



Harrison Rural Electrification Association, Inc.

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partners



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Electric cooperatives 101

Many members of electric cooperatives today don't fully comprehend the need and purpose for these types of organizations. Electric cooperatives were created because the big power companies said the distances were too far to make serving the rural communities economical. Rural people at that time rose up to form their own power companies. Today, the United States boasts nearly one thousand electric cooperatives serving approximately 70 percent of its land mass.

It was President Franklin D. Roosevelt who started it all. During a visit to Warm Springs, Ga., in 1924, he was dismayed to find electricity rates four times higher than what he was paying at his estate in New York. It was after his election that he created the federal Rural Electrification Administration. As a

result, electric co-ops were born. It took another 13 years for Harrison Rural Electrification Association to come into existence in 1937.

Electric cooperatives are recognized industry leaders in promoting energy efficiency to help consumer-members reduce electricity consumption and save money. All in all, cooperatives do a pretty good job of serving the rural areas of our state and have been doing so for more than 72 years.

As a cooperative, it is important to note that the governing of the business is not in the hands of far-off strangers, but in the hands of an elected board of directors who also are members. The directors of your cooperative are your neighbors and have as much at stake as you.

Since 2003, the wholesale price of electricity has been affected by a very volatile market that is influenced by the world's increased consumption of fossil fuels. Add to that the huge investment in equipment to meet environmental requirements, the increasing price of transmission delivery and the need to build new generating facilities to meet the growing demand for energy. Your cooperative is committed to keeping costs down by stabilizing controllable expenses and actively promoting conservation of energy. Additionally, we sup-

Manager's Corner

By
Gary Jackson,
CEO/General
Manager



port legislation that is in our members' best interest, and we maintain a proactive approach to providing safe and reliable electric service to our members. In meeting these goals, we must consider the costs involved so that we can maintain the high level of reliability and excellent service you expect from your cooperative.

Data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) shows that, since 2000, **electric co-op rates have consistently run lower than the national average.** The cost of power itself presents the biggest expense to electric utilities. The power is purchased by the cooperative and must be paid for even when consumers fail to pay their bill. There are other substantial costs involved in maintaining the power system and in restoration when the system is damaged, as was the case in the wind storm that struck West Virginia this past winter.

We thank you for the trust you've placed in us and pledge to continue providing you with reliable and affordable power.

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Congratulations, Class of 2009!

It has been a while since we've had any graduates to brag about, but this year we have two! Justin Yerkey, son of lineman Ron Yerkey and bookkeeper Debbie Yerkey, and Ben Stout, son of office manager Terry Stout and his wife, Carol, are now high school graduates!

Both young men are 18 years old. Justin attended Doddridge County High School, and Ben graduated from Bridgeport High School.

Ben has been a member of the Boy Scouts for the last 11 years and achieved the rank of Eagle Scout in 2008. He has been a 4-H member for the last six years and participated in several county livestock shows, as well as the state 4-H Roundup.

Ben is a farmer at heart, and has helped his grandparents on their farm since he was old enough to do so. He also likes to hunt and enjoys swimming.

Although uncertain about his future plans, Ben may attend West Virginia University to obtain a degree in agriculture, or he is considering joining the Coast Guard where he wants to be an AST rescue swimmer.

Justin spent a lot of his high school time managing the girls' volleyball and basketball teams. He filmed

the games and other events and was very active in school activities. He was vice president of the student council and was chosen to represent his school at Mountaineer Boys' State.

Justin is a member of the Demolay young men's chapter of the Masons, and he loves to hunt, ride his four-wheeler and just generally likes being outdoors. He is his dad's right-hand man and helps Ronnie care for their cattle, among other things. Justin represented the cooperative two years ago when

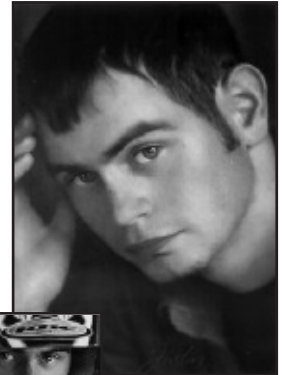
he was our Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., student.

Because of his strong commitment to America, Justin joined the National Guard and leaves for boot camp next month. After he completes his basic training, he will travel to Missouri and begin his schooling to become an electronic engineer.

All of us here at HREA would like to wish Ben and Justin the best of luck, and we want them to know how proud we are of them. It has been a pleasure for us to watch these boys grow into such fine young men.



Ben Stout



Justin Yerkey

Troubleshooting a high bill

Do you think your electric bill is higher than it should be? If so, take a look at the following questions.

Steps to resolution: Here are the steps to follow in resolving a high bill inquiry. These steps will help you better understand the use of electricity in your home—and your electric bill.

1. **Accurate history.** Get an accurate kilowatt-hour history for the account, preferably the last 12 months, if possible. (Ask HREA for help with this.) How does this billing month compare with the same billing month one year ago and two years ago, if that information is available?
2. **Electric bill.** For the electric bill in question—are there other charges in addition to electric service? Have past due amounts, miscellaneous charges, returned check charges, service charges, trip or collection charges been added to the total? We find it best to look at kilowatt-hours of electricity instead of dollar amounts, because then, only electric use is being considered.
3. **Days of use.** Check days of use. Is the number of days greater than other months in question because of different meter reading dates or meter reading cycles? Is your daily average significantly

different from previous months and one year ago? Did you do anything different during the billing period—have guests, a Christmas party, a graduation or wedding celebration? Have you added or changed any appliances or other electric devices?

4. **Weather and seasonal factors.** Check the kilowatt-hour total by month. From the history, are the winter months higher, indicating some form of electric heating? Do the summer months indicate higher use from air conditioning? Was the weather during the billing period colder or hotter than average for the season?

5. **List appliances.** List the appliances in the home. This list is important because many members believe each appliance uses the same amount of electricity. A common statement is, "There's no way I can use this much electricity!" but often a faulty or forgotten appliance is the reason for higher use. If you have well water, make sure your water-well pump isn't running excessively.

We hope these guidelines may be useful in helping our members determine just what exactly is using the bulk of the electricity for which they are billed.