



Harrison Rural Electrification Association, Inc.

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 
www.harrisonrea.com

Some things change and some things don't

The cooperative has experienced some changes over the last couple of months. Gary Jackson decided to retire after serving as the CEO/general manager of HREA for a little more than six years. We will miss his leadership and friendship, but wish him well in whatever endeavors retirement brings his way. On the lighter side, he has been gracious enough to keep us informed of the temperature differences between Florida and West Virginia during these winter months.

As a result of Gary's retirement, the board of directors met and named me as the new CEO/general manager. On a personal note, I thank them for this opportunity and I hope to serve the cooperative and our membership well. By the time this article goes to publication, I hope to have a new man-

ager of office services/accountant on board.

Another staff change has been to move Rick Fox's focus to mapping and to promote Scott Wyckoff to staking engineer. Rick faces a tough task in cleaning up our existing maps and preparing our system for GIS, AMI and outage management. These systems are items we knew we would have to address sooner or later. With regulatory requirements, later is becoming sooner much quicker than we had hoped. We feel very fortunate to have someone with Rick's knowledge available to lead these transitions. Scott has become the primary contact with the membership for new services and infrastructure design. Once again, we are very fortunate to have someone with Scott's knowledge and experience available to take charge of these duties.

Even with these changes, our commitment to you the membership, our commitment to the seven cooperative principles and our commitment to the four core val-

Manager's Corner

by
Terry Stout,
CEO/General
Manager



ues of the Touchstone Energy® brand will never change.

I am sure we will continue to face many challenges from several different fronts in living up to our commitments, but I think we, the entire cooperative staff, are up to the challenge. I have had the honor of working alongside these individuals over the last 10 years and I have seen firsthand their dedication to serving the membership.

Oh sure, sometimes we stumble and don't meet everyone's expectation of us, and for that we apologize and vow to try to do better in the future. Be assured that we are much harder on ourselves for not meeting your and our expectations than the membership ever has been or will be. You see, it isn't just rhetoric to us, it is our way of life, and that will not change.

Board of Directors

C.B. Sharp, Dist. 1.....President
James Stuart, Dist. 4.....Vice President
Darrell Powell, Dist. 6.....Secy.-Treas.
Greg Robertson.....Dist. 2 Kent Vance.....Dist. 3
Ron Watson.....Dist. 5 Michael Cross.....Dist. 7

Terry Stout, General Manager
Alan Cox.....Operations Manager
Richard L. Fox.....Staking Engineer
Scott Wyckoff.....Staking Engineer
Nada McNemar.....Editor

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

**HARRISON RURAL ELECTRIC WILL BE CLOSED ON
PRESIDENTS' DAY, FEBRUARY 20.**

WE WILL REOPEN AT THE REGULAR TIME FEBRUARY 21.

**AS ALWAYS, IF YOU HAVE AN OUTAGE,
CALL 304-624-6365 OR 1-800-540-4732**

AND OUR ANSWERING SERVICE WILL ASSIST YOU.

HREA bids farewell to an old friend

BY NADA MCNEMAR

Those of us who work or have worked for Harrison Rural Electric have had the pleasure of meeting and working with a very special man, Keith Crabtree. Keith recently retired from the Ohio Rural Electric Cooperatives, Inc., which means he won't be our communications consultant anymore. Keith was someone we relied heavily on, and he always came through for us. No matter how difficult the task, Keith would attack it with his usual vigor and help us in any way that he could.

Those members who attend our annual meeting each year may recall seeing Keith motoring around on his scooter taking pictures. Keith has some health issues and overcomes obstacles every day that most of us can't even imagine. He is without a doubt one of the most courageous men I have ever met, and he is such a good person on top of that.

Keith wrote a book about our cooperative titled *Co-op Survivor — The Story of Harrison Rural Electrification Association* that described a dark time in our history, and how we managed to overcome it, and believe me, we could not have done it without Keith's help. Keith's book is required reading for Touchstone Energy's® communications staff. Of course, all our employees have a copy that we treasure very much.

We wanted to honor Keith in some way before he retired, so we invited him to our Christmas dinner last December. He and his wife, Carol, traveled from Ohio just to eat dinner with us, and we were all so

glad to see them. We presented Keith with an HREA jacket at the dinner as a small token of our esteem for him and the entire crowd gave him a standing ovation. However, there is nothing that can represent how much he means to us, or how much we will miss working with him.

Keith didn't work directly for Harrison Rural Electric, but he was and always will be a member of our co-op family. Those of us who work here have two families, the one we go home to every night and the one we work with every day. Like all families, we bicker and quarrel every now and then, but each of us knows that if we need help, all we have to do is look to our co-op family. Keith can rest assured of several things; he and Carol have a standing invitation to our Christmas dinner each year, our door is always open to them at any time of the year, and if he ever needs us, his co-op family here at HREA will be there for him.

