

Your Benton REA Board of Trustees

Connie Krull
*President,
District 7*

Bob Evans
*Vice President,
District 3*

Catherine Russell
*Secretary/Treasurer,
District 8*

Buddy Treadway
Trustee, District 1

Michael Freepons
Trustee, District 2

Ron Johnson
Trustee, District 4

Tim Grow
Trustee, District 5

Scott Fisher
Trustee, District 6

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

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Nominations Open for District 7, 8 Trustees

Benton REA is governed by eight trustees who each represents a district of members. Trustees are elected by members to serve a three-year term.

In 2021, the incumbent Benton REA trustees whose terms expire are Connie Krull, District 7; and Catherine Russell, District 8.

Qualified members can be placed on the ballot as candidates for Benton REA trustee positions. Members interested in running for the board of trustees must call Executive Assistant Missy Jasso at 509-786-8260 by June 1.

Members who live in districts 7 and 8 will receive a ballot in August. Members may mail their ballot or bring their ballot to the annual meeting. All ballots will be counted, and the election results will be announced at the annual meeting on September 18.

To find out which trustee district you live in, contact Benton REA. ■

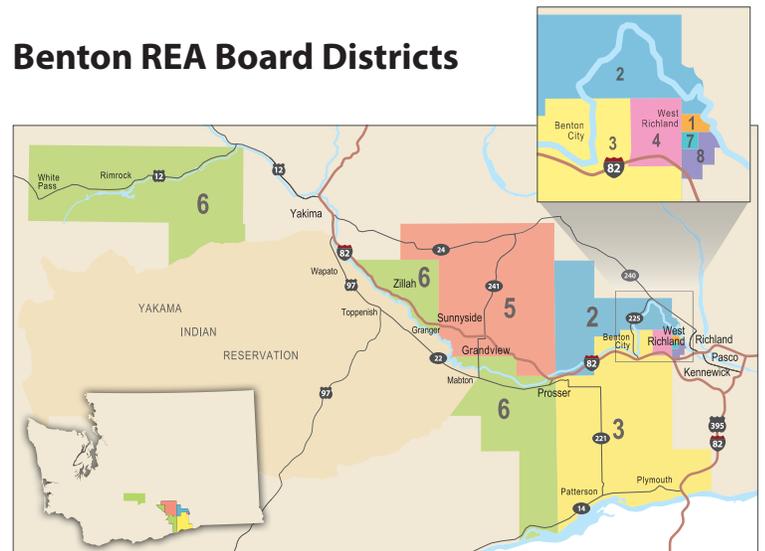


Connie Krull
President, District 7 Trustee
West Richland, Bird Hill
and Paradise South



Catherine Russell
Secretary/Treasurer
District 8 Trustee
West Richland, West Lattin Area

Benton REA Board Districts



Save the Date for Your Annual Meeting: September 18

Benton REA trustees and employees look forward to gathering with Benton REA members again. The co-op is planning an outdoor annual meeting with food and family activities at the Red Mountain Event Center—formerly known as the Tri-City Raceway—with a backup drive-in-only or virtual event if needed. Look for more details and your official invitation in the September issue of Ruralite.



Generate Safely.

Never use a portable generator indoors.

Do not plug generators into standard electrical outlets.

Use heavy-duty extension cords to connect appliances into the generator.

Start the generator before connecting appliances.



May is Electrical Safety Month.
Safety Starts with You.

#ElectricalSafetyMonth

Benton Rural Electric Association

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 509-786-1626; 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

Welcome Back We've Missed You

Our Offices are Open
Monday - Friday
Prosser 7 a.m. - 5 p.m.
West Richland 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.



Masks Required



Maximum Occupancy = 2 Guests

Benton Rural Electric Association
PowerNET
BENTON RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION



The Benton REA offices in Prosser and West Richland will be closed Monday, May 31, in observance of Memorial Day.

We remember and honor all who sacrificed their lives.

Tribute to Old Glory. Photo by John Lowrey



Questions to Ask Your Solar Contractor

As with any major home improvement project, buying from the right contractor is every bit as important as the product you are buying. Due diligence is critical to ensure you get the best system for a fair price, and that it is installed correctly and on time.

This lengthy list of questions may help you select the right contractor.

Questions About the Contractor

1. How long have you been in business?
2. Are you licensed to do business in Washington?
3. How many photovoltaic systems have you installed? Can I talk with former customers and see successful installations?
4. Who will do the installation at my site? Are they employees or subcontractors?
5. What training have you and your installers had, and what certifications do you and your installers hold? Do you have an installer with a master electrician license, and is there an installer on your team licensed to install solar?
6. Does your company carry general liability insurance for at least \$1 million, professional liability insurance, workers compensation insurance plus any other types of insurance?

