

Your Benton REA Board of Trustees

Michael Freepons
President
District 2

Connie Krull
Vice President
District 7

Catherine Russell
Secretary/Treasurer
District 8

Buddy Treadway
Trustee, District 1

Bob Evans
Trustee, District 3

Ron Johnson
Trustee, District 4

Tim Grow
Trustee, District 5

Scott Fisher
Trustee, District 6

General Manager
Michael J. Bradshaw
mikeb@bentonrea.org

In This Issue

- 1** Bill Assistance Applications Open
- 2** Lighting Labels and Lingo, Holiday Office Closures
- 3** Look Out for Scams Keep the Family Connected with PowerNET
- 4** 2021 Calendars, Local Discount Card

Applications for Bill Assistance Now Open, Donations Still Accepted

Two local community-action agencies are now accepting applications for Benton REA's new bill assistance program, now called Power To Care.

Qualifying residential members who need assistance paying their electric bill may apply.

More than \$4,500 Raised, Name Chosen

As of November 1, Benton REA members donated \$2,284.12 to the bill assistance fund through one-time and monthly contributions. Benton REA matched these donations, giving the program \$4,568.24 for seed money.

Benton REA members chose to name the new program Power To Care through an online survey posted on the co-op's website. The survey was open to all members.

Who Qualifies for Assistance

Residential members with a past-due balance on their account may apply for assistance if they have a combined annual gross household income equal to or less than 150% of the federal poverty guidelines, based on family size.

Available Assistance

Qualifying members will receive a one-time payment as a credit on their electric account. Each member is limited to one approved

assistance payment per calendar year. The bill credit will not exceed the amount due on a member's account.

Based on family size, a member may receive the following assistance:

Family Size	Maximum Assistance
1	\$100
2	\$125
3	\$150
4	\$175
5+	\$200

Qualifying households may receive additional assistance if their household income is 125% of the federal poverty guidelines or less.

How to Apply

Members may apply for Power To Care funds through two local agencies. Benton REA employees are not involved in approving funds, only in distributing them to approved members.

Yakima County residents should apply through the Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic, Northwest Community Action Center. Call 509-865-7630 or visit yvwfc.com/service/energy-assistance.

Benton County residents should apply through the Benton Franklin Community Action Committee. Call 509-545-4042 or visit bfcac.org/home-base/utilities.

Tell the agency you wish to apply for Benton REA's Power To Care program.

How to Donate

Benton REA members can enroll in three ways:

1. Through your SmartHub online account or the SmartHub app. Click "Power To Care" under the "Billing & Payments" tab. Click "Enroll" to select your round-up options.
2. Call 509-786-2913, Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
3. Mail the enrollment form on the back of your payment stub to a Benton REA office. This can be found on page 2 of your monthly Benton REA billing statement.

Nonmembers who wish to contribute—including individuals, businesses or community organizations—may call 509-786-2913.

For more information about applying for funds or contributing to the bill assistance program, visit BentonREA.org/BAP. ■



Lighting Labels and Lingo

These days, consumers have endless options when it comes to purchasing light bulbs, but the labels can be confusing! Use the information below as a helpful guide for browsing bulbs.

Lighting Facts	
Per Bulb	
Brightness	655 lumens
Estimated Yearly Energy Cost	\$1.08
Based on 3 hrs/day 11c/kWh Cost depends on rates and use	
Life	22.8 years
Based on 3 hrs/day	
Light Appearance	
Energy Used	9 watts

Source: U.S. Department of Energy



Read the Label

Under the Energy Labeling Rule, all light bulb manufacturers are required to give consumers key, easy-to-understand information on bulb efficiency. Take advantage of the Lighting Facts label, which gives you the information you need to buy the most energy-efficient bulb to meet your lighting needs. The label includes information on the bulb's **brightness, energy cost, life, light appearance** and **energy used** (wattage).

Save Energy

Bulbs are available in **many shapes and sizes** to fit your home's needs. Choosing more efficient bulbs can help reduce energy consumption and save you money!

- LEDs use 25%-30% of the energy and last eight to 25 times longer than incandescent bulbs.
- Purchase ENERGY STAR-rated bulbs to maximize energy efficiency.

Buy Lumens, not Watts

Lumens measure the amount of light produced by the bulb. Watts measure energy consumption.

Tip: To replace a 100-watt incandescent bulb, look for a bulb that produces about 1,600 lumens.

Incandescent 100 watt 1,600 lumens	LED 14 - 20 watt 1,600 lumens

Only \$6 a Year can help someone keep the lights on!

105.25 Your Bill
+ .75 Round Up Donation
=106.00 Total Due

If every co-op member rounded up their bill, together we could give more than \$5,250 each month to your neighbors in need!



