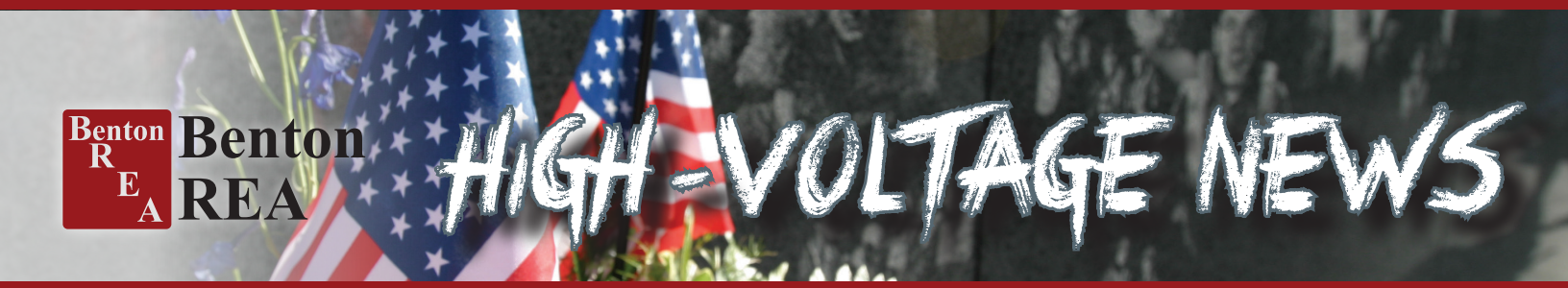

May 2020 P.O. Box 1150, Prosser, WA 99350 • 509-786-2913 • 800-221-6987 • www.BentonREA.org

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#POWERON

Energy assistance helps members power on through COVID-19

The last few months have taken a toll on our community, but we're working together, supporting each other and powering on.

If the COVID-19 outbreak had a negative financial impact on your household or business, Benton REA can help you stay up to date on your electric bill.

Payment Arrangements

For those unable to pay the full amount due on their electricity bill, paying even a portion will help avoid a large balance due down the road. Contact Benton REA at 509-786-2913 to set up a payment arrangement.

Benton REA is a not-for-profit, member-owned cooperative, so it is important each member pays for the electricity they use.

Income-Qualified, Senior and Disabled Discount

Benton REA offers a discount of $24 each month to qualifying members. To apply, download the application at BentonREA.org/Energy-Assistance or call us.

Local Services

Several local action agencies are equipped to help income-qualifying members apply for energy assistance. Visit BentonREA.org/Energy-Assistance for contact information.

Federal and State Assistance

Employers and workers impacted by COVID-19 may apply for relief through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Washington state programs also may be available to you and your family. Visit coronavirus.wa.gov for more information.

Energy Efficiency

If you spent more time at home recently, you may notice an increase in your typical energy use.

Heating and cooling are, by far, a home's biggest energy consumers. Appliances such as electric stoves, entertainment systems and computers also add to your electric bill when used more often than normal.

Visit Benton REA's Facebook or Twitter pages for tips on saving energy at home. The Home Energy Adventure at BentonREA.org/Energy-Audit can guide you through areas of your home where you can

SEE COVID-19 PAGE 2

Billing Statement Redesign

A helpful guide is included with your billing statement

The billing statement included in this envelope has a new look.

The new design is the result of Benton REA's desire to provide members and PowerNET customers with excellent customer service and more information in an easy-to-read format.

Electric and PowerNET rates, as well as your account information have not changed.

A helpful guide to your new bill is included with your statement. For those who receive paperless bills, the information is available on SmartHub as well as inside your May Ruralite magazine.

If you have questions after reading the guide, please contact Benton REA's billing department at 509-786-2913. ■

Header photo By Robin Conover

Kids' Electrical Safety Poster Contest

Posters are due June 19 for this year's Electrical Safety Poster Contest.

All elementary-age children whose parents or guardians are Benton REA members with active electric accounts are eligible. Prizes will be distributed in July.

For more information, call 509-786-8265 or email rmitchell@bentonrea.org.

