

FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER / CEO

Safe, affordable and reliable energy

New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday
7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

EMERGENCY OUTAGE NUMBER

814/766-3221
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Rick L. Eichelberger
General Manager & CEO

THE cooperative mission is to provide safe, affordable and reliable electricity to the members. So how did we do in 2013? A quick answer is we did quite well. There were limited weather events, very few equipment failures, and the poles and wires held together nicely. We actually experienced the best service reliability year of the past 25 years

and perhaps of all time.

We had our share of windy weather, snowy conditions and ice build-up on trees and wires, but line upgrades over the years allowed our lines to hold up. No weather event was severe enough to cause major power line damage or lengthy outages in 2013. We have experienced exceptional reliability for 15 consecutive years due to annual pole and wire replacement projects throughout the system. Additionally, our right-of-way trimming and removal of trees contributes to the reliability.

This does not mean the system is 100 percent storm-proof. If ice accumulation would occur for several days or three feet of heavy, wet snow should appear, we will probably have major damage with lengthy outages. The system is built and maintained to handle some nasty weather events, but there is always the possibility of an extreme event.

A well-maintained and reliable power line means linemen are not called to work after hours as often. It means trucks are driven fewer miles and won't need to be replaced as often. Overtime

hours have been cut 50 percent from the levels they were 10 years ago. Truck mileage has been reduced 15 percent over the past 15 years. These are direct savings to every member.

Safe, affordable and reliable electric service is something that is worked on every day. The last two decades of line maintenance work has made the system very dependable. The lines are safer for the public and for the linemen because of these efforts.

There is no way the cooperative can promise the power will never go off. With over 400 miles of power lines owned and maintained by New Enterprise Rural Electric, automobile accidents, equipment failures, trees falling onto the lines, and all kinds of severe weather events make that impossible. What can be done is to continue making every effort to properly maintain the lines to handle most weather events.

Endless efforts go into having a sound electric distribution system, but we still rely on other utilities that are responsible for shipping the power into our areas over transmission lines. Regulators have forced them to do a much better job of maintaining these lines, too. Dependable transmission is critical to having a reliable power supply, and recent efforts have strengthened the delivery of power.

Each year, budgets are developed to balance the work necessary to maintain a safe and sound electric distribution system and have the revenue to keep it sound. The reliability in 2013 was probably the best ever, but that doesn't mean we won't strive to match that same mark. 

Warning: don't bake all bulbs

OVEN LIGHTS are handy. Curious if a casserole's ready? Flip the switch; no need to open the oven and release heat to get a baking update. But be careful when replacing this little light. Never put a bulb in the oven that's not built for high heat.

Compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) use less energy than classic incandescent bulbs, but they're not safe in extreme temperatures. Most lighting labels designate safe temperatures, but warnings may be in fine print. Need to replace your oven light? Look for appliance lightbulbs. Found in most area hardware stores, appliance stores, or places like Home Depot and Lowe's, these bulbs are designed for extreme temperatures in ovens and refrigerators. The hardy bulbs are here to stay; 40-watt appliance bulbs are exempt from federal lighting efficiency standards.

Why won't CFLs work? Instead of heating a filament until white-hot to produce light like an incandescent bulb, a fluorescent lamp contains a gas that produces (UV) ultraviolet light when excited by electricity. The UV light and the white coating inside the bulb result in visible light. Since CFLs



EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, CO

don't use heat to create light, they are 75 percent more energy efficient. But the technology that cuts energy use doesn't stand a chance in an oven's 400-plus degree heat.

CFLs are good for the pocketbook but not perfect in every situation. Keep these tips in mind:

- 1. Don't dim unless it's dimmable.** Buy a specifically designed CFL for a dimmer switch application.
- 2. Don't flip too fast.** CFLs work best if they are left on for more than 15 minutes each time they are turned on. Older bulbs take 30 seconds to three minutes to reach efficient operation. Frequently switching them on and off shortens bulb life. Newer CFLs feature an "instant-on" capability; look for that on the lighting

CFL MELTDOWN: A co-op member scraped this melted CFL bulb off the side of his oven. Replacing general use lightbulbs with efficient CFLs or LEDs saves energy, but not every bulb works under extreme temperatures.

label if you expect frequent flipping.

3. Give them air. CFLs may be used in enclosed fixtures as long as the enclosed fixture is not recessed. Totally enclosed, recessed fixtures create temperatures too high for CFLs.

4. Protect CFLs outside. Look at the package or bulb for temperature restrictions before using a CFL outdoors.

5. Don't shake. Don't use CFLs in vibrating environments such as a ceiling fan or garage door opener.

6. Do the twist. Always screw and unscrew the lamp by its base. Never forcefully twist the CFL into a light socket by the glass tubes.

To learn more about using and recycling CFLs, visit www.epa.gov/cfl.

Source: Empire Electric Association, U.S. Department of Energy



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Fighting winter chills? A crackling fire in the hearth warms the house, but don't let it heat up your electric bill. To cool energy costs, keep the fireplace damper closed when not in use. Caulk around the fireplace hearth. Double up on wood-earned warmth by lowering the thermostat setting to between 50 degrees and 55 degrees Fahrenheit.

