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Free Family Fun at the Benton REA Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars for July 13. You won't want to miss Benton REA's 82nd Annual Meeting and Member Appreciation Lunch.

Before the business meeting begins at 12:30 p.m., the morning will be full of family activities. Arrive at 8 a.m. to catch a tethered ride on the Touchstone Energy Hot Air Balloon, weather permitting.



Bingo begins at 9 a.m. along with displays and activities from the West Richland Police Department, Benton County Fire District #4, the Benton Conservation District and the Bonneville Power Administration.

Watch the high-voltage electrical safety demo and tour the traveling renewable energy kiosk. Benton REA's new electric vehicle, a Chevy Bolt, will be on display.

Games and face painting will keep the kids busy all morning. The Baduku Marimba band will perform

after lunch is served by Henry's Restaurant and Catering.

The first 500 members to register will receive a 25-foot measuring tape. Many prizes will be awarded throughout the day. Five \$100 and five \$500 electric bill credits will be awarded at the end of the meeting.

Your registration card is on the back of your June Ruralite magazine. Bring it to the annual meeting for faster registration. It also serves as your door prize drawing ticket. We'll see you there! ■

YOU ARE INVITED TO ATTEND THE 82nd Annual Meeting of Members

JULY 13, 2019

DOORS OPEN AT 8 A.M., BUSINESS MEETING BEGINS AT 12:30 P.M.

**LEONA LIBBY MIDDLE SCHOOL
3259 BELMONT BLVD., WEST RICHLAND**

In This Issue

- 1** You're invited to the annual meeting
- 2** Smart Life - SmartHub Don't toy with safety
- 3** Legislative conference Hydropower in the NW
- 4** Maintain an efficient HVAC system

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Smart Life. SmartHub.

Life can be fast and hectic, but it doesn't all have to be complicated. Paying your Benton REA and/or PowerNET bill shouldn't be a complex task, and with our SmartHub web and mobile app, it won't be.

You may have heard about SmartHub, our innovative tool for account management, but what can it do for you? SmartHub can help you take control of your account(s) like never before, giving you more time to focus on other responsibilities.

Whether through the web, or your smartphone or tablet (Android or iOS), you'll be able to pay your bill, view your electric use, contact Benton REA for assistance and get the latest co-op news.

As soon as you log in, you can view your billing history and make a payment with just a couple of clicks or

taps, if you're using the app. You'll be able to see your current bill, along with bills from the previous month or even the previous summer to compare costs.

Making payments through SmartHub is fast and easy. The first time you make a payment either through the web or your mobile device, you'll be able to securely store your payment information for future transactions. The next time you need to pay your bill, it will only take a couple of clicks.

You'll be able to select how you want to be notified about your bill, including email and text messaging.

Reporting an electric outage is quick and easy from the SmartHub mobile app. There's no need to call the office, just let us know about the issue with a few taps. You can also contact Benton REA with any questions you may have.



SmartHub's contact feature makes it quick and easy.

Access SmartHub by visiting BentonREA.org/SmartHub or by downloading the app on your mobile device.

Manage your account simply, quickly and easily with SmartHub.

Smart Management. Smart Life. SmartHub. ■



Don't TOY with your SAFETY

When you are playing outdoors, keep a safe distance from power lines, substations and other equipment your electric co-op uses to send electricity to your home.



Flying remote controlled toys are a great way to have fun, but accidentally making contact with a power line or other electrical equipment can be dangerous and in some cases, even deadly.

- Never fly kites, or remote controlled toys near power lines.
- Stay away from power lines, meters, transformers and electrical boxes.
- Never climb trees near power lines.
- If you get something stuck in a power line, call your electric co-op.
- Never touch or go near a downed power line.

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. I.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.
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

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MEMBER SERVICES

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

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Ron Mitchell, Electrical Advisor

Eric Miller, Energy Advisor

Talking Co-ops in Washington, D.C.

Troy Berglund, community development and member relations manager, travelled to Washington, D.C., in April for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Legislative Conference. While there, he and other Washington electric cooperative employees met with state legislators to discuss the needs of co-op members.

During their meetings with Rep. Cathy McMorris Rogers and Rep. Dan Newhouse, the group discussed several key state issues.

1. Discussed a number of ways congress can help the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) lower its costs to become more competitive.
2. Opposed the proposal to sell off BPA transmission assets as well as changing BPA rates from cost-based to market-based.
3. Asked for support of a bill to clarify that grants received by electric co-ops from federal or state governments do not count as non-related income and potentially jeopardize nonprofit, tax-exempt status. Grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency to recover from a natural disaster are an example of these.

Benton REA is a strong supporter of the hydroelectric dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers. Without the low-cost energy provided by these dams, Benton REA would have to rely on more expensive, carbon-producing energy resources. The dams also provide a consistent, reliable source of electricity for our growing corner of the world. The infographic on this page describes how beneficial hydropower is to our, and the nation's, energy future.

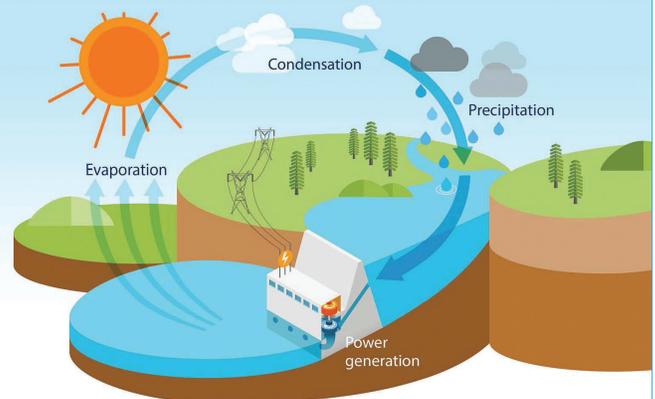
Visit BentonREA.org/legislation to learn more about Benton REA's state and federal legislative positions. ■



Rep. Cathy McMorris Rogers and Rep. Dan Newhouse met with co-op leaders in Washington, D.C., in April.

