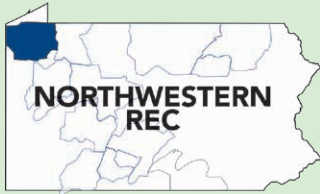


Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

NORTHWESTERN REC

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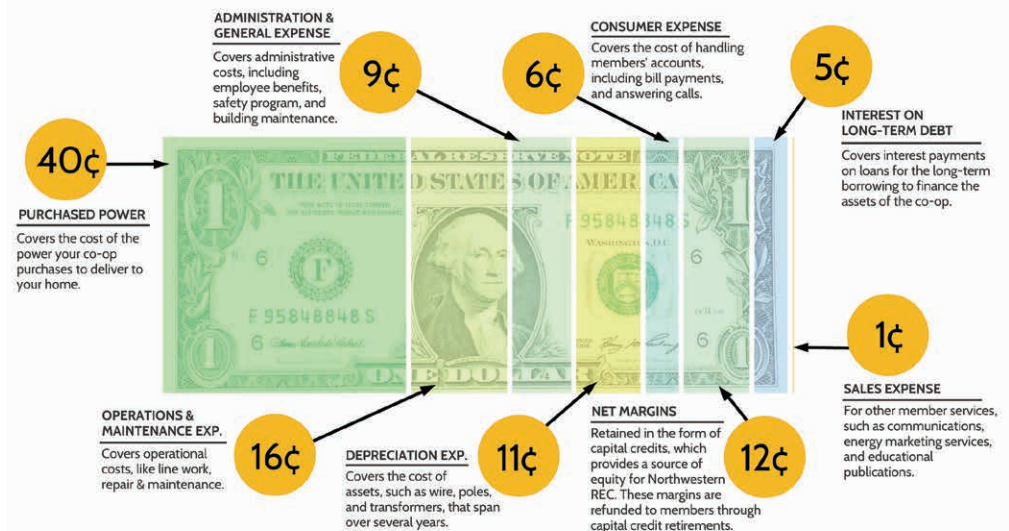
Member Economic Participation and How it Influences Our Decisions



WE'RE PREACHING TO THE CHOIR, I'm sure, each time we discuss a cooperative principle here. All co-ops are guided by a set of seven principles that sustain them as member-focused, not-for-profit, self-help organizations. These principles are often the focus of our articles because it is so important for our members to understand how each principle influences the decisions we make.

The third co-op principle, member economic participation, means "members contribute equitably to, and therefore democratically control, the capital of their cooperative." Every year, some of that capital is put back into the cooperative, some is set aside for future expenses, and the rest is returned to members in the form of capital credits.

In other words, each time a member pays their electric bill, they are contributing equitably to the cooperative. Here is a breakdown of where every dollar goes each month:



It is reasonable for a member, any member, to expect every fellow member to pay for the services they, themselves, consume each month. Otherwise, the burden to cover those expenses is spread across the entire membership. Some members understandably fall on hard times, and therefore the Member-to-Member (M2M) fund was established. M2M was created by the members and for the members of Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) to help those who are struggling keep their lights on.

We answer to you, our members, not investors in some far-off location who are only focused on making a profit. This affects every decision we make during collection season, which begins April 1. The last thing we ever want to do is disconnect a service for non-payment.

Hopefully, by now, you are aware of our pending rate increase. Over these

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Members in Districts 6, 7, 8, and 9: Are You Ready to Serve?

AMY WELLINGTON, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING WITH their cooperative have the right to seek election to the board of directors. While serving on a board is certainly not for everyone, it is healthy for any co-op to have an engaged membership with a portion of the members interested in serving in a leadership role.

At Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC), we are governed by a board of 10 directors, elected by the membership, that provides strategic direction and guidance to ensure we continue to serve the interests of you, the member-owner.

While democracy itself is an imperfect system, it remains the best way to ensure the maximum number of voices is heard. Democracy cannot, and should not, be taken for granted.

