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*mikeb@bentonrea.org*

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# Students: Apply for 2020 Scholarships and Youth Tour

Benton REA scholarship and Youth Tour applications are available online. Youth Tour applications are due December 3. Scholarship applications are due January 3, 2020.

## Seniors

Graduating seniors whose parents are members of Benton REA and whose main residence is within Benton, Yakima or Lewis counties are eligible to apply for Benton REA's scholarships.

Up to five students will earn an \$8,000 academic scholarship to be used for tuition for a four-year, post-secondary education.

In addition, up to two students will earn a \$4,000 trade and technical scholarship for tuition at a community college, trade school or university.

Seven scholarships may be awarded in 2020. Visit [BentonREA.org/scholarships](http://BentonREA.org/scholarships) to download the application and provisions for both scholarships.

## Sophomores and Juniors

Benton REA will select two students to represent the cooperative on an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., June 18-25.

Children of members in their high school sophomore or junior year and whose main residence is in Benton, Yakima or Lewis counties may apply.

Winners will travel with peers from Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. In the capital, they will learn about cooperatives, meet U.S. representatives and senators, visit historic memorials and museums and observe the inner workings of our

nation's government. Visit [BentonREA.org/youth](http://BentonREA.org/youth) to download an application.

Tune into one of two webinars this month for more information about Benton REA's youth programs. See page 4 for details. ■

## HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

**\$8,000 and \$4,000 Scholarships**



## SOPHOMORES & JUNIORS WIN A WEEKLONG TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.



**YOUTH TOUR  
IN WASHINGTON, D.C.  
June 18-25, 2020**

DOWNLOAD APPLICATIONS AT [BENTONREA.ORG/YOUTH](http://BENTONREA.ORG/YOUTH)

# Return of the 'Blob'

## Deadly marine heat wave underscores critical role of carbon-free hydropower energy

Scientists have identified a new marine heat wave in the Pacific Ocean that could indicate the return of the Blob that wreaked havoc on marine life and weather systems from 2014 to 2017.

The phenomenon has refocused the lens on extreme events precipitated by climate change that are now happening sooner than predicted, according to scientists.

Although the newly identified heat wave hasn't yet reached the same magnitude as the Blob, it raises red flags for the marine ecosystem and weather in the Northwest.

The news comes as salmon returns from the Fraser River to the Columbia and Snake rivers are far lower than forecasted this year. A December 2017 study<sup>[1]</sup> published by the Northwest Fisheries Science Center demonstrated a strongly negative relationship between ocean temperatures and the health of salmon populations.

While the region has paid much attention to freshwater habitat, including the four lower Snake River dams, many biologists fear that improving river systems will have little

benefit if climate change continues to warm ocean and river temperatures to levels that harm salmon and their prey.

**Many biologists fear that improving river systems will have little benefit if climate change continues to warm ocean and river temperatures to levels that harm salmon and their prey.**

“We are facing a legitimate climate crisis and we have an important opportunity to do more by understanding the critical capabilities of the hydropower system,” said Kurt Miller, executive director of Northwest RiverPartners. “The Northwest is already a leader in clean, renewable energy with almost 50% of the region’s electricity coming from hydropower, and we need to continue to use hydropower to integrate more renewables in a completely carbon-free way.”

The Honorable Jonathan Wilkinson, minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, said in July that “part of any realistic plan to protect and ultimately restore key salmon stocks must include a comprehensive and aggressive plan to reduce carbon emissions.”

Many power utilities in the Pacific Northwest already use hydropower paired with wind and solar to balance the grid and combine renewable energy

sources.

For the four dams currently under scrutiny, their ability to support the addition of intermittent renewables, such as wind and solar, will be critical to combatting the devastating effects of climate change on orcas and salmon. ■

### **1 Ocean Ecosystem Indicators of Salmon Marine Survival in the Northern California Current**

*Northwest RiverPartners is a not-for-profit, member-driven organization focused on raising awareness about how the Northwest’s hydropower system betters communities and the natural environment. It encourages science-based solutions that help hydropower and salmon coexist and thrive. Members include consumer-owned utilities, ports and businesses across the northwestern U.S. [nwrivernpartners.org](http://nwrivernpartners.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. 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](http://www.BentonREA.org)

