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Is Your Power Out?

If your electricity is out for more than a few minutes...

Check your breaker box to see if a circuit breaker has tripped.

Then, check to see if your neighbors are without power.

Report Benton REA outages by calling 800-221-6987 or via the SmartHub app.

Benton REA's PowerNET Upgrades Internet Speeds

Benton REA is excited to announce that its PowerNET internet customers are currently receiving a faster connection at no additional cost!

PowerNET customers may

have noticed the increased speeds in mid-March. Technicians replaced 15 access points and 450 subscriber antennas between October 2017 and January 2018 to make the upgrade possible for all PowerNET

internet subscribers.

"In addition to improving the speed, these upgrades will also improve reliability," said Jeff Bastow, manager of PowerNET and IT at Benton REA.

Although the new equipment necessary for the upgrades incurred a cost to PowerNET, subscribers' monthly rates did not increase. The upgrade was designed to reduce maintenance costs, therefore a price increase was not necessary.

"We will continue to experiment with faster speeds using existing equipment as well as look into new technologies," stated Bastow.

PowerNET's wireless internet packages start at 2 Mbps download and 512 kbps upload speed for \$49.95 per month. There are no hidden additional fees with PowerNET's packages nor installation fee. See the chart on this page for packages and speeds.

Those interested in further upgrading their internet package, or anyone wanting to connect for the first time with PowerNET, can speak to a wireless representative by calling 800-398-1232 Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. or Saturday-Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ■

PowerNET Internet Packages

Package	Download Speed	Upload Speed	Monthly Investment
Starter	2 Mbps	512 Kbps	\$49.95
Standard	4 Mbps	512 Kbps	\$59.95
Enhanced	6 Mbps	1 Mbps	\$79.95
Premium	8 Mbps	2 Mbps	\$99.95
Ultimate	10 Mbps	3 Mbps	\$119.95
Professional	4 Mbps	4 Mbps	\$99.95
Enterprise	8 Mbps	8 Mbps	\$139.95

powerNET
BENTON RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

**Internet Service Provider • PC Repair
IT Support • Business Consulting**

BentonREA.com • 509-786-4004

New Law Says "Move Over" for Utility Vehicles and Workers

Currently Washington State law requires drivers to move over a lane or slow down for emergency vehicles stopped on the shoulder of the highway. Starting June 7, motorists must do the same for utility vehicles including line trucks from power utilities.

Utility workers often have to work on powerlines located along roadways in inclement weather conditions, at night and/or in emergency situations to restore power which adds to the dangers associated with this work.

"Our linemen and other workers need to be able to concentrate on their work and not have to be concerned about vehicles speeding by the work area. Our goal every day is safety for our workers to ensure they go home to their families every night," said Stephen Frost, Utility Safety Coordinator for Benton REA. "This law supports the importance of drivers to move over or slow down when approaching any vehicle at the side of the road."

More specifically, the Washington State law requires drivers to vacate the lane

closest to stationary emergency vehicles, such as police or tow trucks, if they are traveling in the same direction and it is safe to do so. If not, drivers are required to slow down within 200 feet before and after a stationary emergency vehicle that has its flashing lights activated.

A driver who violates these emergency zone driving restrictions is guilty of Reckless Endangerment of Emergency Zone Workers and can be fined \$1,000, receive a jail sentence, and/or lose driving privileges. ■



MORE THAN A UTILITY. A LIFELINE.

Our town is one of a kind. It makes sense to have a local power company run by local representatives. By finding ways to cut energy use, generating jobs with economic development and supporting hometown groups, Benton REA is a dependable lifeline for local needs.

We are **MORE POWERFUL TOGETHER.**

To learn how you and Benton REA are #MorePowerfulTogether, visit BentonREA.org.



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COOPERATIVE INFORMATION

BENTON RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

Prosser Office
402 7th Street | P.O. Box 1150
Prosser, WA 99350
(509) 786-2913
Toll Free 1-800-221-6987
Office Hours: Mon. - Fri., 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

