



MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

OVERCOMING THE “YES, BUT...” METHODOLOGY

Inevitably, as we travel down our career path, we begin to think about retirement and how we can spend those hopefully freer days. The first things to cross our minds are all of the unpleasant aspects of our job that we will definitely not miss. Why do we focus on these negatives first?

It is because they are so easy to pick out of the list and usually require very little effort on our part. Then, with a little more time, we begin to add in the things we will miss and the other positives having a job brings with it. Hopefully, the time gap for seeing these positives is not too great. If we are honest with ourselves, the positives usually outweigh the negatives when we fairly analyze the situation from the proper perspective.

While it is very difficult, we just cannot allow ourselves to get burdened down by dwelling on the negatives. Here at the cooperative, we, too, find it easy to point out the things we believe or know we can do better in the coming months and years. The underlying truth is that while we may improve in those areas, there is always going to be some aspect where we can do better. Add in that there is a tendency to react in a “yes, but” methodology when we do recognize some of the positives. This same methodology can become a roadblock as we evaluate when the right time to end our career has arrived.

If you are a goal-oriented individual, there will always be something more you want to accomplish. Similarly, the cooperative inched closer to attaining our goals last year, and now we must place even more focus on stabilizing and improving the areas where we fell short of our goals.

In the coming months and years, we need to build upon the foundation that has been laid. Sometime toward the end of next year, we will complete the first true full cycle of right-of-way clearing to our specifications in a very, very long time. At the end of this year, we will have cut about 80 percent of our existing overhead rights-of-way. For us, this is huge.

Having been around for 15 years now, I do not recall ever being this close to attaining what should have always been a basic goal for the cooperative. This is the kind of positive that paves the way for other, harder-to-measure positives throughout the entire operations of the cooperative.



Terry Stout
CEO/General Manager

Yes, but it is not good enough to merely accomplish this the one time. We must keep it going and see if we can shorten the cycle even further in the future. Once we remove bad rights-of-way from the equation, we need to analyze what other factors are keeping us from reaching our reliability goals. Is it conductor, design, interconnections issues, or bad equipment? As we remove one possibility at a time, we can eventually get where we strive to be. It won't be an easy journey.

Over the last several years, we have upgraded many, many miles of line, especially our three-phase backbone. We have replaced our major, load-based metering points with 138-kV substations, replaced old mechanical meters with newer electronic meters, and added or replaced old equipment with newer, more scalable equipment.

Yes, but what about the rest of the system? We have already identified a plethora of additional upgrades that we want to make as the finances become available. With these identified, they are entered on the appropriate project list where we can factor in the variables to determine a priority order. As always, these lists can change any day due to events affecting the system. Establishing internal minimum performance standards that are realistic in function and cost with appropriate, accurate, and reliable measurement capabilities is essential to assuring long-term success in attaining reliability goals. Obviously, weather will always throw us a few curve balls each year, but when we are addressing the basics, these become a little less complex.

Continued on Page 21



TECHNOLOGY

BY LLOYD MASON

Smart bill payments are coming through SmartHub

These are exciting times. Automation is finally getting down to the general public. As the ever-growing technology sector blossoms, we are starting to see the integration of code and hardware produce benefits for regular folks. In recognizing this trend, we are now capable of offering services on a much higher level than ever before.

In past articles, we have explored various devices and terms and ran through what effects they might have on our lives. As a co-op, we accept the responsibility of procuring and distributing power at the absolute most affordable price possible. Along this line of thinking, we as a group have

been exploring just what it may take to move us into the future. As members of the cooperative, you can see the effects of our labors in reliability, response time, and effective outage management, which have all been enhanced by new technology.



One of the newest tools in this endeavor is called SmartHub. This is a free, easy-to-use app for your IOS or Android device, as well as a web interface much like the one you are already used to using. This new software adds many tools to help our members be in control of their bill and payment management. Below, I will outline just some of the new benefits found in SmartHub.

- 1) One of the most-asked-for elements of electronic bill payment has been “recurring payments,” which is now possible with SmartHub.
- 2) You can manage your account and pay bills anywhere 24/7.

