

REA Energy Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey



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President & CEO

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Brendan Short

Right-of-Way/Forestry Supervisor

Chris Weller

Load Management Supervisor

Outages & Emergencies

1-800-332-7273

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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

Stacy Patterson, CCC
Local Pages Editor

Guest Column



Petitions for director candidates due by July 1

By Stacy Patterson, CCC, *Communications Coordinator*

THE board of directors for REA Energy Cooperative, Inc. is comprised of nine cooperative members who represent a specific geographic area of the cooperative's service territory. Directors are elected to four-year terms on a rotating basis.

In 2016, Districts 3 and 4 are up for re-election. Michael Bertolino currently serves as the District 3 director. District 3 consists of Blacklick, Brush Valley, Buffington, Center and Young townships in Indiana County. James Harteis currently serves as the District 4 director. District 4 consists of Cambria, Jackson and Munster townships in Cambria County, and East Wheatfield and West Wheatfield townships in Indiana County.

Qualifications

To be eligible for director candidacy, individuals must meet the following criteria and all other guidelines listed in the cooperative's bylaws:

- ▶ Be at least 18 years old;
- ▶ Have signed and submitted an application for service at primary residence;
- ▶ Have received electric service at primary residence continuously for the past year;
- ▶ Not be employed by, or financially interested in, any business in competition with REA;
- ▶ Never been an employee of REA or any electric cooperative or association;
- ▶ Not be a close relative of a director or employee of REA;
- ▶ Have paid all balances due REA within 90 days of billing during the previous one-year period;

- ▶ Have not been convicted of theft of services from REA; and
- ▶ Have not been convicted of, or pled guilty to, a felony or crime of moral turpitude.

Complete director qualifications are detailed in the cooperative's bylaws in Article III, Section 2 (a). Packets containing all the necessary information and forms are available at cooperative's offices and on the cooperative's website, www.reaenergy.com.

Important dates to remember

This year, the first day that members can submit petitions to run for director is April 4, 2016. To register as a candidate, you must reside in District 3 or 4. A petition must be filed bearing the signatures of at least 15 REA Energy members who reside in the district that the nominee is running for. All petitions shall state the residence and directorate district of the nominee. Upon validation of signatures, the petition will be posted at the cooperative's headquarters.

Interested applicants will need to have their petitions submitted and received at the cooperative by 3 p.m. on July 1, 2016. A random selection of ballot positions will be performed at the cooperative's Indiana office by the cooperative's solicitor at 3:30 p.m. on July 5. Each nominee shall be entitled to attend the selection of ballot position.

A ballot containing the names of all the nominees will be mailed to members in Districts 3 and 4 in early September. Election results will be announced at the REA Energy Cooperative Annual Meeting on Sept. 29, 2016. ☀

The importance of right-of-way vegetation maintenance

By Brendan Short
Right-of-Way/Forestry Supervisor

REA ENERGY is committed to and strives toward providing the highest quality service to our members. Right-of-way (ROW) vegetation maintenance plays a major role in achieving this commitment, so REA can provide safe and reliable electricity to its members.

There are benefits of having a well-established vegetation maintenance program (VMP). The first benefit is public safety. Distribution lines are high-voltage lines that can be a danger to society. If trees are allowed to grow into a high-voltage line, this can create a very dangerous situation for utility personnel, unaware landowners or the public.

Electrical energy is always trying to find its way to ground, but it needs a conductor to get there. An example would be a healthy looking tree, which is a perfect conductor. When tree limbs are touching or lying on distribution lines, there is the potential that the distribution energy is using that tree to find a path to ground, which has the potential to energize a portion of that tree. If landowners notice this situation, they are advised not to take matters into their own hands, and should call REA Energy and report the situation. Trained professionals in the industry can assess the situation and resolve it.

The second benefit of a well-established VMP is storm restoration time. When a proper VMP is in place, storm restoration times may be reduced dramatically because a properly maintained ROW allows utility personnel better access to the lines so they are able to see where the outage is located. This allows personnel to assess the situation and determine what tools and materials may be needed to properly restore the line.

