

FROM THE MANAGER/CEO

## Electric generation 'junk mail' continues

# New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



**New Enterprise REC**  
One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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**Rick L. Eichelberger**  
General Manager & CEO

**MOST** rural electric customers have been bombarded by “junk mail” from FirstEnergy Solutions — an electric generation supplier to some of the investor-owned companies in Pennsylvania.

Letters and post cards saying: “URGENT NOTICE,” “Information about locking in a low electric generation price” or “Last chance to lock in the

lowest electric generation price before rates increase” continue to flood many New Enterprise Rural Electric member mailboxes. Apparently, the mailings are blanketing certain zip codes and not focused on specific power company service territories. I have received four of these mailings since June and have gotten nowhere in attempting to have the mailings stopped.

FirstEnergy Solutions is licensed to provide electric generation to Penelec and West Penn Power customers, but it has no agreement in place to sell generation to New Enterprise Rural Electric members. Even if it had, our electric generation rates are lower, so FirstEnergy Solutions would have a tough time trying to win over any electric cooperative members.

The Pennsylvania and New Jersey electric cooperatives own Allegheny Electric Cooperative, which supplies all of our generation needs. Our own generating plants provide about 65 percent of our needs.

The bottom line is that there is no need to lock in anything. Your electric generation price is already the lowest available in Pennsylvania. So disregard any “junk mail” you receive, and be assured you are already getting the best deal out there on electric generation.

### Capital credits program at New Enterprise

During August, the cooperative


announced it is in a position financially and operationally to address capital credits. Capital credits represent how electric cooperatives return excess margins (profits) to their members.

If you were a member and purchased electricity from the cooperative in 2001 or later, you would have received a Notice of Capital Credits Allocation in the mail. An allocation is a share of the margin for a particular year.

Once an allocation is made to a member, it is set aside for later payment to the member, whether they remain a member or move off the system. A retirement takes place when allocated capital credits are actually paid to the members who earned them. The board must approve payment based on the current financial health of the cooperative.

During a year where there is a margin, you earn a share of that margin based on how much you purchased during that year. In the past, we have used margins to build and upgrade the power lines, purchase trucks and tools, maintain an emergency cash reserve, and keep rates as low as possible. With these investments made into the system, New Enterprise Rural Electric is able to allocate margins from 2001 forward to members as capital credits. These capital credits can then be retired or paid in cash over a future period of years to the members.

It may be a decade until any cash retirement is made, but a permanent allocation record now exists for each member. If you move from New Enterprise Rural Electric service territory or change your present address, you should notify the cooperative because there may be future correspondence concerning capital credits.

Capital credits are just another way cooperatives differ from traditional utilities. We are sure you will find this a welcome difference. 

## 'The Wheels on the Bus Go Round and Round'

BY KELLY BAKER  
Correspondent

**SEPTEMBER** means back to school, a time of year that parents herald and children lament. School days return along with sporting events and a host of other activities that depend largely on the good old school bus.

Bus driving is a family business for New Enterprise Rural Electric Cooperative members Johnny and Kassi Leidy and Kassi's parents, Charlie and Connie Cragan, owners of Leidy-Cragan Transportation. From the late 1970s until 1990, Bob Batzel (Connie's father and Kassi's grandfather) owned a bus company that he sold to Ron Barton, who ran it for the past 20 years. When the Leidys heard that Ron was thinking of selling his buses, they got together with Charlie and Connie and discussed the possibility of buying them back. Charlie approached Ron, who agreed to the deal, and at the beginning of 2011, Leidy-Cragan Transportation was born.

"One of my grandfather's old buses was still in Ron's fleet when we bought them back," Kassi says with a smile. "Of course at that point, it was just being used to hold parts."

The end of the school year doesn't necessarily mean a summer vacation for the Leidys. Behind the scenes, there's more going on to keep the school buses in tip-top working condition. School buses need a standard inspection twice a year, plus a state police inspection. The

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Keeping your tires properly inflated improves gas mileage for the average vehicle by around 3 percent, saving up to 20 gallons of gasoline per year.



