

REA Energy Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives
serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

REA Energy Cooperative, Inc.
75 Airport Road • P.O. Box 70
Indiana, PA 15701-0070
724-349-4800 • 800-211-5667

Ebensburg District Office
127 Municipal Road
Ebensburg, PA 15931
814-472-8570

Website: www.reaenergy.com
Email: reaenergy@reaenergy.com

Staff

Barry Baker

Indiana Operations Manager

Erin Bauer

ACRE Coordinator

Shane Cribbs

Network & Systems Manager

Dave Daugherty

Safety & Right of Way Manager

Jeff Dishong

Ebensburg Operations Supervisor

Lisa Gardill

Accounting & Finance Manager

Stacy Hilliard, CCC

Communications & Marketing Manager

Local Pages Editor

Chris Masterson

Reliability Supervisor

Patrick McAndrew

Manager of Engineering

Bryon Roland

Purchasing & Facilities Manager

Brendan Short

Right-of-Way/Forestry Supervisor

Renee Spalla

Supervisor of Consumer Services

Chris Weller

Load Management Supervisor

Outages & Emergencies

1-800-332-7273

724-463-7273

Office Hours

Indiana Office: 7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Ebensburg Office:

7 - 11 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Monday - Friday

Guest Column

Safety tips that can save your life

By Stacy Hilliard, CCC

Communications & Marketing Manager

AN ELECTRIC cooperative's top priority is always to provide safe, reliable, affordable energy to their members. Your well-being and that of the larger communities we serve are of paramount concern.

May not only means spring storms and potentially severe weather, it also heralds the beginning of the celebration season for many high school students, especially seniors. Proms, graduation parties and other social gatherings are often associated with this time of year.

While we naturally focus on the sunny aspects this season brings, we also sometimes hear about preventable tragedies involving young people and car accidents. This brings me to the topic at hand: safety.

Does your teen or loved one know what to do in the event of a collision with a utility pole resulting in a downed power line? I would like to share a few safety tips I hope you never have to use. But if you do, they could save a life.

Life-saving tips

If a car collides with a utility pole, the vehicle may be charged with electricity. Anyone exiting the car could come in contact with thousands of volts of electricity from the downed line. When you step out of the car, you become part of the electricity's path to the ground and could be electrocuted.

It's critical to stay in the vehicle and tell others to do the same until emergency crews have told you it's safe to exit the car. If the vehicle is on fire or you must exit for other safety reasons, jump clear of the vehicle. Do not let

any part of your body or clothing touch the vehicle and ground at the same time. Land with your feet together and shuffle away (in small steps with your feet still together) to avoid electric shock. Keep moving away until you are at least 40 feet from the vehicle.

If you come upon a car accident involving a utility pole and downed power lines, keep your distance. A downed power line can energize the ground up to 35 feet away. Do not approach the car or scene of the accident. Tell others to stay away. While you may be concerned about injuries to those involved, the best action you can take is to alert emergency officials, who will in turn coordinate with the power provider. For the same reasons described above, never drive over a downed power line or through water touching a downed power line.

If you have a downed power line on your property as a result of a falling tree or storm, do not go near the power line. Assume the downed line is energized and dangerous. Never try to move the power line even if you think it's not energized or if you are using a non-conductive material. We recognize that you may be eager to clear your property of tree limbs or other debris near the downed line, but please wait until after an electric co-op crew or emergency officials have confirmed it is safe to do so.

Contact your local electric co-op for additional electrical safety tips or if you would like to request a safety demonstration at your school or community event. It is no accident that safety is our top priority. ⚡

2019 area meetings

By Stacy Hilliard, CCC
Communications & Marketing Manager

REA ENERGY held its yearly area meetings in March. This year, the cooperative held meetings for members residing in board District 1 at the Plumville Fire Hall. Members in District 2 attended a meeting at the Grove Hall.

Board Chairman Michael Bertolino welcomed members and gave an update on the February windstorm that caused numerous outages and downed poles.

President & CEO Chad Carrick conducted a town hall-like meeting answering members' questions from their reservation slip. Several of these questions are included in this article.

Members attending the meeting took advantage of the opportunity to look at displays of the products our for-profit subsidiary, REA Energy Services, Inc., offers. This subsidiary was formed in 1999 to help offset cooperative costs, as well as give the members an opportunity to purchase quality products at excellent prices.

When members return their reservations to attend an area meeting, they have the opportunity to include a question on the slip. These are some of the questions:

Why does the billing name need to be changed when a spouse is deceased?