With a non-maintained ROW, utility lines can become entangled within brush and tree limbs. When ROWs are not maintained, restoration times may increase because crews have to spend more time looking for the outage location. Once the location of the outage has

been determined, utility personnel may be engulfed within an overgrown ROW. Untangling utility lines in a ROW that has not been maintained is very time consuming for vegetation management crews. This makes it very hazardous for utility personnel and the public.

Becoming an REA member View of REA cooperative utility easements

When a member signs up for electric service from REA Energy Cooperative, he or she is giving REA Energy the right to maintain utility lines in a proper way to provide safe and reliable service to REA members. This is stated in No. 8 on the REA application: “Application for Membership and for Electric Service: By executing this application, applicants hereby grant the cooperative such easements upon, over or under the applicant’s lands for the purpose of erecting, maintaining, repairing and servicing all such pole lines, facilities and equipment as may be necessary or convenient in order to provide electric service to the applicant. Applicant hereby agrees to execute, acknowledge and deliver to the cooperative a right-of-way easement to provide electric service to the applicant in such form as may from time to time be used by the cooperative.”

REA bylaws Section 5. Grant of easements

“By becoming a member and dealing with the Cooperative, grants the Cooperative such easements upon, over or under such member’s lands for purposes of erecting, maintaining, repairing and servicing all such lines, facilities, equipment and related infrastructure as may be necessary or convenient in order to provide electric service to any members.

“Each member agrees to execute, acknowledge and deliver to the Cooperative a Right-of-Way Easement to provide electric service to any members in such form as may from time to time be used by the Cooperative, a copy of which shall be available at the office of the Cooperative.

“Each member further releases and quit claims the Cooperative, its succes-

sors or assigns and lessees of and from any and all damages, loss or injury that may be at any time caused by or result from the erecting, maintaining, repairing and servicing of the said lines, facilities, equipment and related infrastructure, the trimming, cutting down or removal of any and all trees, vegetation and other obstructions which in the judgment of the Cooperative, its successors, assigns or lessees may interfere with the erecting, maintaining, repairing and servicing of the lines facilities, equipment and related infrastructure, or menace the same, and the Cooperative’s exercise of its rights to its right of way easement.”

Right-of-way easement How right-of-way easements are acquired

All right-of-way easements are acquired before our lines are erected from the original owner of the property at the current time of the new construction. Right-of-way easements were being acquired as early as the 1930s to the present day. Original right-of-way easements are filed at REA Energy’s headquarters office located at 75 Airport Road, Indiana, Pa.

Within the right-of-way easement, it states the cooperative has the right: “To cut, trim, or otherwise control the growth by mechanical, manual, or chemical means, of trees and vegetation,” as necessary for proper right-of-way maintenance. REA Energy requires a 40-foot total right-of way for three-phase, two-phase and single-phase lines that serve rural and residential customers.

For underground primary lines (e.g., a housing development) a 15-foot total right-of-way is required. With underground lines, there are green “box-like” pad-mount transformers on members’ properties. These also need proper clearance for our linemen to work safely in case of an emergency. While many may view transformers as eyesores and would like to place plants around them, they must have at least 10 feet of clearance around the transformer to allow our linemen enough room to work.

REA Energy has the right to exceed

the 40-foot right-of-way to remove any tree that is dead, weak, leaning or dangerous, and that has the potential to affect the integrity of the utility if the tree were to fail.

REA Energy utilizes professional tree contractors such as Asplundh Tree Experts, Davey Tree, and Penn Line Corporation that will instruct the landowner on what is needed to be maintained by the cooperative within their given property.

Landowner notification

REA utilizes various methods before any vegetation management work takes place on the property. All attempts will be made to notify landowners. Methods of notification that are being used to notify landowners of the pending work are automated phone calls, letters, newspaper ads, *Penn Lines*, Twitter and Facebook posts. Final notification will be a personal notification from a representative from the professional tree contractor. The representative will explain what work must be accomplished within their given property. At this time, landowners should ask questions so

they have a complete understanding of the work that will be performed within their property.

REA cycle trimming program

There are approximately 2,600 miles of electric line to maintain in the cooperative's territory. REA Energy requires tree trimming, tree removal and herbicide treatment on a cycle basis. Currently, the cooperative has adopted a five-year vegetation management cycle to take care of the entire ROW in our service area. Adequate trimming and spraying programs make it possible to provide reliable electric service and reduce outage time.

