



Northwestern REC
PO Box 207
Cambridge Springs, PA 16403

Presorted
First Class Mail
US Postage Paid
Permit No. 32
Cambridge Springs, PA

December 2003



NEWS *from the* REC



The Northwestern Rural Electric Co-operative Association, Inc.
PO Box 207, Cambridge Springs, PA 16403-0207

A Touchstone Energy™ Partner

www.northwesternrec.com • E-mail: northwesternrec@northwesternrec.com • Phone: 1.800.472.7910 • Fax: 1.814.398.8064

Contacts:

Amy W. Fuller
News from the REC Editor
1.814.398.5364

Mary Mulligan-Haines
Communications/Marketing Manager
1.814.398.5307

Marilyn Jones
Engineering & Operations Supervisor
1.814.398.5310

Linda King
Business Development Manager
1.814.398.5303

Rich Wunderley
Engineering/Field Services Superintendent
1.814.398.5366

Out with the old, in with the new

On a crisp October day, Don Edge, Field Services Representative for Northwestern REC, stands along a country road debating which direction he should go. He has been here before, faced with the same decisions. The ground is saturated from days of steady rain, yet this day, the sun shines so intensely it causes him to squint as he stares out into the pasture.

He knows that much is riding on his decisions, however the clock is ticking. The only sound is the wisp of the wind, reminding him that winter is not far off. After several moments of contemplating his next move, he mumbles something under his breath then heads for his vehicle. He has made his decision.

Working just outside Linesville, Don has decided where to position a new series of utility poles. The Co-op will soon replace five miles of existing electric line in the area, some of which is located down the center of a cow pasture. His plans for this particular span will relocate the lines closer to the road for easier access, and avoid a row of shade trees along the pasture.



Paul Gehr, long-time Co-op member, has given permission to remove the above trees from his property to accommodate new electric line in the Linesville area.

This project is one of several included in the Co-op's long-range plan. Approximately 800 miles of Northwestern REC's existing 2,550 miles of electric lines is well over 40 years old and is scheduled for upgrades. This copper conductor is located throughout the Co-op's service territory and is being replaced with new aluminum conductor – the Co-op replaces about 40 miles of the aging copper wire each year.

As an added benefit, the Co-op is moving much of this line out of fields, woods and other situations that are very difficult to troubleshoot during an outage or unreachable from a bucket truck.

Replacing even just one mile of electric line is a lengthy process. There is much to take into consideration when staking new lines; things like public safety,

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Out with the old, in with the new.....	1 & 2
Co-op RFS III Update.....	2
Is Electric Heat the Answer?.....	3
Co-op Happenings	3
Long Distance Savings	4
Contact Information.....	4
Co-op Water Heater Program	insert
HELP for Crawford County residents.....	insert

News from the REC is published quarterly by the Northwestern Rural Electric Co-operative Assoc., Inc.

Call 888.843.1621 to sign up today!

Offered by Northwestern REC, Cambridge Springs, PA 16403 1.800.472.7910

If you currently pay a monthly fee for long distance service, at a minimum, you will save that amount (at \$4.95/month, you save \$59.40/year; at \$5.95/month you save \$71.40/year)

- ◆ No monthly fee
- ◆ 6.9 cents per minute Anytime, Anywhere
- ◆ FREE 800 number at above rates (all 50 states, Puerto Rico & US Virgin Islands; Canada at 35 cpm)
- ◆ Billed for first 18 seconds & then at 6 second intervals (not on a per minute basis, which is more expensive)
- ◆ PowerNet Global will reimburse you for any switching costs charged by your local phone company
- ◆ Residential and Business accounts eligible

No monthly fee!
No codes to dial!
Only 6.9 cents/minute!



Together with PowerNet Global we offer great long distance savings.



One Co-op RFS III septic system to serve multiple homes - In November 2003, Northwestern Service Corp. installed the first Multi-Residential version of the Co-op RFS III septic system in Venango County. This system works exactly as a single unit - effluent flows from the septic tank into the re-circulating filter tanks then finally passes a UV light before it is discharged. The only difference is that there are three filtering tanks verses two found in a single system. A multi-residential system can serve up to two - four bedroom homes. For more information contact NSC at 1.888.494.8379. ♦

(Continued from page 1)

each member and the land affected. It takes many visits to the area to record not only the location of the existing power lines but to document the surrounding terrain as well. Using this information and keeping the members in mind, Field Services Representatives, like Don, design the most economical line. These designs may change numerous times before actual construction occurs.

