



# Harrison Rural Electrification Association, Inc.

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Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



[www.harrisonrea.com](http://www.harrisonrea.com)

## Aerial cutting could improve vegetation control

THE COOPERATIVE IS ALWAYS looking for ways to maximize member benefit at the lowest possible cost.

In recent months, the West Virginia Public Service Commission created a rule whereby every electric utility in the state had to implement a vegetation management program that included end-to-end cycle cuts with appropriate “hot spotting” as necessary. On the surface, this action did not cause any alarm here at HREA since our program was already based on end-to-end cycle cutting, so this fit right in to our existing plans, and we have an existing contract through the end of 2016. Other utilities were not as well-prepared and have had to make radical changes to their programs, which include rate riders to help offset the increased cost of meeting this new rule.

The only issue we see is that due to the increased focus by the other utilities, the cost per mile of maintaining right-of-way looks to be increasing exponentially, which is not surprising given the laws of supply and demand—something I am not sure the state considered in its rule-making. As we begin

the process to secure future right-of-way maintenance contracts, we are faced with choices that we need to look at thoroughly to ensure that we make the best possible long-term decision.

In analyzing vegetation growth within our rights-of-way, we look at what growth affects reliability through direct contact with lines and what vegetation hinders our ability to repair and restore lines. Side growth is the prominent cause of direct line contact because plants and trees love to grow to the most sunlight, while scrub brush like multiflora rose and autumn olive are some of the worst ground-floor species. Scrub brush is a huge headache for a crew that is patrolling a line or repairing a broken line, but they are unlikely to grow large enough to actually cause a service interruption. Thus, side growth becomes the primary target in improving service reliability.

Typically, controlling side growth requires someone to climb each tree along the right-of-way and remove each branch that invades the right-of-way. This is very time-consuming, as is the major factor in determining the cost. Recently, we observed a demonstration of aerial side cutting where a helicopter was able to complete the side cut in 90 minutes, which would take a manual crew about two to two-and-a-half weeks to complete.

As a result, we are going to test this method on about 85 miles of right-of-way this year using Asplundh Tree Experts, Inc. Asplundh will also have several ground crews doing the follow-up and clearing the ground portion of the right-of-way as they go. The helicopter is a subcontractor called Rotor

### Manager's Corner

by Terry Stout,  
CEO/General Manager



Blade, and it has extensive experience in cutting right-of-way in West Virginia. As a courtesy, Rotor Blade will obtain permission from landowners before cutting. We expect that the contractor will complete this 85 miles in just a few months, hopefully before the leaves come out, but the staff knows to watch for wild cherry, etc.

If all goes well, this may become a key component of our vegetation program for years to come. One word of caution, though, is that if you want to observe personnel while they are in your area, watch the saw, not the helicopter, because watching the helicopter dance in the sky while the pilot manipulates the saw is not for the faint of heart. Personally, I added it to the list of jobs I never want to do.

In addition, the crews cleaning the ground portion may use some equipment similar to a brush hog that will make clearing more productive. Obviously, the terrain will dictate where this equipment can be used safely, but our goal is to be more efficient in obtaining the desired results. If this all works properly, then we may be able to extend our annual mileage, thus reducing the cutting cycles, which should improve the overall reliability of the entire system.

Hope everyone is ready for spring. ☺

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# 2015 Youth Tour:

Why should you apply?

**It just might change your life**

BY JACY WOODS

IT'S YOUR SOPHOMORE OR JUNIOR YEAR in high school; do you want to take a week out of your summer break to go on a **free** vacation to Washington, D.C.?

Do you want to make new friends and gain experiences of a lifetime?

These seem like questions that would have simple answers — yes! — but that isn't always the case. It would mean leaving your friends, missing your favorite TV show and surviving without your mom's cooking. What if you took the leap and were miserable?

These are fears everyone experiences. Uncomfortable situations will help you develop coping skills to achieve your goals while out of your comfort zone, and that molds who you become as a young adult.



Seth Law gave a speech in front of nearly 50 of his peers as part of his participation in the national Youth Leadership Council.

The best place to experience this challenge is with students your own age who are in the exact same situation, and Harrison Rural Electrification Association has the perfect opportunity: the Rural Electric Youth Tour. It's a weeklong trip to Washington, D.C., sponsored by electric cooperatives all across the country. About 1,600 students are expected to converge on the nation's capital this year in June, 40 of them from Ohio and West Virginia.

"I was worried I wouldn't make any friends because I am usually quiet around people I don't know," said Seth Law, Harrison Rural Electric's 2014 representative to the Youth Tour. "Despite my fears, I made friends that I have kept in contact with since the end of the trip. Because I attended Youth Tour, I made friends from all over Ohio. Because I participated on the Youth Leadership Council, I now have friends from all of the United States, including California, Texas, New Mexico, and New York."

Every year, high school sophomores and juniors gather together and share an experience they can only describe as life changing. During Youth Tour, you'll visit many of the famous sites and maybe

even meet a U.S. senator. The group visits the U.S. Capitol, the Smithsonian Institution and Ford's Theater, along with many famous monuments. You make lifetime friends, who might end up being your college roommate or the best man in your wedding.

There were many favorites for Seth, but he really enjoyed getting to know everyone at the hotel after the first long bus ride. "During the first night of the trip, we rode on the bus to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania," he said. "It was pretty quiet on the bus; however, once we got to the hotel, we all started talking about where everyone was from and spent time at the hotel's pool."

