



**Benton
REA**

High-Voltage News

June 2021

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

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Benton REA Members Pay Neighbors' Electricity Bills

Benton REA members who need assistance paying past-due electric bills may qualify for help from fellow co-op members through the Power to Care program.

To receive Power to Care funds, you must:

- Be a residential member of Benton REA,
- Have a past-due balance on your electric account, or have received a electric disconnection notice, and
- Have a combined annual gross household income equal to or less than 200% of the federal poverty guideline income level based on the number of people in the household.

Bill assistance is granted as a credit on the qualifying member's electric bill once per

calendar year. The amount received depends on family size, household income, the amount due on the electric account and availability of funds.

Benton REA strongly encourages members to call 509-786-2913 before applying to ensure eligibility.

To apply, download the "Power to Care Bill Assistance Application" and return it to a Benton REA office or the address on the form. Visit www.BentonREA.org/PowerToCare to download the application.

Want to Contribute?

More than 400 Benton REA members round up their monthly electric bill to the nearest dollar each month,

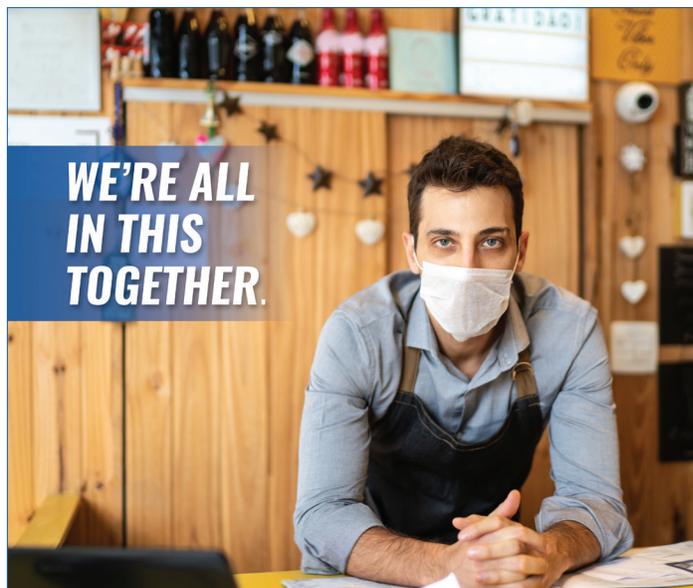
donating the extra change to Power to Care. The program is voluntary and fully funded by member contributions.

Members may enroll on their SmartHub accounts online or on the app, or may call 509-786-2913. ■



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**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

Tree Pruning Improves Services for All

We are fortunate to have so many trees offering beauty, shade, and a habitat for birds and other wildlife. Benton REA strives to balance maintaining beautiful surroundings with a reliable power supply by keeping power lines clear in rights-of-way.

A right-of-way is the land Benton REA uses to construct, maintain, replace or repair underground and overhead power lines. Rights-of-way enable the co-op to provide clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder power line installation, maintenance or operation. They are typically on public lands or located near a business or home.

Benton REA must be able to maintain the power lines above and below the right-of-way. The goal of our vegetation management program is to provide reliable power to members while maintaining the beauty of our community. Proactive vegetation management benefits co-op members in three tangible ways.

Safety

First and foremost, Benton REA cares about our members and puts their safety and that of our lineworkers above all else. Overgrown vegetation and trees pose a risk to power lines.

If trees are touching power lines in our members' yards, it can pose grave danger to families. If children can access those trees, they can



potentially climb into a danger zone. Electricity can arc from a power line to conductive material such as a nearby tree.

A proactive management approach also reduces the potential for fallen branches or trees during severe weather events that make restoring power more complicated and dangerous for lineworkers.

Reliability

One of the biggest benefits of a smart vegetation management program is reliability.

Strategic tree pruning reduces the frequency of downed lines causing power outages. Generally speaking, healthy trees don't fall on power lines, and clear lines don't cause problems.

Proactive pruning keeps lines clear to promote reliability.

Benton REA is a part of the Tree Line USA program. The co-op provides training in quality tree care, annual safety training for the tree crews, public education, tree-based energy conservation information and coordinates with the Arbor Day Foundation to plant trees in the community.

