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In This Issue

- 1** Low Temperatures Causing High Bills
- 2** Upcoming Blood Drives, Energy-Efficiency Tip of the Month
- 3** Smart Thermostats Can Lower Energy Costs
- 4** Estimated Bills, Assistance Programs

Low Temperatures Causing Higher Than Normal Bills

Benton REA members may be seeing higher than normal utility bills this month.

When temperatures drop, more energy is used to keep your house at the comfort level you are used to. The more difference there is between the temperature outside and the thermostat setting inside, the harder your heating system will work and the more energy it will use, even if you don't turn the thermostat higher.

There are some things you can do to cut down on future energy use:

Lower Your Thermostat

Each degree you lower your thermostat can save up to 2% on your heating bill. Set it even lower when you are away or asleep. Keep in mind that your setting should not fall below 55 degrees to prevent pipes from freezing.

Replace Air Filters

Clean air filters keep your system running efficiently. A dirty or clogged filter makes your furnace work harder, increasing energy usage.

Manage Drafts

If you feel cold air coming in, warm air is escaping. Keep windows and doors closed and use caulk or weather stripping to seal leaks around windows, doors and plumbing penetrations.

Cover Windows

Keep curtains and blinds closed unless the sun is shining directly on the glass. Insulated curtains are great at minimizing heat loss through windows.

Layer Up and Grab a Blanket!

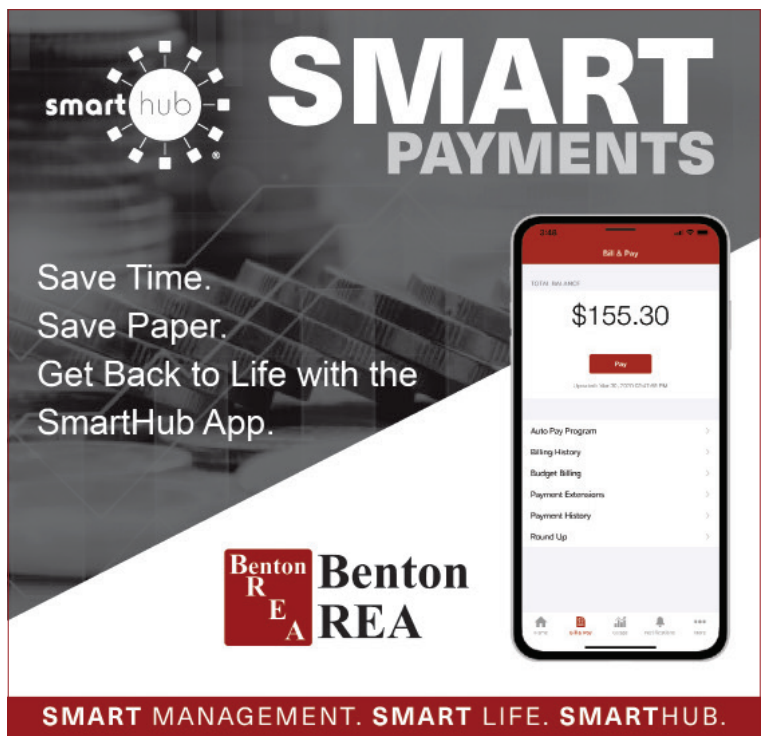
We know we said this last month - but it really does help - if you are cold, put on an extra layer of clothing. You may also consider investing in an electric blanket. Electric blankets use a small amount of energy and if used safely can be a great tool to help

keep you warm.

We are here to help!

We want to remind our members that we are here to help you stay on track. If you are having trouble paying your electric bill, please contact one of our Billing Clerks to discuss your options. We offer payment arrangements and have a variety of programs and services that you may be able to take advantage of. ■

Contact a Benton REA Billing Clerk at:
509-786-2913 or 1-800-221-6987



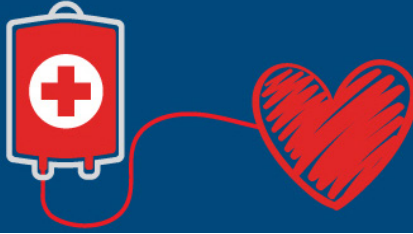
smart hub **SMART PAYMENTS**

Save Time.
Save Paper.
Get Back to Life with the SmartHub App.

Benton REA

SMART MANAGEMENT. SMART LIFE. SMARTHUB.

Kindness
is in your blood.



COMMUNITY BLOOD DRIVES

Prosser

Tuesday, January 3, 2023

11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Princess Theater Green Room
1226 Meade Ave, Prosser, WA

West Richland

Wednesday, January 18, 2023

11:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Community Room
6095 W Van Giesen Street, West Richland

Please call 1-800-733-2767 or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: BREA to schedule an appointment.



