

## Your Benton REA Board of Trustees

**Michael Freepons**  
*President*  
District 2

**Connie Krull**  
*Vice President*  
District 7

**Catherine Russell**  
*Secretary/Treasurer*  
District 8

**Buddy Treadway**  
*Trustee, District 1*

**Bob Evans**  
*Trustee, District 3*

**Ron Johnson**  
*Trustee, District 4*

**Tim Grow**  
*Trustee, District 5*

**Scott Fisher**  
*Trustee, District 6*

## General Manager

**Michael J. Bradshaw**  
[mikeb@bentonrea.org](mailto:mikeb@bentonrea.org)

## 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.

# Johnson Appointed to Board

Ron Johnson was appointed to the Benton REA Board of Trustees on October 31, 2018, to fill the District 4 position left vacant when Mark Platt retired from the board in June.

Ron moved to his home in West Richland after retiring as Fire Captain from the Kent Fire Department where he served for 31 years. He is originally from Portland but has spent much of his life in the Kent, Lacey and Yakima areas of Washington state. The Tri-Cities has been a weekend getaway for he and his wife.

“This is now my forever

home,” he stated, referring to his current residence in West Richland where he has Benton REA membership. Now retired and in a new community, Ron was looking for volunteer opportunities in the area. Serving on the Benton REA Board of Trustees sounded like a good fit to him when he saw the call for candidates in his district.

“When I retired, I wanted to do something different and still something meaningful to the community,” he said. He believes his new role is very interesting and will challenge him.

Ron and his wife of 32 years, Karen, have two daughters and two grandchildren. Now retired, Ron has more time to enjoy the many “dad dates” he takes with his daughters as well as his Harley Davidson motorcycle, shooting sports and family time.

Ron is excited to get to know the people of Benton REA.

“I am looking forward to being a part of a team continuing to provide an outstanding product with outstanding service,” Ron said of his new role as a Trustee. ■

## Your Board of Trustees

Benton REA is directed by an eight-member board of trustees. These trustees are members of the cooperative elected by you. Read their bios at [BentonREA.org/trustees](http://BentonREA.org/trustees). ■



**Buddy Treadway**  
District 1



**Michael Freepons**  
District 2



**Bob Evans**  
District 3



**Ron Johnson**  
District 4



**Tim Grow**  
District 5



**Scott Fisher**  
District 6



**Connie Krull**  
District 7



**Catherine Russell**  
District 8

# The Sun Rises on Members' First Community Solar Project

Thirty-one Benton REA members will soon be sharing in the benefits of solar energy produced in their community. Co-op Solar, Benton REA's first community solar project is set to go live after the first of the year.

The 30.2-kilowatt solar project is located at 6102 W. Van Giesen Street across from the Benton REA West Richland office.

Electricity generated from Co-op Solar will be credited to the electric accounts of the 31 Benton REA members who enrolled in the program in August. Co-op members were given the opportunity to purchase the energy produced from 550 solar units. The project sold out in just eight days after enrollment opened to co-op members on a first-come, first-served basis.

Mike Freepons, president of the Benton REA board of trustees, wishes to thank the members of Benton REA for making this project possible. Through community support, Benton REA is able to bring even more renewable, carbon-free energy to the area in addition to the hydro, wind, nuclear and other solar generation currently powering Benton and Yakima counties.

One solar unit is approximately one-sixth of one solar panel in this project. Hot Solar Solutions of Kennewick installed the 86 solar panels in early December. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on December 7 to thank the participating members and debut the project.

After final inspections and interconnection with Benton REA's electric system the photovoltaic cells will begin producing electricity. Dependent upon weather conditions, the project is estimated to produce 43,725 kilowatt hours annually. This is enough electricity to power 2.5 average sized homes.

Although this project is sold-out, Benton REA is keeping a waiting-list of members who may wish to participate in future renewable energy projects, if the opportunity arises.

Members will soon be able to view Co-op Solar's hourly electric generation at [BentonREA.org/co-op-solar](http://BentonREA.org/co-op-solar). For more information or to add your name to the waiting list, please contact Benton REA at 509-786-8265.

See more photos on page four, or visit Benton REA's Facebook page. ■



## In this issue

- 1 RON JOHNSON APPOINTED AS TRUSTEE
- 2 CO-OP SOLAR RIBBON CUTTING
- 3 POWERNET INTERNET SECURITY CLASSES OFFERED  
SAVE THE DATE FOR ANNUAL MEETING
- 4 CO-OP SOLAR RIBBON CUTTING PHOTOS  
GENERATOR SAFETY TIPS



Participants in Benton REA's first community solar project, along with West Richland Mayor Brent Gerry, Troy Woody of Hot Solar Solutions, President of the Benton REA Board of Trustee Mike Freepons, Benton REA staff and trustees, cut the ribbon commemorating the launch of Co-op Solar on December 7.

## COOPERATIVE INFORMATION

### BENTON RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

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

West Richland Office  
6095 West Van Giesen Street  
West Richland, WA 99353  
(509) 967-2921  
Office Hours: Mon. - Fri., 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Toll Free: 800-221-6987  
[www.BentonREA.org](http://www.BentonREA.org)  
Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

## MEMBER SERVICES

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

Troy Berglund, Member Services Manager  
Elicia Copenhaver, Marketing and Communications  
May Hays, Community Relations Coordinator  
Ron Mitchell, Electrical Advisor  
Eric Miller, Energy Services

# Free, Local Internet Security Classes Offered by PowerNET

*January 16 - West Richland Community Room*

*February 13 - Prosser Benton REA Office*

Do you ever wonder if you are at risk of an internet hack or online identity fraud? Every day thousands of hackers may be attempting to steal your personal information. But you can stop them. Benton REA and PowerNET want you to be confident in your ability to be aware of and prevent internet and email security threats.