**FAMILY BUSINESS:** Bus driving is a family business for, back row, from left, Charlie Cragan, Kassi Leidy and Johnny Leidy, who along with Cragan's wife, Connie Cragan, co-own Leidy-Cragan Transportation. Earlier this year, the Cragans and their daughter and son-in-law purchased the business, which was owned by Connie's father and Kassi's grandfather during the 1970s and 1980s. Pictured with them are: front, from left, Thad Leidy and Peyton Leidy.

state police inspection entails checking the lights, tires, wheels, brakes, and suspension system, as well as engine compartments and emergency window exits.

Keeping the buses clean is no easy task either. They get washed as needed, and each cleaning takes a considerable amount of time. During the winter when salt has a tendency to cake on, extra rinsing is required. To keep up with the necessary day-to-day maintenance issues, the bus shed also employs Ronnie Steele as a full-time mechanic when he's not driving the vo-tech and mid-day bus.

Bus drivers have procedures they need to follow as well. To obtain a bus driving license, an individual must first spend 14 hours in classroom training and pass a test to get their permit. They

must take a CDL general knowledge test, a passenger endorsement test and the school bus endorsement test. If they happen to be driving a bus with air brakes, they also have to get an air brake endorsement. Then they spend six hours with an instructor driving a school bus before taking their driving test. Bus drivers are required to have a physical every year, and every four years they must take a refresher course consisting of seven hours in the classroom and three hours with a certified driving instructor. Making sure the bus drivers stay current is a job in itself.

To educate parents and children about school bus safety, Northern Bedford has school bus orientation for pre-school and kindergarten kids, Kassi notes. Teachers



their way on the wrong bus. When you're a substitute driver, you don't know which kids are the regulars and which ones don't belong."

Such minor mishaps are more common with pre-school children. Dogs have even tried to hitch a ride.

"It's enjoyable. The kids on the bus do a good job helping out," he adds.

The Leidys' children, Peyton and Thad, enjoy the bus business, too. They've ridden just about all the routes, and Peyton adds that when her friends want to know if there's going to be a snow day, she's the one they ask. Plus, when your dad is the bus driver, you get a free ride to sporting events.

Things aren't always peaches and cream though, like when there's inclement weather to deal with. On days the weather is questionable, Charlie will go out early and check the routes to see if there will be any problems.

"It works out well," Charlie says, "We've got a lot of routes here in the Hopewell area, and Carbaugh has a lot of routes further north, so between the two companies we can give school officials a good idea of what the roads are like. There are some places, like Big Bend Beach, that get really rough in the winter. The parents in those locations do a great job working with us. They'll meet the bus at a safer place."

Motorists who fail to stop for the buses also pose a problem. Bus drivers try to make sure all traffic is stopped before letting the kids exit, but sometimes other drivers will swerve around or try to pass the bus.

"When that happens, we try to get a license plate number," Johnny says. "If we get one, we'll turn them in. For the most part though, things go pretty smoothly, but you just never know."

To help keep our children safe this year, remember the following safety rules:

1. Motorists must stop at least 10 feet away from school buses that have their flashing red lights on and stop arm extended.
2. Motorists must stop when they are behind the bus, meeting the bus or approaching an intersection where a bus is stopped.
3. Motorists following or traveling alongside a school bus must also stop until the red lights have stopped flashing, the stop arm is withdrawn, and all children have reached safety.
4. If physical barriers such as grassy medians, guide rails or concrete median barriers separate oncoming traffic from the bus, motorists in the opposing lanes may proceed without stopping.
5. Do not proceed until all the children have reached a place of safety.

Have a safe and happy school year! 🌞

go over the do's and don'ts of riding a school bus, and then the kids climb aboard for a short ride to acclimate them.

"The school really tries to do their best to work with us if there are any problems," she says.

