



# Harrison Rural Electrification Association, Inc.

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partners



www.harrisonrea.com

## Smart solutions needed

Spring is not far off, and the sounds of summer are beginning to appear, but will this new beginning bring with it a change for a brighter tomorrow?

Our new administration in Washington is tackling the concerns of a faltering financial system, and many of us are concerned as to when things will return to some normalcy. While all of us are aware that changes are imminent all through our lives, we all have to realize that the economic crisis affecting us today will remain a major focus for all of us through the coming years.

The new administration also promises an increased focus on global climate change, and more importantly, the potential impact it will have on affordable electricity. It is crucial that any energy policy discussed in Washington comes with a price tag that won't

leave consumers in the dark.

Through the nationwide grassroots awareness campaign called *Our Energy, Our Future*, co-op consumers have contacted their elected officials with three critical energy policy questions focused on capacity, technology and affordability. With a new president and a new Congress, electric cooperatives will need to continue pressing for answers. These answers won't be clear-cut.

Although electricity use across the United States is steadily climbing, and the relatively high costs for construction materials and the uncertainties of climate change have placed strict limits on the future of carbon dioxide emitted by newly planned coal-fired power plants, these potential changes already have stalled development of new base load generation — efficient stations that provide dependable and affordable electric power year round.

So here's the important ques-

### Manager's Corner

By  
Gary Jackson,  
CEO/General  
Manager



tion: how can we keep power flowing and electric bills affordable? There's simply no single answer and electric co-ops know from experience that it will take a variety of new generation resources and technologies to ensure reliable and affordable electricity in the coming years. We must continue to research into renewable energy, invest in clean coal technology, nuclear power, an updated transmission grid and improvements in energy efficiency across the board.

Please visit [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop) today. Make your voice heard and help guide policymakers toward a smart and affordable energy future.

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### Energy Efficiency

*Tip of the Month*

Check your water heater thermostat. Many manufacturers set thermostats to 140° F, although most households only need a setting of 120° F. Each 10 degree drop in water temperature can save you between 3 percent and 5 percent in energy costs.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

## Co-ops and Congress:

# Working together for our future

America has an energy crisis too big to ignore. Experts warn that unless we make more electricity available soon, some regions of the country may face power shortages within the next *two years*. And because of a number of economic and political factors, electric costs have climbed 40 percent since 2002 and are projected to go even higher.

We need an answer right now to keep electric bills affordable.

During the past year, consumers like you have joined the "Our Energy, Our Future"™ grassroots awareness campaign to educate elected officials on the need to craft energy policies that will support a diverse mix of power generation while keeping energy affordable. More than 1.56 million messages have been sent to Congress through the campaign, asking three simple questions:

- How will Congress help us meet the rising future demand for electricity?
- How will Congress support the development of technology needed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions?
- How will Congress make sure electricity remains affordable?

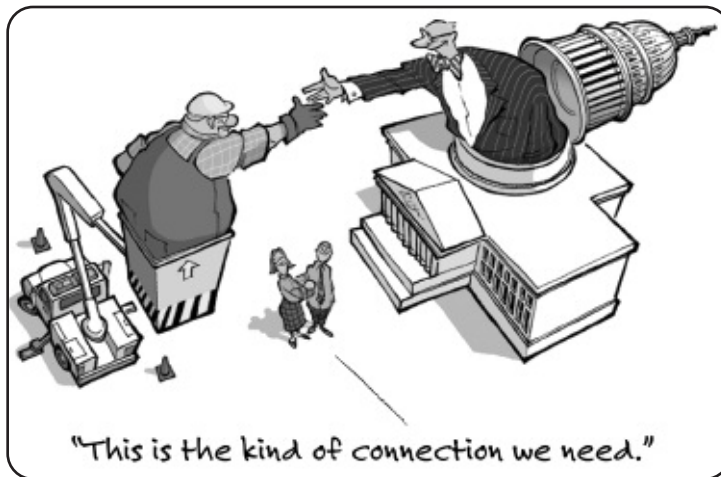
Today we're continuing our efforts with one key

question: Is Congress willing to work with electric cooperatives like Harrison REA to ensure we have reliable power at a price our consumers can afford? It's a simple question, one that can be answered with a resounding 'Yes!' or 'No.' The answer is critical to our future.

Ask your U.S. representative and senators if they will work with electric cooperatives to develop policies that will keep electricity affordable. Co-ops were created to make safe, reliable and affordable electricity available for all Americans. We take our role seriously, and have resources in place to help lawmakers find ways to address our nation's energy crisis without causing costs to rise beyond your means. We can find the right solution together.