Learn more at BentonREA.org/BAP or call 509-786-2913



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:

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

Benton REA will be closed December 24-25 and January 1.

Call 800-221-6987 anytime to report an electric or internet outage.

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Benton Rural Electric Association

Look Out For Scams

Unfortunately, in today's world, scams are inevitable. Scammers can threaten you with everything from legal action involving the Internal Revenue Service to turning off power to your home.

Utility scams often involve an individual or group posing as an employee of your electric cooperative. The scammer may use threatening language to frighten you into offering your credit card or bank account information.

Do not fall victim to these types of scams. Understand the threats and your best course of action:

- If someone calls you demanding you pay your electric bill immediately, gather as much information as you can from that individual, hang up the phone and contact local authorities. Scammers often use threats and urgency to pressure you into giving them your bank account number or loading a prepaid credit or debit card. Benton REA will never ask you to provide personal financial

information over the phone. If you have any doubts about your utility bill, call us at 509-786-2913.

- If someone comes to your home claiming to be an employee of Benton REA looking to collect money or inspect parts of your property, call to verify they are an employee. If they are not, call local authorities for assistance and do not let the individual into your home.

There are other types of scams consumers should watch out for:

- Government agencies such as the IRS will never call to inform you of unpaid taxes or other liens against you. You will always receive this information in the mail. If someone calls claiming to be the IRS, hang up immediately.
- If you receive an email from an unknown sender, an email riddled with spelling errors and typos or an email threatening action unless a sum of money is paid, do not click any links provided within the email



Scam artists can use phone numbers you recognize. Do not trust your caller ID. Never give away your financial information over the phone. PHOTO COURTESY OF TOUCHSTONE ENERGY COOPERATIVES

and do not respond to the email.

Simply delete the email or send it to your spam folder.

- If someone calls your home claiming to have discovered a virus on your computer, hang up. This caller's intent is to access personal information you keep on your computer.

Benton REA wants to make sure you avoid any and all scams that could put you or your financial information in jeopardy. ■

Keep the Family Connected with

powerNET

BENTON RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

BentonREA.org/PowerNET 509-786-4004

YOU GAVE

\$2,284.12

TO HELP YOUR NEIGHBORS
THROUGH THE POWER TO CARE PROGRAM

Benton REA
Matched Your Giving
For A Total Of

\$4,568.24

Enroll Anytime Through
Your SmartHub Account
or Call 509-786-2913

2021 Photo Calendars Available Upon Request

The editors at Ruralite magazine once again produced a stunning 2021 wall calendar featuring photos by public power consumers, like you.

The calendar features 13 wildlife and landscape photographs chosen from Ruralite's 2020 photo contest.

While Benton REA offices remain closed to the public, employees will mail you a free calendar upon request. We ask that you limit your request to one or two calendars per household so more members may enjoy them.

Call 509-786-2913 or email memberservices@bentonrea.org to request your 2021 Ruralite wall calendar. ■



A wheat field envelops an old home near Condon, Oregon, on the 2021 Ruralite calendar cover. PHOTO BY DENNIS BRUNEAU OF CONDON, OREGON



On the February page of the 2021 Ruralite calendar, a red fox yawns after a midday nap in northwest Alaska. PHOTO BY JIM DAU OF KOTZEBUE, ALASKA



**WE'RE ALL
IN THIS
TOGETHER.**

Let's Keep Small Businesses Thriving.

It's time to power a Small Business Comeback across America.

Co-op Connections is a free member benefit program brought to you by BENTON REA. Download the free Co-op Connections app to find discounts from your local merchants and nationwide. We can support our neighborhood businesses and reopen safely if we all work together and practice smart social distancing.

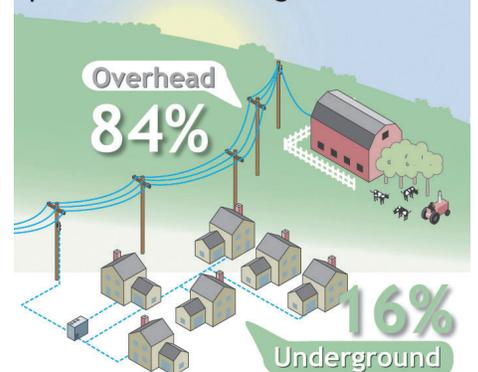
Visit www.SmallBusinessComeback.coop for more information.

#POWERON



How is your power delivered?

Electric cooperatives own and maintain 2.5 million miles of distribution lines across America. The majority are overhead lines, while 16 percent are underground.



Source: NRECA, Funnel Inc.