Harrison Rural Electrification Association, Inc.

RR 6, Box 502
Clarksburg, WV 26301-0502
800-540-HREA

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner
www.harrisonrea.com

2016 midpoint

Manager's Corner

by Terry Stout, CEO/General Manager

As we pass the midpoint of another year, we typically take a look at what we have accomplished and what is left to be accomplished. This year, that review takes on a little extra special meaning. This year, when we looked back, we were pleased to recognize that we are beginning to see and feel the benefits from the many improvements we initiated over the past few years. A lot of the focus has been on improving the core of the cooperative, covering financial and operational goals. As these goals are met, the benefits start filtering out to touch the entire membership in ways they may not even recognize at first.

Over the last five years, the cooperative has spent $10 to $15 million in system improvements while also successfully reducing long-term debt. While that may not seem like much to some of you, this is a huge accomplishment to those of us who sweat the daily details. In truth, this is not something that happens very often and in fact has probably never happened at our cooperative during its existence. It is important for all of us to understand that this new baseline represents a new beginning to build upon in what we refer to as "our new beginning." A big part of that new beginning involves lowering long-term debt. so that it does not place so much pressure on the customer charge portion of your bills. and aligning long-term debt to a shorter, more meaningful life span. Of course reducing long-term debt without also improving the quality of our system would be a hollow accomplishment.

Making improvements to the quality of our systems comes in various forms. One form is our vegetation management, where we are on a plan to shorten the end-to-end cycle to seven years or less. At this year's midpoint, we have already cleared about 100 miles of right-of-way. That is nearly double past years' progress. You, the membership, will start to notice less flickers, blinks, and outages as we continue on this plan. Hopefully, as intense summer and early fall storms hit the area, you will begin to notice the benefits. Actually, the big snow in February was an early indicator because there was far fewer outages systemwide from that storm. Obviously we can never be outage-free, but clean rights-of-way assist in finding problems and then fixing them. Another form of improvement comes in infrastructure maintenance, including upgrades. For the first time in my knowledge, we completed every major project in our workplan. Once again, this accomplishment does not mean the overall goal is met. We are already in the process of assimilating data and prioritizing additional projects for now and the future. We are engaged in another fight with our transmission provider over improving reliability to the Chiefton Substation. Unlike them, we do not believe that meeting the minimum standard qualifies as a "good utility practice."

All of this is being done so that we can be as prepared as possible for what the future brings and still provide the best service ever to our membership. Just based on where we started, this was never going to be an easy goal to achieve. However, this midpoint review indicates that we are making progress, and if the stars align and we continue to keep our focus sharp, then we are getting near to making our goal a reality.

A reminder that school is out, traffic is heavier, and the kids are more active, so be alert and extra cautious. Try to make sure everyone has a wonderful summer.

Plan for a safe and happy Fourth

The month of July has always been a favorite of mine. It's the middle of summer, the kids are out of school, and, of course, we celebrate Independence Day! Typically on the Fourth, we celebrate our nation's independence with grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, homemade ice cream and other sweet treats, and last but not least, fireworks. This is a time for fellowship with family and friends, but at Harrison Rural Electrification Association, we also want to make sure our members focus on safety.

To ensure you have the best Fourth of July possible, following are a few important safety tips from The American Red Cross:

1. Nothing says "Fourth of July" like a spectacular fireworks display! The safest way to enjoy this part of the celebration is to head to a local fireworks show. But, if you want to put on your own show at home, be sure to follow these safety tips:

- Always follow the instructions on fireworks packaging and never give fireworks to children.
- Keep a supply of water close by in case of fire.
- Make sure to wear protective eyewear when lighting fireworks.
- Light only one firework at a time and never attempt to relight a "dud."
- Store fireworks in a cool, dry place away from children and pets.
- Never throw or point a firework toward people, animals, vehicles, structures, or flammable materials.

2. Cookoutws are a great way to bring folks together on the Fourth. Whether you are grilling in your backyard or at a community park, make sure your feast includes a generous portion of fun and a side helping of safety:

* Supervise your grill at all times.
* Use the proper tools for cooking on a grill.
* Never add charcoal starter fluid when the coals have already been ignited.
* Always follow the grill manufacturer's instructions.

3. Fireworks and cookouts wouldn't be complete without a sunny day. Here's hoping we have good weather, and if we do, make sure you are practicing sun safety:

* Use a broad spectrum SPF sunscreen and reapply often.
* Protect your eyes by wearing sunglasses.
* Drink plenty of water.
* Be on the lookout for signs of heat stroke (hot red skin; changes in consciousness; rapid, weak pulse; rapid, shallow breathing).

However you choose to celebrate, HREA wishes you a safe and happy Fourth!

The office is closed **Monday, July 4,** in celebration of Independence Day.

