




# Harrison Rural Electrification Association, Inc.

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## 2017 planning and director elections

IT MAY SEEM EARLY, but it is already time to begin the formal planning process for 2017. By the time you read this, HREA staff have already begun preparation of a preliminary budget to be presented to the board of directors; reviewed data and prioritized by need capital projects; solicited quotes on potential materials and equipment for maintenance projects; and completed our annual planning meeting, which, this year, served as a preliminary Rural Utilities Service workplan meeting for the next four years and to discuss remaining projects on the current workplan.

The cooperative has been working hard to identify ways to increase operational efficiencies and service reliability while reducing overall operational costs. This is a monumental task at best. We will continue to investigate affordable technology that we believe will aid

in accomplishing this goal, and we are evaluating the basics to ensure we have all of the bases covered. We know that each member, each employee, and each director has a responsibility to all of the other members, employees, and directors of the cooperative. These responsibilities must be carried out in a consistent, non-biased manner with a zero tolerance level for personal agenda items.

While all of that is important, one of the most important items addressed annually is the election of directors to sit on HREA's board. The co-op has seven directors representing seven voting districts within HREA's service area. These directors serve three-year terms that start at the conclusion of HREA's Annual Meeting, which is held the third Thursday of every April. The board of directors is generally empowered to oversee the business and affairs of the cooperative.

Those members who have dedicated the time to serve on your board of directors have discovered just how important their role is to the overall operation of the cooperative. Serving on the board requires the individual to gain a thorough understanding of many facets of the electric distribution business that they may not have known existed. It also requires that you put aside your personal agenda and work as part of a team that is focused on serving the membership. The challenges are

### Manager's Corner

by Terry Stout,  
CEO/General Manager



great, but tough decisions have to be made knowing that a certain percentage of the membership will not agree with those decisions. It is not an easy undertaking. The rewards are not financial in nature. The rewards come in the form of team participation and in the knowledge that what has been accomplished can still better the lives of the membership.

Director positions are voted on "at-large," even though there can be only one representative from each of the designated voting districts. The voting districts were established to spread out the representation across the entire membership. In so doing, the cooperative gains firsthand knowledge of situations and challenges in order to make decisions that are beneficial to the entire membership. Additionally, directors are nominated for inclusion on the ballot by a "Member Nomination Petition" that requires the potential candidate to gain the signature and recommendation of 15 HREA members. Of course, the potential candidate must also meet certain qualifications in accordance with Article IV, Section 3, of the cooperative's bylaws and provide the information as stated

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#### Board of Directors

C.B. Sharp, Dist. 1..... President  
Glenn Cox, Dist. 3..... Vice President  
James Stuart, Dist. 4..... Sec.-Treas.  
Greg Robertson, Dist. 2     Ron Watson, Dist. 5  
Philip McMillan, Dist. 6     Michael Cross, Dist. 7

#### Terry Stout, General Manager

Lloyd Mason .....IT Manager  
Sam Satterfield..... Operations Manager  
Scott Wyckoff ..... Line Supervisor  
Jon Paul McAllister..... Staking Technician  
Missie Stephenson ..... Accountant  
Jodi Swiger ..... Editor

#### Office Hours

7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday

# *An automated world* is why **we need higher learning**

BY LLOYD MASON

I CAN REMEMBER SITTING in my living room in 1990, trying to make my “new,” scuzzy 800-MB hard drive — roughly the size of a kids shoe box — recognize a large block access format so my computer at the time could use this unheard of amount of space.

This required a few of my most techie friends and lots a trial and error, while we dreamed of what could be possible. If we could just make these things remember commands and then execute them at the right time to benefit the human architects, then we would really have something. Even then, the robotic concept was not in any way young or new. However, for us, the goal or dream on that day was much closer.

Fast forward to 2015. I now make a living by working with computers, and the hard drive I referenced earlier can now hold 36 times more information and is roughly the size of an unshelled peanut. We truly are on the horizon of robots being capable of performing the same tasks as, say, a retail or fast food worker. The proof is everywhere we look.