"While we were touring Washington, D.C., I was able to look back from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial over the Washington Mall and imagine what it must have been like for Martin Luther King Jr. to give his famous "I have a dream" speech in front of the great emancipator, Abraham Lincoln," Seth continued. "The last night of the tour was very hard for all of us because we had made lasting friendships, and we didn't want the fun to end."

Seth enjoyed his trip so much he wishes he could repeat it again this year. "If anyone is interested in participating in the Youth Tour 2015, I would highly recommend you take advantage of this amazing opportunity," he said.

Seth also participated in the Youth Leadership Council, which is composed of one student from each of the 47 states that participates in the Rural Electric Youth Tour. As part of the council, he returned to Washington last July for additional leadership training, and in February he participated in the annual meeting of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, which coordinates the Youth Tour on the national level, in Orlando, Fla. He worked in the political action center with other students and represented West Virginia by carrying the state flag during the opening general session.



**Are you interested in joining the fun? See the next page for details on how to apply.**

# HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES AND JUNIORS:



*Interested in a life-changing leadership experience ... in Washington, D.C.?*

## June 12-18

**While on the Tour, you'll visit:**

Gettysburg, Pa.  
World War II Memorial  
Jefferson Memorial  
White House  
United States Capitol  
Supreme Court  
Smithsonian Institution  
Lincoln Memorial  
Vietnam Memorial  
Washington National Cathedral  
Arlington National Cemetery  
... and much more!

 /OhioYouthTour

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### What is Youth Tour?

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour is an annual leadership program coordinated by Harrison Rural Electrification Association and its statewide service organization, Ohio Rural Electric Cooperatives, Inc. It's a weeklong, all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., that gives exceptional high school students the opportunity to meet with their congressional leaders at the U.S. Capitol, make new friends from across the country and see many of the famous Washington sights.

Electric cooperatives from 43 states will send about 1,600 students this year for the annual tour. *Will you be one of them?*

### To apply for the Youth Tour...

Successful applicants:

- must be a high school sophomore or junior.
- must be a son, daughter or legal ward of an HREA member living on the cooperative's lines and receiving electric service from the cooperative at the time of selection.

**Application deadline is March 27.**

**Contact Jacy Woods at HREA for rules and application requirements:**

**304-624-6365 • [jwoods@hrea.coop](mailto:jwoods@hrea.coop)**

2014 HREA Youth Tour participants Izzy Meadows and Seth Law visited Gettysburg, Pa., on their way to D.C.



## Drop the debit card for secure shopping

BY LLOYD MASON

TIMES ARE CHANGING RAPIDLY, and the way we use our money is changing.

Over time, we have all become used to using plastic in place of cash. Plastic can be very convenient—for one thing, it takes up very little space, won't get wet and is very hard to destroy. The down side is that banks have not kept up with the pace of technology.

All too often we hear about one retailer or another being compromised by digital attackers. What



this means for us is that our information is not being sufficiently guarded. To put it flatly, it is never safe to use a debit card for day-to-day retail shopping. I and many others have completely stopped using debit cards at the counter or online.

**Solution:** Take out a credit card. Use that credit card only. Whether at brick-and-mortar stores or online, the principle is the same. All credit card companies are and will be vigilant in the pursuit of guarding their own interests. Because the money is technically a short-term loan, the bank making the loan will be motivated to keep an eye on all transactions. They will then act on your behalf to stop in the intrusion or fraudulent activity, and the best part is your bank account never gets touched.

The information needed to take control of your bank account is generally not tied to the credit card. Another hidden benefit from this change is that establishing a revolving credit account and paying it on time helps your credit score—if you pay the balance off each month and do not carry a balance. This is a rare win/win scenario.

*Til 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.

## Be aware of power-line hazards on the job

BY SAM SATTERFIELD, OPERATIONS MANAGER

IT WOULD BE HARD TO IMAGINE LIFE without electricity. It powers so many things we use every day that it has become the lifeblood of our world. Disrespecting, not understanding or not paying attention to electricity can cause unnecessary fatalities.

Every year, hundreds of people are killed or injured by overhead and underground power lines. Most of the deaths are construction workers that come in contact with overhead power lines, with the majority of victims between the ages of 20 and 35. Most were working around a crane or high-reaching equipment that came into contact with overhead power lines.

These accidents could have been prevented. For a shock to occur, a path to the ground must be created for the current to travel or from one power source to a different electrical potential. When a person comes in contact with a power line, injuries consist of an entrance wound at the point of contact and an exit wound to a grounded source. But injuries from electrical contact aren't just evident on the skin—life-threatening internal injuries are possible.

Power lines are a common feature at any given job site and may put workers and others in the proximity to the

potential dangers. Some things to **ALWAYS** do when working near power lines are:

- Keep a safe distance of 10 feet or more between you, your equipment and power lines.
- Survey the site for overhead power lines. **LOOK UP!**
- When using cranes or other tall equipment near energized power lines of 50,000 volts (50 kV) or more, make sure the minimum distance between the lines and any part of the crane is 10 feet plus 1/2 inch for each 1,000 volts over 50,000 volts.
- Request an observer to help you where it is difficult to maintain the desired clearance by your own line of sight.
- Require that the only job of the observer is to help the operator maintain the safe clearance.
- Treat overhead power lines as if they were energized.
- When in doubt, call the electric company to find out what voltage is on the lines.
- Ask the electric company to either de-energize and ground the lines or install insulation while you are working near them.
- Make sure ladders and tools are nonconductive. ☞