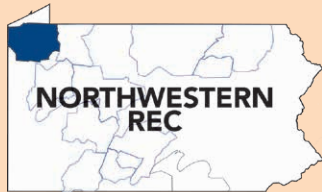


# Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

## NORTHWESTERN REC

P.O. Box 207  
22534 State Highway 86  
Cambridge Springs, PA 16403  
[www.northwesternrec.com](http://www.northwesternrec.com)

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## MAIN ACCESS NUMBER

1-800-352-0014

## EMERGENCIES/OUTAGES

1-800-352-0014

## FAX

814-398-8064

## OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday  
7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Amy Wellington, Editor

## What Your Co-Op Thinks About Solar Power Systems




**WHEN IT COMES TO ALTERNATIVE** power sources, co-ops tend to remain neutral. There are pros and cons to every type of distributed generation, including solar power systems. If members are interested in installing solar generation, we are here to help them through the process. Our goal at Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) is for our members to understand the good, the bad, and yes, even the ugly.

We have recently updated our distributed generation web pages and our policy regarding net billing. Unfortunately, because this is such a hot topic right now, there are scams out there involving solar companies and contractors. Don't fall for the call. Do your research. If it sounds too good to be true, it most likely is too good to be true.

As with any major home-improvement project, purchasing from the right installer/contractor is every bit as important as the product you are purchasing. Due diligence is critical to ensure you get a quality system, for a fair price, and that it's installed correctly and on time.

Ask questions to be sure the contractor knows the business thoroughly and has a number of satisfied customers. Also, be sure to request copies of insurance documents, certifications, and licenses, so you know that the contractor and installers have gone through required training. Be sure to call former customers and check out other installations the contractor has completed. You should query local Better Business Bureaus and the Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office and check online rating services for comments about the contractor and the equipment you plan to purchase. Some organizations have solar contractors sign a pledge to operate under a specific code of conduct.

You can find a list of important questions to ask a contractor on [NorthwesternREC.com](http://NorthwesternREC.com). In addition to the questions about the contractor, you will find questions about the proposed installation, the contract or bid, and the payment. As always, you can count on our Energy Solutions Department to answer any questions you may have about the process. Give us a call any weekday between 7 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. or chat with us at [NorthwesternREC.com](http://NorthwesternREC.com). 


Cooperatively yours,

**RYAN MELLER**  
PRESIDENT & CEO

### TIPS FOR AVOIDING SOLAR SCAMS

As the popularity of rooftop solar panels increases, so do solar scams. Here are a few tips to consider before you install a solar PV system for your home.

- Talk to your electric co-op first. They can offer guidance and recommendations.
- Get at least three quotes from solar companies, and thoroughly read their reviews.
- Avoid solar companies that use high-pressure tactics.
- Don't believe unrealistic promises.
- Only sign clear, easy-to-understand contracts.



# Thank You! - to our SPONSORS

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# August Events Ready to Raise Funds for Member-to-Member

## Help Us Make History – Erie Gives 2023

Have you dreamed of making history? Of course, we all have. And now you have a chance to be a part of Erie County’s day of giving — an opportunity to unite our community around causes we truly believe in and help not-for-profit organizations connect to the larger community.

We need your help! Please join our campaign and help us reach our goal of \$1,000. We need you to tell your friends and family members about the important work we do and ask them to join us in helping to make a difference.

Get ready to give! On Aug. 8, visit [eriegives.org](http://eriegives.org) and make a donation to the Member-to-Member fund or to any of the great participating not-for-profit organizations in Erie County. All giving will end at 8 p.m. Aug. 8, so make sure to get your gift in on time!



## Crawford Gives 2023

Gifts can be made at [crawfordgives.org](http://crawfordgives.org) between 12 a.m. Sunday, Aug. 27, and 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 29.

To gift with a credit card, visit [crawfordgives.org](http://crawfordgives.org) and select the organizations you wish to support. Set a gift amount for each organization, enter your credit card information and submit your donation.

If you have any questions or would like more information, contact Amy Wellington, director of communications,



at 800-352-0014. Thank you in advance for your generosity to our organization.

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**REMEMBER TO VOTE:  
The 2023 Director Elections  
are open through Aug. 16.  
Results will be presented  
at the 87th Annual Meeting  
on Aug. 19.**

Ballots and annual meeting notices were emailed and mailed June 20. If you need a replacement copy, give us a call at 800-352-0014. You can also vote electronically by logging on to your SmartHub account



# Your Home: A Mid-Summer Checkup

**THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER** are here — hot, humid weather and the ever-present threat of extreme weather. How is your home holding up? A mid-season checkup will help ensure your home is using electricity as efficiently as possible. It also presents a great opportunity to improve the comfort and safety of everyone living there.

## HVAC maintenance

Annual cleaning and inspections are important, but ongoing preventive maintenance is necessary to keep your system operating at peak efficiency.

- **Keep filters clean.** Check air filters regularly and replace according to manufacturer's guidelines.
- **Strike the right balance.** Adjust dampers and vents to make sure the system is balanced properly.
- **Schedule inspections.** Regularly scheduled checkups can make the difference between small tune-ups and costly repairs or replacements.
- **Look for leaks.** Check for and repair refrigerant and oil leaks around equipment seals, pipe joints, valves and other instrumentation. Examine refrigerant levels and adjust if necessary.

It's also important to lend an ear. Listen for any strange noise when your cooling system is coming on line. It could be a sign of trouble with your cooling or air-handling system. Take the time to listen to the system operate for a few minutes and determine the cause of any unusual sounds.

## Finding hidden energy costs

Look beyond your air conditioning system and you may find undetected sources of energy waste that are adding to your summer energy bills.

- **Controls out of control.** Poorly tuned thermostats, sensors and other controls can waste energy. Check

control settings and adjust to current space conditioning needs and occupancy schedules.

- **Heat gain.** Solar heat gain through windows can make your air conditioning system work harder to keep things comfortable. Inspect window treatments (including automated blinds and shades) to make sure they're being used correctly to block out solar heat gain, especially in areas with varying occupancy.
- **Air leaks.** Air leaks through windows and exterior doors waste energy and decrease comfort. Check for leaks and seal them with caulk or weatherstripping.
- **Kitchen ventilation.** Kitchen ventilation hoods running full speed uses a lot of energy and makes your air conditioning system work harder. Try using a lower setting, or open a window and use a small desk fan whenever possible.

## Storm readiness

Summer storms can hit at any time. Preparation should begin before storm season hits, but it shouldn't end there. Stay prepared by taking these actions:

- **Update your emergency plan.** Ensure everyone knows the emergency action plan. Make sure contact information for local first responders accurate and up to date. If you don't have an emergency plan, bring everyone living in the home together to make one.
- **Refresh your preparedness kit.** Supplies should include water bottles, non-perishable food, blankets, first-aid supplies, flashlights and radio, if appropriate. Ensure your kit is fully-supplied and operational.
- **Maintain your grounds.** Make sure the grounds around your home are free of heavy debris that could cause damage during high winds, and trim trees to prevent limbs from falling on buildings.

- **Test your backup power.** Inspect and test-run backup generators to ensure that they are operating correctly. This should be done regularly according to manufacturer's guidelines.

With these measures, your home will be ready no matter what the rest of the season brings. 🏠



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