With a suggested design in hand, Co-op representatives contact each member that will be affected by the new line construction. As the most important phase of the project, this often takes several weeks to complete. Where it can, the Co-op will accommodate as many member requests as possible. Relocating electric lines will inevitably require trees to be trimmed or completely removed, and poles to be placed in new locations. Most members are very willing to cooperate with these line improvements.

Long-time member Paul Gehr, of Linesville, has approved the removal of three large locust trees from his front yard to accommodate the new electric lines in his area. To Gehr, the benefits of the line improvements are great. The existing lines run through the

woods located behind his home and often experience blinks or outages when strong winds or storms occur. Relocating the lines along the road is a win-win situation. Not only will Gehr and many of his neighbors experience less blinks in their service, Co-op crews will also be able to access the lines much more efficiently.

Northwestern REC is committed to upgrading the distribution system to enhance reliability, reduce line losses and minimize exposure to severe weather. In its 2004 Work Plan, Northwestern REC will rebuild lines in the following townships: Conneaut, Summer Hill, Summit, Sadsbury, Wayne, Franklin, Elk Creek, Vernon, Cambridge and Plum. Including the work currently being done in the Linesville area, Northwestern REC will replace a total of 36 miles of the aging copper line next year.

Many members in these areas will soon receive a visit from a Northwestern REC Field Services Representative to discuss the new line construction. This representative, will work diligently with each member to redesign the system to best meet the needs of the members and of the Cooperative. ♦

Is Electric Heat the Answer?

Once again we find ourselves in a new heating season and facing rollercoaster-like fuel costs. With such fluctuating prices, many consumers may be wondering what better heating options there are available. Whether it is to upgrade a current heating system, or install something completely new, many of these folks will entrust installers, contractors and other such professionals to help them decide just what to do.

Northwestern REC offers its members ways to save on heating costs. Currently, the Co-op's off-peak interruptible heat rate beats the cost of all other heating fuels. Using September 2003 rates for natural gas, fuel oil and propane, to heat a 1,500 sq. ft. home for one year, it would cost \$985 using natural gas, \$1,050 using fuel oil and \$1,526 using propane, but only \$962 on the Co-op's off-peak (interruptible) rate.

An interesting fact about Northwestern REC's interruptible space-heating rate, since its inception over 13 years ago, the rate has increased by only one penny. The interruptible space-heating rate is proven stable and very predictable, unlike the prices of the other heating fuels – which can fluctuate tremendously even within the same heating season.

In addition to its affordability and great savings, electric heat offers other benefits. With nothing to burn and no harmful fumes to ventilate, electric heat is clean and safe. Combining this rate with heat pumps and heat pump boosters (see last issue) could create the most energy efficient heating system available. As a supplement to electric baseboard heat, electric thermal storage units are very easy to install and to maintain and offer room-to-room comfort control.

Another interesting fact about Northwestern REC's interruptible space-heating rate, it can be applied to other household appliances. To receive this rate, there is a separate panel box that controls the electric heating system; electric appliances such as hot water tanks, clothes dryers, dehumidifiers and more can be connected to the off-peak panel box to receive the same low rate.

In more ways than one, it is the heat that can't be beat. For more information regarding the interruptible space-heating rate, please contact Field Services at 1.800.473.3567. ♦

Heating Cost Comparison*

Annual Heating Cost for a 1,500 Square ft. Home

\$ 630	Ground Source Heat Pump	\$.0973/kWh
\$ 985	Natural Gas Furnace	\$1.02/100 cu. ft.
\$ 962	Northwestern REC Interruptible Electric Heat Rate	\$.052/kWh
\$ 1,050	Oil Furnace	\$1.25/gallon
\$ 1,526	Propane Furnace	\$1.25/gallon

*Data calculated with local prices – 9/15/03

Co-op Happenings

44th Annual Builder's Show

Northwestern REC will have a display at the Builder's Association Home Show, to be held at the Family First Sports Park in Erie, on April 1 - 4, 2004. Stop by our booth for a chance to win a door prize. ♦

Courses at the Co-op

Beginning in 2004, Northwestern REC will offer basic residential wiring courses to members and non-members of the Co-op. For more information contact Human Resources at 1.800.472.7910. ♦

We're going ONLINE!

In 2004, the Communications/Marketing department hopes to offer this newsletter, and other information, completely online. To receive this newsletter electronically, call Amy Fuller, Marketing Coordinator, at 1.800.472.7910 or e-mail your request to: afuller@northwesternrec.com. ♦