Questions About the Installation

1. What size and type of system do you recommend for my site? Why?
2. Are there any steps I must take before the installation, such as removing trees or replacing my roof?
3. What brand(s) of systems do you install, and what are their advantages?

4. Are the systems manufactured in the United States?

5. What warranties do you and the manufacturer offer? Do you offer a warranty on installation? How do I make a claim on defective or short-lived equipment?

6. What tax credits, rebates and other incentives are available for this installation? Who files the paperwork for these incentives?

7. How much of my current energy use does this system cover?

8. What is the payback period?

9. Can I monitor the output of my panels? What is the process for doing that?

10. How and when do you involve staff from Benton REA in the installation? Do you have experience interconnecting with utility grids?

11. Are permits needed for this installation? Who obtains them and pays any fees?

12. When will installation begin? How long will it take to complete?

13. How do we communicate if questions or problems arise? And how do I reach you after hours?

14. If my energy use changes, can I increase the number of solar panels later?

15. Is it possible the installation could cause my roof to leak? If so, does your company take responsibility for repairs?

Questions About the Bid/Contract

1. Is this bid an estimate or a fixed price?

2. Does the bid include the total cost of the project, including components, materials, permits and labor?

3. Does the bid include a breakdown of each of the components (make and model number, size or kilowatt-hour per year) as well as price of each, so I can see what each portion costs?

4. Does the bid include details about permits?

5. Does the bid include the time frame for beginning and ending the installation?

6. Does the bid include warranty information, as well as how to file a claim?

7. Does the bid include expected operation and maintenance costs; projected monthly, annual and lifetime costs and savings; and projected energy production?

8. Does the bid include details about who will file paperwork for tax credits, rebates and other incentives?

9. What documentation will I receive when the project is done? (This may include lien releases and other contract-related paperwork, as well as warranties, operating manuals and more.)

Questions About Payment

1. How much is the down payment? When is it due?

2. What is the payment schedule?

3. Do you offer financing or have a relationship with a bank that offers financing? ■

Contact Benton REA at 509-786-8265 or visit www.BentonREA.org/Renewable-Energy for more information about current incentives and net-metering policies.

Three Ways to Electrify Your Lawn Care

Summer is just around the corner, and you can already smell the freshly cut grass. If you are in the market to upgrade your lawn care equipment, you may want to consider electric or battery-powered options.

Gas-powered lawn mowers and trimmers may be your go-to, but times they are a-changin'. Electric lawn care equipment options are more popular than ever, offering consumers faster charging, longer battery life and quieter products than their gas-powered counterparts. Here are three ways you can electrify your lawn care this spring.

1 Electric Lawn Mowers

Electric lawn mowers have come a long way during the last few years. Early models required corded connections, which were tricky to manage. The cord has been cut.

Cordless electric mowers are more expensive than gas-powered mowers, typically ranging from \$200 to \$500. But much of the upfront cost can be recovered since electricity is less expensive than gas, and electric engines generally require less maintenance than gas engines.

Electric mowers are suitable for most lawn care needs, with batteries that typically require one to two hours to fully charge. Most batteries run for a full hour. That said, if you have a large yard—half an acre or larger—a gas-powered option may better suit your needs.

2 Electric Trimmers

Cordless electric string trimmers are a great option for most lawns. Traditionally, like lawn mowers, string trimmers are gas powered. New versions of electric trimmers are improving and now considered worthy competitors of gas-powered models.

Cordless electric trimmers are much quieter and easier to use. Most batteries last 30 to 45 minutes. If you have a lot of space to trim, you may want to consider a back-up battery or plan to work in short bursts.

If you are interested in buying an



electric trimmer, the main factors to consider are battery life, charge time and power. Costs vary depending on features, but you can find a quality version for about \$100.

3 Electric Leaf Blowers

After cutting and trimming your lawn, you need to clear off walkways and patios for the finishing touch. If you don't want to deal with maintenance of a gas-powered blower or the restraints of a corded blower, a cordless electric version is a great option.

Cordless electric leaf blowers are lightweight and easy to maneuver, but don't offer as much power as gas-powered and corded blowers. If your leaf blowing and clearing needs are minimal, a cordless electric leaf blower can get the job done.

Costs for a cordless electric blower vary depending on power and battery quality. You can buy a dependable model for \$150 and up.

If you are looking to electrify your lawn care equipment, be sure to do your homework. Search online for the latest reviews, and check trusted websites such as www.ConsumerReports.org. With a little research, you will be well on your way to Lawn of the Month with less

maintenance, hassle and noise. And, your neighbors will thank you. ■

ABOVE: Use an electric leaf blower this summer to clear walkways after mowing, and again in the fall for leaf removal.

BELOW: Electric trimmers are quieter than gas-powered trimmers. Most batteries last 30 to 45 minutes. PHOTOS COURTESY OF NRECA

