



Your Benton REA Board of Trustees

Connie Krull
President, District 7

Bob Evans
Vice President, District 3

Catherine Russell
Secretary/Treasurer,
District 8

Vacant
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

In This Issue

- 1** You Have the Power to Care
- 2** Electrical Safety Tips for Hunters, Energy-Efficiency Tip of the Month
- 3** Five Ways to Exercise Your Civic Duty
- 4** City of West Richland Efficiency Savings, Join Us At RiverFest

You Have the Power to Care

In September 2020, Benton REA launched the Power to Care bill assistance program. Two years later, the program has helped income-qualified members pay nearly \$30,000 in past-due bills.

Donating to the Fund

Each month, 582 Benton REA members choose to round up their electric bill to the nearest dollar or more.

Since 2020, members have donated \$24,134.67. This includes \$5,345 donated by

members from their 2020 ownership credit payments. Adding Benton REA's matching donation of \$2,284 in October 2020 and two years of excise tax returns, the total amount donated to qualifying low-income members is \$39,887.11.

Contributing to the program is voluntary. Members can enroll through their Benton REA SmartHub account or by completing the form on page two of your electric bill.

Receiving Funds

As of July 30, 2022, 134 members received a total of \$29,675.90 to help pay their past-due electric bills.

Residential members with past-due balances on their electric accounts can apply to receive donated funds.

Bill assistance is granted as a credit on the qualifying members' electric account once per calendar year. The amount received depends on household size, income and the amount due on the electric account.

"We strongly encourage members to contact us at 509-786-2913 before applying to ensure they are eligible for assistance funding," says Troy Berglund, Benton REA vice president of member services.

To apply, download the Power to Care Bill Assistance Application and return it to a Benton REA office. ■

For more information on donating to Power to Care or to download the application, visit www.BentonREA.org/PowerToCare.

POWER TO CARE CONTRIBUTIONS AND PAYMENTS

	2020	2021	2022 (Jan. - July)	Total
Member Donations	\$3,969.65	\$14,320.91	\$5,844.11	\$24,134.67
Benton REA Contributions	\$2,284.12	\$7,286.23	\$6,182.09	\$15,752.44
Given Back to Members	\$0	\$13,350.00	\$16,325.90	\$29,675.90
Members Helped	0	60	74	134
Members Donating	360 (As of 12-31-20)	520 (As of 12-31-21)	582 (As of 7-31-22)	582 (As of 7-31-22)

Money Is Available to Help Pay Your Electric Bill

Benton REA members with a past-due electric bills and household incomes below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines qualify for help. On average, members receive more than \$200.

BentonREA.org/PowerToCare
509-786-2913



APPLY TODAY

POWER TO CARE

Benton Rural Electric Association



Electrical Safety Tips for Hunters

We encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment while hunting. Keep these safety tips in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors.

- Keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Know where power lines and equipment are located where you hunt.
- Be vigilant in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.
- Never place deer stands on utility poles.
- Never place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment.



Benton Rural Electric Association

Benton REA offices are closed Monday, September 5, in observance of Labor Day.



Enjoy your day off. You earned it.



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 W. 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, Vice President of Member Relations

Shannon Olsen, Assistant Member Relations Manager

May Hays, Community Relations Coordinator

Ron Mitchell, Electrical Advisor

Eric Miller, Energy Services Coordinator

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Water heating accounts for a large portion of home energy bills. To save energy—and money—used for water heating, repair leaky faucets, install low-flow fixtures and insulate accessible hot water lines. When it's time to purchase a new washing machine or dishwasher, look for models that are ENERGY STAR®-certified. Hybrid electric water heaters are 50% less costly to operate than standard electric water heaters.

Source: Dept. of Energy



Five Easy Ways to Exercise Your Civic Duty

September 20 is National Voter Registration Day

America's electric cooperatives, including Benton REA, understand the value of building relationships with elected officials at all levels of government. Many important policy issues directly impact electric utilities and ultimately, you, the consumer-members we proudly serve. Strengthening our relationships with elected leaders positions us to advocate for our local community.

While Benton REA is a locally-owned cooperative, we're part of a larger network of electric co-ops. We work to enhance the political strength of electric co-ops and boost voter

turnout. There's power in numbers. When we all show up at the polls, we can voice the issues that matter most to our community.

National Voter Registration Day is September 20, and midterm elections are right around the corner. If you're looking to get involved or to make sure you're ready to vote, here are five easy ways you can exercise your civic duty.

1 Don't assume your voter registration status is up to date. Visit www.vote.coop, then click "Election Resources" to verify your status.



National Voter Registration Day
Tuesday, September 20

Visit www.vote.coop to ensure you're #voteready.

The graphic features three circular images: a man holding a ballot, a ballot box with a 'CO-OPS VOTE' sign, and a woman holding a 'Register to Vote' sign. Below the images is a red ballot box with a ballot being inserted.

2 Get informed. In addition to ensuring your registration is up to date, learning about local policy issues and candidates is one of the best ways you can prepare to vote. You can visit www.VoicesForCooperativePower.com. Click the "Issues" tab. Here you can stay informed and take action on policy decisions that will shape your access to affordable, reliable, local energy.

3 Get active on social media. Follow @coopsvote and @voices4coops on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Let others know you're a #coopvoter and #VoteReady. Encourage your friends and family to do the same.