- 3) Take an active role in your energy management with the new member management screen.
- 4) Report an outage right from your smartphone or tablet and receive updates.
- 5) Should you need further information or service and need to contact someone directly, SmartHub has in-app e-mail and call functionality. There’s no need to leave the application to find the answers you need now.
- 6) If you want to view your bill online, it’s just one tap away.
- 7) Another nice feature is the ability to view past bills with energy usage history and discover deeper insight with the “Trending Data Tool.”
- 8) Did you say social media? Well SmartHub is just what it sounds like — a hub. A hub of information about your bills, plus any connections to the cooperative you may need. You can view and respond to social media posts directly inside the app!
- 9) Need a little help with all that? There are member help videos right inside the app, even step-by-step instructions to ensure a successful session with SmartHub.
- 10) Still need some help? Just call us and we will be happy to assist, with patience and understanding.

We will be spreading the word over the next few months to ensure everyone is up to date. Until then, we will always be looking for the next right step for our cooperative. By focusing on improvement at all times, we continue to uncover opportunities to get better at what we do.

Till next time @TechCorner.

LLOYD MASON is the manager of information technology at Harrison Rural Electric Association. He writes monthly on technology issues affecting our co-op.

With SmartHub, you can pay your bill online, monitor your energy use, report an outage, and receive important co-op alerts. Stay tuned for updates!



TREE TRIMMING

CLEARING RIGHT-OF-WAY FOR RELIABILITY

There are many ways that Harrison Rural Electrification Association provides you with safe, reliable electric service. One of the most common — and crucial — ways is referred to as right-of-way clearing or vegetation management.

A right-of-way (ROW) refers to a strip of land underneath or around power lines that your electric cooperative has the right and responsibility to maintain and clear. Trees must grow far enough from wires that they will not cause harm to people or disruption to electrical service. Specifications vary, but a general guideline of maintaining a safe ROW is 15 feet of clearance on either side of the primary lines and 20 feet of overhead clearance above the highest wire on the pole.

Clearing the ROW is critical to keeping our members' lights on. An average of 15 percent of power interruptions occur when trees, shrubs, or bushes grow too close to power lines.

If a tree encroaches on this safe distance, our vegetation-management team will trim back branches

and brush using chainsaws, bucket trucks, tree climbers, brush chippers, and mowers. Chemical control methods can also be used to support the growth of low-growing plant species that will out-compete the tall trees growing beneath power lines.

ROW clearing also keeps your family safe by ensuring that tree branches do not become energized because of close contact with a downed power line. Power lines can carry up to 34,500 volts, and an energized tree branch is incredibly dangerous — even deadly. Be mindful when around trees close to power lines, and make sure your kids know that climbing trees near lines is extremely dangerous.

ROW clearing is critical to ensuring that we provide members with affordable electricity as well. Staying ahead of the game keeps us from having to restore power outages caused by fallen trees.

Remember to contact Harrison REA if you decide to trim or remove trees near any power service or line. And never trim a tree in the ROW zone on your own.

Continued from Page 19

Happy Birthday!

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

Joe Duffelmeyer March 20

Lucas Randolph March 26



Even with the aforementioned items and other positives that have been implemented, there will undoubtedly be issues that creep in and affect the results and ultimate effectiveness. For those instances, we will have initially looked at tweaks to the system, but we also have to develop backup plans and even consider complete overhauls to our methodology for extreme situations. We have taken on a lot of various projects over the last few years that have placed a great demand on our time and energy. Yes, but we still have not achieved

the level of reliability and service that we have placed on ourselves.

The old adage “If you are standing still, you are really going backward” is very true, especially in today’s world. If we reach that point where we believe the status quo is good enough or that trying to do better isn’t worth it because our efforts are either underappreciated or not appreciated at all, maybe it is time to think about a change or retirement.

Spring is close, so keep moving forward. See you next time.



DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

Don't forget to spring
forward on **March 12!**
Set your clocks ahead
by one hour.



**HARRISON RURAL ELECTRIFICATION
ASSOCIATION, INC.**

CONTACT
304-624-6365
www.harrisonrea.com

REPORT AN OUTAGE
1-800-540-4732

OFFICE
600 Market Place, Suite 104
Bridgeport, WV 26330

OFFICE HOURS
Mon. - Fri. 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

C.B. Sharp, Dist. 1
President

Glenn Cox, Dist. 3
Vice President

Philip McMillan, Dist. 6
Sec.-Treas.

Greg Robertson, Dist. 2
Ron Watson, Dist. 5
James Stuart, Dist. 4
Jeff Nelson, Dist. 7
Directors

Terry Stout
General Manager

STAFF

Lloyd Mason
IT Manager

Sam Satterfield
Operations Manager

Scott Wyckoff
Line Supervisor

Jon Paul McAllister
Staking Technician

Jodi Swiger
Editor

Harrison Rural Electrification
Association, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 