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In This Issue

- 1** Benton REA Donates to Local Food Banks
- 2** Payment Kiosks West Richland Senior Center Re-Opening
- 3** Electric Vehicle Question & Answer
- 4** WA State Residential Rates Among Lowest in Nation

Benton REA Supports Local Food Banks with \$15,000 in Donations

Fifteen thousand dollars is helping feed local families thanks to Benton REA and matching funds from CoBank, one of the utility's lenders.

"Benton REA is committed to giving back to the members we serve and we are pleased to be able to make these donations to improve the health, safety and success of our community," said Troy Berglund, Interim CEO of Benton REA.

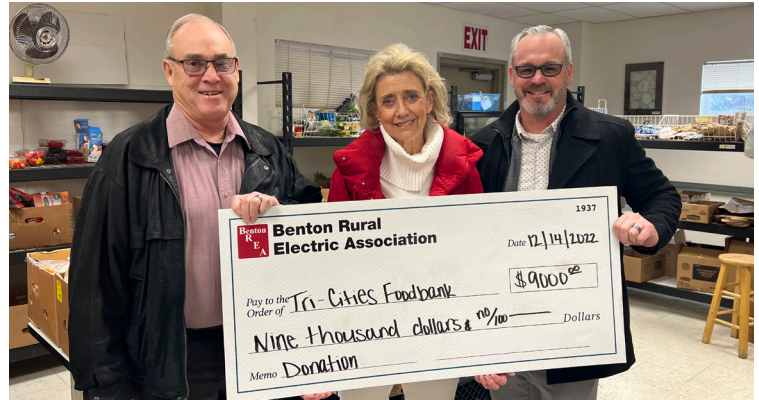
Benton REA received a \$7,500 matching grant from the CoBank Sharing Success program. Together, the \$15,000 donation will help families through three Food Banks within the Benton REA member service area.

Nine thousand dollars went to the Tri-Cities Food Bank serving West Richland and Benton City, \$3,000 to Jubilee Ministries' Food Bank in Prosser and \$3,000 to Sunrise Outreach Center Food Pantries in Mabton and Sunnyside.

CoBank's Sharing Success program doubles contributions of its consumer-members to the charitable organizations and causes they care about most.

About the food banks:

Tri-Cities Food Bank has served Benton County residents in need since 1975. Financial and food donations



VJ Meadows, Executive Director of Tri-Cities Food Bank pictured with Bob Evans, District 3 Trustee and Board President (L) and Troy Berglund, Interim CEO (R).



Bob Evans & Troy Berglund present a check to staff at Prosser Jubilee Ministries Food Bank.

come from individuals and caring businesses. Financial donations go directly to operation of food distribution facilities, central office, warehouse, and vehicle fleet to directly serve clients.

Prosser Jubilee Ministries was founded in 1986. It is funded by their thrift store profits, charitable donations, and the support of local churches and businesses. The

food bank is stocked with refrigerated and non-perishable food items that they offer for free of charge to residents in need.

Sunrise Outreach Centers' Food Pantries were founded in 2009. Their programs encompass the communities of Yakima, Wapato, Sunnyside, Mabton, White Swan, and Wiley City with the support of hundreds of volunteers. ■

Benton REA Payment Kiosks Available 24/7

Benton REA's payment kiosks allow you to easily pay your bill, without making an extra stop at our office. Pay at our kiosk while shopping at Yoke's Fresh Market in West Richland or Lep-re-kon Harvest Foods in Prosser. It's fast, easy and convenient!

Don't forget a copy of your bill. ■



One of Benton REA's two payment kiosks is located near the pharmacy at Prosser's Lep-re-kon Harvest Foods.

To Pay Your Benton REA or PowerNET Bill at a Kiosk

1. Scan the "Kiosk" code on your bill or enter your account #.
2. Pay with cash, check or card.
3. Leave with a receipt.

Benton REA Payment Kiosk Locations



Yoke's Fresh Market
1401 Bombing Range Road West Richland, WA



Lep-re-kon Harvest Foods
471 Wine Country Road Prosser, WA

West Richland Senior Center Re-Opening



Join the West Richland Senior Center for their re-opening on Tuesday, March 14th. Light refreshments will be served and Guardian Angel Homes will provide sandwiches and salad.

Swing by and learn more about the West Richland Senior Center.

