



Benton Rural Electric Association

Membership Guide



Your Source of Power & Information

HELLO MEMBER

WELCOME TO THE CO-OP

We are glad you're here. Let me introduce you to Benton REA, your not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperative. By purchasing electricity from Benton REA, you've become a member and an owner of the co-op.

Being a member-owner does not mean you own poles, wire and transformers. Your ownership is reflected in other ways, such as your vote. Members vote on important issues and elect individuals from their voting districts to represent them on the board of trustees.

The other way your ownership is reflected is in your ownership credits, which are your equity share of Benton REA. All utilities have margins (profits), but only electric cooperatives like Benton REA allocate and over time pay back those margins to its members.

We hope to get to know you throughout the years you choose to live or work here. Use this membership guide to get to know Benton REA. Please contact us whenever you need us.

Cooperatively,



Michael J. Bradshaw
General Manager

We're Here For You

📞 ON THE PHONE

Prosser Office: 509.786.2913
West Richland Office: 509.967.2921
Outages: 800.221.6987
Payments: 844.255.3685
PowerNET: 509.786.4004

🌐 ONLINE

info@bentonrea.org
www.BentonREA.org

📧 BY MAIL

PO Box 1150
Prosser, WA 99350



PROSSER OFFICE

402 7th St.
Open 7 a.m. - 5 p.m.,
Monday - Friday



WEST RICHLAND OFFICE

6095 W. Van Giesen St.
Open 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.,
Monday - Friday

Your Trustees

- BUDDY TREADWAY

District 1 - West Richland

- MIKE FREEPONS

District 2 - Prosser Area

- BOB EVANS

District 3 - Horse Heaven and East Rosa

- RON JOHNSON

District 4 - West Richland and Surrounding Areas

- TIM GROW

District 5 - Sunnyside Area

- SCOTT FISHER

District 6 - Mabton and Rimrock

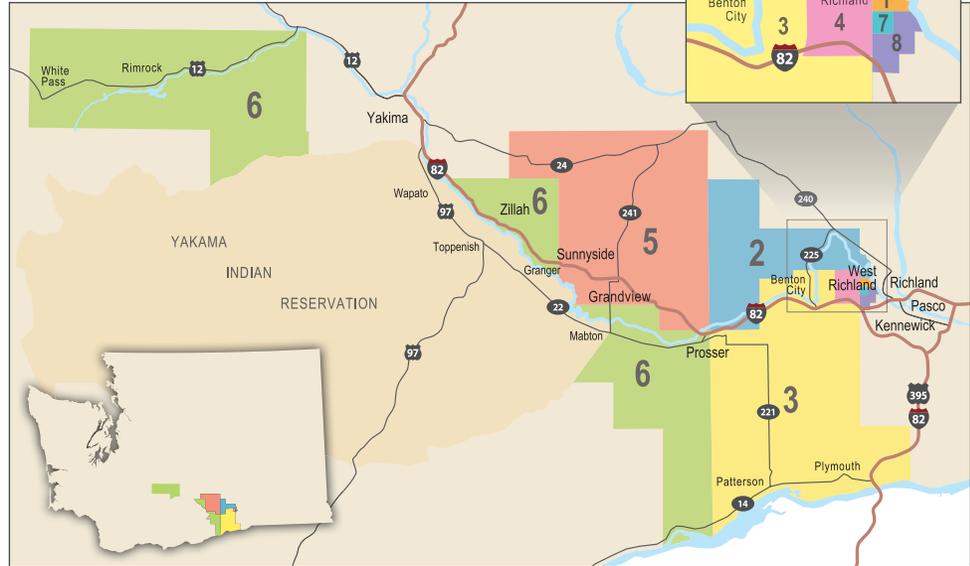
- CONNIE KRULL

District 7 - West Richland, Bird Hill and Paradise South

- CATHERINE RUSSELL

District 8 - West Richland, West Latin Area

Trustee Districts



Our Mission

Our mission at Benton Rural Electric Association, a member-owned and operated cooperative, is to provide affordable and reliable energy and other member-driven compatible services that enhance the quality of life for all our members. Our mission will also provide a stable, safe, competitive career-oriented work environment for the Association's employees. Our mission is being pursued by using progressive marketing in conjunction with sound financial and management principles.

