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Bound for Washington, D.C.

Nathan Shibley and Michelle Bolling will represent Benton REA on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Electric Cooperative Youth Tour June 13-20, 2019.

The Hanford High School sophomores were selected by a committee of Benton REA employees.

Nathan is the son of Benton REA members Bill and Kim Shibley. He applied because he wanted to gain insight into the political process.

"I also applied because I thought it would be super fun," he says.

He is excited to meet his peers from across the country. More than 1,800 students representing electric cooperatives from 47 states will converge in Washington, D.C. They'll visit national monuments, museums and memorials and have the opportunity to meet Rep. Dan Newhouse and Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell.

"I hope to learn more about how cooperatives function in politics," Nathan says.

His favorite era of American history is the gold rush. The Klondike Gold Rush story in particular appeals to him.

Nathan wants to study finance and work as a financial analyst and possibly in investment banking. He also wishes to receive his Master of Business Administration.

Michelle is the daughter



Nathan Shibley

of Benton REA members Craig and Stacey Bolling. She applied because she loves history and wants to discuss renewable resources with her senators.

"I hope to learn more about how government works," she says. "There is so much history in Washington, D.C., and so much to learn about. Visiting the Smithsonian and different museums will be very educational."

Michelle's two favorite eras of American history are World War II and the Women's Suffrage Movement.

"Even though WWII was a very tragic time, our nation came together to work as one," she says. "This gave women a chance to be more involved in the workforce. The Women's Suffrage Movement is important to me because women started getting a voice once they were allowed to vote. Women could own land



Michelle Bolling

and gain a proper education."

Michelle plans to attend college after graduating high school, but has not chosen between studying science or music education.

Benton REA is proud to participate in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Students' trip expenses are funded by Benton REA's unclaimed capital credits. This education fund is meant to invest in youth so they may return and improve the quality of their own lives and the lives of those around them.

Previous Youth Tour delegates from Benton REA include Hannah Doyle, Tyler Slade, Emily Bonus, Nathan Cahoon and Taylor Smith.

Applications for the 2020 Youth Tour will be available in the fall. Learn more about the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour at BentonREA.org/youth-education. ■

Stop By for a Cookie on Our Birthday

On Friday, April 19, any member who visits one of our offices can enjoy cookies and coffee as we celebrate 82 years of member-owned cooperative service.

On April 19, 1937, Benton REA was born. Our original mission was to

bring affordable, reliable electricity to the rural residents of Benton County. The first 89 members of Benton REA received electricity in 1937.

Today, more than 10,500 homes and businesses in three counties receive electricity from Benton REA, and nearly 1,000 rural homes have access to internet from Benton REA's PowerNET.

The dream of our first members lives on in you, our member-owners. This cooperative is run for the people and by the people who use its services.

Learn more about your co-op membership at BentonREA.org/membership.

Celebrate our 82nd birthday and join us for cookies and coffee April 19. ■



**JOIN US APRIL 19
FOR COOKIES AND COFFEE**

**Prosser Office
402 7th Street
Open 7 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

**West Richland Office
6095 W. Van Giesen St.
Open 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

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
- Check to see if your neighbors have power
- Report Benton REA outages by calling 800-221-6987 or use the SmartHub app

COOPERATIVE INFORMATION

BENTON RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

Prosser Office
402 7th St. | 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 St.
509-967-2921

Office Hours: Mon. - Fri., 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Toll Free: 800-221-6987

www.BentonREA.org

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MEMBER SERVICES

This newsletter is produced by the Benton REA Member Services and Economic Development Department.

Elecia Copenhaver, Marketing and Communications Coordinator

Troy Berglund, Community Development and Member Relations Manager

Shannon Olsen, Assistant Community Development and Member Relations Manager

May Hays, Community Relations Coordinator

Ron Mitchell, Electrical Advisor

Eric Miller, Energy Advisor

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

Your Life. Connected.

powerNET
BENTON RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

BentonREA.org/PowerNET 509-786-4004

Landscape Your Way to Energy Savings



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

A well-designed landscape not only adds beauty to your home, but can reduce your heating and cooling costs.