Age Categories:

- Kindergartners and 1st graders
- 2nd and 3rd graders
- 4th and 5th graders

Prizes Awarded for Each Category:

- 1st place $50
- 2nd place $25
- 3rd place $15
- Honorable mention $10

Entries Must Include the Following on the Back of the Poster:

- Child's name
- Address
- Phone number
- Child's school
- Parent/guardian's name

Contest Rules:

- Parents and/or guardians must be members of Benton REA and have an active electric account.
- All poster entries must have an electrical safety theme.
- The poster must be 8½"x11" or larger.
- Posters may be crafted using watercolors, tempura, crayons, markers, powder paint, oil paint, ink, acrylics, charcoal or paper cutouts.
- The poster must be the complete work of the student. ■

COVID-19

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

save energy and money.

Email emiller@bentonrea.org or call 509-781-6751 if you wish to speak with our energy adviser.

If you have questions about your bill, please contact Benton REA's billing department at 509-786-2913.

Through it all, Benton REA remains here for you. Together, we can power on. ■

In Honor of Memorial Day, Benton REA will be closed May 25

Photo by John Lowry

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
Follow us on Facebook and Twitter

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

4 COMMON CULPRITS OF ELECTRICAL FIRES

Outdated wiring and overloaded circuits are the most common causes of electrical fires.
Check the following areas of your home to ensure your home's electrical safety is up to par.

Electrical outlets: Faulty electrical outlets are a leading cause of home fires. As outlets age, so do the wires behind them that you can't see. Any loose, damaged or warm-to-the-touch outlets should be repaired or replaced.

Electrical wiring: Outdated wiring is another common cause of electrical fires. Frequently tripped breakers, flickering lights and burning smells are clear warning signs. If your home is more than 20 years old, it may not be able to handle today's increased power load. If you suspect your home's wiring is outdated, leave this one to the pros and contact a qualified electrician.

Overloaded cords and outlets: Extension cords are not permanent solutions. If your big-screen TV, home theater system and other electronics are plugged into one extension cord, it's time to call an electrician and install additional outlets.

Old appliances: Older appliances are more likely to have loose or damaged wiring, which means they're more likely to catch fire. Check older appliances for damage and determine if it's time to upgrade or replace. Also check to ensure you're using appliance-grade outlets. A qualified electrician can help with installation.

BENTON REA MEMBERS HAVE SAVED OVER $81 THOUSAND ON PRESCRIPTIONS

IT'S SIMPLE

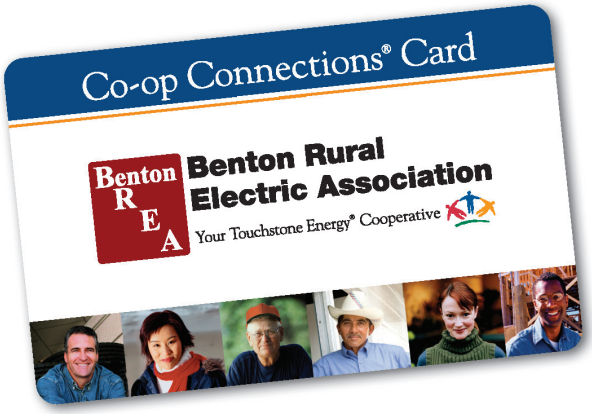
1. Present your Co-op Connections Card at check out. If you have insurance, present your insurance card as well.
2. Ask the pharmacist to calculate the discounted price. If you have insurance, ask the pharmacist to compare the discount card price to your insurance price.
3. You pay the lowest price between the two

TO LOCATE PROVIDERS IN YOUR AREA:

Go to **www.connections.coop** and create or sign into your account.

Click "Healthy Savings" at the top, then click "Locate Provider".

Enter your zip code to search for providers near you. Or you can call Member Services at 800-800-7616 if you have questions or to find a provider.



JUST ONE MORE GREAT MEMBER BENEFIT BROUGHT TO YOU BY BENTON REA

Pharmacy discounts are Not Insurance, and are Not Intended as a Substitute for Insurance. Pharmacy discounts range from 10% to 85% on most medications. **The discount is only available at participating pharmacies**. Prescription claims through this program will not be eligible for reimbursement through Medicaid, Medicare or any other government program.

DON'T HAVE A CARD? DOWNLOAD THE CO-OP CONNECTIONS APP TODAY OR CALL 509-781-6753 AND WE'LL MAIL ONE TO YOU