



# Harrison Rural Electrification Association, Inc.

2100 Sun Valley Road  
Clarksburg, WV 26301

**800-540-HREA**

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



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

## Spring operations update

IT HAS BEEN A PRODUCTIVE year thus far. We have completed the final piece of the Cunningham Run upgrade project, right-of-way clearing is progressing a little ahead of schedule, pole inspections are completed, and we have a good start on several other projects. Some of these projects involve using new technology, which opens the door for establishing updated procedures. We have to approach these projects in a sensible manner so as to provide adequate attention to each. There are just too many risks if we try to take on too many things at the same time.

The completion of the Cunningham Run project is exciting for several reasons: The upgrade should provide better service to the members in that area, and it marks the first time, at least that I am aware of, that we actually completed all of the projects on our workplan. In addition, we were able to keep the project's

costs within budget. With this completed, we can now focus on prioritizing our next major projects by using data from the new geographic information system (GIS) and advanced metering infrastructure. We already have a list based on our thoughts, but it will be nice to compare the information to help ensure that we focus on the correct areas.

The vegetation management program has included increased annual mileage for the last several years. The GIS provided a true measurement of line miles to serve as an overall base and a better method to track progress. As a result, we should be able to reduce our annual mileage from 150 miles per year to around 120 or 130 miles per year. Penn Lines aerial cutting on the Swiger west feed should be completed. As soon as the ground crews finish, they will begin focusing their efforts on the Chiefton north circuit. Line clearance should be done on the Jarvisville south circuit, and they will move to side taps, etc., along the Chiefton west circuit. They also may have begun the herbicide treatment for this year. The herbicide that we use just kills the bad stuff and lets the grasses grow and get stronger.

By the time you read this, Osmose should be done or very, very close to done. They were to inspect and treat, if needed, around 1,725 poles this year, which is a 33 percent increase over previous

### Manager's Corner

by Terry Stout,  
CEO/General Manager



years. The increase came about from an actual pole count provided from the GIS to compare to our required 10-year cycle. As part of its inspection, Osmose also provides information on the infrastructure in the area, which helps us determine maintenance projects. Based on data from the GIS mapping layer for this, we were able to identify some areas that were previously missed, and that has been their first priority for this year.

Other projects included garnering an extension to our current power supply contract that ensures the base cost of power will stay the same for the next seven years. We have had additional discussions on potential renewable projects, in accordance with the current political tide, but have not reached a palatable agreement yet. We have completed our warehouse overhaul and are now working on an improved tracking system to reduce inventory costs, etc.

Spring is here, and summer is just around the corner, so get out and enjoy it while you can. ☺

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#### Office Hours

7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday-Friday

# Technology reduces outage times ...

... but squirrels, weather remain troublesome for utilities

BY PAUL WESSLUND

Better technology has been making your electricity more reliable every year. But longstanding troublemakers, from lightning to squirrels, still knock our lights out occasionally.

In the last few years, less expensive and more sophisticated meters and monitoring systems can detect outages faster than ever.

“We’re far more automated than we were a decade ago,” says Tony Thomas, principal engineer at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. “We don’t have to wait for someone to call and say they’re out of power. Now the member’s electric meter lets the co-op know.”

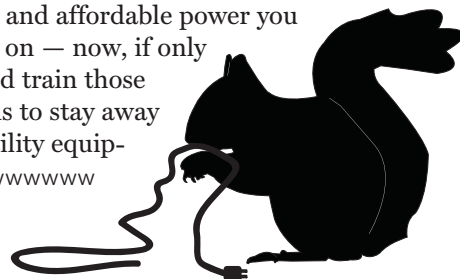
The amount of time a typical consumer is without power during a year is down to less than two hours, according to a benchmarking report from the Institute for Electrical and Electronics Engineers. That’s a 20 percent decline from 2011 to 2014, the latest year in the study.

Thomas says some causes of power outages are hard to eliminate. Those include lightning strikes, equipment failure, trees falling on power lines, people driving into utility poles, snakes touching wires, and squirrels.

“Squirrels are a pain,” Thomas says. “They eat insulation.”

And in case you want to know how much of a pain squirrels can be, check out [cybersquirrel1.com](http://cybersquirrel1.com). The site features a map of all power outages caused by squirrels. You can scan the world and search for the incidents caused by squirrels or other animals, by month or year, and click through to a news account of the details. For example, the site reports 10 squirrel-caused outages in the U.S. in January, where getting into substations and transformers, touched a live wire and a ground wire, and tripped circuit breakers.

As technology advances and reliability improves, we will continue to do our best to prevent outages so you can enjoy the safe, reliable and affordable power you depend on — now, if only we could train those squirrels to stay away from utility equipment. [www.wwww](http://www.wwww)



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*Better technology has been making your electricity more reliable every year.*

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**PAUL WESSLUND** writes for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the service arm of the nation’s 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Avoid placing lamps or TV sets near your room air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the air conditioner to run longer than necessary.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



Harrison Rural Electrification Association will be closed **Monday, May 30**, in observance of **Memorial Day**. For emergency service, call 800-540-HREA.

# GIS and GPS are changing everything

BY LLOYD MASON

Where are we going, and how do we get there?

When you really think about it, don't these two questions make up the fundamental question of life? As people, are we not seemingly always questioning where we are going and how we're getting there? Are we not always planning to go here or there, or sometimes questioning how we got where we are now?

