



MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY CONTINUES TO SHINE

How many of us remember dropping into Harrison Rural Electrification's office with our parents and grandparents to pay the light bill? Whether you now do that in person, by mail, or online, paying your monthly bill does a lot more than just keep the lights on.

Electricity keeps us connected to our modern world. Consider all the necessities and conveniences you enjoy in part because of the power lines running to the electric meter outside your home.

Count up your televisions, computers, printers, gaming consoles, music players, and personal assistant devices. Whether they get used every day or just occasionally, the electricity that keeps them working comes from Harrison Rural Electrification Association.

The average home now has 10 Wi-Fi-connected devices — a number expected to explode to 50 by 2020.

Have you looked around your kitchen lately? Between the coffee maker, microwave, and electric skillet, a lot of us have several modern small appliances. If you've got a craft nook or workshop, the power tools and machines you use are either plugged in or recharged from the outlets connecting your household wiring to HREA.

You use electricity to run all these devices, and we still keep the lights on, use the stove, heating and air conditioning, and get hot water. The good news is, even as we rely more on electricity, it's still a bargain, especially compared to other regular expenses.

Since 2011, medical care, residential rental rates, and education have increased at rates of 3 percent or more per year. Butter, meat, and egg costs have been up by more than one to 2 percent annually, and even bread costs have risen better than a half point on average.

Electricity costs rise about 1 percent a year, but co-ops across the country have reported a decline in average residential use per household since 2010. Kilowatt-hour use per household dropped by 8 percent between 2010 and 2016, slightly less than the 9 percent decline reported by all electric utilities, nationwide. That means we're doing more things with less energy.



Terry Stout
CEO/General Manager

When it comes to value, electricity is a clear winner, and we're always looking for ways to work with you to make it even better. That's why we urge energy efficiency, encourage you to look for ENERGY STAR® appliances, and promote technology designed to give members more control over their electricity use.

Energy performance dashboards, smart thermostats and power strips, and appliance settings that shift most water heating, laundry, and dishwashing outside of peak rate periods help reduce the co-op's overall power demand. They also give you opportunities to control or trim your monthly utility bills, which is good for families and individuals trying to live within their budgets. And it's only going to become more important as digital devices become even more prevalent in our lives.

The average home now has 10 Wi-Fi-connected devices — a number expected to explode to 50 by 2020. Technology and the gateways that keep it working use electricity, so you'll depend on HREA for more than the power that keeps the lights on.

That's why we're always working to provide service that's reliable, affordable, and valuable to our members — you, your family, and your neighbors.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY



10 tips for spring energy savings

- 1. CLEAR THE AIR:** Open windows to allow fresh (free!) air to circulate.
- 2. COOK OUTSIDE:** Enjoy a few hours of sunshine by using your grill or smoker to add festive flavors to meals.
- 3. SEARCH AND SEAL:** Cracks and spaces let conditioned air outside. Caulk and weatherstrip to seal leaks.
- 4. NATURAL LIGHT:** Open blinds and curtains, and turn off the lights to save energy.
- 5. BE FAN FRIENDLY:** Use ceiling fans to circulate airflow.
- 6. ATMOSPHERIC ADJUSTMENT:** Remember to adjust your thermostat settings for the milder months ahead.
- 7. TUNE UP:** Schedule an appointment with your HVAC technician to identify any potential problems with your system.
- 8. PEAK SAVINGS:** Think about supply and demand. Plan household chores that require electricity during off-peak hours (when energy demand is low). This way, you'll save money.
- 9. TAKE CHARGE:** Consider disconnecting electrical devices you don't use regularly until you need them. Plugged-in devices use energy even when not in use.
- 10. MOVE OUTDOORS:** Time spent outdoors offers opportunities to turn off lights, televisions, computers, and home appliances. You'll be more active, have more fun, and save more money.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy



The urban versus rural dilemma



Michael Griffith
GIS Specialist

Hi everyone! Are you yearning for spring as much as I am? I'm ready for warm, sunny days and cool, non-frigid nights. I'm also getting ready to move from my rural home in Kingwood to a suburban home in Bridgeport. Although I am so excited to be closer to work, I never imagined myself living the suburban/urban life. I guess that spring really is a time for change.

While searching for a new home, I was pushing for a more rural location. I've never been a fan of having close neighbors. I mean, right now my neighbors are cows, and the closest humans live a quarter-mile up the road. However, I do find myself getting more and more excited about moving to suburbia. I've made a pros versus cons list of rural and urban living that really coincides with geography, which I think you'll find interesting.

This list would fall into a more human geography study, because while the physical geography isn't too different, the way that we interact and perform daily tasks are what has changed. For example, growing up and living rural, my wife and I usually go grocery shopping once a week or once every two weeks. We do it this way because we don't live close to any grocery stores, and it would be a waste of resources

to drive there multiple times a week to get whatever we need. On the other hand, living in an urban environment, I could buy groceries for dinner every night without any waste in resources because the store is only a few minutes away.

There are so many other pros and cons that I could take up a few pages writing, so I'll briefly list them in no particular order. Generally for roads, internet, social activities, schools, parks, and restaurants, the urban areas take the prize. On the other hand, rural locations are a slam dunk for quiet peacefulness, the ability to self-sustain, and lower crime rates.

We each have our own small worlds where we live, work, and play. That's what makes us all a bit different — we all don't live in suburbia, nor do we all live in farm houses with tons of acreage. We have a choice of where to live because we have different values that are important to us. Some of us like to be close to what we consider necessities, while others prefer to live away from the calamity of the city for peace and quiet.

I know I'll make it through this move, but I'll sure miss being able to see the stars at night and saying good morning to the cows on the weekends. So remember folks: The grass isn't always greener on the other side, and always, always wear a seatbelt.

This has been your mapping minute.

MICHAEL GRIFFITH is the geographic information systems (GIS) specialist at Harrison REA. He writes monthly on geography, mapping, and environmental topics.



VS





The office will be closed on
Friday, March 30,
in observance of Good Friday.
For emergency service,
call 1-800-540-4732.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

In spring and summer months, set your ceiling fans to turn counterclockwise. This will create a cool breeze. Remember, ceiling fans cool people, not rooms. Turn them off when you leave the room.

Source: energystar.gov



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