Learn more at www.energysaver.gov.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

February calendar

FEBRUARY 27 - Install service load limiters on accounts with past due balances (the last day to contact Brawna at extension 224 to make payment arrangements is Feb. 25)

FEBRUARY 28 - Regular payment due date.

Earn cash by using your Co-op Connections Card

Earn cash back from online purchases with your New Enterprise Rural Electric Co-op Connections Card.

The days of long checkout lines and crazy parking lots are a thing of the past



as more and more people are shopping online. Your Co-op Connections Card

now has an added benefit that gives New Enterprise REC members cash back when online purchases are made from any of more than 5,000 of your favorite stores.

With Co-op Connections' Cash Back Mall, you can earn cash back on purchases of more than 300 million products. To start earning your cash back, visit www.newenterpriserec.com, click on the Co-op Connections Card and then click on Cash Back Mall.

By clicking the "Download Now" button and following the instructions, a free shopping assistant tool bar will appear at the top of your internet browser. This tool bar will keep track of the cash back you have earned. As you make online purchases at Best Buy, Wal-Mart, Target, the Apple Store and other big name retailers, watch the money in your account pile up. From fishing and outdoor gear to clothing and big screen TVs, it all adds up.

When setting up your account, you choose how you would like to receive your cash back, whether it is directly deposited into your account or is a printed check mailed to your address. You can also decide at what dollar amount you would like to receive your cash (\$15, \$25, \$50).

Whether you are buying gifts for loved ones, booking a trip or treating yourself, Cash Back Mall can put money back in your pocket. It's just another member benefit brought to you by New Enterprise REC. 

How to pay your electric bill?

Check out the following options to pay your bill with New Enterprise REC:

Sign up for Auto Pay and never worry about paying late. You can have your payment automatically deducted from your checking/savings account or charged to a credit/debit card each month on the 20th. Please call the office to receive a form for this option or indicate on the reverse side of your payment stub.

- ▶ Pay by phone with a checking/savings account or charge to credit/debit card at no additional charge.
- ▶ Go to our website, www.newenterpriserec.com, and pay by check/savings account or charge to credit/debit card at no additional charge.
- ▶ Stop at the office and pay in person. If you arrive after business hours, use the night deposit box located beside the front doors. Envelopes are provided for your use.
- ▶ Send by postal mail. However, please allow five to seven business days for your payment to arrive at the office. Payments must be received by the due date as we do not go by the date stamped on the envelope.

Make sure all payments are made on or before the due date listed on your bill. Generally the due date is the 28th of each month. However, if the 28th falls on a holiday or weekend, payment is due the business day prior to the 28th. Always look at your bill to confirm the day.

During 2013, the majority of payments – 53 percent – were received by mail, with Auto-Pay at 13 percent; phone and website at 19 percent; dropoffs during business hours at 11 percent, and the night deposit at 4 percent.

Budget Billing

Is there a certain time of the year that your electricity use is higher than another? If so, you may want to take advantage of the Budget Billing option. This will balance your payment so it is more consistent each month. The computer will look at your previous 12 months' of use, average it and round it up to the nearest \$10. Your budget amount may vary from time to time depending on the 12 months of use.

If you would like more information or to sign up for the Budget Billing option, please call the office. Once you are on Budget Billing, please understand that

amount must be paid on or before the date the payment is due. If you are late and are charged a penalty twice within a six-month period, you will be removed from Budget Billing. At that time, your total account balance will be due. To avoid being late, you may want to consider signing up for the Auto-Pay program.

Sales tax

Pennsylvania Exemption Sales Tax forms will be mailed out during the next few months. If you are paying sales tax, please contact the office to obtain a form. Not all accounts receive a form in the same year as others.

KIDZCORNER

Plugged-in kids

Website offers fun ways to 'switch on' youth to energy efficiency

BY MEGAN MCKOY-NOE

Getting children excited about energy efficiency may seem hard – for some parents, it's enough of a challenge to get them to do chores. But a website has been designed with young energy savers in mind.

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives, the brand "ID" of the nation's not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, offers Kids Energy Zone (www.kidsenergyzone.com) featuring a spunky energy efficiency mascot, CFL Charlie. The site is designed to teach children in kindergarten through fifth grade how to be Super Energy Savers in their homes. The Kids Energy Zone also includes interactive games, videos, activity sheets and surprises.

"The website is all about engagement," explains Ruben Musca, senior manager of advertising and marketing for Touchstone Energy. "This is a way for parents to interact with children so the family can focus on energy efficiency together, and help everyone develop energy efficient habits that will last a lifetime. Through fun activities, students and their parents learn about energy, electrical safety, and energy savings."

For example, Lights Out! – an energy-saving game in the Kids Energy Zone – challenges kids to speed through a virtual house, replacing traditional incandescent lightbulbs with energy efficient compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) and turning off lights and appliances as fast as possible. The less energy a player uses by the time everything's off, the better the score.