4 Help others prepare to vote. Work at a National Voter Registration Day event. Visit www.NationalVoterRegistrationDay.org to find or host an event near you.

5 Vote! It's the easiest—and most important—way you can exercise your civic duty.

Voting is a form of personal empowerment that gives you the opportunity to voice your opinion on the issues that matter most to you. Make a plan to vote and help others in our community get #VoteReady.

Benton REA encourages everyone, regardless of political beliefs, to vote, stand up for our local community and make a collective impact. ■



JOIN TODAY VCP Voices for Cooperative Power United for Stronger Communities

LOOKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR COMMUNITY AND FOR YOUR LOCAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE? THEN JOIN VCP!



SCAN ME TO LEARN MORE AND JOIN!

VCP is a network of electric co-op members working together to influence public policy decisions that impact our co-ops and our way of life.

VOICESFORCOOPERATIVEPOWER.COM | [f](#) [t](#) [@](#) [in](#) | @VOICES4COOPS

The graphic has a dark green background with a subtle pattern of white lines. The text is in white and yellow-green. The QR code is white with a green border.

Wastewater Treatment Efficiencies Save City 1.7 Million kWh

On August 9, Benton REA presented the city of West Richland the second of two rebates for energy-efficiency improvements to its wastewater treatment plant.

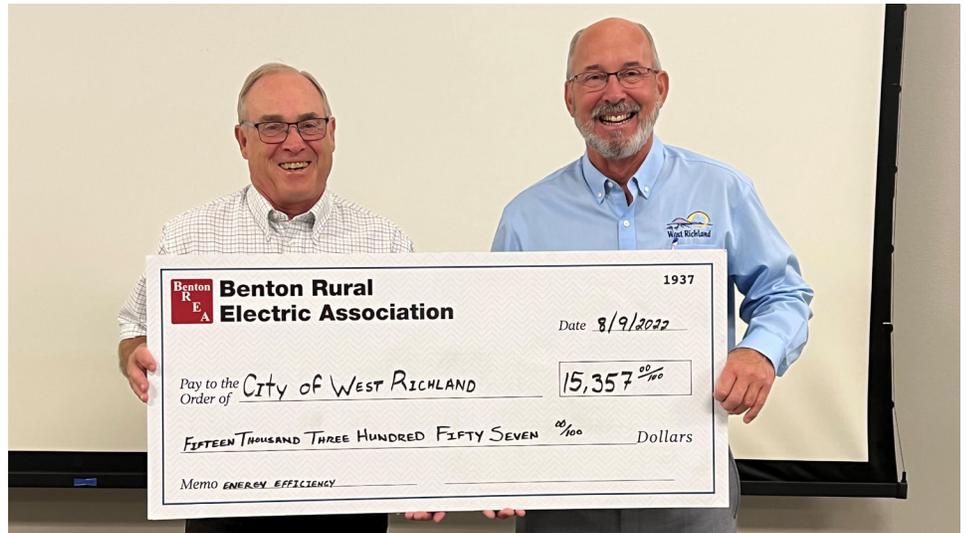
“Since 2016, there have been two major efforts completed where energy savings has persisted and reduced operational expenses for the city of West Richland ratepayers,” says Tony Simon, with the Bonneville Power Administration Energy Smart Industrial program, a contractor for Benton REA.

Starting in 2016, the city worked with Benton REA’s energy professionals to tune up the controls for the plant’s aeration system, ultraviolet disinfection and HVAC units, allowing operators to calibrate equipment to achieve effective wastewater treatment and energy savings.

These efforts led to accumulated savings of 1.7 million kWh and \$80,000, more than the annual plant consumption of around 1.2 million kWh and equivalent to the annual energy use of 140 homes.

Benton REA awarded the city more than \$32,000 in incentives, with \$17,379 paid in November 2018 and \$15,357 paid in August 2022.

The second incentive rewarded the city for its capital investment to realize



West Richland Mayor Brent Gerry, right, accepts an energy-efficiency incentive check from Bob Evans, vice president of the Benton REA Board of Trustees. PHOTO BY SHANNON OLSEN

the full energy savings potential for the aeration system.

“Aeration is the process of adding air to the wastewater to promote degradation and is typically the most energy-intensive process for wastewater treatment plants,” says Austin Rogers, also with Energy Smart Industrial. “Improvements to these systems can have a huge impact on the plant’s operating costs.”

Additionally, Dustin Miller, sewer operations supervisor for the city of West Richland, worked with Tony to evaluate a proposed upgrade to the biosolids process to replace the current

practice of biosolids handling.

“Dustin’s decision to not pursue this project and to directly haul to Natural Selections is economically favorable and saves the city of West Richland \$729,000 in capital investments and \$23,000 per year in prevented labor and operating expenses,” Tony says. “This includes preventing a 20% increase of electric energy use or 217,832 kWh per year, equivalent to 18 West Richland homes.” ■

Businesses interested in reducing their electrical energy use can contact Benton REA at 509-786-8265 to learn more about the co-op’s commercial and industrial incentives, loans and programs.



Join us at RiverFest 2022

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2022
10:00 AM to 3:00 PM
COLUMBIA PARK, KENNEWICK, WA



A FUN AND FREE FAMILY EVENT!

- Celebrate Our Rivers
- Learn Why Hydropower is Important
- Educational Exhibits
- Hands-on Learning Experiences
- Music & Entertainment
- Food Vendors