

## Your Benton REA Board of Trustees

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## Wanted: Donation Requests

Benton REA is seeking community donation requests. Those meeting the following guidelines will be granted on a first-come-first-served basis.

Only one donation request greater than \$200 per organization, activity or group will be considered per calendar year. A maximum of three total donations per organization each year will be awarded. Requests exceeding \$500 may be brought to the Benton REA Board of Trustees for consideration, under the discretion of the general manager.

Donations are available for schools, youth activities, civic and chamber of commerce, community health and community events.

Benton REA is accountable to its members; therefore, the following criteria applies to all donation requests:

- Donations will be limited to organizations or groups that provide services benefiting Benton REA members or their families.
- Requests must be received in writing and shall include a statement regarding the

intended use of the donation.

- Donations must directly benefit the group, activity or organization. The recipient must refrain from using any Benton REA donation received for political organizations or groups, candidates for or in political office, labor groups, or specific individuals or families.
- It is expected the organization, activity or group receiving donations will publicly acknowledge Benton REA's donation.

In 2020, Benton REA donated to:

### Schools

- Enterprise Middle School PTSA
- Grandview High School Leadership Class
- Keene Riverview Elementary
- Liberty Christian School
- Prosser Heights Elementary
- Sunnyside High School Senior Class
- Tri-Tech Skills Center
- Whitstran Elementary

### Youth Activities

- Benton Franklin Fair Market Stock Auction
- HD Girls Basketball and

HHBB Boys Basketball Tournaments

- Mustang Business Plan Competition

### Civic & Chamber

- Back Country Horseman Purple Sage Riders
- City of Prosser
- Grandview Chamber of Commerce
- Prosser Chamber of Commerce
- Walter Clore Center
- West Richland Citizen's Academy

### Community Health

- Chaplaincy Healthcare
- Children's Development Center
- Heads Up Tri-Cities
- Heartlinks Hospice and Palliative Care

### Community Event

- Great Prosser Balloon Rally Virtual Event
- Hogs & Dogs/Cool Desert Nights Virtual Tour
- Movies at the Mountain
- Yakima Valley Fair & Rodeo

## How To Apply

To request a community donation from Benton REA, submit a letter including where the donation should be mailed, the requested amount of funding and a description of what the funds will be used for to:

Benton REA  
Attn: Community Donations  
P.O. Box 1150  
Prosser, WA 99350



The Touchstone Energy hot air balloon flies at the 2017 Great Prosser Balloon Rally. PHOTO BY ELECIA COPENHAVER

# Three DIY Efficiency Projects to Tackle in 2021

A new year brings new opportunities to save energy and money. You may think energy-efficiency upgrades require a great deal of time and expense, but that's not always the case.

If you to make your home more efficient, but don't want to break the bank, there are several do-it-yourself projects you can tackle to increase energy savings. Consider these three inexpensive efficiency upgrades to help you save energy throughout the year.

## Trim Dryer Vent

Level of difficulty: easy

Supplies needed: tin snips, gloves, measuring tape and masking tape

Estimated cost: about \$25, depending on the supplies you already have

If your dryer vent hose is too long, your dryer is working harder than it has to, using more energy than necessary. The vent hose should be long enough for you to pull the dryer out a couple feet from the wall, but the shape of the hose should form a line. It should not have a lot of slack or twists and curves. A shorter, unobstructed vent hose increases the efficiency of your dryer and dries clothing faster. It also reduces lint buildup, which can create fire hazards.

Measure, mark and trim the hose to the desired length, then reattach the hose to your dryer and exterior vent. If you're unsure about the hose length, check YouTube for a video tutorial.

## Seal Air Leaks

Level of difficulty: moderate

Supplies needed: caulk and caulk gun, weatherstripping, gloves, putty knife and paper towels

Estimated cost: \$25 to \$50 depending on the supplies you buy

Sealing air leaks in your home can help you save 10% to 20% on heating and cooling bills. Apply caulk around windows, doors, electrical wiring

and plumbing penetrations to seal in conditioned air. You should also weatherstrip exterior doors, which can keep out drafts and help you control energy costs. Types of caulking and weatherstripping materials vary. Ask your local hardware or home store for assistance if you're unsure about the supplies you need. For more information, the Department of Energy provides step-by-step instructions for caulking and weatherstripping at <https://bit.ly/2Kesu6W>.