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

### MEMBER SERVICES

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

Elecia Copenhaver, Marketing and Communications Coordinator

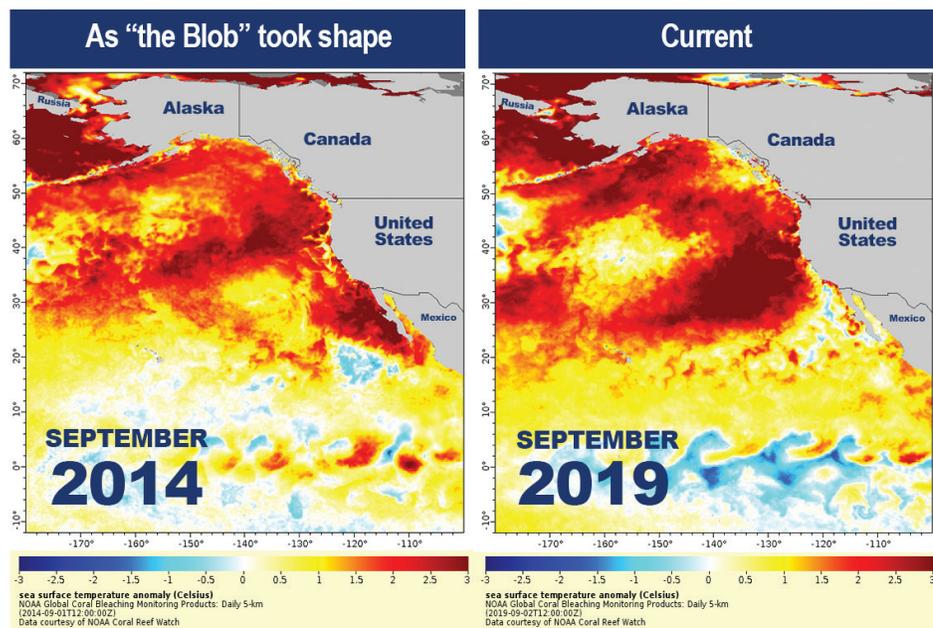
Troy Berglund, Community Development and Member Relations Manager

Shannon Olsen, Assistant Community Development and Member Relations Manager

May Hays, Community Relations Coordinator

Ron Mitchell, Electrical Advisor

Eric Miller, Energy Advisor



Images courtesy of NOAA Fisheries



# Level Out Your Monthly Payments

## Levelized billing helps families stay on budget

Fall is a great time to sign up for levelized billing on your Benton REA electric account. Levelized billing is sometimes called budget billing because it eliminates seasonally-fluctuating payments and helps families stay within their monthly budget.

Your levelized billing amount is determined by averaging your electricity use during the 12 most recent months. You will receive a bill every month showing how much electricity you have used, the levelized

payment due and the current balance on your account.

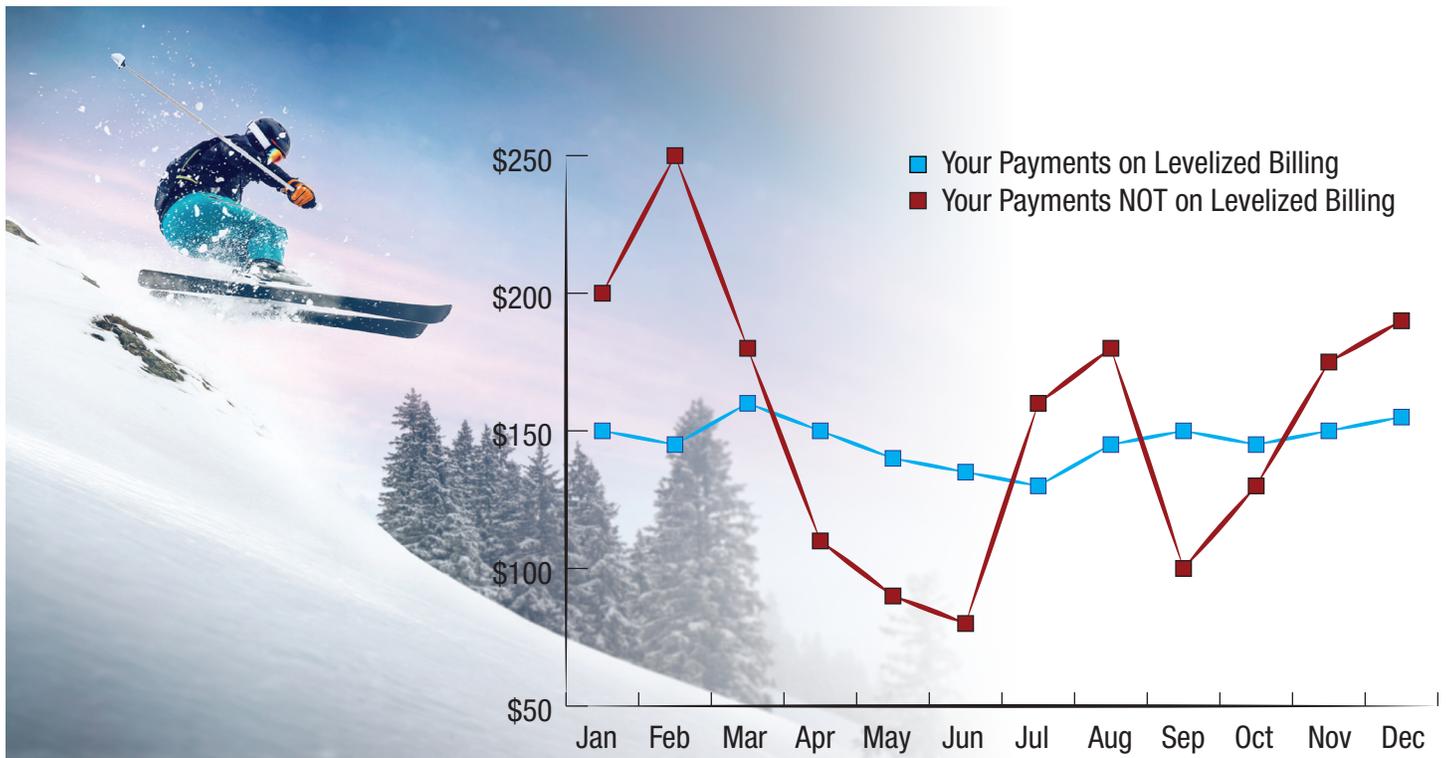
Your payment will fluctuate slightly as the oldest month is dropped and the most recent month's billing is added to your average payment. To keep your account from getting a large negative balance, one-twelfth of any negative balance is added to your levelized payment.

