

New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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814-766-3221
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From the General Manager/CEO



2020: The road ahead

By Mark Morrison

AS WE close the books on 2019 and start a new chapter in 2020, I am happy to report some of the progress we have made over the past year and chat a bit about our plans for the upcoming year.

2019 was a busy year for the cooperative lineworkers. Our work plan sets lofty goals for pole replacements and system maintenance each year, ensuring that we are doing what is necessary to keep the lights on. While the initial focus was simply on replacing aging and end-of-life pole assets, the cooperative was able to relocate a few pieces of line from undesirable locations to areas where truck access is now a possibility for power restoration. That projected work has been completed with pole replacements and line relocations in the Hickory Bottom, Cypher, Plank Road and Salemville areas. The same holds true for 2020 as line improvements are slated for the Waterfall and Saltillo areas. We will also be surveying equipment and design of our substations and delivery points in preparation for upcoming improvements.

One of the biggest operational expenses for the cooperative is right-of-way and vegetation management. Each year, New Enterprise lineworkers and contractors perform maintenance on upward of 70 miles of line. Our crews make their way around the system every six years for scheduled work. Our plan also includes provisions for hot spots or areas that pose an immediate

threat to safety and reliability. In 2019, work was completed in the Cypher, Tatesville and Sherman's Valley area. Right-of-way work is scheduled for the Bakers Summit, Jack's Corner and Liberty areas for the upcoming year. As always, any time you are concerned a tree may contact the line, let us know and cooperative personnel will come out and evaluate a course of action.

Over the past two years, the cooperative has been replacing meters and aging metering technology. We will continue that plan this coming year and should have close to a third of all meters changed out by the end of the year. The new metering system has the potential to notify us of an outage or voltage problem, thus sometimes preventing possible outages or equipment failures. The data provided also helps us in planning system upgrades and using cooperative dollars most efficiently.

You may have noticed your electric bill being a little less than normal last month. In 2019, the cooperative continued its plan set forth by the board of directors and carried out by management to retire capital credits to the membership. This is just one of the advantages of being a member of an electric cooperative. Our 2020 budget includes the continuation of the retirements of capital credits slated for distribution with the December billing cycle. To date, the capital credits plan has retired nearly \$1.4 million back to the members. ☀

Did you know...

- ▶ Bills are sent out the first part of every month. They should arrive before the 10th of the month
- ▶ Payment arrangements can be made by calling Brawna at extension 4602 or by emailing her at bsell@newenterpriserec.com

Ways to pay

- ▶ At the co-op office
- ▶ At our two night deposit boxes — one is located beside the front entrance doors and the other is near the driveway entrance
- ▶ By mail
- ▶ With Auto Pay — your bill is deducted from your checking or savings account or charged to your credit/debit card on the 20th of each month
- ▶ MasterCard, Visa and Discover cards are accepted
- ▶ On our website newenterpriserec.com by credit/debit card or by check
- ▶ By phone with credit/debit card or checking account
- ▶ With your smartphone or tablet — go to your Apple Store or Google Play to download SmartHub, a free app

Online banking payments

- ▶ When you use your bank's website to pay your electric bill, it may not be paid to New Enterprise REC until after the due date. These bank payments are mailed to us. 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, newenterpriserec.com? You can pay your bill using a checking account or MasterCard, Visa, or Discover card. Your payment is posted to your account within a few minutes, avoiding mail deliveries and unnecessary penalties
- ▶ You can 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
- ▶ There are no fees charged for us to accept your payment

When to pay

- ▶ The due date is the 23rd of the month. If the 23rd falls on a weekend or holiday, the due date is the business day after the 23rd. **Always look at your bill to confirm the due date**
- ▶ Yard lights can be rented from the cooperative at \$8.50 per month. All maintenance work is done by co-op employees without any additional charge. Just contact the office if your light isn't working properly

Family in Need Fund

The Family in Need Fund is a program that helps families in need of hardship assistance. Consumer-members volunteering for this round-up program agree to have their monthly bill rounded up to the nearest dollar, with the extra change going to the Family in Need Fund. A one-time payment can also be made. Let us know you want the amount to go to Family in Need. This is a tax-deductible program that assists New Enterprise REC consumer-members ONLY.