Trees and other plants on the east, south and west sides of your home help shade it, helping reduce cooling costs in the summer and cold winds in the winter. Deciduous trees lose their leaves in the fall, allowing sunlight to warm your home. The extra shade during summer months will keep your home cooler and give your air conditioner a much needed break.

Well-placed trees or shrubs can create a windbreak that can block wind close to the ground which lowers the heat loss around your home. With a windbreak in place, it will reduce wind speed for a distance of as much as 30 times the windbreak's height.

Without landscaping, your HVAC runs longer to keep your home comfortable.

"Proper placement of trees and shrubs can help lower your energy bill by 10 percent," says Eric Miller, energy advisor at Benton REA.

Do Not Plant Near Electrical Equipment

Branches that touch utility power lines create hazardous situations and can cause power outages. Selecting and planting trees with the size and growth characteristics appropriate to their location can extend the life of the tree and prevent power outages.

A list of trees, their growth heights and where you are allowed to plant them is available from the Mid-Columbia Community Forestry Council at BentonREA.org/trees.

Electrical equipment such as pad-mounted transformers, switch cabinets and electric meters need to be kept free of obstructions.

"During power outages, Benton REA crews often find fences, shrubs and trees that have been placed or planted in front of electrical equipment. Removing these obstacles takes time and delays restoration of power," says Jeff Ekrut, operations manager at Benton REA.

Overgrown plants can also obstruct access to the electric meter on your property. Benton REA meter readers

need safe and clear access to the meter in order to obtain an accurate monthly read.

Call 811 Before You Dig

554 miles of Benton REA's powerlines are underground. Because of this, and the many other natural gas and water pipelines or communications cables that may be lying beneath the surface, Benton REA urges you to follow the law and call 811 before any kind of digging project, big or small.

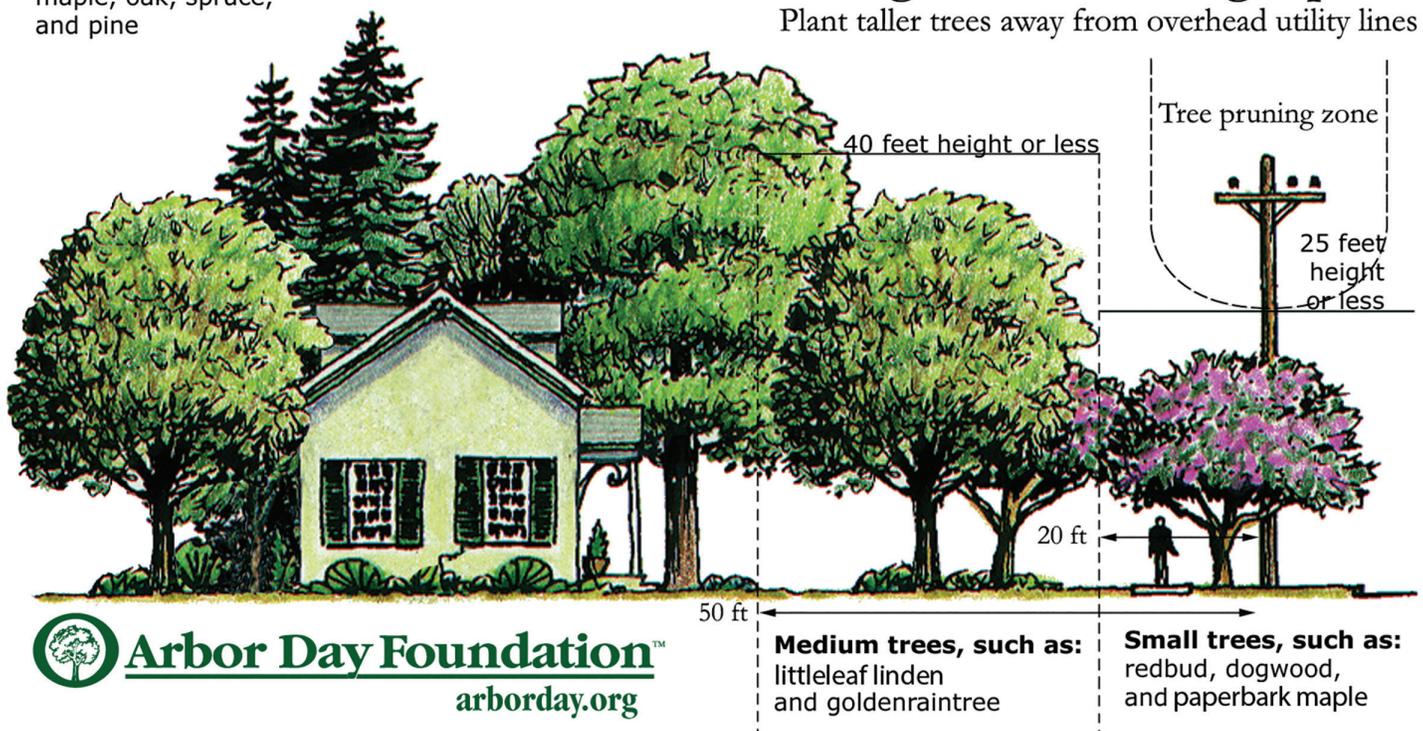
Always call 811 for the Utilities Underground Location Center at least two business days before doing any digging projects.