Seven Cooperative Principles

VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefitting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.

Your Payment Options

Benton REA member representatives are available to go over your account options including levelized (budget) billing, automatic deduction payments and more. Call 509-786-2913 to speak with someone about your account options.

- **ONLINE**

SmartHub is your secure, online account management portal. With SmartHub you can not only pay your bill online but also report electric outages, sign up for automated payments, access your digital monthly member newsletter and review your past electric use and billing history. To create an account, visit BentonREA.org and click “Pay My Bill” on the homepage.



- **SMARTHUB APP**

Pay your bill using the SmartHub app. Simply download the app on your smart device.

- **AUTOMATIC DEDUCTION**

Save time and have your payments drawn directly from your bank account, your credit card or your debit card.

- **BY MAIL**

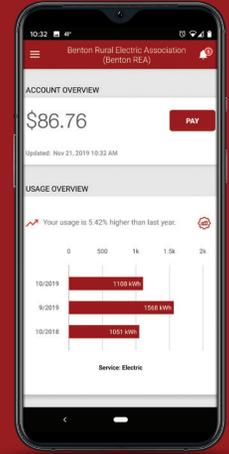
Mail a check and your completed bill stub, located on your bill at the bottom of page two, to PO Box 1150, Prosser WA 99350.

- **BY PHONE**

To ensure security of your financial information, Benton REA uses an automated system for our over-the-phone payments. Have your account number handy when you call 844-255-3685.

- **DROP IT OFF**

Visit a Benton REA office during business hours or drop off your non-cash payment in our overnight drop box located at each Benton REA office. Payments left in the drop boxes will be processed the next business day.



REPORT OUTAGES

BEFORE you report AN OUTAGE, ensure that the problem IS NOT on your side of the electric meter by doing the following:

- First, check your electrical panel to make sure you breakers and/or fuses are in working order.
- Check for an exterior main breaker (common with manufactured homes).
- Check to see if your neighbors have power.
- Once you've determined that the outage is not an internal electrical problem, you should report the outage.

When you report the outage have your Benton REA account number and the phone number on your account handy. These can be found on your most recent electric billing statement.

OUTAGE MAP

Electric outages affecting more than 10 members will appear on Benton REA's outage map. See it at BentonREA.org/outage-map.

CALL 800-221-6987

OR REPORT OUTAGES ON THE SMARTHUB APP



SAFETY FIRST

DO NOT attempt to touch or move a downed power line. Stay far away from power lines at all times and warn others to do the same. The ground around a downed power line and anything it touches may be conducting electricity and can cause serious injury or death if touched.

Learn more about electrical safety at BentonREA.org/safety

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

32% of Benton REA's power lines are underground. Because of these and the other utilities that may be lying beneath the surface (natural gas, communications, water, etc.), Benton REA urges you to call 811 before you dig.



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

Your Membership & Ownership Credits

Ownership credits are a unique benefit of belonging to a cooperative. Benton REA operates as a not-for-profit by annually allocating margins (profits) back to its members at the end of the year based upon the amount of electricity each member purchased. The allocation of margins is called ownership credits. Since Benton REA members are also the people we serve, ownership credits reflect each member's ownership in and contribution of capital to Benton REA.

Benton REA allocates and periodically pays back ownership credits to the members. If the co-op has margins in the year you purchased electricity from Benton REA, your equity increases. Likewise, the ownership credit payment you receive decreases your equity by the amount of your check. Benton REA determines your payment based on your total accumulated ownership 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.

Learn more about your ownership in Benton REA at BentonREA.org/OwnershipCredits.

It Pays to Be a Member

Since Benton REA was formed in 1937, the cooperative has paid more than \$15 Million ownership credits back to its member-owners.



Power To Care

Can you spare your pocket change?
Just \$6 a year can help someone keep
the lights on.

