

Your Benton REA Board of Trustees

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In This Issue

- 1** Touchstone Energy donates to Heartlinks Hospice; RiverFest 2019
- 2** Save time with SmartHub; Heat pump water heater rebates
- 3** Electric shock drowning
- 4** Annual meeting recap and photos

Balloon Rides for Charity

The Touchstone Energy Cooperatives hot air balloon rose 50 feet in the air over and over again the morning of July 13. 143 members of Benton REA enjoyed an experience of a lifetime on a tethered Touchstone Energy Cooperatives hot air balloon ride at the 82nd Benton REA annual meeting.

“Every day the Touchstone Energy hot air balloon is flown, a monetary contribution is made to a local charity on behalf of the sponsoring Touchstone Energy cooperative,” says Cheri White, general manager of Cooperative Balloon Associates.

As a Touchstone Energy cooperative, Benton REA employees chose Heartlinks

Hospice and Palliative Care to receive the \$510 donation.

“On behalf of Heartlinks and behalf of our board, thank you,” said Shelby Moore, executive director of Heartlinks Hospice and Palliative Care. “I am so honored that Benton REA thought of us.”

During the tethered flights, the balloon’s basket gave passengers a safe and magnificent view of the surrounding West Richland landscape.

As a member of Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, Benton REA is proud to uphold the shared values of integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community with a nationwide network of more than 750 local,



Shelby Moore accepts the donation from Benton REA Board President Mike Freepons.

member-owned electric co-ops dedicated to providing members with safe, reliable and affordable electricity across 47 states. ■

RiverFest
2019 Our Rivers, Our Way of Life
#RiverFest2019TC #DamProud

Aerial vineyard photo by Kim Fetrow / All other photos courtesy of Visit Tri-Cities

Saturday, Sept 7, 2019

Columbia Park, Lampson Pits
Kennewick, WA | 10am-4pm

- CELEBRATE OUR RIVERS
- LEARN WHY DAMS ARE IMPORTANT
- EDUCATIONAL EXHIBITS
- HANDS ON LEARNING EXPERIENCES
- MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT
- LOCAL RETAIL & FOOD VENDORS

FUN & FREE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY



Scan this QR code to visit the Facebook event and see all the updates and info about RiverFest event activities!

For info about how to get involved contact:
Pasco Chamber of Commerce
509.547.9755 | info@pascochamber.org | pascochamber.org

Save Time With the SmartHub App

Whether through the web or your smartphone or tablet, you can quickly pay your bill, view your energy use, contact Benton REA for assistance and get the latest co-op news.

As soon as you log in to your Benton REA SmartHub account, you can view your billing history and make a payment with just a couple of clicks or taps on your phone. You'll be able to see your current bill, along with bills from previous months—or even the previous year—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 can select how you want to be notified about your bill, either by email or text message.

Reporting an electric outage is quick and easy from the SmartHub mobile app. There's no need to call Benton REA, just let us know about the issue with a few taps. SmartHub's contact feature makes it quick and easy to contact Benton REA on the go.

Create your SmartHub account by visiting BentonREA.org/SmartHub or download the app today. ■



SmartHub

National Information Solutions Coop..

Tools

INSTALL

IT'S TIME TO SAY GOODBYE TO YOUR OLD ELECTRIC WATER HEATER

It's not just old, it's wasting up to \$300 per year on your electric bills. And if it's nearing the end of its 10-year lifespan, it could cause a whole lot of water damage too.



HEAT PUMP WATER HEATER

Saves up to \$300 per year

10-year warranty

Instant discounts and rebates

OLD ELECTRIC WATER HEATER

...doesn't

...afraid not

...uh... pass?



UPGRADE AND SAVE WITH BENTON REA

Get a rebate **up to \$500** when you install a new heat pump water heater.

Call our energy experts at **509-786-8265** to get started.



Find local installers and retailers at HotWaterSolutionsNW.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.
- 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.
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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Be Aware of Electric Shock Drowning

Despite being categorized as leisure activities, swimming and boating can quickly become dangerous.

While water-safety behaviors such as wearing life jackets and maintaining safe boating speeds have become commonplace, a serious hazard remains that is often overlooked.

This silent killer, classified as electric shock drowning, occurs in fresh water when a typically low level alternating current passes through the body, which causes muscular paralysis and eventually leads to drowning.

“Although there are reported incidents every year, there is a lack of awareness about the dangers of electric shock drowning,” says Electrical Safety Foundation International President Brett Benner.

A 21-year-old Illinois man died in 2015 when touching a dock ladder at the Lake of the Ozarks in Missouri. There were at least two fatalities in Kentucky in 2013, and in 2017, a young man in Pasco suffered from an electrical shock and died while swimming in the Columbia River.

Most of these victims were younger than 15. Electric shock drowning deaths are usually recorded as drowning because victims show no signs of burns. Therefore, many instances remain undocumented.

While a lack of awareness persists about the dangers of electric shock drowning, positive strides are being

taken to combat the problem. In Tennessee, state legislators passed the Noah Dean and Nate Act in 2014, which protects state residents from electric shock injuries and drowning deaths near marinas and boat docks.