## Insulate Attic Openings

Level of difficulty: moderate

Supplies needed: rigid foam board, faced blanket insulation, tape for foam board, measuring tape, utility knife, caulk, caulk gun and plywood

Estimated cost: \$50 to \$100

A properly insulated attic is one of the best ways to optimize energy savings and comfort in your home. Many homeowners don't consider insulating the attic stairs, or the opening to your attic space. Even a well-insulated attic can leak air through the opening. Luckily, there's an easy fix.

An insulated cover box can seal and insulate the attic opening. You can build your own insulated cover box or buy a pre-built box or kit from a local home improvement store.

If you decide to build your own, check out these step-by-step instructions from the Department of Energy at [bit.ly/36YNCYQ](http://bit.ly/36YNCYQ). If your attic opening is in a garage that you do not heat and cool, this upgrade will not be as effective.

Saving energy doesn't have to be hard. With a little time and effort, you can maximize energy savings and increase the comfort of your home.

To learn about additional ways to save, email [memberservices@bentonrea.org](mailto:memberservices@bentonrea.org) or call 509-786-8265. ■



**A shorter, unobstructed vent hose increases the efficiency of your dryer, dries clothing faster and reduces lint buildup, which can create fire hazards.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF TOUCHSTONE ENERGY COOPERATIVES

## 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](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:

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Ron Mitchell, Electrical Advisor  
Eric Miller, Energy Advisor

# NEW: Schedule Payments in SmartHub

Members who use Benton REA's SmartHub to pay their electric and internet bills can now schedule payments for a later date. This added feature gives members more flexibility and convenience. To schedule a payment, follow these steps.

## Schedule A Payment on the SmartHub Website

1. Create a SmartHub account, or login by visiting BentonREA.org and clicking Pay My Bill.
2. Under the Billing & Payments tab, click Billing & Payments. Select the account(s) you want to pay. Type the amount you are paying under Make A Payment. Then click Pay Now.
3. Confirm the amount you are paying is correct. Then click Continue.
4. Select the Payment Date. Choose Today, Due Date or Other, then click Continue. If you select a date after the 20th of the current month, you will see a warning that the payment date

selected is past the due date.

5. Complete the details of your payment method, then click Continue.

6. If the information on the confirmation page is correct, click Submit. Your payment will be paid or scheduled based on your selections. You will see a payment confirmation screen and receive a confirmation email.

## Schedule A Payment on the SmartHub App

1. Download the SmartHub app on your mobile device, then create or login to your SmartHub account.
2. Under Bill & Pay, select Make a Payment.
3. Select the account(s) you want to schedule payments for and click Pay.
4. Select the amount you are paying and the date you want to schedule the payment. If you select a date after the 20th of the current month, you will see a warning that the payment date

selected is past the due date.

5. Input your payment information in the secure app. You can save your payment information for future use.

6. Review and confirm your scheduled payment. You will see a payment confirmation screen and receive a confirmation email.

## What Is SmartHub?

SmartHub has features that make managing your account as easy as possible. Whether through the web, or your smartphone or tablet (Android or iOS), you can pay your bill, view your energy use, contact customer service and get the latest co-op news.

## Billing History and Use Trends

In SmartHub, you can see your current bill and previous bills. You can see how your use is trending over time, which will allow you to take steps to lower your electricity use and your bill.

## Make Fast Payments

The first time you make a payment either through SmartHub, you will be able to securely store your payment information for future transactions. The next time you need to pay your bill, it will only take a few clicks.

## Co-op News and Notifications

See important notices with SmartHub. Select how you want to be notified about your accounts, including email and text messaging.

## Report Issues

Reporting a service issue or electric outage is a snap with SmartHub. There's no need to call the office. Just let us know about the issue with a few clicks. You can also contact us through SmartHub for customer service requests or answers to your questions.