The electric co-op's mission to provide safe, reliable and affordable power is being achieved. Now, as the utility industry enters an era of change, when people have more choices for the way they receive electricity, it is critically important that we hear your voice and the voices of the most diverse group of members. Through members' active engagement and participation, the co-op can ensure it is leading in a direction that members will want to follow.

In addition to ensuring the co-op serves the best interests of its members, the board of directors is committed to providing solutions that maintain the vibrancy of our local communities. Being a co-op board member requires a real commitment of time and effort,

and an attitude of being a servant-leader; meaning board members should want to engage to make a real contribution to the membership and community.

This year, the following districts have seats up for election:

District 6 — Rockdale, Richmond, Bloomfield and Athens townships in Crawford County

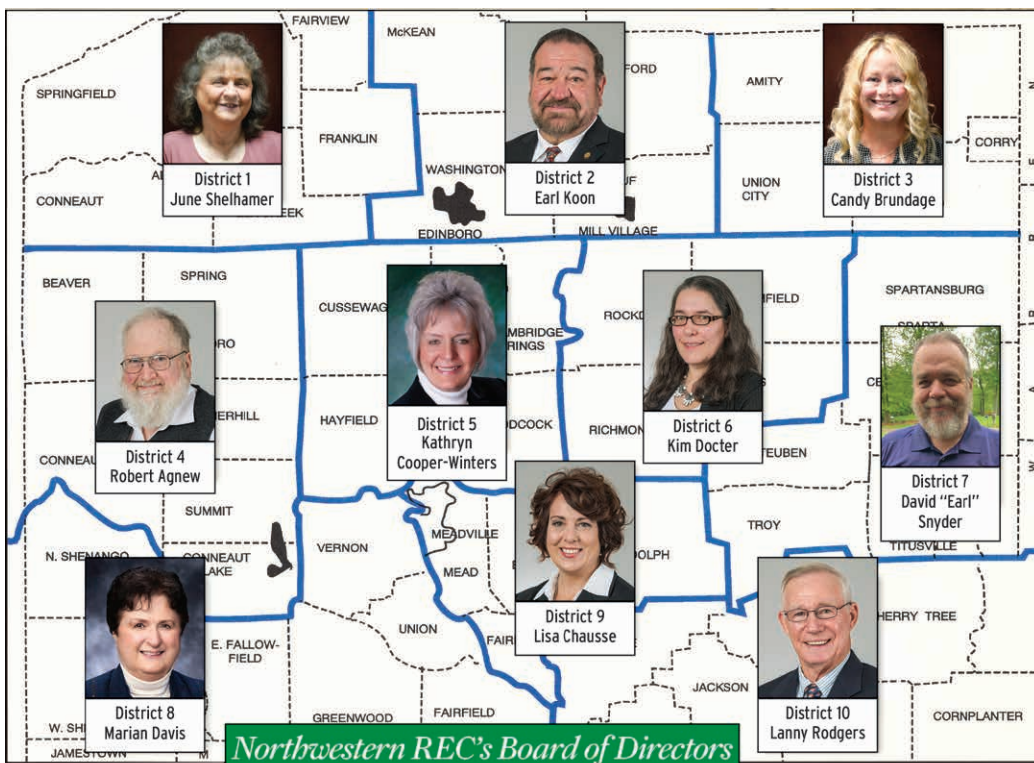
District 7 — Sparta, Rome, Oil Creek, Steuben, and Troy townships and Center Borough in Crawford County, and Southwest and Eldred townships in Warren County

District 8 — East Fallowfield, Vernon, Greenwood, Union, and Fairfield townships in Crawford County, and Kinsman, Williamsfield, Andover, and parts of Richmond townships in Ashtabula County, Ohio

District 9 — West Mead, East Mead, East Fairfield, and Randolph townships and Blooming Valley Borough in Crawford County

If you are interested in running for your district or would like to nominate another member in any of these districts, there are a few qualifications you must meet (**Note:** This is not a complete list):

- ▶ Your primary residential home (within that district) must have received Northwestern REC electric service for at least one year prior.
- ▶ You must be a member in good standing with no outstanding balances for at least one year.