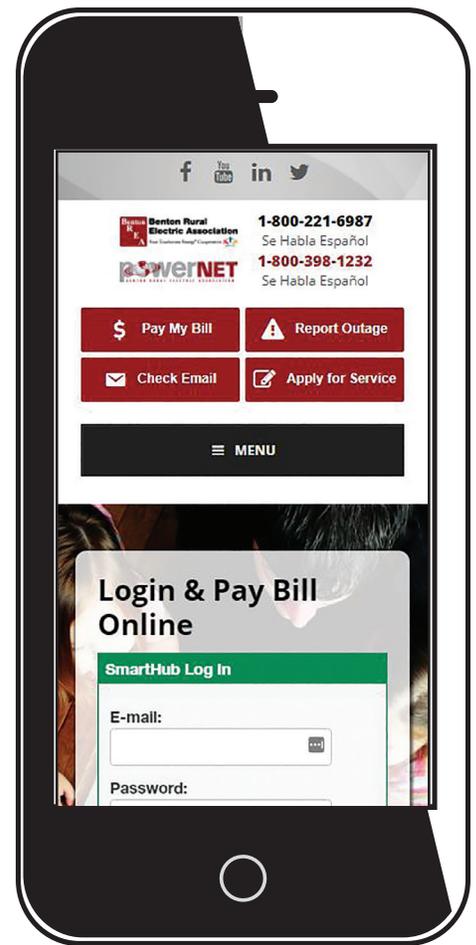
West Richland Office
6095 W. Van Giesen,
West Richland, WA 99353
(509) 967-2921
Office Hours: Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Office Closed for Lunch Noon - 12:30 p.m.

www.BentonREA.org
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MEMBER SERVICES

This newsletter is a product of the Benton REA Member Services and Economic Development Office

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Eric Miller, Energy Services



Coming Soon: New Benton REA, PowerNET Combined Website

Benton REA and PowerNET are getting a new online look. Currently, Benton REA and PowerNET have separate websites, although they had a similar look and feel. The new website will merge the electric, internet and IT services onto one website where information for both is easily accessible.

The new website can be reached by visiting either BentonREA.org or Benton-REA.com at the end of the month.

Easy Navigation

By analyzing our current website, we learned that most members use the Benton REA website for only a few things: paying their bill, contacting us, viewing outage information, looking for employment and applying for service. On the PowerNET website, most wanted to see our internet packages and pricing. The new website has made these features easier to find on the home page.

Those of you who pay your bill online will be able to login to your SmartHub account on Benton REA's home page, saving a step and your time.

The website is one of many tools Benton REA uses to educate members about

their cooperative. This is why information about member programs will be easy to find on the new website.

Many people do not realize PowerNET not only provides wireless internet services, but also computer repair and business IT consulting. Information about electrical safety, member youth programs, renewable energy and what it means to be a co-op member are also easily found on the new website.

Modern Mobile Design

The new website platform has a fresh look designed to be both easy to use and visually appealing. The website is also mobile-responsive, meaning it will be easier to navigate and read from any size phone, tablet or computer.

Accessible

Websites are communication tools, therefore, it is the co-op's intent to make the new Benton REA and PowerNET website easily understandable to individuals with disabilities.

The website will be designed with technology that helps individuals with vision and hearing disabilities read and

understand the content on each web page. The new website has been designed with all our members in mind.

Spanish Translation

After its official launch, the new website will be translated into Spanish for those who set Spanish as their preferred web browser language. The translation may take a few weeks to complete after the website launch date.

Launch Date

The new website will go live in late May. If you have bookmarked specific pages of our website, these links may not work after this date.

We hope you take a few minutes to browse BentonREA.org and learn more about your co-op as well as PowerNET's many internet and computer services available to you. ■

DO NOT TAMPER WITH YOUR ELECTRIC METER

Meter tampering can result in electric shock, is illegal and increases electricity rates for other co-op members.



- ⊘ Never break a meter seal.
- ⊘ Never open a meter base.
- ⊘ Never remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.

If you know or suspect that someone has tampered with their meter, please contact us immediately.

509-786-2913 or 800-221-6987

Share the Electrical Safety Message this Month

In May, electric cooperatives across the country promote safety awareness to coincide with National Electrical Safety Month. Every year, thousands of accidents occur due to shock hazards, and Benton REA is committed to educating the public about potential electrical dangers in the home.

In 2016, 475,500 structure fires (including residential fires) were reported in the U.S., causing 2,950 deaths, 12,775 injuries and \$7.9 billion in property damage. According to the National Fire Protection Association, a residential fire was reported every 90 seconds. Many home fires occur when electrical equipment is outdated or improperly used.

It is critical that the public understands their home's electrical system and the safety concerns associated with the latest residential technologies before bringing them into their homes. With newer technologies, such as solar panels, electric vehicles and more electrical gadgets in the home, people need to ensure they have an electrical system that's compatible with the increased load.

To raise awareness of the importance of electrical safety, Benton REA will post safety tips and messages on its Facebook and Twitter accounts this month. Like and share them with your friends to spread the word about electrical safety.

Through electrical safety awareness and education, we can all play a part in preventing electrical hazards and injuries in the future. Together, let's plug into safety this May. ■