

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



An open invitation

By Mark Morrison

DID YOU know that every year your cooperative conducts an annual meeting of the membership? The purpose is to hold the election for the board of directors, share important financial information, occasionally vote on other matters, such as changes to the bylaws, and of course, give away great door prizes!

The New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) Annual Meeting is a community gathering, where neighbors can meet new neighbors as well as catch up with friends they haven't seen in a while. As our lives get busier and more of our interactions with others are online, the annual meeting is a great opportunity to witness firsthand some of the good things your cooperative is doing in the communities we serve. Very few organizations are uniquely positioned like New Enterprise REC to bring together all consumer-members of our local communities.

While rural Americans probably do a better job of staying connected to our neighbors, it is not something we should take for granted. The simple act of smiling, saying hello and shaking someone's hand truly lifts both parties.

New Enterprise REC's Annual Meeting is designed to take care of the important business of your co-op and the equally important business of building a real sense of community. All cooperatives serve both an economic and social purpose. While safe, reliable and affordable electric power is crucial to our mission, improving the quality

of life for all consumer-members is at the core of what we do every day.

Your electric cooperative was incorporated in 1938, and the first annual meeting was held June 4, 1940. An excerpt from the minutes of that meeting follows: "The annual meeting of the New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc., was held in the Loysburg Grange Hall, June 4, 1940. A supper was served by the grange beginning at 5 o'clock. At 8 o'clock, the meeting was called to order by the president, E.W. Van Horn. Mr. Van Horn gave a review of the work done by the cooperative up to date."

The 2022 annual meeting is a few months away, but we urge you to consider marking the date on your calendar and attending this year. In the upcoming months, you will see information in a separate mailing to consumer-members as well as within future *Penn Lines*. If you have not attended the annual meeting in the past or if it has been a few years, we urge you to take the time to be with your fellow co-op consumer-members.

New Enterprise REC is connected to you by more than just power lines. We are your neighbors, and we look forward to seeing you at your annual meeting.

This year's annual meeting is Thursday, June 9. Please join us for the annual meeting and enjoy the fellowship with friends, employees, directors, and staff of your electric cooperative. See you there! 🌟

Are portable space heaters efficient for my home?

SMALL space heaters are meant to do exactly as their name says: Heat a small space. But, unfortunately, many people use portable space heaters to heat their entire home, which can take a toll on your energy bills. The truth is, whether you should use space heaters really depends on your home's efficiency and energy needs.

If you're using a space heater to compensate for problems in your home, like inadequate insulation, drafty windows and exterior doors, or an inefficient heating system, space heaters are not a practical solution. Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home. If you're on a tight budget, caulking and weatherstripping around windows and exterior doors is a low-cost, easy way to save energy. Depending on the size of your home, adding insulation can be a great next step. Loose fill insulation typically costs \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot. Taking these proactive energy-saving measures, rather than relying on space heaters for supplemental warmth, can reduce your heating and cooling bills for years to come.

Perhaps your home is energy efficient but you're cold-natured and want a specific room to be cozier than



the rest. In this case, a space heater may work for your needs. A good comparison is ceiling fans. We use ceiling fans in the summer to cool people, not rooms. A space heater can be used in a similar way during winter months. Only use a space heater in small spaces that you're occupying and, if possible, try to shut off other rooms to contain the warmth provided by the space heater. If you decide to use a space heater to heat a small area

TIPS TO DITCH THE SPACE HEATER

Space heaters are energy hogs, and older models can be extremely dangerous. This winter, ditch the space heater and try these alternative solutions to stay cozy.

- Use an electric blanket to keep warm during the night.
- Caulk and weatherstrip around all windows and doors to prevent heat loss.
- Consider adding insulation to your attic and around duct work.



in your home, make sure the heater is properly sized for the space; most heaters include a general sizing table.

A word about safety: The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates more than 25,000 residential fires are associated with the use of space heaters every year, resulting in more than 300 deaths. If you must use a space heater, purchase a newer model that includes the most current safety features and make sure it carries the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label. Choose a heater that can be controlled with a thermostat to avoid energy waste and overheating. Also, place the heater on a level surface away from foot traffic when in use. Always keep children and pets away from space heaters.