Twice a year, in September and March, bus-riding students do a safety drill where they practice exiting through emergency door at the back of the bus.

In addition to the 15 school buses, Leidy-Cragan also has 11 vans to transport students to smaller Christian schools, Head Start programs and pre-schools. Children with special needs also have the benefit of using the vans, which offer more comfort and accessibility.

Every day brings a new adventure when you're driving a bus.

"You never know what you're going to get," says Johnny, who drives different routes to fill in as needed. "Kids fall asleep on the bus, personal items get left behind, and extra kids sometimes find

## September co-op calendar

Sept. 5 - Office is closed in observance of Labor Day.

Sept. 27 - Disconnect accounts with past due balances. Last day to make a payment arrangement with Brawna is Sept. 23 (call Brawna at extension 224).

Sept. 28 - Regular payment and meter reading due date.

# KIDZCORNER

## September facts

School is back in session! Here are some facts that you can share with your teacher and fellow classmates:

1. September is National Chicken Month.
2. The first comic strip was printed in an American newspaper on Sept. 11, 1875.
3. The poem "Mary had a Little Lamb" was published Sept. 1, 1830.
4. World War II began in September 1939, when Adolph Hitler invaded Poland.
5. The U.S. Treasury Department was established in September 1789.
6. National Cheese Pizza Day is Sept. 5. Did someone say pizza for supper?
7. The First Continental Congress was called to order on Sept. 5, 1774.
8. September 19 is "Talk Like a Pirate Day" around the world – an international event.
9. The first airport opened on Sept. 29.
10. Band-Aids were invented in September.
11. The U.S. Supreme Court was established on Sept. 4, 1789.
12. On Sept. 18, 1851, the New York Times newspaper published its first edition.
13. The Great Fire of London happened on Sept. 2, 1666.
14. On Sept. 5, 1961, President John F. Kennedy signed a hijacking bill, making air piracy a crime punishable by death or imprisonment.
15. Former President Richard M. Nixon was given an unconditional pardon for his role in the infamous Watergate fiasco by President Gerald Ford on Sept. 8, 1974.
16. The U.S. Food Stamp Program was authorized by the U.S. Congress as a program to distribute surplus food to poor, hungry Americans on Sept. 11, 1959.

## Trees near power lines – leave them alone

Most people know that trees and power lines aren't supposed to mix. When they do, be sure to keep your distance.

Strong winds and storms can topple trees or break branches, pulling power lines down from poles or supporting structures. Just because a line is down doesn't mean there can't be electricity flowing through it. It is possible for a line to remain energized when it's down, potentially electrifying the tree, the ground and nearby objects.

Arcing or flashovers between power lines and trees can also cause potential damage or danger. Additional weight from snow and ice can bend or break tree branches, bringing them close enough to power lines to cause an arc or flashover and become energized.

A voltage surge on a power line from a nearby lightning strike can cause a tree to become "electrified" as well. During warm weather or when power lines are carrying heavy electrical loads, they can heat up and stretch, making the lines longer. Thus, power lines can sag as much as 15 or 20 feet, bringing them even closer to trees.

The electric current caused by arcing or flashovers between power lines and trees can injure or kill an individual caught nearby. It is important to pay attention to power lines when felling trees or using equipment near electric lines. Below are some power line safety tips for you to consider:

- ▶ Make sure to always look for nearby power lines before you begin to cut down any tree or trim branches.
- ▶ Treat all power lines as energized. Never climb or attempt to handle a tree that has a limb in contact with a power line. You may not see any visible evidence that the tree is "electrified" or dangerous.
- ▶ Teach your children that they should never climb trees near power lines.
- ▶ Make sure to maintain required clearances between equipment and power lines.
- ▶ If a fire starts from a fallen power line, notify 9-1-1 and New Enterprise. Stay away from the site of the electrical hazard. Make sure others stay clear of the line and treat it as energized.
- ▶ Do not use water on or near a fallen power line.