

REA Energy Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

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- Dave Daugherty**
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- Jeff Dishong**
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- Lisa Gardill**
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- Stacy Hilliard, CCC, CKAE**
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- Chris Masterson**
Local Pages Editor
- Patrick McAndrew**
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- Manager of Engineering**
Bryon Roland
- Purchasing & Facilities Manager**
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- Office Hours**
Indiana Office: 7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Ebensburg Office:
7 - 11 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Monday - Friday

Guest Column



It's a matter of (co-op) principles

By Stacy Hilliard, CCC, CKAE
Communications & Marketing Manager

ACE Hardware, State Farm, REI, Land O'Lakes and REA Energy all share something in common: We're all cooperatives.

We may be in different industries, but we all share a passion for serving our members and helping our communities thrive. In fact, all cooperatives adhere to the same seven principles that reflect our core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater community good. October is National Co-op Month, so this is the perfect time to reflect on these principles that have stood the test of time, but also provide a framework for the future. Let's take a look at the first three cooperative principles.

Voluntary and open membership

Just like all co-ops, REA Energy was created out of necessity — to meet a need that would have been otherwise unmet in our community. So in 1937, a group of neighbors banded together and organized our electric co-op so everyone in our community could benefit. For a modest membership fee to the co-op, any farmer could get electricity brought to his farm. Neighbors came together to tackle a problem that they all had but couldn't solve alone. They worked together for the benefit of the whole community, and the newly established electric lines helped power economic opportunity in our community.

While this history may be forgotten, key parts of that heritage remain — the focus on our mission and serving the

greater good. In this, we include everyone to improve the quality of life and economic opportunity for the entire community. Membership is open to everyone in our service territory, regardless of race, religion, age, disability, gender identity, language, political perspective or socioeconomic status.

Democratic member control

Our co-op is well suited to meet the needs of our members because we are locally governed. Each member gets a voice and a vote in how the co-op is run, and each voice and vote are equal.

Many REA Energy employees live right here in the communities we serve. The members of our board of directors, who help to set long-term priorities for the co-op, also live locally on co-op lines. These board members have been elected by neighbors just like you. We know our members have a valuable perspective, and that's why we are continually seeking your input, and encourage you to weigh in on important co-op issues and participate in co-op elections.

Our close connection to this community ensures we get a firsthand perspective on members' priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments.

Members' economic participation

As a utility, our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to our members. But as a co-op, we are also motivated by service to the com-
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Annual meeting wrapup

Stacy Hilliard, CCC, CKAE
Communications & Marketing Manager

REA ENERGY Cooperative, Inc. (REA) held its 84th annual meeting on Thursday, Sept. 16, in an online format. There were 273 members who attended the meeting virtually.

Members of the Credentials and Elections Committee, who witnessed the meeting, included Chairman Michael Wirfel, Louise Bendis, John “Tom” Brady, Robert Fairman, Dennis Gillespie, Paula Hencel, R. Michael Keith and Shelby Miller.

Election results

This year, board Districts 5 and 6 were up for regular election. In both districts, incumbents Robert P. Neese and John R. Learn ran unopposed and were declared re-elected to their respective districts.

Cooperative updates

Board Chairman Michael J. Bertolino and President & CEO Chad Carrick gave presentations regarding the cooperative.

Bertolino highlighted the many challenges and uncertainties that we, as a cooperative and a community, have faced in the past year and a half. As a

cooperative, he said, we have had to adjust our daily routines and activities. However, one thing has remained the same: The cooperative is committed to always being there for our members’ needs while safely and reliably keeping the lights on.

Another decision that had to be considered this year was how the annual meeting would be conducted, Bertolino told participants. Initial plans were to hold the meeting in person. However, due to concern for members’ and employees’ health and safety and with COVID-19 cases increasing again in our area, the board decided to move forward with an online format for the meeting.

In 2022, he noted, REA is planning to resume in-person meetings and use the online format again as well.

Bertolino closed by saying, “I would like to extend a sincere thank you to the employees and management of the cooperative from the board of directors for a job well done and for ‘keeping the lights on.’ Our board, management and employees would also like to extend a thank you to our membership for your patience and understanding. We look forward to continuing to serve you with excellent service now and for years to come.”

After welcoming the online participants, Carrick said that for members who were unable to join the online meeting, the cooperative is holding a Member Appreciation Month in October. Starting Oct. 1, members who did not register for the online meeting can pick up an appreciation gift at the cooperative’s offices on a first-come, first-served basis, while supplies last.

Carrick and REA Communications and Marketing Manager Stacy Hilliard also conducted a question-and-answer session. Some of the questions asked by the members focused on the following topics: the financial state of the cooperative, power supply-caused blinks and outages, products and services the cooperative’s subsidiary offers, power outage restoration, and the cooperative’s status on broadband.