We love you, Keith, and we wish you well in your retirement (although none of us believe that you will ever really stop working). God Bless!



Insulation installation safety tips

When tackling home insulation installation on your own, safety should be at the top of your mind. Follow these tips from the North American Insulation Manufacturers Association on safe insulation installation practices.

Wear appropriate clothing. To reduce the chances of skin irritation, wear a head cover, gloves and loose-fitting, long-sleeved, long-legged clothing.

Wear proper personal protective equipment. Safety glasses and respiratory protection may be necessary, depending on your work environment. The U.S. Occupational Health and Safety Association offers guidelines in its Respiratory Protection Standard that may be helpful.

Take care if fibers get on your skin or eyes. If insulation fibers collect on your skin, don't rub and scratch or remove with compressed air. Instead, lay tape on your skin, adhesive-side down, and then re-

move the tape gently, so the fibers are pulled from the skin. If fibers get in your eyes, never rub — flush with water or eyewash solution. Contact your doctor if you have continued irritation.

Keep dust to a minimum. Leave the materials in packaging for as long as possible. Use tools that create the least amount of dust; power tools should have dust-collection devices. Put scrap materials in the trash and don't let equipment wander too far from the work site.

Maintain adequate ventilation. Determine whether your work site needs a dust-collection system. Also, exhausted air containing fibers should be filtered before being recirculated into inside workspaces. Finally, ventilation systems used to capture fibers should be regularly checked.

Source: *North American Insulation Manufacturers Association*

Caulk up the savings

The greatest sources of heating and cooling losses in your home are often invisible — air leaks. As a result, controlling air leaks provides the best way to extend the life of your home, conserve energy, save money and increase comfort.

Bottom line? If you don't tighten up your home first, money spent on insulation may be wasted.

Fortunately, you can seal a lot of leaks around your home's exterior with less than \$100 worth of caulk. It's generally possible to seal openings up to one-quarter inch between window frames and siding or around door frames. For larger gaps, add a backing material before caulking, or use a spray foam sealant instead.

Most types of outdoor caulk are sold in tubes that fit a caulking gun. In addition, some caulks come in aerosol cans; they're a good choice for filling gaps up to one-half inch around pipes and wires.

When shopping for caulk, there are myriad choices. Prices range from a couple of dollars to several dollars per tube, so be sure to read the labels and choose a product that will adhere best to the materials you're sealing.

If budgeting allows, spend a little more for a higher-quality caulk. Inexpensive caulks may last only a few years, while premium-priced caulks are rated for 20 years or more.

Caulk like a pro

- As a rule of thumb, you'll probably use half a cartridge per window or door and up to six cartridges for foundation work.

- Most caulks pose no known health hazards after they're fully cured. However, some high-performance caulking compounds contain irritating or potentially

toxic ingredients, so you should carefully read the manufacturer's instructions and take the appropriate precautions.

- The best time to apply caulk is during dry weather when outdoor temperatures are above 45 degrees. Low humidity is important during application to prevent cracks from swelling with moisture.

- If the gap you're sealing is too wide, use a special filler made for the purpose. You'll find fillers in the caulking department of your local hardware store or home center. However, note that fillers are not designed for exposure to the elements; so you'll need to caulk or seal over it.

- Before applying new caulk, remove the old caulk or paint residue with a putty knife, stiff brush or special solvent.

- Make sure your work area is dry, so you won't seal in moisture.

- Hold the caulking gun at a consistent angle; 45 degrees is best.

- Caulk in a straight, continuous stream, avoiding stops and starts, and make sure the caulk sticks to both sides of the crack or seam.

- Send caulk to the bottom of an opening to avoid bubbles.

- Release the trigger on the caulking gun before pulling it away from the crack to prevent applying too much caulk. A caulking gun with an automatic release makes this much easier.






- Don't skimp. If the caulk shrinks, reapply it to form a smooth bead that completely seals the crack.

- If caulk oozes out of a crack, use a putty knife to push it back in.

- Once you've applied caulk, it takes time for it to dry, or cure. Curing time is described in two