Sales tax

New Enterprise REC is required by the state of Pennsylvania to charge sales tax on any meter not having a *Pennsylvania Sales Tax Blanket Exemption Certificate*.

These certificates are updated every three years. Should a certificate not come back, sales tax is charged to your account. So it is very important to return these certificates.

If you get a form and your account is a business, write "taxable" on your certificate and return it.

Look at this month's bill. Is sales tax being charged? Call the office to have a *Pennsylvania Sales Tax Blanket Exemption Certificate* sent to you.

Life support

For some consumer-members, electric service is more than a con-

venience; it is a necessity. New Enterprise REC realizes some homes are equipped with life-sustaining medical equipment that requires a reliable source of power. Our commitment to you is to provide electric service safely and with as few interruptions as possible.

Unfortunately, outages occur due to unpredictable acts such as severe weather, animal interference, broken tree limbs, fire or accidents. If your health or the health of someone in your household depends on electricity, we offer the following suggestions and strongly encourage you to implement them:

- ▶ Obtain a back-up source of power recommended by the manufacturer of your equipment you have in your home. For example, battery back-ups or standby generators can provide you with electric power if service from the cooperative is interrupted
- ▶ Talk with relatives or friends today and devise a plan whereby the individual who relies on this equipment will have somewhere to stay in the event of a power outage
- ▶ Let Bobbi at our office know of the situation. Her phone number is 814-766-3221 or 800-270-3177, extension 4606. She will mail you a form to be completed by your physician
- ▶ By having this form on file, your account will be marked as having life-sustaining equipment. Even though your account is marked, this does not guarantee uninterrupted electric service, nor does it guarantee immediate attention to your individual service during an outage

Unauthorized pole attachments

Electric poles are intended to only have equipment used to provide electric to our consumer-members. Unfortunately, that isn't always the case. Below are some examples of things that SHOULD NOT be on an electric pole:

- ▶ Satellite dishes
- ▶ Birdhouses, flower boxes or basketball hoops
- ▶ Deer stands
- ▶ 911 address signs
- ▶ Signs
- ▶ Nails, staples or tacks

The above are just a few examples of things that we have seen on poles. Should these items be found on a pole, they will be removed. The cost of removing the items will be charged to the consumer-member.

What to do in case of an outage

- ▶ Check your fuses or breakers
- ▶ Check with your neighbors to see if they have power
- ▶ Call New Enterprise REC at 814-766-3221 or 800-270-3177. During business hours, press 3 to report an outage. After hours, listen to the message for instructions of leaving a message
- ▶ Have the following information ready: account name, service location, contact telephone number for a return call and time the power went out
- ▶ Let the co-op know if you saw any problems such as a broken pole, lines down, trees or limbs on the electric lines, etc.

Budget Billing

What is Budget Billing? With Budget Billing, the computer looks back at your past 12 months of electricity use, averages it and rounds to the nearest \$10. This is done each month to keep your budget amount in line. 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

Items on utility poles are dangerous, illegal

Imagine walking up wooden steps to your bedroom. You have only gone one step and you feel sharp pieces of metal poking into your bare foot. As you continue going, you get a painful sensation with each step. Nails, staples and tacks have been pounded into your steps. Along with these nails, staples and tacks, pieces of paper and cardboard are attached, making each step even more dangerous. Now who would have done this? This could cause you to slip or fall to your death.

Now this example isn't realistic, but nails, staples and tacks in utility poles are. As lineworkers are climbing a pole, they may be thinking, "Who would have tacked all these signs to this pole" or "How am I to get to the top of the pole with a satellite dishes and birdhouse in the way?" Signs aren't the only unwanted items found on an electric pole. Over the years, we have found satellite dishes, basketball hoops, birdhouses, flower boxes, flags, mailboxes, tree stands, electric fence, yard sale and 911 signs, and even Christmas lights on poles. So, what is wrong with attaching these items on the electric poles?

