



Harrison Rural Electrification Association, Inc.

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

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Quality of life depends on having electricity

While it is important to work our way through this current economic downturn, it is important to look back on how we got to this point.

During the 1930s, the Rural Electrification Association helped to provide one of the stimuli that eventually brought the country out of the Great Depression. Similarities to that era are facing many of us today with calling this period the Great Recession. However, we've progressed in many other ways since those early years. Our need for dependable electricity has been met for the most part. Few people today live without the conveniences of electricity. While many weather-related issues continue to cause outages, our reli-

bility issues have decreased with an upgraded infrastructure. While reliability is of high concern, a balance between expenses and reasonable utility rates is important.

Rural electrification stemmed from the belief that affordable power would change the way the lives of rural Americans would prosper in the coming years. While 90 percent of urban dwellers had electricity in 1930, only 10 percent of rural America did. Large for-profit utilities found little reason to invest vast amounts of money in rural areas to earn minimal returns for their investors. The companies insisted that putting up poles and wires for farms was too expensive. While today's rural community of home dwellers has increased, the percentage of customers per mile still remains very low in comparison to the number of people living in and near cities.

Under the leadership of then President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the REA was established. That created the rural electric cooperatives as we know it today. Electric cooperatives exist in virtually every part of the United States and currently serve 78 percent of the landmass. While Harrison Rural

Manager's Corner

by
Gary Jackson,
CEO/General
Manager



Electric remains as only one of three cooperatives serving members in the state, other states surrounding us have quite a large number of electric cooperatives serving members like you.

While a larger utility might offer the benefits of economies of scale, a smaller utility can offer benefits too. One example was the storm that hit West Virginia in late 2009 during the Christmas holidays. Ninety-nine percent of the members of Harrison Rural Electric who lost power during that storm were returned to power within 36 hours, while other utilities in the state were without power for nearly two weeks. We contribute our good fortune to the aggressive right-of-way clearing that HREA has committed to over the past years, along with a dedicated workforce, many of whom are served by HREA.

While HREA remains a small player in the bigger picture, be assured that our members are the most important reason why we exist today.

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7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Mon.-Fri.

It's almost annual meeting time!

Harrison Rural Electrification Association will hold its annual meeting of the members on Thursday, April 15, at Liberty High School. As was mentioned last month, cake and coffee will be served immediately following this year's meeting.

In an effort to save money, there will be no gift handouts at the door nor door prize drawings following the meeting. The pre-meeting meal and entertainment also have been eliminated.

We hope you will plan to attend the meeting, as this is your chance to hear what your co-op has been doing and what it plans to do in the future. This is also your chance to ask questions and voice your concerns.

There will be more information about the meeting in the April issue of *Country Living*. We hope to see you there!

April
15!

How tall is that tree going to grow?

As spring planting begins to enter your mind, new trees may be part of your landscape plan.

Winter ice storms and summer thunderstorms show the effect trees can have on the flow of your electric service, which is why it's important to think about more than just the tree.

So while you make plans for what trees will enhance the look of your property, make sure you look up to see how those trees will affect the overhead utility lines.

Decorative trees generally don't grow extremely tall, such as a Bartlett pear reaches a mature height of about 20 feet.

But those big hardwood favorites that bathe a yard in shade during the hot summer months can get much bigger.

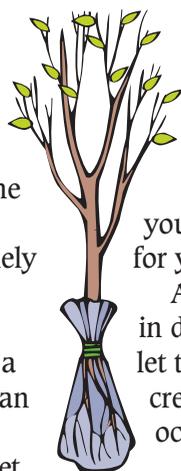
Maple trees will grow to between 60 and 80 feet

when mature, oak trees can reach 75 to 80 feet, and the mighty sycamore will reach upward of 115 feet when fully grown.

A good rule of thumb to consider is to plant trees at least as far away from utility lines as the tree is expected to grow. (If you're planting a sugar maple that could grow to be 75 feet tall, plant it 75 feet away from power lines.)

When it comes to trees, your cooperative needs your help in maintaining a constant flow of power for you and your neighbors. Plant responsibly.

Also, if you have trees on your property that are in danger of coming in contact with power lines, let the co-op know, and our right-of-way clearing crews can take care of things before a problem occurs.



Five ways to obtain IRS forms and publications

The Internal Revenue Service has free tax forms and publications on a wide variety of topics. If you need IRS forms, here are five easy methods for getting the information you need.