West Richland Senior Center
616 N. 60th Avenue
West Richland, WA 99353

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
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MEMBER SERVICES

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

Stacey Azure, Communications Specialist
Troy Berglund, VP of Member Relations
Shannon Olsen, Assistant Member Relations Manager
Ron Mitchell, Electrical Advisor
Eric Miller, Energy Advisor
Leandra Chavez, Administrative Assistant

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When was your cooling system last serviced? Most manufacturers recommend an annual tune up for your home's cooling system. March is a great time to schedule this service so you can beat the summer rush when the pros are busiest.

A qualified professional can check the amount of refrigerant, accuracy of the thermostat, condition of belts and motors and other factors that can greatly impact the efficiency of your system.

Source: Dept. of Energy



Thinking About an Electric Vehicle?

Here are some answers to questions our members most frequently ask.

You've likely heard or read that most automakers are transitioning many or all their new vehicles to electric-only models over the next 10 years. Regardless of the type of car you drive today, the electrification of the transportation sector is underway.

We regularly receive inquiries about electric vehicles from Benton REA members, so we thought it would be helpful to respond to some of those frequently asked questions in this month's member newsletter.

Q: Why is Benton REA communicating about electric vehicles?

A: It's no secret that consumer interest in electric vehicles (EVs) is growing. Benton REA is providing information so that our members can make informed decisions when considering an EV purchase.

Q: Why does Benton REA have an EV?

A: We purchased our most recent EV in 2019 to continue research and

development. Our EV and charging station helps us access key data and gain insights into how EVs operate and what infrastructure is needed to support them. We have an EV to help raise awareness and promote understanding of EV technologies

Q: Why is Benton REA involved in EV infrastructure issues?

A: All electric utilities are planning now to ensure they have the necessary electric infrastructure in place to meet future EV charging needs—without jeopardizing the ability to keep reliable power flowing to our local homes and businesses. As your local energy provider, Benton REA is best suited to advise and help our members and local businesses plan for the electric vehicle future.

Q: Can I charge my EV using an existing outlet or do I need a special outlet?

A: All EVs come with a 110-volt

compatible (Level 1) charging unit which can be plugged into any standard household outlet. For an eight-hour overnight charge, this will enable traveling around 36 to 40 miles a day. If you typically drive longer distances or are in a hurry, a Level 2 charger takes about half the time and provides about 180 miles of range over an eight-hour charging period. A Level 2 charger must be installed by a licensed electrician.

Q: Does the outside temperature affect the range of an EV?

A: Outside temperatures, particularly colder weather, can impact the range of an EV. Unlike a gas-powered vehicle, where the heat is mostly coming from the engine, an EV must produce cabin heat and manage an optimal battery temperature with energy that comes from the battery, which can reduce battery range.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Electric Vehicle Q&A

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3



Q: Will an EV meet my daily driving needs?

A: If you are like most Americans and drive an average of 30 miles a day, an EV can meet your daily needs.

Q: What kind of incentives are available for EVs?

A: Benton REA offers qualifying members incentives for the purchase of an EV and the installation of a Level 2 charger. Visit www.afdc.energy.gov/laws/electric-vehicles-for-tax-credit to learn about federal incentives available through the Clean Vehicle Credit program.

Q: Should I let my co-op know if I purchase an EV?

A: If you purchase an EV, please let us know so we can better serve you. As more of our members buy EVs, it's helpful to know where they're located in our area so we can ensure we have the necessary infrastructure in place to meet charging needs and provide reliable power to our local homes and businesses.

We understand making the switch to an EV is a big decision. Whether you're ready to make an EV purchase or wondering if an EV can meet your daily driving needs, we're here to help you make an informed decision. Give Member Services a call at 509-786-8265 or contact us at memberservices@bentonrea.org. ■

The Basics of How We Charge For Residential Electricity

You probably don't spend a lot of time thinking about your power bill or how it's calculated, and that's a good thing! When we saw the chart to the right, we thought it would be helpful to explain the basics of how we charge members for electricity each month.

For residential members we have a Base Charge. Benton REA's residential Base Charge is \$12.00. It is a flat fee that is billed each month. It partially covers what it costs to have electricity available to you at all times and delivered to your home. It includes costs such as hardware, maintenance, meter reading, administrative costs and other important system costs.

The meter outside your home measures the amount of electricity you use and is read each month. For example, if you use 1200 kilowatt hours of electricity according to your meter read, we will multiply that by our kWh rate for residential electricity which is 7.83 cents per kWh. For this example, it comes out to \$93.96.

Benton REA's rates are set and do not change depending on the time of day or year. In fact, our rates have not changed since 2016.

As you can see our residential rate is below the state average of 10.1 cents per kWh and is among some of the lowest in the nation. ■

Average Prices for Residential Electricity

2021 figures, in cents per kWh

