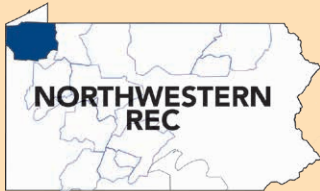


# Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



One of 14 electric cooperatives serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey

## NORTHWESTERN REC

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

Amy Wellington, *Editor*

## Energy Scams Unmasked



**RYAN MELLER**

**CONSUMERS WITH WATER, GAS AND ELECTRICITY** connections have long been targets for utility scams. But in today's digital world, every swipe and click increases the risk of potential scams.

Scammers are more sophisticated than ever before, and they understand our increasing reliance on technology. This month, I'd like to share updates on the latest utility scams, as well as tips to help you stay safe from even the craftiest scammers.

Scammers typically disguise themselves as utility employees or representatives to steal consumers' money or personal information. A common trick is to claim a consumer's bill is past due and threaten to disconnect service if payment isn't received immediately. Scammers approach consumers through a variety of means, including phone calls, text messages, emails and even in-person visits. However, the digital line of attack is becoming more common.

For example, new capabilities that disguise caller ID, a practice known as "spoofing," can make the phone number you see appear to be from a trusted source. Spoofing makes it easier for scammers to deceive you because it's more difficult to immediately verify the call.

Another recent scam involves phone calls, text messages or emails claiming you overpaid your electric bill and will receive a cash or banking refund. This offer may seem too good to be true, and it is — it's likely a scam aimed at stealing your personal information.


There are several red flags you can watch for to identify an energy scam.

Scammers often use high-pressure tactics to create a sense of urgency, like claiming your electricity or other services will be disconnected if a payment isn't made immediately. Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative gives plenty of advance notice and never makes such demands.

Additionally, scammers may ask for unusual payment methods, such as gift cards or cryptocurrency. If someone is pushing for an unusual payment method, it's likely a scam. We offer a variety of payment methods, which can be found on our website at [northwesternrec.com](http://northwesternrec.com).

Many digital scams, like emails or text messages, include poor grammar, spelling errors and odd email addresses. These are red flags, too, so when you see these dodgy forms of communication, consider it a potential scam.

Whether in-person, over the phone, or online, always be suspicious of an unknown individual claiming to be a cooperative employee and who's requesting banking or other personal information. We will only send you text messages if you have opted in for important alerts, like outage updates, from our SmartHub app.

If you're ever in doubt about a potential energy scam, call 800-352-0014 so we can assist. We encourage you to report any potential scams so we can spread the word and prevent others in our community from falling victim. 

Cooperatively yours,

**RYAN MELLER**  
PRESIDENT & CEO

## What Does Reliability Look Like This Summer?

**THIS SUMMER, KEEPING THE LIGHTS** on and the fans running is a primary focus for electric cooperatives like ours. However, burdensome and unnecessary energy policies limit our ability to generate and distribute energy.

In April, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a final rule on power plant emissions that will undermine electric reliability and poses grave consequences for the nation's already stressed electric grid. The EPA's proposal is the wrong plan for our nation's energy future. It will reduce available generation resources as we increase our reliance on electricity.

### The EPA's rule:

1. Is unrealistic, unachievable and will reduce key generating resources just as Americans are increasing their reliance on electricity.
2. Will jeopardize reliability and result in more black-outs, higher costs, and greater uncertainty for American families and businesses.
3. Will magnify today's reliability challenges with grave consequences for an already stressed electric grid.

What are co-ops doing? Electric cooperatives are leaders in testing and demonstrating new technologies focused on increasing grid reliability. Because of that leadership, co-ops understand the complex technical challenges of implementing new technologies.

What can you do to help increase grid reliability? Register to vote, research where candidates stand on issues affecting reliability and then vote accordingly. You can also join Voices for Cooperative Power, a national network of co-op advocates, and help support policies that bolster reliability nationwide. Learn more at [vote.coop](https://vote.coop).

Here's your sign:

**IT'S TIME TO HEAD TO THE POLLS.**

Visit [vote.coop](https://vote.coop) to learn more!



## Your 2024 Youth Tour Representatives

**HELD EACH JUNE**, the Rural Electric Youth Tour is a great opportunity for a select group of high school students to participate in real grassroots activities in Washington, D.C. The following students were chosen to represent Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC) and their communities on the 2024 Rural Electric Youth Tour:



- ▶ Haley Jardina, Cambridge Springs
- ▶ Madora Melnick, Cambridge Springs
- ▶ Maria Peterman, Cambridge Springs
- ▶ Julia O'Day, Crawford Christian Academy
- ▶ Alannah Kelly, Maplewood
- ▶ Landon Lentz, Maplewood
- ▶ Lindsey Greco, Saegertown
- ▶ Nolan Hughes, Saegertown
- ▶ Travis Huya, Saegertown
- ▶ Elliot McWright, Saegertown

These students will travel June 16 to Washington, D.C., where they will join an estimated 1,800 high school juniors from across the nation. During the weeklong trip, they will meet their legislators on Capitol Hill, visit monuments and memorials, observe the changing of the guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and so much more.

Every year, our Youth Tour students return home with great stories, new friendships and an appreciation for the cooperative way of life.

At Northwestern REC, we have combined the Youth Tour into our larger Youth Ambassador Program. The participants in this program meet every month or so to learn more about cooperatives, the electric industry and perform rewarding community service projects.

We are looking for a Youth Ambassador community service project for July. If you have a project you'd like our students to tackle next month, please contact us at [info@northwesternrec.com](mailto:info@northwesternrec.com).

We are extremely proud of these students and look forward to the great things they will achieve.

