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**Michael J. Bradshaw**  
mikeb@bentonrea.org

# More Than \$1.8 Million Paid Back to Members

This month, Benton REA is paying back more than \$1,836,000 in capital credits to its members. All utilities have margins, but only electric cooperatives such as Benton REA allocate and, over time, pay back those margins to their members.

One million dollars will be returned to members using the percentage of equity method, with an additional \$836,000 distributed to fully pay out the capital credits remaining from 1984 through 1989.

The Benton REA Board of Trustees approved the distribution of capital credit retirements to more than 20,000 current and former Benton REA members. If you are one of these members, you may receive your check before Christmas.

Due to the expense in processing printed checks, \$10

is the minimum retirement amount that will be issued.

Retirements less than \$10 are accumulated year to year until the sum is equal to or greater than \$10.

### More About Capital Credits

By purchasing electricity from Benton REA, you are a member and owner of the cooperative. We refer to your equity ownership in Benton REA as capital credits.

Each time you pay your Benton REA electric bill, your equity in the cooperative grows. Likewise, any capital credit retirement checks you receive decreases your equity by the amount of your check.

Benton REA determines your retirement amount based on your total accumulated capital credits through the percentage of equity method. Additionally, the board has the authority to pay back one

or more of the oldest years' equity to members.

Benton REA charges enough through its rates to pay its operating costs and make payments on any loans. At the end of each year, operating expenses are subtracted from the operating revenue collected during the year. The difference is called an operating margin.

Benton REA works hard to keep your electric bills as low as possible. But it's nice to know when there are margins, Benton REA allocates and returns them to its members.

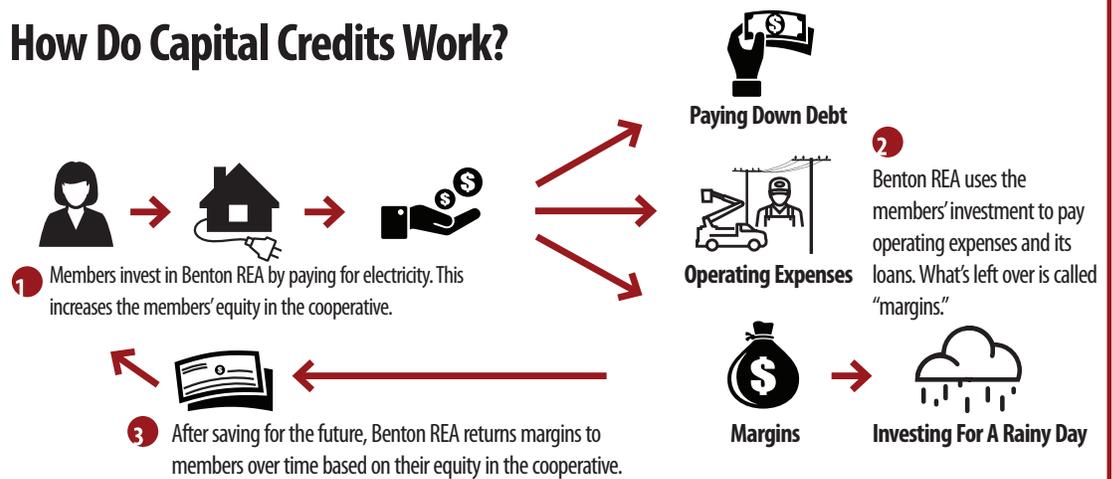
It's important you inform Benton REA of your current address so future retirements can be properly mailed to you. You are entitled to your capital credits even if you move away.

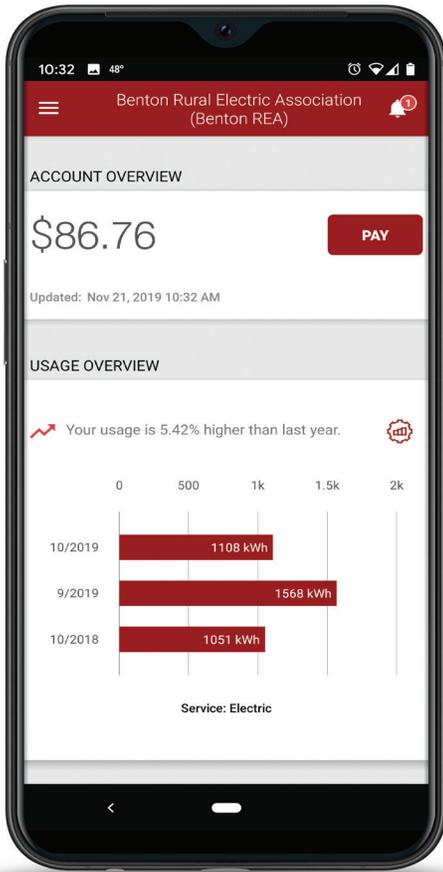
For more information about your capital credits, call 509-786-2913 or visit BentonREA.org/capital-credits. ■

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## How Do Capital Credits Work?





# Introducing A New SmartHub Experience

SmartHub, Benton REA’s mobile payment and account app, underwent a facelift last month.

You may have noticed the update to your app. If you don’t have the app yet, you can download it from the Apple Store or Google Play Marketplace.

SmartHub has helped Benton REA members connect with their co-op since 2015. With a swipe or tap, you can view and pay your bill, communicate with Benton REA representatives and report an outage.

SmartHub’s new look features a revamped home screen that presents the most important information—such as your bill amount and energy use—at a glance.

Billing, payment and other features are available with one click of a button in a new condensed menu.

