

New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday
7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

EMERGENCY OUTAGE NUMBER

814/766-3221
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FROM THE MANAGER/CEO

Keeping warm without going broke



Rick L. Eichelberger
General Manager & CEO

THIS WINTER it seems almost everyone has been thinking about how to best heat our homes. Should our existing heating system be totally abandoned? Should an upgrade to a more efficient furnace be made? Should a wood furnace be installed? How about a geothermal or air source heat pump? What about the electric baseboard heaters

we abandoned a decade ago and are still wired for use?

So where do we start? Maybe more important, when do we start? The answer to this question is perhaps the easiest of all questions. Start now! If you haven't already, evaluate your existing heating system and how you have been using it. It could be that changing some of our heating methods and habits could save as much as installing a completely new heating system.

Do you need to heat every room in your house at the maximum temperature all day long? The answer for most of us is no. We go through the thought process of what to do with our heating systems because of costs. It costs to operate our heating source and it costs to change out our existing heat source in an attempt to lower the operating costs. Any investment must see a pay back within a reasonable amount of years.


A popular solution

New "advanced quartz infrared portable heaters" or a "portable rolling fireplace" have been advertised heavily

this year with sales being high. Comments indicate they save dollars, they are not an inconvenience and they work. They work when used the way they were meant to be used — by being a supplement to your existing heat. The idea is to turn back your main source of heat to about 50 degrees and move your portable heater to the area you want warmer. Your savings is from setting back your main source of heat.

The cost to operate the portable heater is tied directly to the "hours" it is turned on. Example: a 1,000-watt (1KW) heater operating for one hour = 1 kilowatt-hour (kWh). A kWh costs about a dime. So every hour your 1,000-watt heater operates will cost a dime and, if operated 10 hours each day, would cost you about \$1/day. Be careful though! If your heater is 2,000 watts (2KW), it costs 20 cents each hour. If it operates 20 hours a day, your cost quickly goes to \$4 a day. Buy two of these and you can see how the costs can multiply quickly.

The solution I just described will work for many people but may not be the best for others. You must evaluate your situation. Building a new house? Perhaps a \$20,000 geothermal system is the solution. Have an abundance of wood on your property (and a healthy back)? An outdoor wood furnace is a choice. If you already have ductwork in your home, you might want to think twice about abandoning it.

The important thing is we all seem to be taking seriously how we can heat our homes in a cost-effective manner. This is a giant step in doing everything we can to be more energy efficient in our homes. Good luck with your choices. 

Collection of past due balance doesn't stop during winter

ON JAN. 27, 2009, New Enterprise REC will be installing service load limiters on any account that has a 60-day or greater past due balance. Payment of the past due balance must be in the office before Jan. 27 to avoid a limiter being installed. Not able to pay the full past due balance? Call Brawna at extension 224 to set up a payment agreement. All agreements must be in writing and be in New Enterprise REC's office before Jan. 27, 2009. Don't wait until the last minute to call the office. Allow enough time for the agreement to get to you and to be returned to the co-op's office.

The service load limiters were approved for use in October 2001. Since that time, many limiters have been installed on past due accounts during the winter months. Limiters are also used for those people who are on medical equipment that have a 60-day past due balance and no payment agreement.

The procedure for service load limiters is the same as the disconnection for non-payment. The full past due amount needs to be paid before the limiter date.

Once a limiter is installed, the total bill due plus installation and removal fees need to be paid before the limiter can be removed. This payment must be in cash or money order. During our business hours — 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. — you can use a credit card to make payment. Should the account not be paid in full by April 1, 2009, the electric service will be disconnected completely. This will add more fees to the account balance. Even though a limiter is installed, a meter reading still needs submitted. Electricity is still being used with a limiter, just not nearly as much as before.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) doesn't consider a service load limiter a crisis. Since this is a heating program and a limiter will provide heat, no money is available through the crisis program.

So what is a service load limiter?

- ▶ A service load limiter limits the amount of power (watts) that can be used in the home at any one point in time. It will severely limit the amount

of electricity used in your home.