The grocery store is a great example. We are now seeing quasi robot tellers. In most grocery stores, you'll find a bank of self-check out machines. Who knows how long it will be before the replacement of checkout clerks altogether. We can easily imagine a conveyor belt full of items being scanned as they pass through the turnstile, which distributes your food to the correct bags. Sound familiar? Automation can easily remove the human and greatly speed up our experience. And that's just a grocery run.

What if our fast food could be done in much the same way? That, too, is already here and being tested by one of many automation companies. This is — forgive the geekish glee — a very exciting concept with many avenues for personal choice. The machine in question is a robot that can not only make 360 burgers per hour, but it can do it with your choice of meat combinations and cooking preferences. The machine has fresh vegetables to slice on demand, guaranteeing the freshest possible experience for every customer. What if this company had the forethought to automate the software controlling its burger bot? That would mean whatever delicious combo you had last time will be remem-

bered by the burger bot on your vacation, or when you go out of town, and will be exactly like the one you had back where you live.

Burger makers are not the only machines like this. In Japan, a company has installed 262 locations with custom sushi machines. While providing for a busy lunch rush, the sushi machine makes the sushi and distributes to a conveyor belt for human selection. Because it is run by a computer, the machine knows when sushi has been cut and keeps track of how long a particular dish has been on the treadmill, removing it once it reaches the time window dictated by safety protocols. All this for the average price of \$1 for a lunch plate! Without the overhead of employees, the real cost of the food can be extended while providing reasonable profit for the owner.

Now for the headline of this article: It is widely accepted that people's jobs are being replaced by machines like the ones mentioned here. This further shows the need for more highly skilled workers. People need to invent, build, and repair these high-tech machines.

It goes without saying that our entire marketplace is changing. Many newer high-tech jobs are becoming available as many low-skill jobs threaten to be replaced by machines.

The solution: We must all educate ourselves. In the job market of today and beyond, there will be no possible way to avoid a job that involves using a computer. The fact is they are everywhere, and we use them to control almost everything. Flatly put, school and the preparation for this reality is the difference between a good living and struggling. It really does break down to that simple idea. Learn or be left behind. The good news is learning comes in many forms and from many places.

Next month we will look into the incredible number of opportunities the internet can offer the focused learner.

*Till next time @ Tech Corner.*

**LLOYD MASON** is the manager of information technology at Harrison Rural Electric Association. He writes monthly on technology issues affecting our cooperative and members.

# Don't be fooled by common energy myths

BY ABBY BERRY

Eating carrots will greatly improve your eyesight, cracking your knuckles leads to arthritis, and watching too much TV will harm your vision. We've all heard the old wives' tales, but did you know there are also many misconceptions about home energy use? Don't be fooled by common energy myths.

**Myth: The higher the thermostat setting, the faster the home will heat (or cool).**

Many people think that walking into a chilly room and raising the thermostat to 85 degrees will heat the room more quickly. This is not true.

Thermostats direct a home's heating and cooling system to heat or cool to a certain temperature. Drastically adjusting the thermostat setting will not make a difference in how quickly you feel a temperature change. The U.S. Department of Energy recommends setting your thermostat to 78 degrees during summer months, and 68 degrees during winter months for optimum energy efficiency.

**Myth: Opening the oven door to check on a dish doesn't really waste energy.**

While it can be tempting to check the progress of what's cooking, opening the oven door does waste energy. Every time the oven door is opened, the temperature inside is reduced by as much as 25 degrees, delaying the progress of your dish and,

more important, costing you additional money. If you need to check a dish, try using the oven light instead.

**Myth: Ceiling fans keep your home cool while you're away.**

Many people think this is true — but ceiling fans cool people, not rooms. They circulate room air but do not change the temperature. A running ceiling fan in an empty room is only adding to your electricity use and your bill. Remember to turn fans off when you're away and reduce your energy use.