The bill is named in memory of 10-year-old Noah Dean Winstead and 11-year-old Nate Lynam, who died from electrical injuries they suffered on July 4, 2012, at a marina in Tennessee.

Jessica Winstead, Noah's mother, was the driving force behind the bill as a result of her tireless crusade to prevent similar tragedies from occurring. An inspection following the tragic incident found that the marina did not have ground-fault circuit interrupters.

Under the Noah Dean and Nate Act, Tennessee marinas must install ground-fault protection, post notices about the danger of electrical leakage into waters surrounding a marina, and undergo a safety inspection conducted by the state fire marshal.

A similar law passed in West Virginia in 2013 following the death of Michael Cunningham, three years after he died at the age of 15. One also passed in Arkansas in 2012 after several electrocutions near docks there and in surrounding states.

The 2011 National Electrical Code addresses the dangers in marinas and boatyards by requiring the main overcurrent protective device to be GFCI-protected. This applies

to installations and inspections. Inspections are recommended annually but not always enforced.

Protect yourself and your loved ones from the risk of electric shock drowning and common boat electrical hazards with these handy tips:

- ▶ Don't swim near docks. Avoid entering the water when launching or loading your boat.
- ▶ Always maintain a distance of at least 10 feet between your boat and nearby power lines.
- ▶ If you feel a tingle while swimming, the water may be electrified. Get out as soon as possible, avoiding the use of metal objects such as ladders.
- ▶ Have your boat's electrical system inspected and upgraded by a certified marine electrician who is familiar with National Fire Protection Association Codes: NFPA 303 and NFPA 70.
- ▶ Have GFCIs installed on your boat, and test them once a month. Consider having equipment leakage circuit interrupters installed on boats to protect nearby swimmers from potential electricity leakage into water surrounding your boat.
- ▶ Only use shore or marine power cords, plugs, receptacles and extension cords that have been tested by Underwriters Laboratories, Canadian Standards Association or Intertek.
- ▶ Never use cords that are frayed or damaged or that have had the prongs removed or altered.
- ▶ Never stand or swim in water when turning off electrical devices or switches.
- ▶ Electric shock drowning can also occur in swimming pools, hot tubs and spas. Have an electrician inspect and upgrade your pool, spa or hot tub in accordance with applicable local codes and the National Electrical Code.

For ESFI's complete collection of boating and marina safety resources, visit www.esfi.org. ■



82nd Annual Meeting Well-Attended

For the first time since 1980, Benton REA held the annual meeting of members in West Richland.

More than 530 attended the family event on July 13 at Leona Libby Middle School. Tethered hot air balloon rides began at 8 a.m., and 143 people rode the basket at least 50 feet into the air. The rest of the activities began at 9 a.m.

Children learned how dams generate electricity and built their own transmission towers at the Bonneville Power Administration booth. The Benton Conservation District helped kids build a paper dam and invited members to RiverFest on September 7. The Benton County Fire District No. 4 offered ambulance tours, and the West Richland Police Department brought their mobile response unit.

Many children left the event with their faces painted by Vivid Imaginations. The Baduku Marimba Band entertained the crowd with a 45-minute show.

Members of all ages witnessed the power of electricity at the electrical safety demonstration performed by Benton REA lineworkers. LED Lucy, the energy-efficient mascot, greeted members of all ages throughout the day.

Many members left with prizes won during bingo, and enjoyed a barbecue meal catered by Henry's Restaurant



LED Lucy and Trustee Ron Johnson, right, greeted members at the annual meeting.

and Catering. Children who completed their annual meeting passport by visiting different areas of the event, took home sunglasses, a Frisbee and candy.

Members also had the opportunity to ask Benton REA employees questions at the billing, Ruralite magazine and PowerNET booths. The winning artwork from the electrical safety poster contest was on display.

Trustees Buddy Treadway, district 1; Mike Freepons, district 2; and Bob Evans, district 3 were reelected to serve three-year terms on the Benton REA Board of Trustees. Final votes were counted during the business meeting, which began at 12:30 p.m.

Trustee Catherine Russell presented the secretary/treasurer's report. President Mike Freepons spoke to the members about the annual meeting theme "We Power You," and General Manager Mike Bradshaw gave a state of the cooperative address.

Four of the five 2019 Benton REA scholarship recipients and one of the two 2019 Youth Tour delegates were present to accept certificates from President Freepons.

Throughout the business meeting, 32 door prizes were awarded to those whose names were drawn and who

were present at the meeting. Winners of five \$100 electric bill credits and five \$500 grand prize electric bill credits were also drawn. The business meeting adjourned at 2 p.m.

See You Next Year

The Benton REA Board of Trustees will announce the date and location of the 83rd Annual Meeting of Members later this year. Look in upcoming issues of Ruralite magazine for your 2020 invitation. ■



The Columbia River Young Marines present the colors to kick-off the business meeting.



Many members' children enjoyed free face painting.