Affordability

Benton REA is a not-for-profit cooperative, meaning we strive to keep costs in check to keep our rates affordable. This extends to our approach to vegetation management.

If trees grow too close to power lines, the potential for expensive repairs also increases. Effective tree pruning and other vegetation management efforts keep costs down for everyone.

Our community is a special place. Benton REA appreciates the beauty trees provide, but also knows the community depends on reliable energy. Through vegetation management, we are better able to keep power lines clear, prepare for future weather events and secure the reliability of the grid.

To learn more about Benton REA's tree programs, visit www.BentonREA.org and type "tree" in the search bar. ■

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

How Long Will an EV Battery Last?

How long will an electric vehicle battery last, and what is the price to replace it? The response is often “it depends.” Many electric vehicle models come with an eight-year/100,000 mile warranty, but some do not.

While there is little agreement in the EV industry as to how long a vehicle battery will last, there is strong agreement and data proving the more energy used from the battery between charges, the shorter the battery’s life. As a result, there are some in the industry who adopt the charging phrase “graze not gorge” to encourage regular, short charging sessions, as opposed to using the vehicle until the battery is depleted.

A few common conditions may cause high energy usage of the battery and possibly contribute to shorter battery life:

- High temperatures.
- Overcharging.
- Frequent driving with a battery less than half-full.
- Frequent quick accelerations.

Prices start at \$5,500 to replace a battery when the vehicle is past warranty. You may be able to refurbish battery packs for about half the cost of a replacement. Additionally, battery prices continue to drop, so replacement costs may decline.

Lastly, there is a concern about the disposal of old batteries. Thankfully, we are beginning to see batteries recycled or used as part of energy storage systems. This keeps batteries out of landfills and enables them to be used years after they are removed from vehicles. For example, Nissan launched an initiative to use old Nissan LEAF batteries as energy storage for streetlights. The lights have a solar panel that generates energy which gets stored in the battery. At night, the battery provides the power to run the streetlight.

As battery technology continues to develop, we will see the life of batteries extend and the cost of refurbishments and replacements decrease. It is also

encouraging to see that there is a second life for batteries after they are removed from vehicles. ■

For more information about electric vehicles, charging stations, tax credits and incentives, visit www.BentonREA.org/EV.

This article was provided by Advanced Energy, a nonprofit energy consulting firm. For more information, visit www.advancedenergy.org.



Register Your EV, Get \$100

Benton REA members can receive up to \$100 from Benton REA toward the purchase of an electric vehicle.

Members will receive \$100 for electric vehicles purchased before a Level 2 charger has been installed in their homes or businesses where the vehicles will be charged. Members can receive \$50 if the vehicles were purchased after a Level 2 charger was installed. Plug-in-hybrid vehicles qualify for a \$25 incentive.

To receive the incentive, members must allow Benton REA to install an AMI or equivalent automated meter on their homes or businesses where the vehicles will be charged. There is no charge for the meter replacement. Benton REA will use the automated meter to study the impact of electric vehicles on the cooperative's electrical system.

All-electric vehicles can create a large demand on the electrical transformer and equipment powering homes and businesses. To prevent outages caused by stressing the capacity of transformers, Benton REA engineers will monitor the load through the automated meters.

An AMI meter is not required for the plug-in-hybrid vehicle incentive because these vehicles do not significantly add to the overall building's electrical demand.

Members may also qualify for Benton REA's \$300 rebate and \$2,000 loan for Level 2 residential charging stations.

Installing a Level 2 (240-volt), smart electric vehicle charger in your home or business will significantly increase the speed of charging your electric vehicle. The Level 2 devices charge a fully depleted electric vehicle in eight to 10 hours, as opposed to the 24 hours needed for a Level 1 charger.

To qualify, Benton REA members must set the charging delay to after 10 p.m. This prevents adding to the peak electric load on the system and gives enough charge overnight for your morning commute. ■

Electric vehicle registration forms as well as plug-in hybrid, and Level 2 incentive applications are available at www.BentonREA.org/EV or by calling 509-786-8265.



Electric vehicle Level 2 charging stations can be installed inside or outside a home.