

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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1-800-352-0014

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Monday through Friday

7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Amy Wellington, Editor

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Guest Column



Let us never forget

By Amy Wellington, *Director of Communications*

TWENTY YEARS AGO, just six days after Sept. 11, 2001, I walked into my office at Northwestern REC for the very first time. It was an exciting day to be starting a new job but still emotional as the world continued to mourn the attacks on our country the week before. As I sat at my desk that day, I wondered what I could do to help my new co-workers express the patriotism we all were feeling.

Then it dawned on me — Old Glory.

In my first week as the new marketing coordinator, I created a special Sept. 11 edition of the employee newsletter, which included a graphic that the staff could cut out and display if they wanted to.

I wasn't sure what to expect as the low

person on the electric pole, but within a few days, little versions of the American flag were popping up all over the co-op — on office doors, in windows and on fleet vehicles. I was in absolute awe. Many of these mini-flags even remained on display until the co-op building was renovated several years ago.

Looking through an old portfolio of my work recently, I came across this Sept. 11 tribute and was flooded with mixed emotions. I couldn't believe that 20 years have passed, but mostly I remember the camaraderie I felt then ... even as the newbie.

Let us never forget those who perished during and as a direct result of the Sept. 11 attacks. May they rest in peace, always. ☀



A UNIFYING SYMBOL: Here is a version of the image we used 20 years ago in our employee newsletter to commemorate the events of Sept. 11, 2001. Please join us on the 20th anniversary by displaying this flag at your home or business. Send photos to awellington@northwesternrec.com to be included on our social media pages.

Avoiding the energy rush

Time of use matters

DID YOU KNOW that when you use electricity often matters as much as how much electricity you consume?

It's no surprise that electricity use fluctuates throughout the day based on consumer demand, and electric co-ops must be able to provide enough electricity to meet the energy demands of their members during times of highest energy use, also known as "on-peak hours."

Early-morning hours, when people often start their day, and evening hours, when people return to their homes after work, are common times for on-peak hours. To reduce peak energy demand and save money, Northwestern REC has created load management programs and special electric heat rates to encourage electricity use during off-peak hours — when energy is less expensive to provide. Similar to saving money by attending a matinee, you can keep more money in your wallet simply by using electricity during an off-peak time period.

Using less on-peak power means lower costs for the co-op — and ultimately, lower rates for members.

Load management programs offer consumers the ability to lower their electricity costs without reducing the amount of electricity used. And by performing some of your daily chores like running the dishwasher or doing laundry during off-peak hours, you can save on your utility bill. In a similar vein, plug electronic equipment, such as computers, printers, TVs and power tools, into a power strip and then turn it off during peak hours.

You can also put technology to work for you. If you have a programmable thermostat, adjust the settings so your heating/cooling system syncs up with off-peak time periods. Use automatic timers to run hot tubs, pool pumps, water heaters and other appliances in the same way.

Saving energy can be simple. Remember, by shifting your energy use to off-peak times, you have the power to save on your monthly energy bill. To learn more about why time of use matters, watch a short video by visiting the following link: tinyurl.com/TOUmatters.

What is load management?

Load management helps to reduce peak electric demand during the highest use times of the day and night when electricity cost is at its highest. In this program, members volunteer to let the co-op shift electricity use of their electric water heater and/or electric thermal storage (ETS) heating systems from times of peak demand to off-peak hours.

Who is eligible?

Load management is available to any member who uses an electric water heater or an electric thermal heating system.



Businesses, homeowners and mobile home owners are all eligible. Rental properties can also participate with permission from the property owner. Residency must be full time, 12 months per year.

Why should you participate?

Participants directly benefit by receiving FREE 24-hour repair or replacement of their electric water heater. Northwestern REC provides top-of-the-line electric water heater tanks that are 92% efficient.

ETS systems are smarter and more efficient than traditional heating systems. Through the use of high-density ceramic bricks, ETS systems are capable of storing heat during low-cost, off-peak hours. So, while you may be using the majority of your electric heat during peak billing hours, you'll actually be paying non-peak billing prices because the energy was stored during low-cost times. There are three discount heating rates available for those using off-peak heat:

- ▶ **Residential Comfort Plus Rate:** applies when an air-source heat pump is the primary source of heating/cooling and a Steffes Comfort Plus brick furnace is the backup.
- ▶ **Residential Heat Shift Rate:** applies when a Steffes electric boiler/heating system is the primary source of heating.
- ▶ **Residential Off-Peak Rate:** applies with a Steffes electric boiler or with an electric baseboard (or ceiling cable) heat/ Steffes ETS room units combination.