Other business

Immediately following the business meeting, the board held a reorganization meeting and elected officers for 2021-2022. They are: Bertolino, chairman; Wayne Farabaugh, vice chairman; and Robert P. Neese, secretary/treasurer. Neese was elected as the Allegheny director representative as part of a two-year term, and Rick Shope will serve as the alternate Allegheny director. 🌞



Robert P. Neese
 District 5



John R. Learn
 District 6

REA Energy Cooperative, Inc., Board of Directors

- District 1** Tom Beresnyak
- District 2** Rick Shope
- District 3** Michael J. Bertolino

- District 4** Thomas Aurandt
- District 5** Robert P. Neese
- District 6** John R. Learn

- District 7** Anthony Enciso
- District 8** Wayne Farabaugh
- District 9** Sandra Dill

REA Energy seeks to return unclaimed capital credits

Because cooperatives put people first, REA Energy's rates are set up to cover the cost of doing business. In fact, when revenues exceed costs, you may get money back in the form of patronage capital.

Patronage capital is the margin that remains after subtracting expenses from revenue each year. As a not-for-profit cooperative, REA Energy uses the capital to qualify for loans to upgrade and expand the electrical distribution system. If the board of directors decides the cooperative's financial condition permits, a portion of the capital is returned to members in the form of a check.

In 2018, REA Energy mailed out patronage capital retirement checks to some current and former members. Some of that money remains unclaimed. If not claimed, REA Energy will eventually return the money to local communities through various means.

A list of those with unclaimed capital credits is posted on our website, reaenergy.com. If you know any of the individuals on the list, please contact REA Energy at memberservice@reaenergy.com, 724-349-4800 or, toll-free, 800-211-5667.

October is National Co-op Month

Being part of a cooperative means being part of something special. REA Energy will celebrate National Co-op Month in October, along with more than 40,000 other cooperative businesses serving more than 140 million people nationwide.

This year, REA Energy will be holding a Member Appreciation Month throughout October. Members who were not able to participate in the online meeting* will need to present their annual meeting member card (the bottom portion of their annual meeting notice) to receive a gift packet, which includes a hat, calendar and outdoor kit. This will be given on a first-come, first-served basis. Only one gift packet per membership will be given while quantities last. **If you participated in and received the \$10 bill credit for the online meeting, you will not be eligible to receive a gift packet.*

In the event that the COVID-19 situation in our area requires the cooperative to close its lobbies, members will be able to receive their gift packet at the Indiana drive-thru window. At our Ebensburg office, members will need to come to the front entrance, and an employee will place the packet outside if the office is closed.

If you have any questions, please visit our website, reaenergy.com, or call our office at 724-349-4800 or 800-211-5667.

Powering Up After an Outage

When the power goes out, we expect it to be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm or natural disaster causes widespread damage, extended outages may result. Our line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark:



1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines:

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

2. Distribution Substation:

A substation can serve hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself or if problems exist further down the line.

3. Main Distribution Lines:

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

4. Tap Lines:

If local outages persist, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools and homes.

5. Individual Homes:

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issue.

It's a matter of (co-op) principles

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community, rather than profits. Members contribute equitably to and democratically control the capital of REA Energy. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for co-op programs, initiatives, and capital investments and to support other activities approved by the membership.

Because we are guided by seven cooperative principles, it's not just about dollars — it's about opportunity for all and being fair when engaging with our members. The cooperative way is a values-based business model.

REA Energy is a reflection of our local community and its evolving needs. We view our role as a catalyst for good and making our corner of the world a better place. And by the way, that sums up the seventh co-op principle, "concern for community," which I'll elaborate on next month. ☀️

Right-of-way management/facility construction news

REA Energy contractors will be completing tree-trimming work in the following areas for the month of October:

- ▶ Contractor crews from Penn Line Tree Service will be trimming the rights-of-way of the Amsbry, Belsano, Reese, Smithport and Wilmore Substation areas, in addition to emergency maintenance areas.

Members in the affected areas will be notified. Contractors will perform all right-of-way work per REA Energy specifications. All contractor-employees will carry employee identification cards and their vehicles will display their company name.

If you have any questions, call 724-349-4800, or view the specifications at reaenergy.com.

Your Board of Directors



Michael J. Bertolino
Chairman
District 3



Wayne Farabaugh
Vice Chairman
District 8



Robert P. Neese
Secretary/Treasurer
District 5



Sandra Dill
District 9



Tom Beresnyak
District 1



Anthony Enciso
District 7



Thomas Auranndt
District 4



John R. Learn
District 6



J.R. "Rick" Shope
District 2

REA Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.