June 2019 Benton REA

HYDROPOWER in the Northwest



- ✓ **Renewable.** Each year, rain and snow replenish the supply. It is the nation's most abundant source of renewable energy.
- ✓ **Efficient.** Hydropower plants at dams convert about 90 percent of the energy in falling water into electrical energy. By comparison, fossil-fueled plants lose more than half of the energy content of their fuel as waste heat and gases.
- ✓ **Clean.** Hydropower produces no emissions. There are no gases or waste products that contribute to air pollution.
- ✓ **Secure.** Water from our rivers is largely a domestic resource that is not subject to disruptions from foreign suppliers, cost fluctuations in power markets, international political crises or transportation outages.
- ✓ **Flexible.** By adjusting the amount of water flowing through the dams, hydropower can be increased or decreased very quickly to meet changes in demand for power. This meets a fundamental requirement of all electric grids, which is that demand must exactly match supply at all times to keep the system stable.
- ✓ **Accommodating.** Hydropower is a great "backup" for wind and solar power — for example it can be ramped up to meet demand when the wind is not blowing, and dialed down at times of high winds.
- ✓ **Affordable.** This is because the "fuel" — water — is free, which keeps operating costs low and protects against fluctuations in fuel prices. Over the years, the dams have consistently provided some of the nation's most affordable electricity.



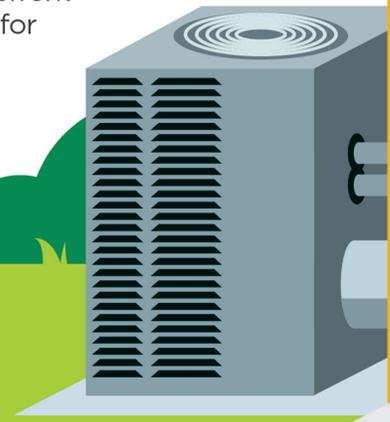
WWW.BPA.GOV/HYDROFLOWHERE

3-Step HVAC Test

As summer temperatures rise, so do electric bills. Follow these steps to test the efficiency of your HVAC unit.

The outdoor temperature should be above 80 degrees, and you should set your thermostat well below the room temperature to ensure the system runs long enough for this test.

1. Using a digital probe thermometer (about \$12), measure the temperature of the air being pulled into your HVAC filter.
2. Measure the temperature of the air blowing out of your A/C vent.
3. Subtract the A/C vent temperature from the HVAC filter temperature. You should see a difference of about 17 to 20 degrees. If the difference is less than 17 degrees, you may need a licensed technician to check the coolant. If the difference is greater than 20 degrees, your ductwork may need to be inspected for airflow restrictions.



Tips for Maintaining an Efficient HVAC System

Ah, summer. Cookouts, swimming pools, camping—it's the perfect time to enjoy the outdoors with family and friends. When it's time to come back indoors, there's nothing better than that cool blast you feel from your home's air conditioning unit.

Your heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) system is essential to keeping your home comfortable during summer months, and if it breaks down, it's also very expensive equipment to repair or replace. Luckily, you can take simple steps to lengthen the life of your HVAC system.

Change or clean filters

Dirty filters block airflow, which can greatly decrease the efficiency and life of your system. Different types of filters require different change periods. The Department of Energy recommends changing or cleaning filters every month or two during the cooling season. If your unit is in constant use or is subjected to dusty conditions or pet hair, consider checking filters more

frequently.

Clean the HVAC unit

Outdoor condenser coils can become clogged with pollen, dirt and small debris. Dirty condenser coils produce less capacity and lower efficiency. Use a hose to spray the HVAC unit once each season to ensure maximum airflow. Do not use a pressure washer to do this, as it can damage the equipment.

Clear space around the outdoor unit

Dryer vents, falling leaves and grass clippings can create buildup. Remove any debris around the HVAC unit. If you have foliage near the unit, trim it back at least 2 feet around the condenser for proper airflow.

If you want to evaluate the efficiency of your HVAC system, try this quick test.

The outdoor temperature should be above 80 degrees, and you should set your thermostat four degrees below the room temperature to ensure the system runs long enough for this test.

1. Using a digital probe thermometer,

measure the temperature of the air being pulled into your HVAC filter. This is the return air temperature.

2. Measure the temperature of the air blowing out of the A/C vent, also called the supply air.

3. Subtract the A/C vent (supply air) temperature from the HVAC filter (return air) temperature. You should see a difference of about 17 to 20 degrees. If the difference is less than 17 degrees or more than 20 degrees it may be time to call your HVAC technician.

You should also have your HVAC system periodically inspected by a licensed professional. The frequency of inspections depends on the age of your unit, but the Department of Energy recommends scheduling tune-ups during the spring and fall, when contractors are not as busy.

When HVAC equipment fails, it's inconvenient and uncomfortable—especially during the dog days of summer. Remember, your HVAC system runs best when it's regularly cleaned and serviced. With a little maintenance along the way, you can add years to your system's lifespan. ■