- ▶ The service load limiter is installed in your meter base, behind the meter. It has a circuit breaker that will open, turning off your electricity, if the electric load in the house exceeds the allowable amps. You will not be able to operate all of the electrical devices in your home at the same time. Breakers in your panel box will need to be turned off. Only the breakers that have the needed appliances or furnace on should be turned on.
- ▶ If the circuit breaker in the service load limiter opens, you will be without electricity. Before the breaker will reset, you need to limit the amount of electricity being used in your house by turning off the breaker in your breaker panel. Once the electric load is decreased, the service load limiter breaker will automatically reset in approximately two minutes.

New Enterprise REC would prefer to not have to install a service load limiter on any account. We would much rather work with you to get your bill paid in full. If you are unable to pay the full past due balance, call Brawna to set up arrangements. Once an agreement is in place, it must be followed as stated. Should the payments not come in as agreed upon, limitation will occur. ⚡

Winter safety tip

Please be aware that using candles, portable heaters, gas appliances and gasoline- or diesel-powered generators to light or heat your home may be dangerous. Portable heaters and burning candles that are left unattended, especially around children and pets, can create a fire hazard. In addition, generators can produce deadly carbon monoxide and should never be operated indoors.

Signed up for E-bill?

Many of you have been paying your bill and submitting your meter readings online through e-bill. Did you know that you can have your paper bill eliminated? Your bill can be sent to your email address.

If you would like to stop your paper bill, log onto our website under Bill Pay. Enter your email address and password. Once you are into your account information, click on Stop/Start Print Bill. Now uncheck the "Send Me a Statement by Mail" box. Be sure to click Update. That's it. You will start to get your bill by email the following month.

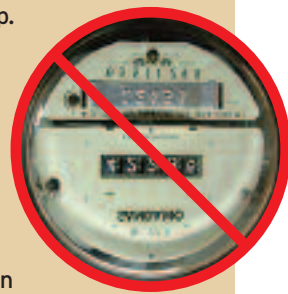
Don't turn in inaccurate meter readings

In past articles we have reported that some people are under-reporting their meter readings. This causes problems with the co-op and the state police for people who choose to steal electricity from the co-op.

Some people under-report while others over-report. Over-reporting your meter reading isn't going to get the state police involved, but it does cause problems with the co-op. With these types of readings, the people aren't cheating or stealing electricity. They are actually doing the complete opposite of those under-reporting. They want to be paid ahead in their bills. Some are self-budgeting their accounts so they are paid ahead for those months in the year when their bills are higher. Others would prefer to be paid ahead in case an emergency happens where they can't pay their bill for a month or so.

Being paid ahead isn't a problem but don't give inaccurate readings. Should we have to adjust an account that has been over-reporting, it takes quite a bit of time to make the corrections. Should we have to adjust an account because incorrect meter readings, a fee will be charged. Some accounts have been over-reporting for years. When these inaccurate meter readings are found, we will adjust the account.

Instead of giving inaccurate meter readings, you can just pay more on your bill each month. This will give you the security of being paid ahead without causing problems on your account.



Attention high school juniors

HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS from Forbes Road, Northern Bedford, Southern Huntingdon and Tussey Mountain are needed to attend the 2009 Rural Electric Youth Tour this summer. New



Enterprise REC, along with other rural electric cooperatives from all across the country, sends students on this trip of a lifetime to our nation's capital, Washington D.C. To qualify for this trip, your parents or legal guardians need to be consumer-members of New Enterprise REC. The dates for this all-expense-

paid adventure are June 14-19, 2009. If you are interested in this great trip, contact Brawna at the cooperative's office at extension 224 or by email at bsell@newenterpriserec.com. You can get the necessary paperwork from Brawna or your high school guidance counselor. The forms will be sent to the guidance counselors sometime in January.

A little history

Over 50 years ago, then-U.S. Sen. Lyndon Baines Johnson inspired the Youth Tour when he addressed the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Annual Meeting in Chicago. The senator and future president declared, "If one thing goes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the nation's capital where they

can actually see what the flag stands for and represents."

What started out as a few young people working during the summer in Sen. Johnson's office is now an event that sees more than 1,400 high school students from across the United States in attendance.

The Youth Tour lets young people learn first-hand about politics, community development and today's social issues while touring historical sites around Washington, D.C.