**Myth: Reducing my energy use is too expensive.**

Many consumers believe that reducing energy use requires expensive upfront costs like purchasing new, more efficient appliances or building upgrades to an older home. But the truth is, consumers who make small changes to their energy efficiency habits, such as turning off lights when not in use, sealing air leaks, and using a programmable thermostat, can see a reduction in energy consumption.

Remember, energy efficiency doesn't have to be difficult. Focus on small changes to save big.

**ABBY BERRY** writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

## 2017 Planning

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in Article IV, Section 4. These petitions must be delivered to the myself, the cooperative's CEO/General Manager, at least 90 business days prior to the member meeting at which directors are to be elected (per Article IV, Section 4(a) of the bylaws). In HREA's case, directors are elected at the Annual Meeting, which is on April 20, 2017.

In 2017, you will be electing directors for District 3 (Clay and Eagle Magisterial Districts of Harrison County and the members residing in Marion County) and District 4 (Elk Magisterial District of Harrison County and the members residing in Barbour and Upshur Counties).

If you are interested in becoming a candidate, you can stop by HREA's administrative office in Charles Pointe to pick up the required forms. If you have questions, you can call me at 304-624-6365.

**The important date to remember is that properly completed petitions and accompanying documentation must be received by 4 p.m. Dec. 7. ☞**



**If you see these HREA employees this month, be sure to wish them a very happy birthday!**

**Scott Wycoff Oct. 18**

**Jason White Oct. 23**

# Pros and cons OF HEAT PUMP WATER HEATERS

BY TOM TATE

A MAJOR CONSUMER OF ELECTRICITY in today's home is the water heater. Because of how electric water heaters work, using electric resistance elements, these units max out in efficiency around 96 percent. As the government and industry seek ways to reduce energy use and the resulting carbon dioxide emissions, they have turned their attention to the electric water heater. After a lengthy study, the U.S. Department of Energy issued rules governing the efficiency of electric water heaters that went into effect in 2015. The rules resulted in a jump in efficiency requirements for larger residential electric water heaters; enter the heat pump water heater (HPWH).

Heat pumps have been in use for home heating and cooling for

decades. When the oil embargo of the 1970s brought the need for improved efficiency to the forefront, heat pumps became an important source of increased energy efficiency in the heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) arena.

Heat pumps operate by using compressors, refrigerant, heat exchangers, and the difference in outside air temperature versus indoor temperatures to produce heating and cooling. These units historically have been most successful in areas with moderate winter temperatures, although advances in technology are making use in colder climates more feasible.

How does a HPWH function, and what are its advantages and disadvantages? In short, the

HPWH absorbs heat from the surrounding air, using it to heat water within the tank. Because the HPWH uses heat pump technology, it can be up to 2.5 times more efficient than a traditional resistance electric water heater. This means it will use less electricity and cost less to produce hot water for your home.

The table below details the key advantages and disadvantages of the HPWH. As with heat pumps for general space conditioning, the HPWH will provide greater year-round savings in moderate climates.

**TOM TATE** writes for the *National Rural Electric Cooperative Association*, the service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

<b>PROS</b> OF HEAT PUMP WATER HEATERS	<b>CONS</b> OF HEAT PUMP WATER HEATERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Efficiency can be as much as 2.5 times higher than an electric resistance alternative</li><li>• Cools surrounding space in the summer, making the area more comfortable</li><li>• Uses waste heat from the central furnace during winter months</li><li>• May qualify for \$300 federal tax credit in 2016</li><li>• Can save \$330 annually for a family of four, depending on water use and electricity rates</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cost about twice as much as electric resistance water heaters</li><li>• The compressor will make a noticeable noise — insulating the mechanical room can reduce the sound, but doing so reduces the amount of warm air for the unit's use</li><li>• Makes the heating system work harder during winter months because it generates cold air while operating</li><li>• Physical size can be greater than an electric resistance alternative</li><li>• Requires additional space for air flow (1,000 cubic feet) and a condensation drain or pump</li><li>• Slow recovery may be a problem when demand for water is high</li><li>• Not well-equipped for cost-saving electricity demand-management programs</li></ul>