Learn more about which trees are safe and efficient to plant near your home. Visit BentonREA.org/trees or call Benton REA at 509-786-8252. ■

Tall trees, such as:
maple, oak, spruce,
and pine

Plant the right tree in the right place

Plant taller trees away from overhead utility lines



The Dedication of an Electric Lineworker

April 18 is Lineworker Appreciation Day

National studies consistently rank power line installers and repairers among the most dangerous jobs in the country, and for good reason. Laboring high in the air, wearing heavy equipment and working directly with high voltage electricity creates the perfect storm of a dangerous and unforgiving profession.

But electric lineworkers are up to the task. These brave men and women are committed to safety, as well as the challenges of the job.

Benton REA's lineworkers are responsible for keeping power flowing day and night, regardless of national holidays, vacations, birthdays, weddings, anniversaries or other important family milestones.

Beyond the years of specialized training and apprenticeships, it takes internal fortitude and a mission-oriented outlook to be a good lineworker. In fact, this service-oriented mentality is a hallmark characteristic of lineworkers. The job requires lineworkers to set aside their personal priorities to better serve their local community.

Family Support System

To perform their jobs successfully, lineworkers depend on their years of training, experience and each other to get the job done safely.

Equally important is their reliance on a strong support system at home. A lineworker's family understands and supports their loved one's commitment to the greater community during severe storms and power outages.

This means in times of prolonged outages, the lineworker and their family members may have minimal communication and not see each other for several days. Without strong family support and understanding, this challenging job would be all the more difficult.

Community Commitment

Electric co-op lineworkers' mission-focused mentality of helping others often extends beyond their commitment to their work at the cooperative.

Lineworkers often are familiar figures in the community. They can be found coaching youth sports teams, volunteering for local charities and serving on local advisory boards.

Thank You

Thursday, April 18 is Lineworker Appreciation Day. Given the dedication of Benton REA's lineworkers, both on and off the job, take a moment and acknowledge the many contributions they make to our local community.

If you see their family members in the grocery store or out and about in the town, please offer them a thank you as well. ■

**Committed to the job.
Committed to safety.
Committed to you,
our members.**

Lineworker Appreciation Day

April 18, 2019