Let Congress know where you stand in

this critical debate. We thank those of you who already have started a dialogue with your elected officials through the campaign, and ask that you keep that conversation going. Visit [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop) today, and tell your family and friends to do the same. We'll all be impacted by future energy policy changes; now is the time to work together and take a stand for affordability. We simply can't afford not to.



## Unplug those chargers!

*The following article was taken from the official Web site of California Senator Barbara Boxer:*

Senator Boxer says, "TAKE A STEP: UNPLUG IT". Ever notice that your cell phone charger stays warm even when you are not using it? It stays warm because it continues to use electricity any time it is plugged in. Take a step to improve the environment by unplugging your cell phone charger when your phone is charged. Most modern cell phones recharge in a short amount of time. This means that, if you leave your charger plugged in all the time, you may be wasting more than 95 percent of the electricity it uses.

Many other appliances use electricity even when

turned off. It is estimated that for most households, about 5 percent of their energy consumption is spent on machines that are turned off but that are still consuming energy, emitting about 18 million tons of carbon into the atmosphere every year. It also can save you money on your electric bill.

It could be time for an entire household energy audit. If you are not using the spare clock in the guest room, unplug it. If you only use the refrigerator in the garage three times a year, unplug it. If you have a tool recharger in the garage that you use only occasionally, unplug it. All of these can be energy hogs, costing you money and adding to global warming.

# CFL light bulbs will save you money

Several months ago, HREA decided to give away compact fluorescent light bulbs in an effort to help our members save money on their electric bill. Since the bulb giveaway started about the same time cold weather hit, it's hard to see the difference these bulbs can make, but consider the facts:

HREA gave away more than 2,300 compact fluorescent light bulbs equal to 60-watt incandescent bulbs. The 13-watt CFL uses only 13 watts of electricity and produces 880 lumens, as compared to a 60-watt bulb that produces 850



lumens. The life expectancy of a CFL is 10,000 hours, or about nine years. One can only guess at the life expectancy of an incandescent bulb. CFLs use around 70 percent less electricity than incandescent bulbs, and replacing just one incandescent bulb with a CFL can save up to 350 pounds of carbon emissions a year.

Since residential energy is responsible for around 21 percent of total U.S. carbon emissions, replacing those incandescent bulbs is not only good for the monthly budget, it's also good for the environment.

## Use newspapers for mulch

With the days getting longer and the temperatures getting warmer, thoughts of this year's spring planting comes to mind. Whether your interest is flowers or vegetables, or both, one thing remains constant — weeds! Weeds seem to sprout faster than you can pull them, but there is an easy and inexpensive way to keep them at bay — use newspapers for mulch. Newspapers are biodegradable, but hold up for several months. They rob weeds of sunlight, but let water and air reach the soil, and they're a great alternative to herbicides.

When mulching with newspapers, the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends using a layer of newspapers that's about a quarter-inch thick. Use only black and white pages, because some of the colored inks may be harmful to plants. Make use of lawn maintenance leftovers, such as leaves, grass clippings and pine needles by spreading a 2-3" layer over the newspapers to weight them down. With this extra cushion of leaves and grass, it makes it easy

to walk around in the garden without ripping holes in the newspaper.

In the fall, spread two to three sheets of wet newspaper over the entire garden plot, add peat moss, grass clippings and shredded leaves, and when you uncover the garden in the spring, you will find rich, weed-free soil underneath. You can be creative with the ingredients you mix on top of the layer of newspapers, just be sure to not put anything on there that has been treated with herbicides.

So, if pulling weeds out is not one of your favorite things, try newspaper for mulch. Newspaper helps regulate soil temperature and conserve moisture. You'll save time, water and you won't spend your summer pulling out weeds.

## Co-op Connections® cards are helping!

As you remember, several months ago, we sent all of our members a Co-op Connections® card. Well, the report is in for the last quarter of 2008, and several members have benefited from the pharmacy discount that is available when you show your card.

More than 200 prescriptions were filled that would have cost members \$6,474.20. With the Co-op Connections card, these same prescriptions cost \$4,450, a savings of \$2,024.20. Members saved anywhere from 24 to 39 percent on prescription costs. And, as we all know, "every little bit helps."

Stay plugged in to what's happening with your electric cooperative at your annual meeting.

**Harrison Cooperative will hold its 72nd Annual Meeting at 6 p.m. on Thursday, April 16, at Liberty High School**

Take part in the business meeting and enjoy a pasta dinner.