If you are interested in learning more about Youth Tour or the cooperative's Youth Ambassador Program, visit [youthtour.northwesternrec.com](http://youthtour.northwesternrec.com). We will begin recruiting for the 2025 Youth Tour in the fall. You can also contact Amy Wellington, director of communications and local Youth Tour coordinator, at 800-352-0014. 📞

## Meat Raffle a WIN-WIN for Member-to-Member, Local 4-H

**EMILY SONNTAG**, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

**SINCE 1985, MEMBER-TO-MEMBER INC. (M2M)** has been helping members pay their electric bills. This program, a hand-up, not a handout, helps those struggling to keep the lights on. There are various ways you can make an impactful donation that supports your fellow members of Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative (REC). All funds collected stay in our community.

Northwestern REC is owned by those we serve and operates under the seven cooperative principles. Each principle reflects core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service for the greater good of the community. "Concern for community" is one of those principles. We strive to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy while being a catalyst for good. Those who need help should not be ashamed. The only reason we have stayed in business this long is because of our members. If there is anything we can do to help those in our cooperative family, we will do it.

To raise additional funds for M2M, the cooperative will be hosting its first meat raffle, with all proceeds benefiting the program. Tickets are \$5 each or three for \$10. The grand prize is a large freezer with half a cow and half a pig. The second and third prizes are a small freezer with a quarter of a cow and a quarter of a pig. The cooperative will support local youth by purchasing the meat during the 4-H auction at the 2024 Crawford County Fair. Northwestern REC knows our children are tomorrow's leaders, and that is one of the many reasons why we chose this fundraiser. All freezers and meat will be delivered within a 60-mile radius of the cooperative, courtesy of Northwestern REC.

Meat raffle tickets can be purchased at our headquarters in Cambridge Springs during the 88th Annual Meeting on Aug. 3 at New Beginnings Church of God or at our fair booth during the Crawford County Fair. The drawing will be held Friday, Aug. 23, at the fairgrounds. Tickets will be sold up until the date of the drawing. For more information, call 800-352-0014. 📞



# Grow Your Summer Energy Savings: Northwestern REC Can Help You Save Money

**RIAN DOUBET**, ENERGY SOLUTIONS REPRESENTATIVE

**ONE OF MY FAVORITE THINGS** about summer is the opportunity for fresh, homegrown food, whether it's shopping at the local farmers market or sharing the abundance of garden tomatoes with a neighbor. It's amazing how just a few seeds, some fertilizer and water can turn into a bounty.

The same is true for energy efficiency. With just a few simple actions, you can use less electricity and reap the rewards of energy savings.

You don't need to be a farmer or botanist to know plants need water — just like you don't have to be a lineworker or engineer to know adjusting the thermostat or turning off lights can reduce your monthly electric bill. In fact, if you read Northwestern Rural Electric Cooperative's (REC) publications regularly and follow us on Facebook, you know there are a lot of things you can do at home to save energy and money.

Summer months bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. Cooling your home accounts for a large portion of your monthly energy use, and the hotter it gets, the harder (and longer) your air conditioner works to keep you cool.

There are several ways you can manage energy use at home. Below are a few tips that can help grow your summer energy savings.

I'd also like to share a few ways we're here to help you

save not only during the dog days of summer but also throughout the year.

One of the great things about being part of Northwestern REC is we're locally owned by you, our members. So instead of making profits, we can focus on helping our community. That's why we've developed incentives and programs to help you keep your money in your wallet.

Save money with these easy incentives:

- ▶ **Rebate** — Northwestern REC offers an Electric Appliance Rebate for efficient equipment you purchase, like heat pumps and refrigerators. Our rebate can be claimed by simply filling out a form. Find the form and a list of all accepted appliances at [northwesternrec.com/electric-appliance-rebate-program](http://northwesternrec.com/electric-appliance-rebate-program).
- ▶ **Energy Audits** — As a certified energy adviser, I can determine the overall efficiency of your home and help you find ways to improve it. If you want to do it yourself, we can help with that, too. More details can be found at [northwesternrec.com/home-energy-audits](http://northwesternrec.com/home-energy-audits).
- ▶ **Take Control of Your Use** — Use SmartHub to track your energy use. You can even get alerts when your use spikes and make changes in real time.
- ▶ **Summer High-Five Peak Alerts** — You can sign up via SmartHub to receive an email, text message or push notification when electric demand is predicted

to be high (more expensive) so you can shift your electric usage to off-peak (less expensive) times.

- ▶ **Ways to Pay** — If you're having a difficult time paying the higher bills that come with increased energy use in the summer, contact us to learn about our budget or leveled billing or prepaid electric program.

Most people don't know everything about electricity, and that's why we're here to help you. There are no investors making profits here — just knowledgeable people with local jobs, working for our neighbors to ensure electricity is available when you need it. Call 800-352-0014 so we can work with you to find more ways to save energy — and money. 🌱

## 5 WAYS TO SAVE THIS SUMMER

When summer temperatures rise, so do our energy bills. Here are a few ways you can reduce energy use and grow your summer savings.

### 1. Raise your thermostat.

The smaller the difference between the indoor and outdoor temp, the more you'll save.

### 2. Install window coverings

like blinds or light-blocking curtains to prevent indoor heat gain during the day.

### 3. Seal leaks with caulk and weatherstripping

around windows and exterior doors. Air leaks force your air conditioner to work harder and run longer than necessary.

### 4. Run ceiling fans

for additional cooling but turn them off when you leave the room.

### 5. Lower your water heater thermostat

to 120 degrees to reduce standby heat loss.



Source: Dept. of Energy