\$105.25	Your Bill
+ \$0.75	Round Up Donation
= \$106.00	Total Due

Round Up Your Bill Today

- Enroll with SmartHub,
- Call 509-786-2913 or
- Mail the form on your pay stub

Learn more at BentonREA.org/BAP.

Lowering Your Bills

Everyone has a monthly budget, even your cooperative. Because we are member-owned, it's our goal to help you save money by saving energy.

Benton REA offers several ways to reduce your monthly bill. Contact the member services department or visit BentonREA.org to discover which rebates and programs you qualify for. We're your source of power and information.



**Commercial
and Industrial
Rebates**
**Appliance and
HVAC Rebates**

Renewable Energy Program

Benton REA offers net metering to members who wish to invest in renewable energy like wind and solar. Contact Benton REA to discuss current program requirements and possible incentives before installing your home renewable energy system.

Residential Energy Savings Loans

Various loans are available to qualifying members who wish to purchase energy efficient upgrades to their home. Call for details.

Home Energy Use Consultations

If you have questions about your energy use, our energy experts can help. Call us at 509-786-8265 and we'll help discover where your home can be more efficient.



Your Co-op Community

Each month you'll receive your copy of Ruralite magazine featuring the stories of Northwest residents along with current Benton REA news and announcements.

Included with your billing statement, both in print and online, is Benton REA's High Voltage newsletter. Read it to learn about upcoming classes, events, programs and services you can participate in as a co-op member.

www.BentonREA.org

Learn more about the power of your co-op membership on our website, and connect with us on social media.

[@bentonrea](https://twitter.com/bentonrea)



[nextdoor](https://www.nextdoor.com)

Youth Programs

Benton REA is committed to promoting safety and education in our community. Electrical safety demonstrations are available for classrooms of all size and ages. Our scholarships and the Washington, D.C., Youth Tour are available to eligible high school students. Visit BentonREA.org/youth for more information.

powerNET

BENTON RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

PowerNET is owned and operated by Benton REA. The combination of being a private, not-for-profit and member owned cooperative ensures that PowerNET will respond quickly and efficiently to customers' needs.



Wireless Internet

We believe in providing service that performs as advertised. We build our network to provide the speeds advertised, even during peak times. No installation or additional fees. Call us to request a free signal test.



Computer Repair

Your computer is important to you. That's why we provide services to help you keep it running. Ask about our PC maintenance program, PC repair and troubleshooting, virus removal and more.



Business Networking

PowerNET can be a backup to your IT support team or handle the day-to-day operations for you. Our goal is to provide personal, professional and timely support for your business.



Keep the Power In Your Hands

SmartHub is available anytime, anywhere, on your computer, your smart device and on the go. View and pay your bill, communicate with Benton REA, manage your energy use and report outages. Visit BentonREA.org/SmartHub to create your account and download the app.

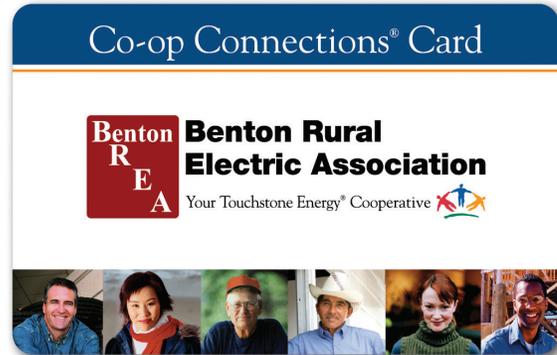
Co-op Bylaws

The Benton REA bylaws are a set of rules approved by the board of trustees. They establish the manner in which Benton REA will be operated. Members may request a hard-copy by calling 509-786-8260 or may download them at BentonREA.org/bylaws.

Co-op Connections Savings Card

As a member of Benton REA, a Touchstone Energy cooperative, you receive discounts on products and services from participating local and national businesses. The Co-op Connections member benefit program is absolutely free.

Use this card or download the Co-op Connections app to save at local and national retailers, hotels, pharmacies and more.



www.connections.coop