If you do not have 12 months of history with Benton REA, a fixed payment will be calculated and

automatically convert to levelized once you have 12 months of history.

To be eligible, your account must be paid in full. Eligible members may be put on the levelized billing program at any time during the year. Contact Benton REA to start levelized payments before winter causes your energy use to increase.

To find out what your levelized payment would be, call Benton REA at 509-786-2913 and speak with one of our member service representatives. ■



## VETERANS DAY

**Honoring All Who Served  
We Thank You For Our Freedom!**

Benton REA will be closed  
Monday, November 11, to celebrate Veterans Day  
and Thursday, November 28, for Thanksgiving

We're still available 24/7

To report an outage, call 800-221-6987  
To make a payment, call 844-255-3685

# Upcoming Member Webinars

## Learn about these member benefits: energy-efficiency, youth scholarships & programs

Benton REA will host three free webinars in November about its youth programs and residential energy efficiency programs.

“We want to let our members know about these great member benefits, but we know not everyone has time to attend a class,” says Troy Berglund, manager of community development and member relations. “By attending a webinar, you don’t have to leave your

home or office.”

If you don’t have time to attend one of our live webinars, register and Benton REA will send you a recording of the webinar you can watch anytime. Each webinar will last about a half hour.

### How to Lower Your Bill

Thursday, November 21 at 6 p.m.  
Register at [BentonREA.org/EEWebinar](http://BentonREA.org/EEWebinar)

Whether you’re new to your home, or have lived there 30 years, there are ways you can improve its energy efficiency and your comfort, while lowering your energy expenses.

Listen in and ask questions about the role of appliances, lighting and other sources of energy use in the home. Other topics include the importance of a well-insulated, reasonably tight home, selecting a proper heating and cooling system and keeping them in good operating order.

### Youth Tour & Scholarships

Tuesday, November 19  
Noon - 12:30 p.m.,  
Register at [BentonREA.org/YouthWebinarNoon](http://BentonREA.org/YouthWebinarNoon)  
or  
6 -6:30 p.m.  
Register at [BentonREA.org/YouthWebinar6](http://BentonREA.org/YouthWebinar6)

Benton REA will award up to seven scholarships to high school graduates who plan to attend college or a trade school.

Also, two area students will be chosen to represent Benton REA on a weeklong, all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., in June.

Applications are due soon for both of these youth programs. Parents, teachers and students are encouraged to register for our webinar to learn about these opportunities.

For questions, contact Benton REA at [memberservices@bentonrea.org](mailto:memberservices@bentonrea.org) or 509-786-8265. ■



## Portable generators can be very helpful to members during outages.

We urge you to follow these safety guidelines when using one:



**Never connect a generator directly to your home’s wiring unless your home has been wired for generator use.** This can cause backfeeding along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including lineworkers making repairs.



**Always plug appliances directly into generators.** Connecting the generator to your home’s circuits or wiring must be done by a qualified, licensed electrician who will install a transfer switch to prevent backfeeding.



**Read and adhere to the manufacturer’s instructions for safe operation.** Never cut corners when it comes to safety.



**Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords.** Make sure extension cords are free of cuts or tears and the plug has three prongs. Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage.



**Ensure your generator is properly grounded.**



**Never overload a generator.** A portable generator should only be used when necessary to power essential equipment or appliances.



**Never fuel a generator while it is operating.**



**Never operate a generator inside your home, garage, any building or an enclosed space.**



**Always have a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby.**



**Keep the generator dry.** Operate it on a dry surface under an open structure.



**Turn off all equipment powered by the generator before shutting it down.**