- 1. On the Internet** You can access forms and publications on the IRS Web site 24 hours a day, seven days a week, at IRS.gov.
- 2. By Phone** You can call 1-800-TAX-FORM (800-829-3676) Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. local time—except Alaska and Hawaii, which are Pacific time—to order current year forms, instructions and publications as well as prior year forms and instructions. You should receive your order within 10 days.
- 3. At Convenient Locations in Your Community** During the tax filing season, many libraries and post offices offer free tax forms to taxpayers. Some libraries also have copies of commonly requested

publications. Many large grocery stores, copy centers and office supply stores have forms you can photocopy or print from a CD.

- 4. By Mail** Order your tax forms and publications from the IRS National Distribution Center at 1201 N. Mitsubishi Motorway, Bloomington, IL 61705-6613. You should receive your products 10 days after receipt of your order.

- 5. Taxpayer Assistance Centers** There are 401 TACs across the country where the IRS offers face-to-face assistance to taxpayers, and where taxpayers can pick up many IRS forms and publications. Visit IRS.gov and go to Contact My Local Office on the Individuals page to find a list of TAC locations by state. On the Contact My Local Office page, you can also select TAC Site Search and enter your ZIP code to find the IRS walk-in office nearest you as well as a list of the services available at specific offices.

Weathering the 'perfect storm'

Our nation's electric utility industry is heading into a "perfect storm." While the amount of electricity we use every day steadily increases, the capacity to generate and transmit that power is running short. In the past, fossil fuel-fired power plants were the go-to option to meet growing new demand with proven technology, but looming federal regulations on carbon dioxide emissions is changing that. The cost of complying with new regulations could make electricity less affordable for everyone—a concern Harrison Rural Electrification Association is fighting to voice.

In December, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a part of the executive branch, declared that six key greenhouse gases from auto emissions, including carbon dioxide, are "endangering public health and welfare" of current and future generations. Emissions from motor vehicles of four of those greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, were also said to contribute to dangerous air pollution.

The endangerment finding puts a foot in the door for the EPA to issue sweeping new rules that could

impose strict limits on carbon emissions, including those from power plants. The cost of generating electricity would go up, and in the end those costs would hit consumer pocketbooks.

Congress is mulling over its own set of carbon dioxide regulations, and we must continue to ask that any resulting legislation be fair, affordable and technologically achievable. If passed, congressional legislation should also preempt use of any other existing laws, fixing a regulatory disaster that would only add to costs for consumers with a mess of overlapping regulatory red tape.

Whatever the political outcome, the honest truth is the change won't come overnight. Fossil fuels currently account for more than 70 percent of all electricity generated in the United States. New technology will be key to both keeping these traditional options up-to-date and refining new ways to affordably keep the lights on. Cleaner use of fossil fuels, an increased use of renewable energy, and a big commitment to energy efficiency will all be necessary.

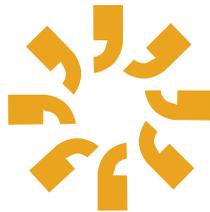
Electric co-ops have a long history of providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity to their members, and no "perfect storm" is going to keep us from continuing to do our job. Co-op research projects are already underway to expand the current limits of renewable energy, make coal- and natural gas-fired power plants cleaner and more efficient, and possibly even capture carbon dioxide from plant emissions before they go up a smokestack and store them deep underground to keep them out of the atmosphere.

The Cooperative Research Network, of which our co-op is a member, was recently awarded a \$33.9 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy, which will support a wide-ranging "smart grid" research project. The effort brings together 27 electric co-ops in 10 states, which will match the grant money awarded to create a pool of nearly \$68 million for ground-breaking technology development. With a smarter electric

grid, we'll be able to deliver electricity to our consumers more efficiently—cutting the amount of emissions we'll need to

generate as a result.

Co-ops have stepped up to challenges in the past, and I have no doubt our response to this challenge will be any different in the end. But we need your help in relaying to Congress just how important it is to keep climate change legislation fair, affordable and technologically achievable. To make your voice heard, join the Our Energy, Our Future™ grassroots awareness campaign at www.ourenergy.coop.



Our Energy, Our Future A Dialogue With America



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

In 2010 many state energy offices are offering consumers rebates when they replace old appliances with ENERGY STAR qualified ones. Find out what's available in our state at www.energysavers.gov/financial/70020.html.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

