

Northwestern  
Rural Electric  
Cooperative  
Association, Inc.

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric  
cooperatives serving  
Pennsylvania and  
New Jersey

Northwestern REC  
P.O. Box 207  
22534 State Highway 86  
Cambridge Springs, PA 16403  
Home Page:

<http://www.northwesternrec.coop>

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Kathy Cooper-Winters**  
President  
**Larry Proper**  
Vice President  
**AnneMarie Sundean**  
Secretary  
**Robert G. Agnew**  
Treasurer

Francis Surovick

District 1  
**Roger Follett**  
District 3  
**Kim Docter**  
District 6  
**David Rectenwald**  
District 7  
**Ronald Wineland**  
District 8  
**Lanny Rodgers**  
District 10

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

**Billing/Moves/Credit/Consumer Services**  
1-800-352-0014  
**Engineering/New Construction/Field  
Services/Water Heater Servicing**  
1-800-473-3567  
**Emergencies/Outages**  
1-800-474-1710  
**Administration/General**  
1-800-472-7910  
FAX  
814/398-8064

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday  
7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Mary Mulligan-Haines, Editor

FROM THE MANAGER & CEO

# Safety - It's everyone's responsibility!



by Michael D. Tirpak  
General Manager & CEO

**SAFETY IS** the No. 1 priority at Northwestern REC and everyone has a part of the responsibility for making it happen, including the board of directors, management, employees and the public.

The board establishes policy, and we have several policies dealing with public safety, as well as employee safety. The board also

approves our annual work plan/budget, which has safety as our No. 1 core value.

Our management team takes this very clear priority and develops strategies and goals to accomplish the creation of a safe work environment for our employees, our membership and the general public. The very nature of our electric distribution utility business, which involves thousands of miles of high-voltage electric lines in the air and underground, makes this a continuing challenge for our team.

Our employees also take safety very seriously from a very personal standpoint — their lives. Many of our employees work around 12,000-volt electric lines on a daily basis and trust their lives to their fellow employees and our safe work practices, which spell out the procedures that allow their work to be done safely. We also buy quality equipment — from rubber gloves to bucket trucks — that has the needed safety margins for the work we do every day. Our employees travel close to 500,000 miles every year in the course of our business to provide the best service for our membership.

Safety is also important at our headquarters in Cambridge Springs, where over half of our employees work

throughout the day. Ergonomic designs of our work areas minimize potential office accidents, as well as minimize the wear and tear on our employees who sit at desks, answer phones and interact with computers for hours at a time. We also have spent time designing the front entrance into the office and restroom facilities to accommodate handicapped individuals.

Safety in our service territory is a two-way proposition with the public. We design our lines and substations to meet or exceed the National Electric Safety Code to minimize risks of injury to the public. We also spend a lot of attention and money each year on right-of-way clearing and line maintenance to keep everyone safe. In return, we ask the public to avoid attaching items to our poles that could be a hazard to our linemen, to keep their pets from injuring our employees (see the article in this issue on dog control) and to keep our electric facilities in mind when adding decks, garages or other additions to their homes. Safety is really everyone's responsibility!

## Annual meeting time again!

Northwestern REC's 72nd annual meeting is scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 2, 2008, at the Crawford County Fairgrounds. Please mark your calendars now to attend this important and fun event! The whole family is welcome and there is something for everyone. Details are in this issue of *Penn Lines* and will be mailed to all members soon. See you there!!! ☀

Michael D. Tirpak  
General Manager & CEO

# Outage detection and notification with new load management system

**THE INSTALLATION OF** the new load management system is tentatively scheduled to be completed by late 2009, and with it will come many outage management benefits and efficiencies. There will also be some potential new services that we will be evaluating.

Currently, we rely on members to call in and report outages and, even with the new system installed, member telephone calls still will play a very important role. With the new system, we will have communication devices out on the power lines in strategically placed locations. In the event of an outage, we will use these devices to help determine where the outage occurred. It will also count events to enable us to determine if a blink happens often, or if it happens at the same time each day, etc. This information will be used to help plan for future line upgrades and/or replacements.

What the new system can't tell us is that a tree is on the line, a car hit the pole, a line is down and on fire, a pole is on fire, a house is on fire, etc. Even though this new technology will improve efficiencies, it still can't replace needed information in these types of situations. We will continue to rely on members to call to report this type of information.