More about these rates can be found at NorthwesternREC.com or by calling the Energy Solutions Department at 800-352-0014. 🌞

There is still time to apply for a teacher grant

AT NORTHWESTERN REC, we recognize the children of today are the co-op members of tomorrow. The Clearly Brighter Teacher Grant Program was designed to reach these kids by helping their teachers acquire innovative and effective educational curriculum that is not covered by traditional school funding.

Individual teachers can apply for grants up to \$250, while teams of teachers (two or more) can apply for grants up to \$500. Each year, Northwestern REC will award a total of \$4,000 through this grant program.

Educators in public and private schools, pre-K through 12th grade, as well as home-school organizations in Northwestern REC's service territory, are eligible to participate. It is not required for

teachers or schools to receive electric service from Northwestern REC. Grants are awarded for projects in any discipline

and are intended to help teachers bring special, hands-on projects to the classroom. Projects for special needs adults will also be considered.

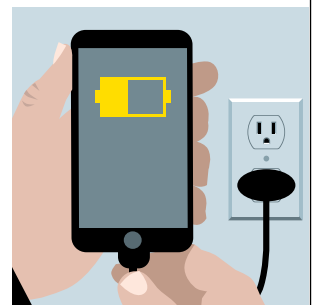
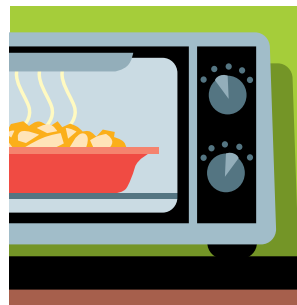
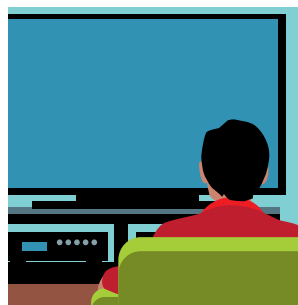
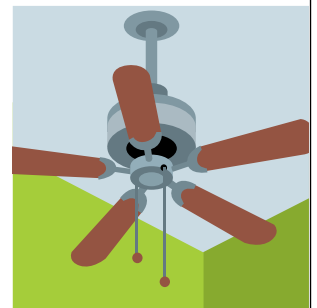
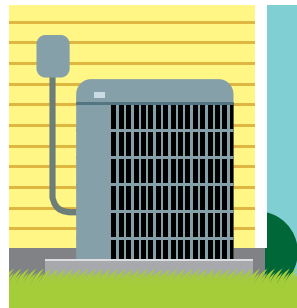
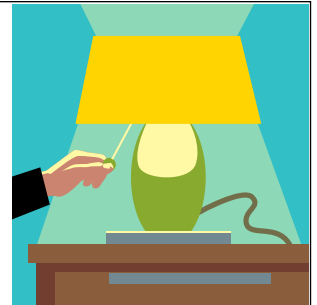
Grants are awarded annually in a competitive evaluation process. Applications are accepted online beginning May 1 and will be awarded in October. The deadline to submit grant applications is 5 p.m. Sept. 15, 2021.

For more information, call Amy Wellington, Director of Communications, at 800-352-0014 or email awellington@northwesternrec.com. Applications are accepted online only. Visit NorthwesternREC.com. ☀

Clearly Brighter Teacher Grants

We're Proud to Power YOU.

Local, Safe, Reliable Electricity.
For all the ways
you live.





SAFETY FIRST: When harvesting, farmers can avoid serious accidents with utility poles and power lines by looking up and around when operating large machinery.

Tips for a safe harvest

AGRICULTURE is the backbone of our country, and our livelihood greatly depends on the crops provided by American farmers. In addition to being one of the most labor-intensive professions, farming is also considered one of the most dangerous jobs in the U.S.

The hard work and exhaustive labor are tough, but rushing the job to save time can be extremely dangerous — even deadly — when farming near electrical equipment.

Every year, we see tractors and other farming equipment that have accidentally collided with utility poles and power lines, causing injuries and power outages. These dangerous accidents can be avoided by looking up and around your surroundings when operating large farm machinery. If you're preparing for harvest season, please keep the following safety tips in mind:

- ▶ Maintain a 10-foot clearance around all utility equipment in all directions.
- ▶ Use a spotter and deployed flags to maintain safe distances from power lines and other electrical equipment when working in the field.
- ▶ If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed power line, contact 9-1-1 immediately and remain inside the vehicle until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab (without touching it) and hop away to safety.
- ▶ Consider equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle. Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipes and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.

September 19-25 is National Farm Safety and Health Week, but practicing safety on the farm year-round yields positive results. We hope you never find yourself in a situation where farming equipment contacts power lines or poles, but if you do, we hope you'll remember these safety tips. 🌞



Unplug with meaningful community programs

By Amy Wellington, *Director of Communications*

MOST ADULTS have a vague memory of a time when “checking for messages” meant listening to an answering machine. We carried on with our days without relying on cellphones and managed just fine. But today, we are more connected than ever through our smartphones and other devices.

Our phones are so much more now — from cameras to calendars to social media connections — and truly disconnecting from them can be tough. But it’s even harder for our kids to unplug because they only know life with these tiny screens. It’s difficult for them to imagine life without computers, gaming devices, tablets or cellphones.

But there’s great value in unplugging for children and adults, even if it’s for just a short period of time. For kids, time away from the screen to be outside with other children allows them to connect with nature and others in a way that a virtual experience simply does not allow. They are able to experience life in the moment and allow their creativity and energy to break free.

Fortunately, we have access to great community programs and organizations like 4-H, the Scouts, and local chapters of the National FFA Organization (formerly Future Farmers of America) that provide children with a safe place to play, learn, and grow while cultivating new skills and interests.



CATS ARE PEOPLE, TOO: Harriet enjoys playing board games with her humans.

These types of clubs and programs offer kids an opportunity to explore activities and interests outside of school academics. Children can investigate areas they might not otherwise have access to and discover new interests and passions. They often learn new skills and strengthen existing ones. It’s no secret that the broader the range of experiences and activities children are exposed to, the more likely they are to find their own path and possibly a career. Community programs also foster important leadership development and public speaking skills. Through guided and informal play and activities, children learn problem-solving and

interpersonal skills that enable them to resolve conflicts peacefully and improve relationships.

Adults can also find meaningful opportunities to spend time with the kids when we all unplug. From board games and craft projects to playing in the park, there are many ways we can unplug for some family fun.

While you and your children are disconnecting, take a moment to identify potential energy savings. Unplug electronics that are not in use to avoid “vampire” energy loss. This is the energy that is drained from technology and electronics even when they are not in use. For example, although it is turned off, your TV is waiting to receive a signal from the remote, and your DVR is waiting to record the next show or perform an update.

Let’s encourage youngsters to step away from the screens and join in by being a part of an organization that helps them connect with others, participate in meaningful interactions, and explore new activities and interests.

When you do plug back in, Northwestern REC is here to help you save money and energy by connecting you with our energy-saving programs and services. While we’d love to see you in person, we’re also just a call or click away. Our office hours are 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. You can reach us at 800-352-0014 or chat with us online at NorthwesternREC.com.

Assistance Programs Available to Northwestern REC Members

Emergency Rental Assistance Program

*For those who rent and are on unemployment.

*Money can be used for rent and utilities.

Apply online at www.dhs.pa.gov.

Administered locally by:

Center for Family Services, 814-337-8450

Erie County Care Management, 814-923-5512

Mercer, Venango and Warren Counties, use COMPASS to apply.

Bridge Builders Community Foundation

*For NREC members who qualify in Venango Co.

*Administered by the United Way of Venango Co.

Apply by calling 814-676-6545

Member-to-Member, Inc.

*For all members with a referral from NREC.

*Administered by several local agencies, visit M2Mfund.org

Contact Northwestern REC at 800-352-0014

pa211nw.org

*Powerful search engine for all available help in your area.

Visit pa211nw.org, call or text 2-1-1

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