Northwestern REC's Board of Directors

- ▶ You cannot be an employee of any cooperative or association within the past three years.
- ▶ You cannot be a close relative of an employee or current director.
- ▶ You cannot have been convicted of a felony within the past five years.
- ▶ You cannot be a candidate or incumbent for elected, public office at the countywide level or higher.

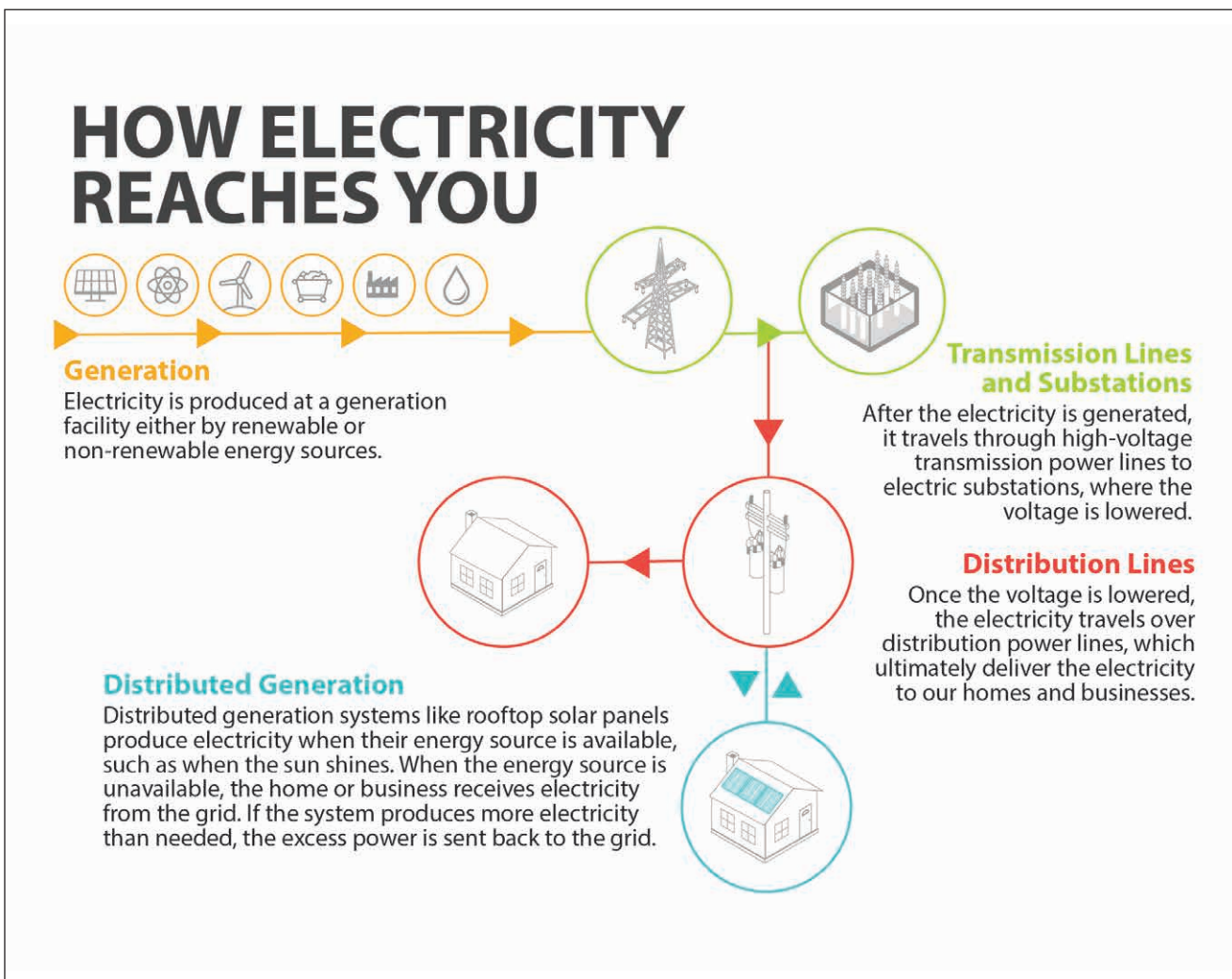
For a complete list of qualifications, please review the “Director Position Description” and “Director Qualifications” at northwesternrec.com/content/running-board before submitting your nomination.