We will also be able to monitor the voltage on the line remotely instead of

driving to the location to verify the voltage level. This will reduce costs and improve response time as a crew may not have to be dispatched to patrol the line and find the problem. The system will be able to help us determine where the problem is and the crew can be sent to the location to make the repair.

The system will help with efficiencies and reduce outage time during the larger outages typically caused by weather conditions and also help with individual outages. When a member calls in to report an outage, we will ask the following questions:

- ▶ Are your neighbors without power also?
- ▶ Have you checked your breakers to make sure something didn't trip them?

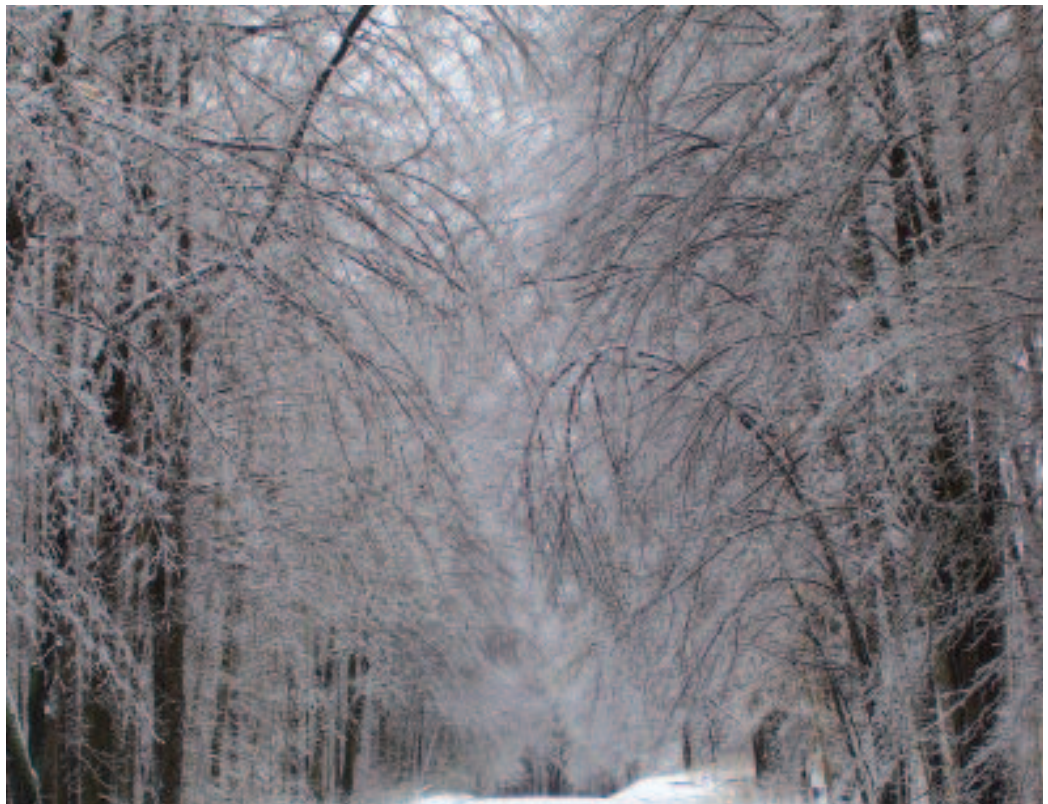
If the reporting member's neighbors have power but the member calling doesn't have power and has checked his breakers, this is known as an individual outage. Today this situation would require that we send a crew to the location to check the power. If it happened after normal working hours, the mem-

ber might be charged a fee if the crew found the problem was located on the member's side of the meter.

The new system will enable us to "ping" (send a signal to) the member's meter. If there is power to the meter, the meter will send a message back to the office, indicating there is power to the meter and the problem is on the member's side of the meter. This will eliminate costs for both the co-op and the member, as well as help resolve the problem much faster.

Another area the new system will help improve is transformer sizing. Often members change or add equipment without thinking about notifying the co-op. This may result in overloading the transformer originally sized for the home and may also cause an outage situation at the home. We will be able to determine the load on the transformer and determine if a larger transformer is required.

