

REA Energy Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

REA ENERGY COOPERATIVE, INC.

75 Airport Road • P.O. Box 70
Indiana, PA 15701-0070
724-349-4800 • 800-211-5667

EBENSBURG DISTRICT OFFICE

127 Municipal Road
Ebensburg, PA 15931
814-472-8570

Website: www.reaenergy.com
Email: reaenergy@reaenergy.com

Chad Carrick
President and CEO

STAFF

Barry Baker
Indiana Operations Manager

Erin Bauer
ACRE Coordinator

Shane Cribbs
Network & Systems Manager

Dave Daugherty
Safety & Right of Way Manager

Jeff Dishong
Ebensburg Operations Supervisor

Lisa Gardill
Accounting & Finance Manager

Nick Hartman
Manager of Engineering

Stacy Hilliard, CCC, CKAE
Communications & Marketing Manager

Local Pages Editor

Bryon Roland
Purchasing & Facilities Manager

Renee Spalla
Supervisor of Consumer Services

Chris Weller
Load Management Supervisor

OUTAGES & EMERGENCIES

844-920-3395

OFFICE HOURS

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

Ebensburg Office: 7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Closed Tuesday and Thursday

Facing the Challenges of Rising Costs



CHAD CARRICK

AT REA ENERGY COOPERATIVE, INC., our mission begins with a clear commitment: to provide our members with safe, reliable and affordable electricity. We work hard every day to fulfill this promise, but like any organization, we occasionally face challenges that require our attention and action.

In recent years for instance, we have faced the global pandemic, the rising costs of goods and services, and disruptions in the supply chain. Electric cooperatives, along with the broader energy industry, have also been impacted by evolving regulations and concerns over grid resiliency and security. These challenges require careful management and strategic decisions by cooperative leadership and your board to ensure we not only keep our rates affordable but also maintain the financial integrity of the cooperative.

Rising costs are something we all feel in our daily lives. Increasing energy costs have led to higher prices for goods and services. This upward trend has continued with the prices we pay for the material and equipment the cooperative uses to maintain and improve our infrastructure. The following list outlines some of the price increases we have experienced over the last five years:

- ▶ Poles and crossarms: 92% increase
- ▶ Wire: 60% increase
- ▶ Pole line hardware: 99% increase
- ▶ Distribution transformers: 118% increase
- ▶ Protective equipment: 61% increase
- ▶ Molded fiberglass: 78% increase
- ▶ Utility Truck: forty-two (42) percent increase
- ▶ Fuel: sixty-eight (68) percent

Rising generation and transmission costs are impacting the electric industry, too. Allegheny Electric Cooperative, Inc., our wholesale energy supplier in Harrisburg, generates approximately 66% of REA Energy's power. The remaining 34% is purchased on the open market, where costs have increased substantially over the last few years. Recent forecasts predict wholesale power costs will increase up to 800% in the next few years.

Wholesale generation and transmission costs have increased 40.29% since 2019. In comparison, REA Energy has only had a 33.24% increase in rates over the same period. Generation and transmission costs are passed through to members margin-free, with no additional costs added.

As a member-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperative, REA Energy only adjusts rates when necessary to maintain financial stability, and we only raise rates as minimally as possible. To ensure we continue to provide reliable and affordable electricity in 2025, a rate increase is necessary.

Members' January bills will have a 12% increase implemented. Based on an average residential usage rate of 950 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per month, this roughly equals a \$14.50 increase. Even with this market-driven rate increase, REA Energy members will continue to have one of the lowest rates in Pennsylvania.

Continued on page 12C

Powering Hope: Electric Co-ops Unite to Lend a Hand in Hurricane Recovery

KAYLA KING, MARKETING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST

IN LATE SEPTEMBER 2024, HURRICANE HELENE, a powerful Category 4 storm, left widespread devastation across the southeastern United States.

With sustained winds of up to 140 mph, along with heavy rain, parts of several states — including Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee — were affected by downed power lines and severe flooding. The storm left thousands without power, shelter and everyday necessities. Many lives were lost, too.

One rural electric cooperative, Blue Ridge Energy in North Carolina, reported more than 80% of its members lost power. The torrential rains flooded streets, submerged homes, and washed away bridges and campgrounds, leaving communities in crisis.

In the aftermath, many areas became unlivable,

with homes reduced to rubble. Flash flooding further complicated rescue efforts, trapping residents in their homes and worsening the situation. In addition to their homes, many families also lost loved ones.

Despite the challenges, local organizations and volunteers quickly mobilized to provide food, shelter, and supplies to those in need. REA Energy Cooperative's offices in Indiana and Ebensburg served as drop-off points for donations.

Rural electric cooperatives from Pennsylvania and other states joined the effort to restore power. REA Energy sent six lineworkers to help Blue Ridge Energy.

“When we heard about the devastation our fellow cooperatives were facing, we knew we had to help,” says REA President & CEO Chad Carrick. “Cooperatives helping



COOPERATIVES HELPING COOPERATIVES: Top left: An RV camper lies on a utility pole from being swept away from the storm waters. Top right: REA Energy crews ferry new electric line across the New River in North Carolina. Middle left: REA Energy crews work tirelessly into the nighttime hours to restore power to those affected by Hurricane Helene. Middle right: REA crews reset an electric line to restore power for a home. Bottom: REA Energy's lineworkers, from left – Matt Bumbarger, Stephen Malesky, Zach Rusnak, Jonathan Illig, Chad Empfield and AJ Jablunovsky.

cooperatives is one of our core principles, and our linemen were eager to assist.”