Consider alternative ways to stay warm, too, including extra layers of clothing or UL-approved electric blankets. If you have hardwood or tile floors, lay down area rugs to provide additional insulation (and appeal!) and maintain warmth.

We know it's cold out there, but remember that in addition to safety concerns, space heaters can greatly increase your energy bills if used improperly. ❄️

Disconnecting for nonpayment

Are you having trouble paying your electric bill? If so, please call our office at 814-766-3221 or 800-270-3177 to set up a payment agreement. You don't have to have a disconnection notice to set up an agreement. If you are unable to pay one month's bill, call right away.

Once a disconnect notice is mailed, a payment of the total due needs to be made or an agreement made. If not, your meter will be disconnected. Disconnecting for nonpayment is one job that is not very popular. No employee enjoys shutting a meter off to leave a family in the dark.

Don't delay calling our office to make an agreement once you receive a disconnect notice. A signed agreement needs to be on file before the disconnection date.

Once an agreement is made, the amounts must be paid as stated in the agreement. Any change in the agreement amounts or dates paid will make the agreement void. Disconnection may occur after an agreement is broken.

Should agreements be broken twice, no further agreements will be allowed.

If you could use some help paying your electric or heating fuel bill, call your county energy assistance program.

Five ways to save energy when working from home

TODAY, more Americans are working from home than ever before. More time spent at home means more energy used throughout the day.

If you're punching the clock from home, there are small steps you can take to reduce your energy use and save on electric bills. Here are five easy ways to save energy when working from home:

1. Use a smart power strip.

Plugging in your most-used devices, like computers, monitors and routers, to a smart power strip ensures these devices aren't drawing power when they're not in use. Smart power strips also give you the option to select which devices should stay in "always-on" mode.

2. Unplug your least-used equipment. If your home office includes equipment, such as printers

and scanners, you're probably not using these electronics every day. In this case, go ahead and unplug your least-used electronics and devices since many of these draw energy even when they're not being used.

3. Choose Energy Star®-certified office equipment. If you're looking to purchase new equipment for your workspace, look for the Energy Star label to ensure you're getting the most energy efficient features. Computers, monitors, imaging equipment, and other office electronics that receive the Energy Star rating include power-management features that make saving energy easy, and most are designed to run cooler and last longer.

4. Flip the switch and use natural light instead. It's still chilly out there, so take advantage of natural light and additional warmth from the sun.

When you're working during the day, open blinds, curtains, and other window coverings to let natural light in — and don't forget to turn off the lights to reduce energy use!

5. Lower the thermostat. Home heating makes up a significant portion of your energy bills. Turn the thermostat down a couple degrees during the day to reduce energy use and save money. The Department of Energy recommends setting the thermostat to 68 degrees or cooler during winter months. You're more likely to stay focused and alert when it's cooler in your home, so even more reason to mind the thermostat.

Working from home doesn't have to take a toll on your energy bills, and whether you're working remotely or not, these practical tips can help everyone reduce their energy use. ❁

Energy assistance

THE LOW INCOME Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is designed to help low-income families and individuals pay a portion of their heating bills during the heating season.

- ▶ You don't have to own your home.
- ▶ You must re-apply each year.
- ▶ You don't have to be on public assistance.
- ▶ You don't need an unpaid bill.

To apply for this program, go to compass.state.pa.us or call your county assistance office:

Bedford County – 800-542-8584 or 814-623-6127

Fulton County – 800-222-8563 or 717-485-3151

Huntingdon County – 800-237-7674 or 814-643-1170. ❁



HAVING A HARD TIME PAYING WINTER HEATING BILLS?
Assistance is available. Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program is now open. Call your county assistance office for more details.
DON'T BE LEFT OUT IN THE COLD THIS WINTER.

Dining in the dark

Food safety tips during a power outage

Storm-induced power outages can take you by surprise. If you've lost power and have a refrigerator full of food, make sure time and temperatures are on your side.

If your home's power is interrupted for two hours or less, losing perishable foods shouldn't be a concern. When an outage is prolonged, it's time to decide when to save and when to toss food away.

A digital, quick-response thermometer can be one of the most useful tools you can wield in your battle to preserve food. The gadget checks the internal temperature of food, ensuring items are cold enough to eat safely.