In many instances, the membership of a husband and wife is only in one name. When that spouse passes away, the surviving spouse needs to put the account in their name. This is so they can get information on the account and the cooperative has a point of contact.

Who do I contact about removing trees that may be a hazard if they would fall during a storm?

Please call 724-349-4800 or 800-211-5667, and ask to speak to our right-of-way supervisor. REA Energy's trained tree contractors are experienced with removing and trimming trees to industry standards. We offer competitive and safe tree maintenance services to all members and non-members.

Why is there a monthly service charge of \$30?

The service charge has been a part of

members' bills for decades. This service charge is to cover the cost of providing electric service to our members, including the upkeep of the electrical system, such as lines, poles, meters and substations.

I am considering installing a new electrical panel at my home. How do I contact your subsidiary?

To receive a free quote on the cost of upgrading your electric panel and more information, call our subsidiary, REA Energy Services, at 724-349-4800, option 2. To learn more about all the products and services that REA Energy Services offers, visit reaservices.com.

Please explain why the switch from analog meters to smart meters? How safe are smart meters?

In 2009, REA Energy, in accordance with Act 129, began to install automated meters, which are often referred to as "smart meters." The meters that REA Energy uses allow us to read a member's meter and check on voltage, ampere, and peaking information. Our meters also help streamline our storm management process by showing which members are out of power and pinpointing outage locations. The radio frequency emitted by smart meters is well below the limits set by the Federal Communications Commission and it is below levels produced by other common household devices such as cellphones, baby monitors, satellite TVs, and microwaves.

What is the chance that REA will provide internet service?

REA Energy is always looking for ways to provide more value-added services to our members. We are currently looking to perform a feasibility study on offering broadband service to our members. Stay tuned for more information later!

Can estimated times of power restoration be posted on your power outage map?

The cooperative has an online outage viewer at reaenergy.com. Members can see the total number of outages, the number of outages per county, number of members affected and the cause, if known. The information for any estimated times of restoration are also shown on this page.

What district am I in? When I hear about elections or right-of-way, I am

curious to see if it pertains to me.

REA Energy holds elections for each directorate district every four years. In accordance with the elections, our area meetings are held in the districts that are up for election.

Why are you widening rights-of-way?

With a non-maintained right-of-way (ROW), utility lines can become entangled within brush and tree limbs. When ROWs are in this form, restoration times may increase because personnel have to spend more time looking for the outage location. There are approximately 2,600 miles of electric line to maintain in the cooperative's territory. REA Energy requires tree trimming, tree removal and herbicide treatment on a cycle basis. Currently, the cooperative has adopted a five-year vegetation management cycle to take care of all of the ROWs in our service area. Adequate trimming and spraying programs make it possible to provide reliable electric service and reduce outage time.

Why do I only have REA for electricity? Without competition, REA is free to (overcharge) its customers.

In Pennsylvania, no alternative suppliers have ever entered cooperative service territories to serve cooperative consumers, due in large part to competitive cooperative rates. Recognizing that,



MEMBER ENGAGEMENT: REA members visit displays to learn more about products the cooperative and subsidiary offer.

in 2014, the General Assembly passed legislation removing cooperatives from the retail market.

Why do our lights blink sometimes?

There are several reasons that may cause your service to blink. These include a tree on the line, failing equipment or an increase in electrical load from a commercial account. If a problem persists, please call 724-349-4800.

I want to pay my bill online. How do I set this up?

To sign up for the online member por-

tal, visit reaenergy.com and click on the link for the member portal. From there, you will be redirected to a page that contains a link to click to "Sign Up." After filling in the information at the bottom of the page and submitting valid data, your User ID is created. You can then log in using your User ID.

The board would like to invite all members to join us at our 82nd annual meeting on Thursday, Sept. 19, 2019, at the Kovalchick Convention Complex. We hope to see you there! ☀

REA Energy offices will be closed on Monday, May 27, 2019, in observance of Memorial Day. Power outages can be reported by calling 724-463-7273 or 800-332-7273.

Have you been using your Co-op Connections Card?

In 2012, REA Energy joined a nationwide alliance called Touchstone Energy, offering a value-added product to you in addition to our commitment to providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity. We are always looking for ways to provide value to our members and our community, especially during tough economic times. REA Energy's Co-op Connections Card is a money-saving tool we're proud to offer our membership. The card connects you with discounts on everything from hotel stays to prescription drugs.

A wide variety of merchants throughout our community accept the card, including Yanov's Bait and Tackle in Portage and Indian Springs Eye Associates in Indiana. Be sure to mention your card to receive your discount.