Applying that mindset to the idea of mapping makes much more sense than you might think, and in that context, the global information system (GIS) concept was born. The idea of a piece of paper that can show you what road to take for the fastest travel time is a very commonplace idea. What if a device can show you that set of directions, only this time with choices of food, drink, entertainment and lodging? What if that same map now had the ability to warn us of construction that may impede our travels? What if that map could, in real time, tell us based on speed and of direction travel whether we have enough fuel to make it to our destination without a stop? What if that same map could then give a list of choices customized for the situation?

The answer: "What if" is here. Worldwide, there has been an explosion of software designed around the use of GIS and GPS satellites. In combination, these tools are being installed in cars, trucks, trains, planes, phones, boats, tablets, watches, and list goes on and on. The easy access of data collected and stored in relational databases has made it possible for the least tech-savvy of us to maximize the use of these tools. By collecting huge amounts of data about the world we live in, GIS is being used to find efficiency not previously visible.

For instance, a bus company has a set route. This route was not planned from an overview of all the places they needed to go from the start. This route is something that has grown over time with the size of the community and the number of people using it. With GIS and GPS, we can now take a very detailed view of routes times and distance, taking into consideration all of the roads and possibilities that could save time. The number of people using the service daily and even the number of people on each bus can be used to streamline capacity and fuel consumption. The data can then be used to help the company's bottom line.

This is truly a win-win situation for all, and it's just one example of many where the combination of these technologies is making the world a safer, more organized place to be.

*Till next time @Tech Corner...*



**Energy Hogs are not limited to home appliances.**

**Did you know the average home loses about half of its cooled air through unsealed openings?**

Cracks and gaps left unsealed typically add up to a 2-foot-square hole in the average home — that's like having a window open all day, every day!

***Here are a few tips on how to seal air leaks:***

- Weather strip doors and windows that have gaps at the frame.
- Use caulk and a caulking gun to fill small gaps around outlets or between the baseboard and the floor.
- Use foam insulation, foil insulation, sheeting or a combination of materials to seal larger gaps and holes, such as those around pipes in your home.

*Source: Dept. of Energy*





# Electric co-ops and a culture of safety

BY ADAM SCHWARTZ

A children's book titled *Safety 1st, Safety Always* encompasses many of the traditional safety lessons parents should teach their children. We drill youngsters about safety from an early age because we know how important it is to protect ourselves and the people we care about. In recognition of May as National Electrical Safety Month, let's take a look at how electric cooperatives have been stepping up to the plate when it comes to safety in our communities.

In 2007, Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange, which insures many electric co-ops nationwide, initiated a campaign called a "Culture of Safety." It was designed to create greater awareness about safety issues at all electric co-ops and to reduce "lost-time accidents," which are any incident resulting in an employee missing time at work.

Through the use of strategy labs across the country, Federated brought together co-op CEOs and general managers, operations supervisors, safety directors and linemen to better understand how each group viewed safety. Out of this evaluation came the "Speak Up, Listen Up" program, which

empowers anyone who sees a potentially unsafe situation to "Speak Up" and encourages everyone to "Listen Up" to concerns about safety. The results have been dramatic, with more than a 30 percent decline in the number of accidents over the past nine years.

As a member, you have a role, too. If you see any situations or practices that seem dangerous, you should report them as soon as possible to HREA by calling 800-540-HREA.

The implementation and success of the Culture of Safety program demonstrates a very important point. If we are intentional about our actions, we can indeed change the culture in our organizations. The same is true for our families, our teams and any groups we may belong to.

We also know that living our cooperative principles and values is equally important. We have the best business model because it puts you, the member-owner, at the center of our efforts.

We look forward to being your safe electricity provider and energy advisor long into the future. For more information about Harrison's own Culture of Safety, visit [www.harrisonrea.com](http://www.harrisonrea.com).

## MAKE THE MOST OF CEILING FANS BY TURNING ON THE FAN, YOU CAN TURN UP THE SAVINGS!

Ceiling fans aren't just a decorative addition to our homes – if used properly, they can help lower your energy costs.



### TIPS FOR MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR CEILING FANS.

- 1. FLIP THE SWITCH** Most ceiling fans have a switch near the blades. In warm months, flip the switch so the blades operate in a *counter clockwise* direction, effectively producing a "wind chill" effect. Fans make the air near them feel cooler than it actually is. In winter, move the switch so the fan blades rotate *clockwise*, creating a gentle updraft. This pushes warm air down from the ceiling into occupied areas of the room. Regardless of the season, try operating the fan on its lowest setting.
- 2. ADJUST YOUR THERMOSTAT** In the summer, when using a fan in conjunction with an air conditioner, or instead of it, you can turn your thermostat up 3 to 5 degrees F without any reduction in comfort. This saves money because a fan is less costly to run than an air conditioner. In the winter, lower your thermostat's set point by the same amount. Ceiling fans push the warm air from the ceiling back down toward the living space, which means the furnace won't turn on as frequently.
- 3. CHOOSE THE RIGHT SIZE** Make sure your ceiling fan is the right size for the room. A fan that is 36 to 44 inches in diameter will cool rooms up to 225 square feet. A fan that is 52 inches or more should be used to cool a larger space.
- 4. TURN IT OFF** When the room is unoccupied, turn the fan off. Fans are intended to cool people, not rooms.