Get started by downloading the SmartHub app, or creating a login by going to BentonREA.org and clicking Pay My Bill. ■

The graphic features the SmartHub logo (a sun-like icon with 'smart hub' text) and the large text 'SMART PAYMENTS'. Below this, it lists benefits: 'Save Time.', 'Avoid service interruptions.', and 'Eliminate late fees.' At the bottom left is the Benton REA logo. On the right, a smartphone displays the 'Bill & Pay' app interface, showing a total balance of \$155.30, a 'Pay' button, and a list of account management options: Auto Pay Program, Billing History, Budget Billing, Payment Extensions, Payment History, and Round Up.

**SMART MANAGEMENT. SMART LIFE. SMARTHUB.**

# 2021 Photo Calendars Available Upon Request

The editors at Ruralite magazine 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.

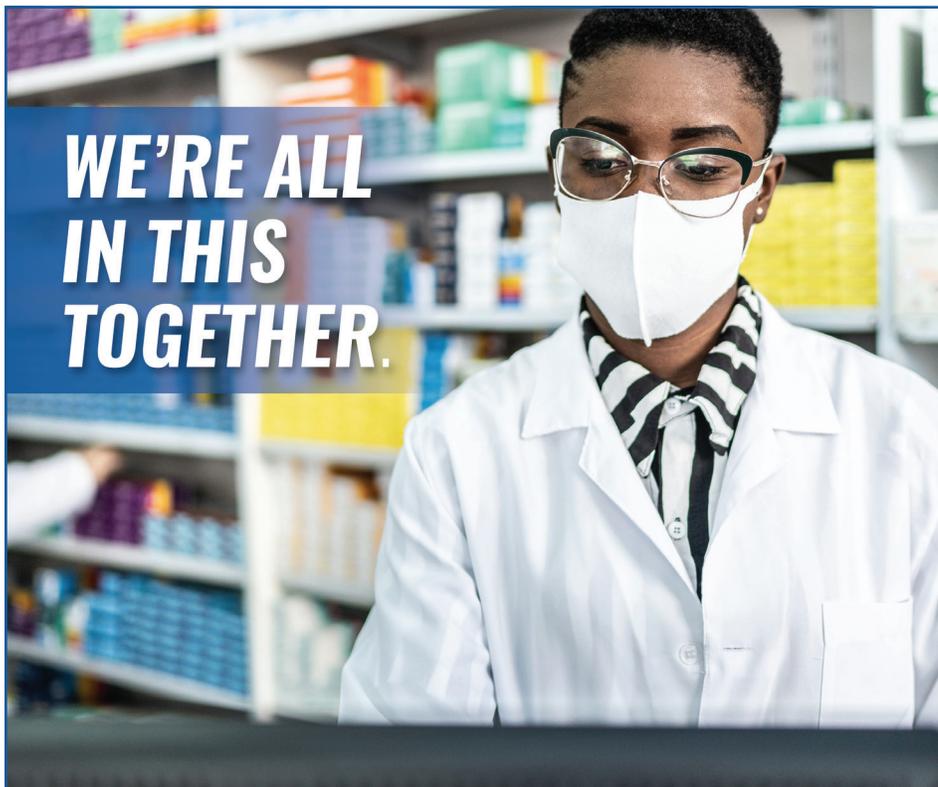
Call 509-786-2913 or email [memberservices@bentonrea.org](mailto:memberservices@bentonrea.org) to request your 2021 Ruralite calendar. ■



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 pharmacies. We can support our neighborhood businesses and reopen safely.

Visit [www.SmallBusinessComeback.coop](http://www.SmallBusinessComeback.coop) for more information.

#POWERON



## UPCOMING BLOOD DRIVES

**JANUARY 13**  
11 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Holiday Inn Express & Suites  
680 Wine Country Road, Prosser

**JANUARY 21**  
11 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Mayfield Gathering Place  
& Gardens  
331 S. 41st Ave., West Richland

To schedule your donation, use sponsor code "BentonREA" at [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) or call 509-781-6753.