Benton REA hopes these app updates

will provide a more user-friendly and efficient experience. All the features you love about SmartHub will still be available, just with a refreshed look and an enhanced user experience.

To learn more about Benton REA’s SmartHub app, visit [www.SmartHubApp.com](http://www.SmartHubApp.com). New look. New experience. Same SmartHub. ■



## SmartHub

National Information Solutions Cooperative

### 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)

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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

Keep the Family Connected with

# powerNET

BENTON RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

[BentonREA.org/PowerNET](http://BentonREA.org/PowerNET) 509-786-4004

# Low October Temperatures Cause High Bills

**October was unusually cold, causing electric heating systems to use more energy**

According to the National Weather Service, October 2019 was the coldest on record for several cities in Yakima and Benton counties.

The average temperature was 44.8 degrees in Yakima and 48 degrees in Richland. Seven days dipped down to or below 32 degrees in West Richland.

Since heating systems consume most of a home's kilowatt hours, these colder-than-usual temperatures directly impact electric bills. The colder the temperature, the longer furnaces run, and the higher the electric bill will be.

The monthly comparison chart on your billing statement can help you understand your current charges. Knowing how many days of energy use are in your billing cycle and the average temperature during that period are good clues to discovering why your bill is what it is.

The efficiency of your home also affects your energy use.

"Having a heat pump and knowing how to keep it running efficiently will not only extend the life of the unit, but also reduce your energy bill," says Eric Miller, Benton REA's energy advisor.

Benton REA rewards members who make energy-efficiency upgrades to their home, such as new windows, duct sealing, insulation, smart thermostats and heat pumps, including ductless heat pumps.

"All these products help homeowners reduce their energy consumption," Eric says. "I'm happy to talk with members as they make home improvement decisions that will also affect their energy bill."

Members may call 509-786-2913 to speak with Eric or any of our billing representatives. Rebate information is available at [BentonREA.org/rebates](http://BentonREA.org/rebates). ■

Monthly Comparison

Account #	Current Month	Same Month Last Year	Last Month
Days of Service	35	32	33
Total kWh	1504	943	902
kWh per Day	43	29	27
Average Temp.	47	52	56

The monthly comparison chart on your electric bill shows the average temperature and days of service compared to last year and last month.

**WATER IS POWER.** The lifeblood of the Northwest. **Hydropower** is our heartbeat.

FUELING OUR ECONOMY AND WAY OF LIFE.

The most dependable of Mother Nature's energy sources.

Constantly replenished courtesy of the water cycle.

EACH DROP WORKS HARD AS IT RUNS DOWNRIVER.

We work hard to make the most of each drop.

The strength of the river, flowing to your light switch.

**HYDROPOWER** IS THERE WHEN WE NEED IT.

A PUBLIC RESOURCE FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD.

So reliable it never even crosses our minds.

LOCAL, CLEAN & CARBON FREE.

Allowing us to breathe easy.

FROM RAIN DROP TO KILOWATT. WATER IS POWER.

TOGETHER WE POWER LIFE IN THE NORTHWEST.

[www.bpa.gov/HydroFlowsHere](http://www.bpa.gov/HydroFlowsHere)

# Trade and Academic Scholarship Applications Due January 3

High school seniors pursuing a trade program certificate or a four-year degree after graduation should apply for one of Benton REA's seven scholarships.

## Trade and Technical Scholarships

Benton REA will award up to two trade and technical scholarships for tuition at a community college, trade school or university. These \$4,000 scholarships will be distributed in equal installments based on the duration of the curriculum.

Qualifying career paths include, but are not limited to, automotive, computer-aided drafting, computer programming or repair, cosmetology, early childhood education, electrical

lineworker, HVAC technician, nursing, paramedic, pharmacy technician and welding.

To apply, students must submit a completed application, transcripts, an experience sheet and three reference letters, one from someone associated with the trade the applicant will study.

## Academic Scholarships

Benton REA will award up to five academic scholarships to students pursuing a four-year university or college education. This \$8,000 scholarship will be used for tuition and is distributed equally among the student's four years of education.

To apply, students must submit a completed application, transcripts,

**APPLY TODAY!**

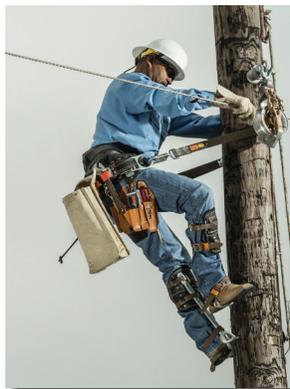
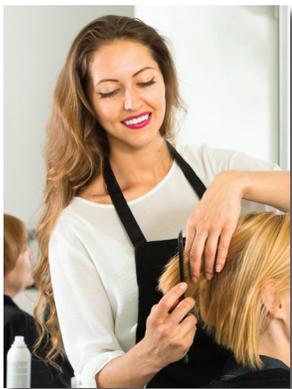
SAT/ACT scores and a 500-word essay and bibliography.

## Who Is Eligible

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.

Visit [BentonREA.org/youth](http://BentonREA.org/youth) to download scholarship applications. Email [memberservices@bentonrea.org](mailto:memberservices@bentonrea.org) or call 509-786-8265 for more information. ■

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



## Benton REA Holiday Office Hours

December 24, Christmas Eve  
Prosser 7 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
West Richland 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

December 25, Christmas Day  
CLOSED

January 1, New Year's Day  
CLOSED

Even when our offices are closed, Benton REA's outage response team is available anytime by calling 800-221-6987.

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