These items create a dangerous hazard for lineworkers. Lineworkers are required to wear special rubber gloves to protect themselves. When they are climbing these poles with nails, staples

or other items, the gloves could be punctured or torn. When they are punctured or torn, the gloves cannot do their job and protect the lineworkers from injury or death. Unwanted items on poles also can cause a lineworker to slip when his hooks hit a nail or staple. The hook may not go into the pole like it was designed. This could cause the lineworker to fall or slide down the pole.

Should we find any of items on our poles, they will be removed. The cost to remove these items will be billed to the consumer-member responsible.

New Enterprise REC's policy is that any pole having co-op-owned wire attached is owned by the co-op regardless of who installed the pole. A state law forbids nails, staples or any other item that would be a hazard to the lineworkers to be placed in or on the pole. Cable and/or telephone companies have a contract with New Enterprise REC to attach their wires to our poles.

So, the next time you want to attach something to a utility pole, think twice. A lineworker is putting his life in danger each day so you can have the convenience of electricity. Not only are you endangering a person's life, you are breaking the law every time you attach anything to a utility pole.

Three DIY efficiency projects to tackle this year

A NEW YEAR brings new opportunities to save energy — and money. You may think energy efficiency upgrades require a great deal of time and expense, but that's not always the case.

If you're interested in making your home more efficient but don't want to break the bank, there are several do-it-yourself (DIY) projects you can tackle to increase energy savings. Let's look at three inexpensive efficiency upgrades that can help you save energy throughout the year.

Trim dryer vent

Level of difficulty: easy. Supplies needed: tin snips, gloves, measuring tape and masking tape. Estimated cost: about \$25 depending on the supplies you have.

If your dryer vent hose is too long, your dryer is working harder than it has to, using more energy than necessary. The vent hose should be long enough for you to pull the dryer out a couple feet from the wall, but the shape of the hose should form a line — it should not have a lot of slack, with twists and curves. A shorter, unobstructed vent hose increases the efficiency of your dryer, dries clothing faster and reduces lint buildup, which can create potential fire hazards.

Simply measure, mark, and trim the hose to the desired length, then reattach the hose to your dryer and exterior vent. If you're unsure about the hose length, go to YouTube.com for a quick video tutorial.

Seal air leaks

Level of difficulty: moderate. Supplies needed: caulk and caulk gun, weather stripping, gloves, putty knife, paper towels. Estimated cost: \$25 to \$50 depending on the materials you purchase.

Sealing air leaks in your home can help you save 10% to 20% on heating and cooling bills. Apply caulk around windows, doors, electrical wiring and plumbing to seal in conditioned air.

You should also weather strip exterior doors, which can keep out drafts and help you control energy costs. Types of caulking and weather-stripping materials vary, but ask your local hardware or home store for assistance if you're unsure about the supplies you need. For more information, the Department of Energy provides step-by-step instructions for caulking and weather stripping at <https://bit.ly/2Kesu6W>.

Insulate attic stairs opening

Level of difficulty: moderate. Supplies

needed (if you build the box yourself): rigid foam board, faced blanket insulation, tape for foam board, measuring tape, utility knife, caulk and caulk gun, plywood. Estimated cost: \$50 to \$100.

A properly insulated attic is one of the best ways to optimize energy savings and comfort in your home, but many homeowners don't consider insulating the attic stairs or the opening to your attic space. Even a well-insulated attic can leak air through the stair opening, but luckily, there's an easy fix.

An insulated cover box can seal and insulate the attic stairs opening. You can build your own insulated cover box or purchase a pre-built box or kit from a local home improvement store like Home Depot or Lowe's for about \$60. If you decide to build your own, check out these step-by-step instructions from the Department of Energy at <https://bit.ly/36YNCYQ>. It should also be noted, if your attic opening is in a garage that you do not heat and cool, this upgrade will not be as effective.