In 2016, the following cycle trimming projects are scheduled:

- ▶ Brown's Crossroads MP – 40 miles
- ▶ Tanoma – 8 miles
- ▶ Cherryhill / Senate MP – 103 miles
- ▶ Laurel – 126 miles
- ▶ Curry Run – 60 miles

In 2016, the following herbicide projects are scheduled:

- ▶ Brown's Crossroads MP – 40 miles
- ▶ Tanoma – 8 miles
- ▶ Cherryhill / Senate MP – 103 miles
- ▶ Laurel – 126 miles

- ▶ Curry Run – 60 miles
- ▶ Smithport – 81 miles
- ▶ Shadowood – 43 miles
- ▶ Clyde – 70 miles
- ▶ Washington – 138

Reliability

Reliability is a major focus of REA Energy. During 2015, 38 percent of utility outages were due to downed trees and limbs. This was a total of 263 outages that resulted in 40,495 outage hours. Our focus this year is to reduce tree-related outages, which can be achieved with the cooperation of members and proper ROW maintenance.

REA Energy appreciates your cooperation with ROW tree trimming and vegetation control. Working together, we will reduce outages, keep the system safe for employees and landowners, and reduce outage time.

If you have any questions regarding ROW issues, you can visit our website at www.reaenergy.com to see proper specifications for ROW clearance, or contact the cooperative's Indiana office at 724-349-4800 or the Ebensburg office at 814-472-8570. ☀

Power of membership – you help power a community

REA Energy Cooperative, Inc. belongs to the members it serves. That means our members have a say in how our co-op is run. And with members in charge, you can feel confident the decisions that are made are in your best interest and the best interest of your community. Doesn't that sound good?

Members know they can trust REA Energy because it was created not to make a profit, but to deliver on this promise: providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity. Four values are the foundation of REA Energy's service to its members – innovation, commitment to community, accountability and integrity. These values represent the cooperative difference and how our co-op earns the trust of members, every day.

Members first. Every day. That's the power of co-op membership. Plug in to the power of REA Energy's Touchstone Energy Cooperative membership at www.TogetherWeSave.com.

Right-of-way management/facility construction news

REA Energy contractors will be completing tree-trimming work in the following areas in March:

- ▶ Contractor crews from Asplundh Tree Expert Co. will be trimming the rights-of-way of the Brown's Crossroads Metering Point, in addition to emergency maintenance areas.

Notification of work will be made using our automated phone system to members in the areas affected.

Contractors will perform all right-of-way work per REA Energy specifications. If you have any questions, call 724-349-4800, or you can view the specifications online at: www.reaenergy.com. All crews will carry cards and have magnets on their vehicles identifying them as REA Energy contractors.

REA's IT internship program

Indiana University of Pennsylvania student Kortnee Blair started in the position of information technology (IT) intern on Jan. 18.

Some of her duties will include: solving computer and network problems, and assisting with the transition to new technology.

Kortnee is currently pursuing a dual baccalaureate degree in finance and management information systems. She has also taken classes to learn Chinese, and will obtain a certificate for that subject.

Kortnee enjoys spending time with her pets and family, being outside as much as possible, riding jet skis and four-wheelers, and swimming.



INTERNSHIP PROGRAM: Kortnee Blair is working as the REA Energy IT intern. She began work in January.

Before you switch on the lights, we've already put up the poles, connected miles of wire and flipped more than a few switches of our own. All to make sure your life is always "on." Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at TogetherWeSave.com.

YOUR ELECTRICITY ISN'T SOMETHING WE TAKE LIGHTLY.



REA *energy*
Cooperative Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Your Board of Directors



Herman Blakley
Chairman
District 9



Michael J. Bertolino
Vice Chairman
District 3



Robert P. Neese
Secretary/Treasurer
District 5



Sam Eckenrod
District 1



Wayne Farabaugh
District 8



James Harteis
District 4



John R. Learn
District 6



Jack R. Rising
District 7



J.R. "Rick" Shope
District 2