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New Payment Kiosks at Harvest Foods and Yoke's Fresh Market

Pay with cash, card or check during store hours

Benton REA's two new payment kiosks are at Lep-Re-Kon Harvest Foods in Prosser and Yoke's Fresh Market in West Richland.

Benton REA and PowerNET bills can be paid at the kiosks using cash, check or card anytime the stores are open. Payments are posted to members' accounts immediately, and the process is easy.

Just touch the screen to start. The first time you use the kiosk, you will need your account number as well as the phone number and first and last name on the account. You can also scan the QR code on the first page of your Benton REA or PowerNET bill.

Once you log in, you can create a PaySite account for a faster experience in the future.

"The idea to install payment kiosks came during the shutdown of our offices in March 2020," says Mike Bradshaw, Benton REA general manager. "Members who preferred to pay their bill with cash were suddenly not able to. Money orders and other means of payment were accepted, but in the long run we knew we needed a solution where members could pay with cash if the Benton REA offices were closed."

If Benton REA's office hours don't work with your schedule, you can now pay at either of the kiosk locations on weekends and evenings.

The kiosks are one of many ways to pay your PowerNET or Benton REA bill, including:

- SmartHub, Benton REA's secure online account management portal. Click "Pay My Bill" at the top of www.BentonREA.org to create or log in to your SmartHub account.
- Download the SmartHub app for Android or iOS and use your smartphone or tablet to view your bill, pay it or schedule a future payment.
- Mail your payment and completed payment stub in the self-addressed envelope we include with your billing statement.
- Call our secure, automated payment number. Have your account number handy and call 844-255-3685 .
- Automatic deduction from your bank account or credit/debit card is an easy way to pay your bill on time every month.
- Visit Benton REA's local offices, where you can deliver your payment to a friendly Benton REA member service representative.



Benton REA Billing Supervisor Kendra Wynn uses the new payment kiosk at Lep-Re-Kon Harvest Foods in Prosser to check her account balance. Photo by Elicia Copenhaver

- Drop a check in our secure payment boxes 24/7 at either Benton REA office in Prosser or West Richland.
- The New payment kiosks are located at Prosser's Lep-Re-Kon Harvest Food (471 Wine Country Rd.) and West Richland's Yoke's Fresh Market (1401 Bombing Range Rd.). ■



UPCOMING CO-OP BLOOD DRIVES

October 7 in Prosser

11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Green Room at the Princess
1226 Meade Ave.

October 21 in West Richland

11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

West Richland Municipal Services
Building, City Council Chambers
3100 Belmont Blvd.

To schedule your donation, use sponsor code "BREA" at www.RedCrossBlood.org

Every two seconds someone in America needs blood. Blood cannot be manufactured. It can only come from volunteer donors.



**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

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MEMBER SERVICES

This newsletter is produced by the Benton REA Member Services and Economic Development Department:

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Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Old, uninsulated and improperly installed exterior doors can waste energy and money.

Shut the door on wasted energy by weather stripping and sealing all exterior doors. If you have an old exterior door, consider replacing it with a newer, energy efficient model.

Source: energy.gov



Get Familiar with Cyber Basics

At a time when we are more connected than ever, being “cyber smart” is of the utmost importance.

This year has already seen more than a fair share of cyber attacks and breaches, including the high-profile attacks on the Colonial Pipeline and other critical infrastructure. Furthermore, cyber attacks are becoming more sophisticated with more evolved bad actors cropping up each day.

Luckily, there are several steps that we can take on a daily basis to mitigate risks and stay one step ahead of malefactors. Here are a few quick tips:

Enable multifactor authentication

Multifactor authentication adds that necessary second check to verify your identity when logging in to one of your accounts.

By requiring multiple methods of authentication, your account is further protected from being compromised, even if a bad actor hijacks your password. In this way, MFAs make it more difficult for password cracking tools to enable attackers to break into accounts.



Use strong passphrases and a password manager

All too often strong passphrases and password managers are overlooked.

Spending more time online during the pandemic has certainly contributed to more bad actors prowling for accounts to attack. Using long, complex and unique passwords is a good way to stop your account from being hacked, and an easy way of keeping track of and remembering your passwords is by using a password manager.

Benton REA's PowerNET recommends these password managers:

- Keeper—www.keepersecurity.com
- Dashlane—www.dashlane.com
- LastPass—www.lastpass.com
- Bitwarden—www.bitwarden.com
- RoboForm—www.roboform.com

Perform software updates

When a device prompts that it's time to update the software, it may be tempting to simply click postpone, and ignore the message. However, having the latest security software, web browser, and operating system on devices is one of the best defenses against online threats. Don't wait—update.

Do your research

Common sense is a crucial part of maintaining good online hygiene.

An intuitive step to stay safe online is to do some research before downloading anything new to your device, such as apps.

Before downloading any new app on your device, check who created it, what the user reviews say and if there are any articles published online about the app's privacy and security features.

Check your settings

Be diligent to double check your privacy and security settings and be aware who can access your documents. This extends from Google docs, to Zoom calls and beyond.

For meetings on Zoom, for example, create passwords so only those invited to the session can attend, and restrict who can share their screen or files with the rest of the attendees.

Download free antivirus software

Benton REA's PowerNET employees recommend several free antivirus programs you can install on your personal computer. Download them at www.BentonREA.org/AntiVirus.

You may also consider PowerNET's PC maintenance service which includes an antivirus program, maintenance on updates to your software and a daily security check for just \$6 a month.

Being cyber smart and maintaining stellar online hygiene is the best way to protect yourself and others from cyber attacks. No single tip is foolproof, but taken together they can make a real difference for taking control of your online presence.

Following these tips is also easy and free. By taking preventive measures and making a habit of practicing online safety, you can decrease your odds of being hacked exponentially—and prevent lost time and money, as well as annoyance. ■

PASSWORD DOS AND DON'TS

A strong password can make all the difference in protecting your personal information. Follow these tips for stronger passwords.

DO:

- Change the manufacturer's Wi-Fi password on your router.
- Use two-factor authentication.
- Use 3-4 random, misspelled words to create good passphrases that can still be remembered.

DON'T:

- Don't use common words or numbers like “password” or “1234.”
- Don't use personal details like your date of birth in a password.
- Don't use the same password for multiple accounts.

October is
Cybersecurity
Awareness Month.

Do Your Part. #BeCyberSmart

October is Co-op Month

ACE Hardware, State Farm, REI, Darigold and Benton REA all share something in common: All are cooperatives.

The industries are different, but all share a passion for serving members and helping communities thrive. In

fact, all cooperatives adhere to the same set of seven principles that reflect core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater community good.

Benton REA is one of 15 electric cooperatives serving members in

Washington state.

October is National Co-op Month. This is the perfect time to reflect on the Seven Cooperative Principles that have stood the test of time but also provide a framework for the future.

1. Open and Voluntary Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Members' Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community ■



**WE ARE
THE CO-OP
DIFFERENCE**

Benton Rural Electric Association

Co-op Month

Washington Electric Cooperatives