That is why you are invited to attend one of two basic internet security classes hosted by PowerNET, a business division of Benton REA.

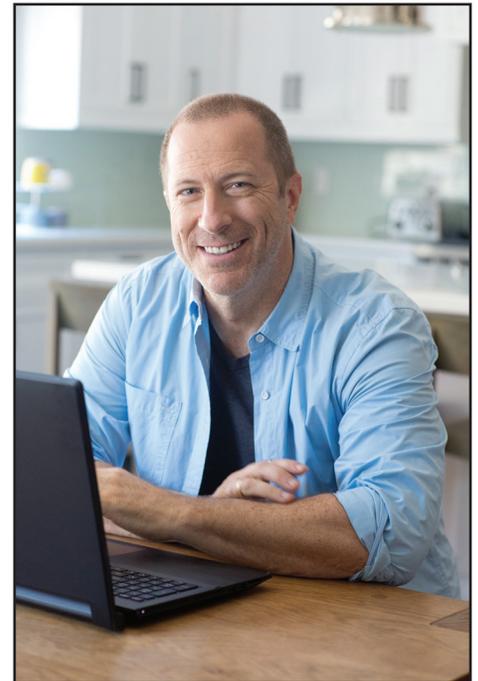
The first class will be held on January 16 at the Benton REA West Richland Community Room (6095

W. Van Giesen Street). Or, sign up to attend the class on February 13 in the Benton REA Prosser Office (402 7th Street). Both classes will begin at 6 p.m.

There is only room for 10 people in each class, so register quickly to reserve your seat. Laptop computers will be provided to use during each class.

The classes are free to Benton REA members and PowerNET internet customers. Non-members and non-customers may attend for a \$20 fee.

To register, contact PowerNET at 509-786-4004. ■

An advertisement for PowerNET internet service. The background is a photograph of a woman with long blonde hair, wearing a grey t-shirt, sitting on a couch and smiling while looking at a laptop. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

**Internet starting at \$49.95/month No Installation Fee**

Your Life. Connected.

**powerNET**  
BENTON RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

**BentonREA.org/PowerNET 509-786-4004**

## Annual Meeting Set in July

Benton REA's 83rd Annual Meeting will be held on July 13, 2019, at Enterprise Middle School in West Richland. Details on event activities and schedule will be announced in June.

All Benton REA members are invited to attend the business meeting where many door prizes and bill credits will be awarded to members. Activities will be planned for families prior to the meeting including a free meal, kids games and activities and free tethered rides on the Touchstone Energy Hot Air Balloon.

We hope to see you at your 83rd Benton REA Annual Meeting of Members. ■

# Photos from the Co-op Solar Ribbon Cutting

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2



Ron Mitchell (right), electrical advisor, discusses the project with Co-op Solar participant Jim Jewell.

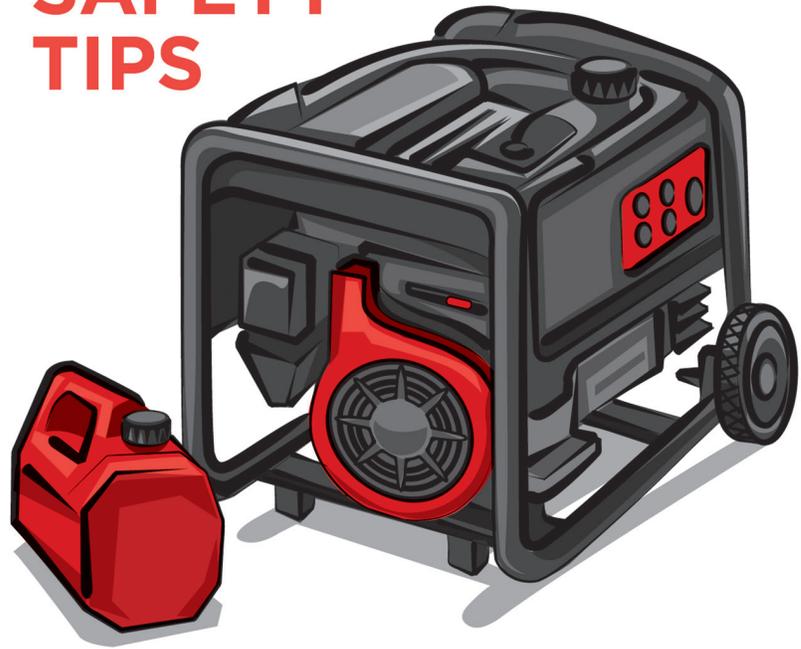


President of the Benton REA Board of Trustees Mike Freepons thanks the members for supporting Co-op Solar.



Co-op Solar Participants John and Jeannette Hamilton admire the newly installed panels.

## GENERATOR SAFETY TIPS



**N**ever connect a standby generator directly into your home's electrical system without the help of a professional. There are only two safe ways to connect a standby generator to your equipment.

### Stationary Generator:

An approved generator transfer switch, which keeps your house circuits separate from the electric co-op, should be installed by a professional.

### Portable Generator:

Plug appliances directly into the outlet provided on the generator.

Set up and run your generator in a well-ventilated area outside the home. Make sure it's out and away from your garage, doors, windows and vents. The carbon monoxide produced by generators is **deadly**.

Use a heavy-duty extension cord to connect electric appliances to the outlet on the generator.

Start the generator first **before** connecting appliances.

Source: [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org)