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Common Caulking Compounds

Caulk Type	Recommended Uses	Cleanup	Shrinkage	Adhesion	Comments
 Silicone	Seals most dissimilar building materials such as wood, stone, vinyl, metal flashing and brick	Immediately with dry cloth and mineral spirits or naphtha	Little or none	Good to excellent	Permits joints to stretch or compress. Will stick to painted surfaces, but paint will not adhere to most cured silicones.
 Polyurethane, expandable spray foam	Expands when curing. Good for larger cracks. Use in non-friction areas, because foam becomes dry and powdery over time.	Immediately with solvent such as lacquer thinner	None; expands quite a bit	Good to excellent	Quickly expands to fit larger, irregularly shaped gaps. Flexible. Can be applied at variable temperatures. Must be painted for exterior use to protect from ultraviolet radiation.
 Water-based spray foam	Around window and door frames in new construction or remodeling projects; smaller cracks	Water	None; expands only 25%	Good to excellent	Takes 24 hours to cure to a soft consistency. Will not overexpand to bend window frames. Must be exposed to air to dry. Not useful for larger gaps, as curing becomes difficult.
 Butyl rubber	Seals most dissimilar materials such as glass, metal, plastic, wood and concrete. Seals around windows and flashing; bonds loose shingles	Mineral spirits or naphtha	5%-30%	Good	Lasts 10 or more years. Resilient, but not brittle. Can be painted after one week. Variable shrinkage may require two applications. Does not adhere well to painted surfaces.
 Oil or resin-based	Seals exterior seams and joints on almost all building materials	Mineral spirits or naphtha	10%-20%	Good	Low cost. Rope and tube forms available. Oils dry out and cause material to harden and fall out. Low durability; lasts 1-4 years. Poor adhesion to porous surfaces such as masonry. Should be painted. Limited temperature range.

Hearts at risk

Healthy hearts face risks from many different factors: high cholesterol, obesity, diabetes, tobacco use, an unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and secondhand smoke, among others. But another common — and often misunderstood — risk factor is high blood pressure.

One in three Americans suffers from high blood pressure, according to the American Heart Association (AHA). With February designated as American Heart Month, now's a great time to understand more about this condition.

Blood pressure is typically recorded as two numbers, written as a ratio: 118/75 mm Hg. The top number, systolic, measures pressure in the arteries when a heart beats and the heart muscle contracts. The bottom number, diastolic, measures pressure in the arteries between heartbeats (when the heart muscle rests between beats and refills with blood).

The AHA lists five stages of blood pressure:

- Normal: Systolic less than 120 and diastolic less than 80
- Prehypertension: Systolic between 120-139 or diastolic between 80-89
- High Blood Pressure Stage 1: Systolic between 140-159 or diastolic between 90-99
- High Blood Pressure Stage 2: Systolic 160 and higher or diastolic 100 or higher
- Hypertensive Crisis (emergency care needed): Systolic 180 and higher or diastolic 110 or higher

How is high blood pressure diagnosed?

Health care providers want an accurate picture of blood pressure to chart what happens over time. Starting at age 20, AHA recommends a blood pressure screening at least once every two years.

If a patient's blood pressure reading comes in higher than normal, a doctor may take several readings over time and/or have the patient monitor blood pressure levels at home before diagnosing high blood pressure.

A single high reading does not necessarily translate to high blood pressure. However, if readings stay at 140/90 mm Hg or above (systolic 140 or above OR diastolic 90

or above) over time, a doctor will likely begin a treatment program. Such a program almost always includes lifestyle changes and often prescription medication.

If, while monitoring blood pressure, a patient notes a systolic reading of 180 mm Hg or higher OR a diastolic reading of 110 mm HG or higher, the patient should wait a few minutes and try again. If the reading remains at or above that level, a patient should seek immediate emergency medical treatment for a hypertensive crisis.

Which number is more important, systolic (top) or diastolic (bottom)?

Typically, more attention is given to the top number (the systolic blood pressure) as a major risk factor for cardiovascular disease for people over 50. In most cases, systolic blood pressure rises steadily with age because of increasing stiffness of large arteries, long-term build-up of plaque and increased incidence of cardiac and vascular disease.

To learn more, visit www.heart.org.

Source: American Heart Association.

Caulk up the savings

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ways. The tack-free time tells you how quickly the fresh caulk's outer surface will dry or skin over. The total cure time indicates the time required for the caulk to become completely stable — or reach the point where no further drying or shrinking will occur.

- Don't allow pets and small children to come into contact with fresh caulk.

Use expanding foam for large gaps

- Be sure to use the correct type of spray foam for the job. Polyurethane expandable spray foam works well around pipes and gaps around the foundation. However, this type of caulk expands with so much force that it can cause damage to window frames and door frames. In those spots, use a water-based spray foam specifically designed for the job.

- Expanding foam is ideal for filling cracks that caulks can't handle. It comes in aerosol cans and takes a short time to cure. The foam is very sticky and attaches itself quickly, so be prepared to pick up any messes fast.

- To seal gaps too wide for foam, use foil-faced bubble wrap. For really large holes, cut sections of rigid foam insulation to fit and then glue into place with expanding foam before covering the area with wood or another appropriate building material.

Find more ways to seal your home and save at TogetherWeSave.com.

Sources: U.S. Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, ENERGY STAR and product manufacturers



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Air is drawn into your home from low areas, so inspect your foundation for potential air-infiltration points. Fixing these leaks makes a bigger impact on your electric bill than sealing doors and windows! Caulk all cracks and gaps around your home including spaces around wires for telephone, electricity and cable, as well as gas lines, water spigots and dryer vents. Find more ways to save at TogetherWeSave.com.

Source: Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives