

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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www.northwesternrec.coop

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From the President & CEO



Make your voice heard

By Bill Buchanan

THERE'S AN old political saying, "If you're not at the table, you're on the menu." This adage is the perfect answer to, "Why vote?" It's a blunt description of what happens when you don't engage in the political process.

If you don't vote, you're not only missing the opportunity to support a candidate who shares your views, you're allowing others to chart a course that impacts your future. That's why we're encouraging everyone to recognize National Voter Registration Day on Sept. 22. Whether you're registering yourself or others, or helping members of our community, there are many ways to get involved.

Your vision, your vote

While local elections may not be as exciting as the high-profile presidential election, they are just as critical. Local elections have a direct impact on your community and on your quality of life.

Like the national level, local elections represent who we are as a community, and more importantly, where we want to go. Whether it's an election for a mayor, state representative, school board or a co-op board member, your vision for the community is tied to your vote.

Voting keeps elected officials accountable. Elections are a direct and tangible source of feedback. For example, Northwestern REC board members provide strategic guidance on the direction of the co-op and how it serves the community. Check out our website for results of the 2020 Northwestern REC board elections, which were announced on Aug. 22 at the

84th annual meeting. Results will also be included in the next *Penn Lines*.

Staying in sync with the community

Ultimately, the role of the co-op board is governance. While day-to-day decisions are made by our employees, bigger decisions are made by the board, whose mission it is to look out for the vitality of the co-op and the members we serve. Our board members provide their perspective on community priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions.

However, we need you, the members of the co-op, to help keep the system in check. We depend on you and your neighbors to vote so we can stay on course and ensure we are in sync with the community that we serve.

A strong voter turnout shows investment in the community and ensures that a diverse number of views are represented. The whole community benefits when more people participate in the process, because greater numbers reflect a consensus on the direction of the future and the will of the people.

By voting, you are a role model for your family, friends and colleagues. The act of voting demonstrates your support for the community and helps officials chart a course for the future. Democracy is not a spectator sport. Research candidates, learn about issues that are on the ballot, and get out and vote!

Cooperatively yours,

Bill Buchanan
President & CEO

There is still time to apply for a teacher grant

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

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 within 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.

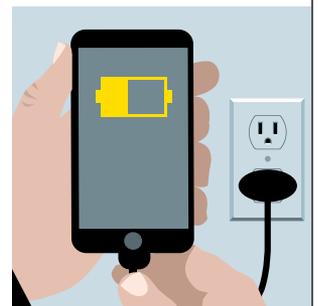
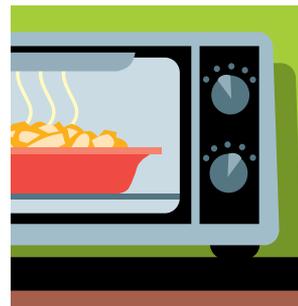
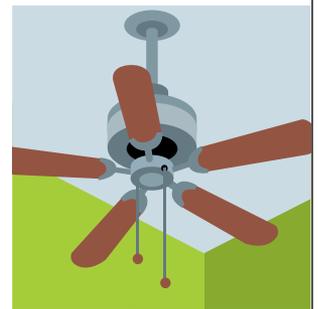
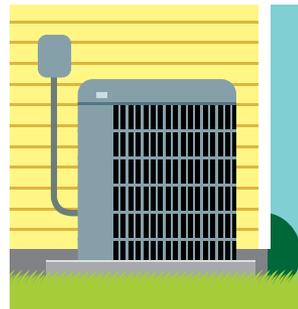
Grants are awarded annually in a competitive evaluation process. Applications are accepted online beginning May 1 and will be awarded in October. The deadline to submit grant applications is 5 p.m. Sept. 15, 2020.

For more information, call Amy Wellington, manager of communications, at 1-800-352-0014, or email awellington@northwesternrec.coop. Applications are accepted online only at NorthwesternREC.coop.

Clearly Brighter Teacher Grants

We're Proud to Power YOU.

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



Teaching youngsters the importance of energy efficiency

PERHAPS NOW more than ever, teaching younger generations about energy efficiency during these uncertain times is a top priority. Electronic and mobile devices, TVs, computers, and gaming stations have become ubiquitous fixtures in our homes, particularly with children. Consumer electronics coupled with the proliferation of smart home appliances, technology and electric vehicles have steadily changed our homes.

This ever-connected world is the modern environment in which children are growing up. And with lifestyles increasingly reliant on technology and in turn, energy consumption, teaching youngsters to save energy is an important life lesson.

The why

But before parents can teach their children how to save energy, they must first answer the question, “What’s in it for me?” Convincing kids to care about energy efficiency is a hard sell. Parents need to explain why it’s important to save energy and how it benefits the child. In the simplest terms, it means less money spent on an electric bill

can mean more money used for fun activities.

Less tangible, but just as important, using less energy means running your home more efficiently, conserving natural resources and helping the environment.

Learning by doing

Because “saving energy” is an abstract concept for kids, be specific about energy efficiency actions and set an example. We know children learn by observing. Even if they don’t say anything, children are processing your actions. When you turn off the lights when leaving a room or unplug the phone charger, they will notice.

Learning about energy efficiency doesn’t have to be a boring lecture.

For younger kids, turn energy efficiency into a “treasure hunt” to locate all the things in your home that use electricity. Depending on the age, challenge them to count and group the items into categories: electronics, appliances, lights, etc. Ask which gadgets and appliances could be turned off or unplugged to save power every day.

Show older kids how to program the smart thermostat and appliances. Ask them to examine the electric bill so they can see the costs, energy use and how their actions impact the bill.

Kids can learn a few simple energy-saving habits that can last a lifetime:

- ▶ Turn off lights, devices, computers and video consoles.
- ▶ Open blinds and curtains during winter days and close them during summer days.
- ▶ If old enough to run the dishwasher or wash their own clothes, teach kids to do so only with a full load and during off-peak hours.

Rewards

Offer rewards for agreed-upon milestones. This positively reinforces energy-saving actions. The idea is to create a habit of being energy efficient. And for parents, this could mean less nagging about turning off the lights!

Teaching your children about saving energy is not just a creative way to spend time with them. It helps your home to be more energy efficient and can instill good habits that will benefit your child long into adulthood.

Special safety message from Northwestern REC’s chief linemen

THE JOB of a chief lineman includes many tasks from job planning, including tools and equipment, to time management and submitting paperwork. But the most important responsibility of the chief lineman is the overall safety of his crew and anyone who enters the work zone.

The work these guys do can be very intriguing and attract much attention from the general public. So much so that you may be tempted to ask one of the guys what they are working on.

Entering the work zone to ask this question may seem simple enough to



you, but to the chief lineman, it greatly increases the possibility for a work-zone incident. There are more people he is responsible to keep safe in the

work zone, and there are more distractions to his crew members. Not only are visitors to the work zone a safety concern, they can also slow the progress of the job at hand.

So, on behalf of the Safety Committee for Northwestern REC, please refrain from entering any co-op job site for any reason. The rule of thumb is to stay at least 25 feet away from the crews and their equipment. Any questions you have about what

they are working on can be directed to Northwestern REC’s field services office at 1-800-352-0014, or chat with us online at NorthwesternREC.coop. 🗣️

When preparing for the big hunt, consider electrical safety

AS YOU prepare for hunting season, keep in mind that along with general hunting safety, electrical safety should also be at the top of your mind.

You might be preoccupied and excited about the big hunt, but be sure to look up and out for power lines. Never place a tree stand near a power line. Contact with the power line, utility pole, or related equipment can alter the path to ground, sending electricity through anyone or anything that comes too close or in direct contact with the power source. (Even coming within 10 feet can cause an arc, transferring energy from the power line/ source to an object or person.)

In addition, do not shoot near or toward power lines, utility poles, transformers, or substations. Stray bullets or pellets could damage equipment, possibly interrupting electric service. Even more concerning, they could drop a power line to the ground, causing a hazardous scenario. Those who get within 50 feet of the downed line could be shocked or electrocuted.

Northwestern REC and its safety committee remind hunting enthusiasts

of these electrical safety tips:

- ▶ Familiarize yourself with the area before heading out to hunt. Take note of power lines and equipment, especially when hunting in densely wooded areas.
- ▶ Observe all signs or postings that advise electrical safety, especially when scouting out a location for your tree stand.
- ▶ Do not use power poles to support a tree stand.
- ▶ Do not locate a tree stand near a power line or pole.
- ▶ Be in the habit of looking up and out for power lines, and do not come within 10 feet of an overhead line or pole when setting up or taking down a stand.
- ▶ Never climb a utility pole. Please report any damage to a line



DANGEROUS AND ILLEGAL: Attaching anything to a utility pole is not just dangerous – it's also illegal.

or other related equipment to us so that we can address it. Although we perform routine maintenance, damage may not be noticed for weeks or months unless an outage occurs due to the vast amount of lines that cover our service area.

Of course, always take the time to observe general hunting safety measures as well. Stay safe out there! 🦋

A well-designed landscape can save you some green

Give TREES a Chance

Trees planted too close to power lines grow into a BIG problem. To prevent power outages and safety hazards, these trees need to be trimmed and sometimes removed. Do your part to keep trees healthy and prevent power outages.

Plant trees a safe distance from power distribution lines. SafeElectricity.org

while blocking the sun's rays in the summer. Either scenario helps reduce energy costs if trees are strategically placed in relation to your home.

Trees that don't shed leaves are called evergreens, which usually block the sun year-round. That's great in the summer but not so hot in the winter.

NOTE: If any of your fall projects require digging — such as planting trees or shrubs, or setting posts — remember to dial 811 first.

Underground utilities, such as buried gas, water and electric lines, can be a shovel thrust away from turning a fall project into a disaster.

When planting trees, be sure to consider height potential. Do not plant a tree that will mature to more than 15 feet tall near or under

THINKING of planting some trees in your yard? Spring is an optimal time of year to dream up and achieve your landscaping masterpiece, but in many parts of the country, planting shrubs in early fall gives the plants a head start at establishing roots in the season's cool, moist soil.

If the answer is, "Yes, I want some new trees," giving some thought about where to put them could help reduce your energy bill. Not only are trees beautiful, but shading is the most cost-effective way to reduce heat gain from the sun.

And the savings are nothing to sneeze at. According to the Department of Energy, a well-planned landscape can reduce an unshaded home's air-conditioning costs by 15% to 50%. Our nation's energy authority also boasts that on average, a well-designed landscape saves enough energy to pay for itself in less than eight years.

Although effective, shade-producing landscaping strategies vary by climate,

here are some general planting guidelines from the Arbor Day Foundation:

- ▶ Plant on the west and northwest side of your home to provide mid-to late-afternoon shade.
- ▶ Plant shade trees over patios, driveways, and air-conditioning units (but never crowd or block your air-conditioning unit — it should have a 5-foot clearance above it and 3 feet on all sides).
- ▶ Use trees to shade east and west windows. If they block your view, prune lower branches.

In general, large, deciduous trees planted on the east, west, and northwest sides of your home create shade in the summer and can help decrease the cost of running your air conditioner in the heat of the summer.

Deciduous trees shed their leaves annually. Although it equates to a lot of leaves to rake come October, the annual cycle lets the sunshine through in the winter

power lines. Taller-growing trees (taller than 15 feet at maturity) should be planted a minimum of 20 feet away from power lines, and much farther — 50 feet away — to avoid future pruning/power line issues.

For more information about planting the right tree in the right place or information about electrical safety, go to SafeElectricity.org.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**