Support of directors

New Enterprise REC directors believe it is important to teach students why electric cooperatives were created and how government works. Students come away from this outstanding trip with memories and friendships that last a lifetime. 🌟

Life support during an electrical outage

For some electric cooperative consumer-members, service is more than a convenience; it is a necessity. New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) realizes that some homes are equipped with life-sustaining medical equipment that requires a reliable source of power. Our commitment to you is to provide electric service safely and with as few interruptions as possible. Unfortunately, it is impossible to guarantee uninterrupted power 100 percent of the time. Each year, events — some beyond our control — occur and cause power outages.

If your health or well-being depends on your electric supply, we offer the following suggestions and strongly encourage you to implement them:

1. Obtain a back-up source of power recommended by the manufacturer of any life-sustaining or critical care equipment you may have in your home. For example, battery back-ups or standby generators can provide you with electric power if service from the cooperative is interrupted.

2. Talk with relatives or friends today and devise a plan whereby the individual who relies on this equipment will have somewhere to stay in the event of a major power outage, or even for just a few hours.
3. Call the office today to obtain a form to have completed by your physician. As soon as the form is completed, return the form by mail, at our office or by faxing to 814/766-3319. Once this form is back in our office, we will make a note of the medical need on the account. This way, our representatives will be aware of the condition in the event of an outage or if the account is scheduled for disconnection. The presence of critical medical devices does not exempt service from termination or limitation due to non-payment of bill. Anticipated payment delays should be addressed through the cooperative's office.

Notifying the New Enterprise REC of your situation does not guarantee unin-

terrupted electric service, nor does it guarantee immediate attention to your individual service should the area experience a power outage. It does alert us to the situation. Letting us know your specific needs allows our personnel to better serve you. 🌟

Food Safety Tips

If the power is out for more than two hours, follow these food safety steps:


- ▶ A half-full freezer can hold food for 24 hours. A full freezer can hold food for 48 hours. Avoid opening the freezer door if possible.
- ▶ Pack all perishable items such as dairy, meat, fish, eggs, etc. into a cooler and surround them with ice.
- ▶ Always use a thermometer to check the temperature of your food before you cook or eat it. If it has a temperature of more than 40 degrees Fahrenheit, throw it out.


Information provided by the Center for Disease Control (CDC)




2008 Writing Contest winners

In October, we encouraged children and teens to enter our 2008 Writing Contest. We received eight stories or poems from young writers. Once again, the competition was tough and choosing the first-and second-place winners of each age group wasn't easy.

 The first-place winner of the 14 - 18 age group was Marlene Sauder of New Enterprise. Marlene's story was entitled, "A Horse's Biography."

 The first-place winner of the age group 8 - 13 was Lily Zimmerman of rural Martinsburg. "I am the Wind" was written by Lily.

 Second place goes to Nancy Zimmerman of New Enterprise. Her story was "Treed by a Bear."

No entries were entered for children 8 and younger.

Marlene's story is featured in this month's issue. Please watch next month for entries from Lily and Nancy.

Thank you to all who participated in this year's Christmas card contest. The talents of our children and teens shone brightly again this year.

"A Horse's Biography" by Marlene Sauder

The morning sun glistened on the colorful coat of a newborn colt. His name was Tang. The little mustang was in the western plains of Texas. All he knew of was his mother and the freedom in which he was born. Days went by and Tang grew rapidly in beauty and strength. He liked to run and play with other colts his age.

The stallion, who was the leader of the herd, was growing old. Soon Tang would need to take his place.

When the day came for his leadership, he proudly led the herd off to drink at the stream. Tang was a good leader and the herd prospered under his watchful gaze.

But one summer morning, a terrible tragedy occurred; a group of men came galloping up to the horses. The herd thundered away over the plain. The men followed the horses all day till the horses were weak with fatigue and thirst. Finally they could go no more. Then men surrounded the horses and captured him. Tang snorted and lunged with the powerful strength of his ancestors. The harder he pulled, the tighter the men held on. The men dragged Tang into a corral. There they gave him a drink and food and then they left.

Days passed, but Tang wouldn't eat or drink; his spirit was broken. He passed his days looking out to the hills. Beyond them, the herd still freely roamed.

One morning when the men came, they found him dead. The blood of freedom, strength and beauty that was passed from generation to generation in these wild creatures pulsed through Tang no more.