Use these food safety tips to help you minimize food loss and reduce the risk of foodborne illness:

Refrigerator food

- ▶ Keep refrigerator doors closed as much as possible. An unopened refrigerator keeps food cold for about four hours.
- ▶ If food (especially meat, poultry, fish, and eggs) has been exposed to temperatures above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for two or more hours or has an unusual odor, texture, or color, get rid of it. Remember the American Red Cross food safety rule: "When in doubt, throw it out."
- ▶ Never taste food to determine its safety.
- ▶ Use perishable foods first, then frozen food.
- ▶ To keep perishable food cold, place it in a refrigerator or cooler and cover with ice.

Frozen food

- ▶ A full freezer stays colder longer. Freeze containers of water to help keep food cold in the freezer. If your water supply runs out, melting ice can supply drinking water.
- ▶ If you keep the door closed, a full freezer keeps the temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full).
- ▶ If food in the freezer is colder than 40 degrees Fahrenheit, is partially thawed and has ice crystals on it, you can safely refreeze it.
- ▶ Always discard frozen food items that may have come in contact with raw meat juices.

Find more tips at FoodSafety.gov.

Home safe home

THE U.S. Fire Administration reports faulty home electrical wiring causes 26,000 residential fires a year, hundreds of deaths and thousands of injuries. Unfortunately, electrical hazards often go unaddressed until it is too late. New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative has the following tips to help you find and correct hazards that may be lurking around the home:


- ▶ Check electrical outlets for loose-fitting plugs that can cause shocks or start fires. Replace missing or broken wall plates so the inner wiring components are not exposed.
- ▶ If you have young children, use safety covers on unused outlets. Consider installing tamper-resistant receptacles with a built-in shutter system that prevents hairpins and other small objects from being inserted into the outlet.
- ▶ Check the cords of the appliances in your home as well as the plugs and connectors. Make sure they are not frayed, cracked, or damaged, placed under rugs or carpets, resting on furniture, or in high traffic areas. Do not nail or staple cords to walls, floors, or any other objects.
- ▶ Extension cords should be used on a temporary basis only. They are not a permanent wiring solution. Have additional outlets installed where you need them. If you are using extension cords, make sure they have safety closures to protect young children from shocks or mouth burns.
- ▶ Never use an indoor extension cord for outdoor use. Use an extension cord specifically for outdoors; they are heavier and less likely to be damaged.
- ▶ Check your electric panel to make sure the breakers and fuses are properly rated for the circuit they are protecting. Have a qualified electrician identify and label the correct size to be used if you are unsure. When replacing a fuse, use the same size.
- ▶ Check lightbulbs and appliances to make sure the wattage matches



fixture requirements. Do not replace bulbs with higher wattage than recommended. The bulb should be securely screwed in to prevent overheating.

- ▶ If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker, or gives you an electrical shock, immediately unplug, repair, or replace it.
- ▶ Check for or install ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). A GFCI is an inexpensive electrical device that shuts off power instantly if there is a problem. GFCIs should be installed in all “wet” areas of the home, such as bathrooms, kitchens and basements.
- ▶ GFCIs should be tested monthly to ensure they are working properly. The Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates GFCIs could prevent more than two-thirds of the roughly 300 electrocutions that happen each year in the home.
- ▶ Consider installing arc-fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) on bedroom circuits and having smoke detectors in all bedrooms and in hallways within 15 feet of bedrooms. Also, there should be at least one smoke detector on every level. Carbon monoxide detectors should also be within 15 feet of each bedroom. As always, check with your local electrical inspector if you have questions or concerns.
- ▶ Inspect all outdoor connections, appliances, and tools for frayed cords, broken plugs, and cracked or broken housings. Repair or replace damaged cords and appliances. ❁

Are you wasting your money on
DIRT?



Dirty air filters cause a heating and cooling system to work harder and break down faster. That's because unfiltered dust and grime works into critical parts, creating friction that causes unnecessary wear and, eventually, failure.

How does a dirty air filter cost you?

- Reduces air flow in the home, leading to up to 15 percent higher operating costs
- Leads to costly duct cleaning or replacement
- Lowers system efficiency

To avoid these expenses, change filters monthly when your heating and cooling system's in regular use. Discuss cleaning the unit and ductwork with your heating and cooling service professional.

Learn more ways to save at www.energysavers.gov.

Source: High Performance HVAC, U.S. Department of Energy