REA Energy lineworkers AJ Jablunovsky, Chad Empfield, Jonathan Illig, Matt Bumbarger, Stephen Malesky and Zach Rusnak worked tirelessly to bring electricity back to affected communities. The crew arrived in Sparta, N.C., on Oct. 1. Located in the Appalachian Mountains, Sparta was devastated by severe flooding. In one instance, the raging water pushed an RV camper atop a utility pole.

“We arrived with two service trucks and a digger truck,” says Empfield, a journeyman lineworker. “[What should have been the] last hour of our journey took two and a half hours because the roads were washed out.”

Jablunovsky says the destruction was shocking. “Seeing how high the debris was hanging in the trees, the devastation was unfathomable. We were driving on roads that were half washed out.”

In total, the REA Energy crew spent two weeks providing mutual aid to restore power. They typically worked grueling 16-hour days, starting at 5:30 a.m. and ending around 9:30 p.m. The lineworkers set poles, ferried cable across the New River and restored power to the community.

With most bridges washed away, Blue Ridge Energy used drones and excavators to navigate the terrain. And if crews had to cross the river, the drive to the nearest intact bridge was 45 minutes.

“We were originally tasked with setting new poles,” Empfield says, “but when Blue Ridge Energy saw how quickly we could get power lines across the river, they shifted our focus for the rest of our time there.”

“All the power that could be restored was fully restored by the time we were preparing to head home,” says Rusnak, a journeyman lineworker.

“It was humbling to see the damage firsthand,” he adds. “Blue Ridge Energy had everything organized so well. We didn’t have to worry about food, water or clean clothes; we could focus on power restoration.”

With all the additional mutual aid, Blue Ridge Energy’s workforce swelled to more than 500 people, making coordination a massive undertaking.

“The community was a tremendous help,” Jablunovsky says, “even offering to do our laundry and giving us electrolyte drinks. It was the little things that helped us out.”

By Oct. 15, power was restored to approximately 70,000 Blue Ridge Energy members. REA Energy’s crew was among the last to leave the service area. The efforts of these dedicated lineworkers made a significant impact on restoring power, highlighting the resilience and cooperative spirit that is vital in the face of disaster. 🗣️

FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Continued from page 12A

Residential rate changes

- ▶ Appliance rate: \$0.11512/kWh
- ▶ Monthly service or access fee: \$42/month
- ▶ Electric heat rate: \$0.10412/kWh
- ▶ Dual fuel and ETS rate: \$0.07145/kWh
- ▶ Outdoor lighting fee: \$17.95/month

Commercial rate changes

- ▶ Small commercial (no demand): \$0.11512/kWh; \$50/month service or access fee
- ▶ Small commercial (with demand): \$0.08245/kWh; \$134.50/month service or access fee; \$13.50 demand charge
- ▶ Large commercial: \$0.06595/kWh; \$269/month service or access fee; \$18.50 demand charge

These rate changes will help ensure the cooperative’s ability to continue delivering affordable, reliable and safe electricity to our members.

We understand rate increases are never easy, and we appreciate your continued support as we navigate these challenges. If you have any questions or need more information, please don’t hesitate to contact us at 724-349-4800 or 800-211-5667. You can also visit reaenergy.com.

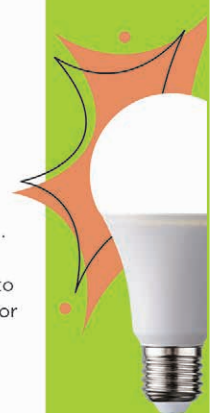
Thank you for being a valued member of REA Energy. 🗣️

CHAD CARRICK, MBA, CFPC
PRESIDENT & CEO

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Taking steps to help your home heating system run more efficiently can reduce energy use and lower your winter bills. Check to see if any air vents around your home are blocked by furniture, curtains or other items. Obstructed vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and can increase pressure in the ductwork, causing cracks and leaks to form. If necessary, consider purchasing a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture or other obstructions.

Source: energy.gov



APPLY FOR A TRIP OF A LIFE TIME

"I've made memories and friendships that will last for a lifetime and I hope that other kids continue to have this amazing opportunity."
-Olivia Short, 2024 Youth Tour Delegate



"Youth Tour was such an amazing time that I will forever be grateful to experience."
-Sophia White, 2024 Youth Tour Delegate



JUNE 16 TO 21, 2025

AN ALL-INCLUSIVE TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

WHAT IS YOUTH TOUR?

- An all-inclusive trip to Washington, D.C., sponsored by REA Energy.
- A week of visiting historic monuments, touring world-class museums and meeting elected officials.
- Developing lifelong friendships with delegates from across the country!



LEARN MORE AT REAENERGY.COM

FACEBOOK/INSTAGRAM:
NRECA YOUTHTOURDC

HOW TO APPLY

- Applicants must be a junior in high school.
- Students and their parents or guardians must be served by REA Energy Cooperative, Inc.
- Application deadline is Feb. 7, 2025.



YES! I AM INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN REA ENERGY'S 2025 YOUTH TOUR. PLEASE SEND ME AN APPLICATION AND INFORMATION PACKET. **RETURN THIS SLIP BY JAN. 24, 2025.**

Name: _____
 Address: _____

 High School: _____
 Parent/Guardian Name(s): _____
 REA Energy Account Number: _____

Right-of-way Management/Facility Construction News

REA Energy contractors from Penn Line Tree Service will be trimming the rights of way in the Livermore and Latimer substation areas in addition to emergency maintenance areas in January.

Members in the affected areas will be notified. Contractors will perform all right-of-way work per REA Energy specifications. All contractors carry employee identification cards, and their vehicles 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 Aurandt District 4	John R. Learn District 6	J.R. "Rick" Shope District 2
--	--	--	---------------------------	-----------------------------	------------------------------	------------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------------

REA Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.