These are just some of the benefits we are looking forward to delivering to members with this system improvement. Watch your *Penn Lines* for more details on the changes. ☀



**DEVASTATING BEAUTY:** Ice storms often cause outages.

## Official Annual Meeting Notice

Please take note that the regular Annual Meeting of the members of The Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Inc. will be held at the Crawford County Fairgrounds from 1 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 2, 2008, for the following purposes:

1. To hear and pass upon the reports of officers, directors and committees.
2. The election of four directors to serve the Cooperative. Article IV of the Bylaws permits district nomination meetings, which were held April 15, 21, 23 and 28. The following candidates were nominated and are presented herewith for your consideration:

<u>District</u>	<u>Nominees' Names</u>	<u>Addresses</u>
6	Kim Docter	27553 Miller Station Road, Cambridge Springs
7	David Rectenwald	45895 Keys Road, Titusville
8	Larry Proper	P.O. Box 35, Guys Mills
9	Ronald Wineland	17695 Mullen Road, Meadville

3. For the transaction of any business that may properly be brought before the meeting.

I, AnneMarie Sundean, duly elected secretary of The Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Inc., do hereby certify that the above-named members were nominated to be elected as directors for the aforesaid association for the year 2008 at properly convened meetings according to notice and that minutes of such meetings are on file in the office of the Association. The above-named were validated by the Member Panel on Director Elections.

AnneMarie Sundean, Secretary

## 2008 – Your 72nd annual meeting

**Saturday, Aug. 2**  
**Crawford County Fairgrounds**

10 a.m. to 1 p.m. — Registration

11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. — Picnic lunch

Kentucky Fried Chicken picnic meal. Each registered membership will receive two free meals; additional meals cost \$5 each. Children's meals (age 10 and under) cost \$3 each.

1 to 3 p.m.

Business meeting

**Door Prizes — You must be present to win.**

Each attending membership will receive a complimentary, re-useable tote bag.

Door prizes will be awarded throughout the day.

Two \$200 electric bill credits will be awarded at the end of the business meeting.

**Reservations are required**  
**Please call 800/472-7910**  
**Monday-Friday 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

**Reservations must be received by July 18**

**\* Special Features \***

Frank Betley, Allegheny/PREA President & CEO

Used book sale

Bingo for all ages

Children's carnival

Crafters and special exhibitors

***Please note: Wheelchairs will no longer be available. Please bring your own if necessary.***



## Your best friend might not like strangers

**UTILITY WORKERS** need access to your meter and the electric line. Please control your dog(s) so the employees can do their jobs safely. Please don't chain your animal in a way that prevents easy access to the meter. It is often safest to put your dog inside if utility workers need to work on a line that crosses your area. Please help us to work safely. Your cooperation is appreciated.

### What are Pennsylvania's dog laws?

- ▶ All dogs 3 months of age or older must be licensed. Licenses are issued by county treasurers.
- ▶ All dogs must be under control and must not be allowed to run at large. Dogs are personal property, and owners are responsible for damages caused by their dog.
- ▶ It is illegal to mistreat or abuse any animal. Violations should be reported to a local humane organization or the police.



**LOOKING FRIENDLY:** But looks can be deceiving.

- ▶ It is illegal to abandon or attempt to abandon any dog.
- ▶ No dog under 7 weeks of age may be sold, traded, bartered or transferred.
- ▶ You may not place any poison or harmful substance in any place where dogs may easily eat it, whether it is your own property or elsewhere.
- ▶ You must have a current kennel license if you operate a facility

that keeps, harbors, boards, shelters, sells, gives away or transfers a total of 26 or more dogs in any one calendar year.

- ▶ Owners of dogs and cats 3 months of age or older are required to have a current rabies vaccination. It is illegal to interfere with an officer or employee of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture engaged in enforcement of dog laws. 🐾

## Make Sure You Get Your Tax Rebate

Starting in May, the IRS began distributing economic stimulus payments. The payments range from \$300 to \$600 for individuals and \$600 to \$1,200 for married couples, with an additional \$300 for each qualified child under the age of 17.

In order to get a payment, a 2007 federal tax return must be filed and you must meet certain requirements. If you filed your tax return by April 15, you've probably done what you need to get your payment. But, if you haven't filed yet, you can still get your payment by filing a tax return by Oct. 15, 2008.

Even if you normally don't have to file a federal tax return, if you received at least \$3,000 in Social Security, railroad retirement, veteran's pensions or earned income, you may qualify for the stimulus payment. But you have to file a tax return by Oct. 15 to get your payment. You can file a simplified version of Form 1040A. You can even file electronically for free by going to the IRS website, [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov), and clicking on "free file."

More information is available at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or by calling 800/829-1040.