Our hope is that our local businesses participating in the Co-op Connections Card program continue to benefit from increased traffic from our members. Businesses can sign up for the program at no cost. For a complete list of all participating businesses in our area, simply log on to our website, reaenergy.com, and follow the Co-op Connections Card link.

The card also gives you access to online savings at many national retailers. You can check out these great discounts at connections.coop.

Perhaps one of the most valuable features of the Co-op Connections Card is the pharmacy discount. While it is not an insurance, the discount can mean savings of 10 to 60 percent on prescription drugs. The logo and information on the back of your card is recognized at more than 60,000 national, regional, and local pharmacies.

The pharmacy discount has been widely used by members of Touchstone Energy co-ops across the country. In fact, REA Energy members to date have saved over \$42,000; that's an average of over \$7,000 in savings per year!

Want to find out more? Log on to <https://www.mymemberportal.com/#/Login> to search for pharmacies in our area that honor the card.

As a Touchstone Energy co-op, REA Energy strives to serve our members according to four core values: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. Our Co-op Connections Card is one of the ways we live up to those values.

We're eager to answer any questions you have about the card and how to take advantage of the discounts it provides. Call us at 724-349-4800 to find out more, or log onto reaenergy.com.





May is National Electrical Safety Month

This month, we encourage all members to take extra time to plug into safety.

#ElectricalSafetyMonth



AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Right-of-way management/facility construction news

REA Energy contractors will be completing tree-trimming work in the following areas in May:

- ▶ Contractor crews from Penn Line Tree Service will be trimming the rights-of-way of the Laurel and Parkwood Substation areas, in addition to emergency maintenance areas.

Notification of work will be made using our automated phone system to members in the areas affected.

Contractors will perform all right-of-way work per REA Energy specifications. If you have any questions, call 724-349-4800, or you can view the specifications online at reaenergy.com. All crews will carry cards and have magnets on their vehicles identifying them as REA Energy contractors.

Three easy DIY projects to save energy

Winter weather can have a big impact on your energy bills, hitting your pockets a little harder than you would have liked. Now that spring is just around the corner, it's the perfect time to tackle a few do-it-yourself (DIY) efficiency projects for your home. The good news: you don't have to be an energy expert to do this.

Here are three projects you can do now to start saving:

Insulating a water heater that's warm to the touch can save 7 to 16 percent annually on your water heating bills. It should also be noted that if your water heater is new, it is likely already insulated. But if your water heater is warm to the touch, it needs additional insulation.

You can purchase a pre-cut jacket or blanket for about \$20. You'll also need two people for this project. Before you start, turn off the water heater. Wrap the blanket around the water heater and tape it to temporarily keep it in place. Once the blanket is positioned correctly, tape it permanently in place, then turn the water heater back on. If you have an electric water heater, do not set the thermostat above 130 degrees, which can cause overheating.

Applying caulk around windows, doors, electrical wiring, and plumbing can save energy and money. There are many different types of caulking compounds available, but the most popular choice is silicone. Silicone caulk is waterproof, flexible, and won't shrink or crack.

Before applying new caulk, clean and remove any old caulk or paint with a putty knife, screwdriver, brush, or solvent. The area should be dry before you apply the new caulk.

Apply the caulk in one continuous stream, and make sure it sticks to both sides of the crack or seam. Afterward, use a putty knife to smooth out the caulk; then wipe the surface with a dry cloth.

One of the best ways to seal air leaks is to weather strip exterior doors, which can keep out drafts and help you control energy costs.

When choosing weather-stripping materials, make sure it can withstand temperature changes, friction, and the general "wear and tear" for the location of the door. Keep in mind that you will need separate materials for the door sweep (at the bottom of the door) and the top and sides.

Before applying the new weather stripping, clean the molding with water and soap, then let the area dry completely. Make sure the weather stripping fits snugly against both surfaces so it compresses when the door is closed.

By completing these simple efficiency projects, you can save energy (and money!) while increasing the comfort level of your home. And you can impress your family and friends with your savvy energy-saving skills.

Your Board of Directors



Michael J. Bertolino
Chairman
District 3



Wayne Farabaugh
Vice Chairman
District 8



Robert P. Neese
Secretary/Treasurer
District 5



Sandra Dill
District 9



Sam Eckenrod
District 1



Anthony Enciso
District 7



Howard Terndrup
District 4



John R. Learn
District 6



J.R. "Rick" Shope
District 2

REA Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.