Any member, regardless of their district, can nominate another member for any of the districts up for election. The nominee, however, must live in the district where he or she is being nominated.

Nominating meetings are being planned for spring and will be announced online, on your electric bill, and in *Penn Lines*. Invitations will also be emailed and mailed to members.

Once all nominees are certified by the Member Panel for Director Elections, voting will begin in June with online, electronic and mail-in ballots. Election results will be announced during Northwestern REC’s 87th Annual Meeting, Saturday, Aug. 19, at the New Beginnings Church of God on Leslie Road in Meadville.

One of the greatest resources of northwest Pennsylvania is our people. If you are interested in running for a seat on Northwestern REC’s Board of Directors, we’d like to hear from you. Please contact Amy Wellington, director of communications, at 800-352-0014 or awellington@northwesternrec.com.



FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

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past few months, we have been examining all possible options to limit the impact of this increase on all of you, our members, and to ensure we distribute the responsibility fairly among the various rate classes. It is not a decision your board of directors takes lightly.

To give you some idea regarding what we have faced in material cost increases, between 2019 and 2023, the cost of a 10 kVA transformer has increased 150%, while the cost of PVC conduit has grown by a whopping 462%. These unpredictable cost increases are why cooperatives set aside some capital each year for future expenses. Northwestern REC will be applying 100% of its deferred revenue fund toward the pending increase.

Northwestern REC will always be run in a democratic way, so any surplus income earned by the co-op is invested back into the member community in an equal and fair way. I encourage you to consider joining and/or voting for the board of directors so you can be more involved with the decision-making process 🗳️

RYAN MELLER
PRESIDENT & CEO



Play it Safe: 10 Do's and Don'ts When Using Portable Generators

STORM SEASON IS UPON US, which means greater potential for power outages. If you're planning to use a portable generator in the event of an outage, Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative's Safety Committee reminds you to play it safe.

With proper use and maintenance, portable generators can provide great convenience during an outage. However, when generators are used incorrectly, they can be extremely hazardous. In a 2022 report, the Consumer Product Safety Commission estimated 85 U.S. consumers die every year from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gasoline-powered portable generators.

Here are 10 do's and don'ts to keep in mind when using portable generators:

1. **DO:** Install backup CO alarms.
2. **DO:** Keep children and pets away from portable generators at all times.
3. **DO:** Position generators at least 25 feet outside the home and away from doors, windows and vents that can allow CO to enter the home.
4. **DO:** Ensure your generator is properly grounded. Use a portable ground-fault circuit interrupter to prevent electric shock.
5. **DO:** Use three-pronged extension cords that are rated to handle the load of the generator. Inspect extension cords for cuts, frays or other damage before use.
6. **DON'T:** Operate a generator inside your home or an enclosed (or partially-enclosed) space. Generators produce high CO levels, which can be deadly.
7. **DON'T:** Open windows or doors while the generator is running.
8. **DON'T:** Rely on generators as a

full-time source of power. They should only be used temporarily or in emergency situations to power essential equipment or appliances.

9. **DON'T:** Overload generators. They should only be used to power essential equipment. Make sure your generator can handle the load of the items you plan to power.
10. **DON'T:** Connect generators directly into household wiring unless you have an appropriate transfer switch installed. If a generator is connected to a home's wiring without a transfer switch, power can backfeed along power lines and electrocute utility line-workers making repairs.

While generators provide convenience during power outages, they can quickly become hazardous — even deadly — if improperly operated. Before you operate a portable generator, be sure to thoroughly read the owner's manual for important safety information and tips.

If you have questions about the proper use of portable generators, we're here to help. Give us a call at 800-352-0014 or chat with us online at NorthwesternREC.com. 🗨️

