like to hear from you if you remember what it was like before the lights came on or the day your family first received electricity. We plan to publish some of these stories in Penn Lines, so let us know what it was like to live without electricity and how you felt when the lights came on.

If you are interested in sharing your story, call Brawna at 814-766-3221 or 800-270-3177, extension 4602, Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

KIDZcorner

UNPLUG THE ELECTRONICS, PLUG IN WITH YOUR FAMILY



The average American child spends 5 to 7 hours per day on a computer, mobile phone or other mobile device.¹



Kids who have more screen time and less time outside have narrower blood vessels in their eyes, which has been linked to cardiovascular disease in adulthood.³



For every hour playing video games, children are 50% more likely to experience pain in their fingers and wrists.



84% of 18-24 year-olds report having back pain resulting from looking down at screens.²



Over 60% of obese children report watching more than 2 hours of television each day.

Here are 3 ways to trade screen time for healthful family time:

1 Cook together

Children who eat 3 or more family meals a week are 12% less likely to be overweight and 24% more likely to eat healthy foods than those who don't.³

2 Unwind at the end of the day

Unplugging at least 15 to 30 minutes before bed has been shown to help everyone in the family sleep better.^{4,5}

3 Read a book

Reduce your stress by up to 68% when you pick up a book.⁶ Choose a book the whole family might enjoy and discuss it over dinner or on the way to school.

SOURCES:

1. "Screen time and children." Medline Plus
2. "'Tech Neck' and other Tech Troubles." WebMD
3. "This Is Your Teen On Screens." Huffington Post
4. "Unplug Before Bed." Bastyr University
5. "Power Down for Better Sleep." WebMD
6. "Reading For Stress Relief." University of Minnesota