Have a safe and happy holiday!

Emergency service is available at 800-542-4732.

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

Bridget Hinzman	July 15
Terry Stout	July 30

Learn the basics of biometrics

BY LLOYD MASON

Here at the Tech corner, we've been known to explore the obvious because the obvious is, well, sometimes not so obvious. However, in this article, we will explore some changes that I believe are inevitable, and we will simply be left with the question of how to cope.

With very little input on the creation side of what will eventually be used to catalog every human being from cradle to grave, it would be easy to develop a feeling of trepidation. Here at TechCorner, we have discussed Big Data, passwords, and many other security topics over the years. We are now seeing the culmination of all of these technologies and more into something known as biometrics, which is the collection of characteristics organized by mathematical models applied to fingerprints, phrenology (study of human cranium), and facial characteristics of a human subject. These points of data are collected and put into a database that can be used in a great many ways.

For instance, authentication has been a huge topic of late in the computing industry in terms of the way we identify ourselves to our own workspaces. A working biometrics database infrastructure would potentially make it possible for anyone to walk up to any computer screen anywhere in the world and be recognized by that machine to grant access to any or all of the information the owner might need at that time. Imagine a world with no need for identification cards, no need to carry payment. Wouldn't it be great for your car to recognize you as you walk up to it? To be greeted by name and have all of the creature comforts of your vehicle aligned to your specific preferences immediately adjusted to your personal bio-signature sounds like a thing of the future; in reality, it is right around the corner.

The fact is, military and law enforcement agencies of many counties have been using some of these techniques for years. Juan Vucetich of Argentina is generally considered the first to start an inmate fingerprinting program in 1891. These fingerprints made, if you will, the first biometric database ever created. Simultaneously, a fellow named Alphonse Bertillon began developing a method to apply mathematical modules to delineate the unique characteristics observed in each human fingerprint. The study became science, and the science became practice, and the term biometrics was born. When computers were introduced, the ability to store and quickly compare these records meant a grand new scale of efficacy, to include the possibility of sharing data with more than one group. The data being shared would dwarf the data possible with just a picture of a fingerprint. Where there may be a visual match of a few unique points, a computer can discern many more and in a shorter time frame to provide certainty where at first there could only be incomplete data.

While it would be easy to assume — maybe rightly so until recently — that huge computer systems would be needed for this type of database collection and reference, civilian systems are becoming more and more capable, and the landing pad for consumer biometrics is almost in place. There is a very good chance that whether or not you are using biometrics, biometrics has already worked its way into your life. For instance, are we all aware of the poorly placed finger print scanner on a laptop? Yep, that's just one example of many. There is a good chance that no matter where you live in the United States, it will not be possible to even obtain a driver's license without a fingerprint, which is biometrics. The ability to positively affirm identity on the spot has become a very real and, some think, necessary goal. To give some sense of scope to the governmental application of such a database, here is an example: India has already enrolled 550 million members of its population in its biometrics program and plans to include the remaining population soon. That addition would make the Indian biometrics database grow to 1.2 billion citizens, making it the largest of its kind in the world. The rest of the world will surely follow. We can't know how long that may take, as every situation is unique unto itself. The United States, along with 28 other nations, have begun the process of standardizing protocols to enable quick comparison and reference of all biometrics. This process is daunting and will prove to be a huge challenge. The many changing elements of computer systems and multiple languages create a landscape fraught with inaccuracy and constraint, but in the interest of everyone's national security, the time to get started has already passed.

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.*

USE CAUTION NEAR CO-OP EQUIPMENT
WHEN PLAYING OUTDOORS THIS SUMMER

BY ABBY BERRY

As you find yourself spending more time outdoors this summer, HREA reminds you to exercise caution near electrical equipment.

Substations and power lines carry extremely high voltages, and if contact is made, the results can be dangerous — even deadly.

To start, never climb trees near power lines. If you make contact with a tree that is touching a power line, your body could become the path of electricity from the line to the ground. If you encounter an animal trapped in a tree near power lines or inside a substation, do not attempt to remove it — no matter how furry and cute! Call 911 for assistance.

These days, we are seeing more remote-controlled toys, such as drones and airplanes, which are cool new gadgets that also bring new safety concerns. Remote-controlled toys should never be flown near power lines, substations, or other electrical equipment.

Remember these safety tips when flying a remote-controlled toy:

•Keep a safe distance from electrical equipment. If the toy contacts a power line or a transformer inside a substation, many members of your community could be left without electricity.

•Keep the remote-controlled toy in sight at all times.

•Avoid flying if weather conditions are unfavorable. High winds could cause you to lose control of the remote-controlled toy.

Here at HREA, your safety is important to us. We hope you will share the message of electrical safety so that you and others can enjoy plenty of summer days filled with fun.

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.*