Saving energy doesn't have to be hard. With a little time and effort, you can maximize energy savings and increase the comfort of your home. 🌞

Youth Tour 2020

YOUTH TOUR is an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., June 21-26, 2020. It is a chance for young adults to learn more about what a cooperative is, bond with



fellow students, meet elected officials and experience the sights of our nation's capital. Every year, New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative, along with electric cooperatives across

the country, sponsors high school juniors to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

While in Washington, students may visit sites such as Arlington National Cemetery, the Iwo Jima Sunset Parade, the National Zoo, the Holocaust Museum, and may enjoy a ride down the Potomac. Youth Tour is so much more than a sightseeing trip. Students have repeatedly shared that this experience has helped them grow into successful professionals. It has also benefited our local communities. Youth Tour participants return home with a deeper understanding and skillset of what it takes to be leader, and as a result, they put these skills to use right here in our community. Without a doubt, Youth Tour has grown into an invaluable program that gives young Americans an experience that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

Interested students whose parents or guardians are members of New Enterprise REC can complete an application found on our website, with your school guidance counselor, or at the co-op office. A short video needs to be produced or a short essay written on the topic: "What are the benefits of an experience such as Youth Tour for a high school junior?" Lastly, each student will participate in an interview at the cooperative office usually held in May.

Youth Leadership Council

During Youth Tour, each student will have an opportunity to be selected to represent Pennsylvania on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Youth Leadership Council (YLC). Selected students will return to Washington, D.C., for the YLC Conference July 25-29, 2020. While attending the conference, each person will gain a broad-

er understanding of electric cooperatives and the energy industry. YLC members meet with NRECA leaders and Youth Tour alumni who work in Washington, D.C., and on Capitol Hill. Each student will deliver a 5-7-minute speech to their peers about what inspired them during the Youth Tour. A YLC National Spokesperson will be selected to address the membership at the NRECA Annual Meeting and to address the Youth Tour delegates the following year.

On Feb. 20- 24, 2021, YLC members will be flying to San Diego, Calif., to attend the NRECA Annual Meeting. YLC members will represent their home states on stage plus have a hands-on experience with virtually every



facet of the meeting, including the resolutions process and helping co-op members communicate with their legislators.

The cost of travel, meals and housing for YLC members is covered by NRECA, New Enterprise REC and the Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association. The only cost to students would be for drinks, snacks, souvenirs, etc.

Being a member of YLC offers a unique opportunity to build leadership and public speaking skills, enhance knowledge of the cooperative form of business, and build lifelong friendships with other student leaders from across the country.

Scholarships for Youth Tour participants

Jody Loudenslager Memorial Scholarship

Jody Loudenslager, a 1995 Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association (PREA) Youth Tour student from Trout Run, Pa., was among the 230 passengers killed July 17, 1996, when TWA Flight 800 exploded shortly after take-off from New York. Since Jody was committed to higher education, the scholarship was created to honor her and help Youth Tour participants with college costs.

This scholarship is available to any col-

lege-bound or college student who participated in the PREA Youth Tour. Applicants need to furnish necessary aptitude test scores and financial need information. To get more information and request an application by email, go to <https://www.prea.com/jody-loudenslager-memorial-scholarship>.

Glenn English Scholarship

The Glenn English National Cooperative Leadership Foundation encourages educational advancement by awarding high education scholarships to eligible students who have shown a commitment to the Seven Cooperative Principles.

Applicants must be U.S. citizens who have participated in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and have completed their freshman year of college or received academic credits equal to at least one year of college. To learn more about this scholarship go to <https://www.electric.coop/our-organization/youth-programs/scholarships>.

Other scholarships are available for students who did not participate in Youth Tour. Please contact our office for more details.

Application requirements

Youth Tour is open to any high school junior whose parents or guardians are consumer-members of New Enterprise REC. They need to attend Forbes Road, Northern Bedford or Tussey Mountain schools. Also, students who are home schooled or attend a private school are welcome to apply.

Applicants are required to write an essay or produce a video on "What are the benefits of an experience such as Youth Tour for a high school junior?"

Applications along with the essay or video need to be in New Enterprise REC's office on or before Feb. 7, 2020.

For more information

You can print an application from our website or Facebook page. Applications are also available from your guidance counselor or by stopping at our office Monday – Friday 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. ☀