MILK
DAY

JANUARY 16, 2023

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 Department:

Stacey Azure, Marketing and
Communications Specialist

Troy Berglund, Vice President of Member
Services

Shannon Olsen, Assistant Member Services
Manager

Ron Mitchell, Electrical Advisor

Eric Miller, Energy Advisor

Leandra Chavez, Administrative Assistant

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Insulating your electric water heater can reduce standby heat loss by 25% to 45%, saving you 7% to 16% on annual water heating costs.

The Dept. of Energy rates this project as medium difficulty, meaning most homeowners can tackle this project on their own. You can purchase pre-cut jackets or blankets for about \$20 at most home improvement stores. Visit energy.gov for project tips and additional considerations.

Source: energy.gov



Smart Thermostats Can Help Lower Energy Costs

Rebates on select models are available to our members

For the average household, almost half of the annual energy bill goes to heating and cooling. That can add up to more than \$900 a year.

A smart thermostat can offer the ability to monitor and adjust your home's temperature even when you are away, helping you gain efficiency and convenience. They are Wi-Fi enabled and automatically adjust temperature settings in your home for optimal performance.

Smart thermostats learn your routines over time. For instance, if you normally return home from work at 5:30pm it will begin heating or cooling your home ahead of time, so it is to your comfort level when you arrive.

Another great feature is they can be managed through your smartphone. This allows you to adjust your settings at any time. They also provide temperature and use data that you can track and manage.

To help ease the cost of upgrading to a smart thermostat, we offer rebates

to our members on selected models that have earned the ENERGY STAR. Different brands of thermostats use slightly different features to help homeowners save energy, so do your research, and choose the ENERGY STAR designation smart thermostat that's right for you.

In order to qualify for the rebate, members must have an electric heat source in the home where the thermostat will be installed (a heat pump or electric furnace).

Members can receive up to a \$165 rebate for the purchase and installation of the following smart thermostats:

- **Bryant** T6-WEM01-A
- **Ecobee** 3, 4, 5 (Ecobee Smart Thermostat with Voice Control), Smart Thermostat Enhanced and Smart Thermostat Premium
- **Lennox** iComfort M30
- **Nest** Thermostat, Nest Learning Thermostat, 3rd Generation, and Nest E



This rebate is available for existing and new construction single-family, manufactured and multifamily homes. Limit two per household. Thermostats that control cooling-only systems are not eligible for an incentive. Members must apply for the rebate within six months of purchase date to qualify.

For more information about available rebates call our Member Services Department at 509-781-6751, or go to www.bentonrea.org/rebates. ■

A man with long dreadlocks and a beard, wearing a plaid shirt, is sitting at a desk with a laptop. He is smiling at the camera. The background is a blurred office or home workspace.

New Year, New Savings.

Visit our website to learn about programs to help you save energy and money.

Some Member Bills Estimated This Month

Winter weather has produced some beautiful landscape scenes as seen in this photo that Benton REA Foreman Lineworker, Marty Homan took in White Pass at Trout Lodge in December. Unfortunately, it has also made it difficult for our meter readers to travel on roadways and gain access to meters.

To ensure the safety of our meter readers the electrical use of several hundred meters was estimated.

Estimates are based on historical use data at the address as well as outdoor temperatures. We took great care to calculate the most accurate estimates we could. We ask for your understanding on this issue. If your bill was estimated and you want to help us make it more accurate, you can take a photo of your meter with the dials clearly visible and send it to billing@bentonrea.org and a Billing Clerk may adjust your bill. ■



Energy Assistance Programs Available

Low-Income Senior & Low-Income Disabled Discounts

To ease the financial burden caused by energy costs on Benton REA's low-income senior or low-income disabled residential members, Benton REA offers a discount of \$24 each month to qualifying members.

Qualifications:

Combined annual household income that is equal to or less than 200% of the Washington State poverty guideline for two-member households.

Applicants must be 62 years of age or older. The age criteria for qualification under the program can be waived if the applicant provides proof of disability through a current "Social Security Administration Retirement, Survivors and Disability Insurance Statement" for the applicable period.

Power To Care

Members who have a residential account with a past-due balance and have a combined gross household income equal to or less than 200%

of the federal poverty guideline are eligible to apply.

Bill assistance will be granted as a credit on the electric account of the qualifying member once per calendar year. The amount of assistance depends on the family size, household income and amount due on the electric account.

For more information about our energy assistance programs our Billing Clerks can be reached by calling 509-786-2913 or 1-800-221-6987. ■

**POWER
TO CARE**
enroll today

Less than \$1 a month can make a world of difference



Visit BentonREA.org/PowerToCare
or call 509-786-2913 to enroll



**Benton Rural
Electric Association**