

NOVEMBER 2021

POWERLINES

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION FOR THE MEMBERS OF WHITEWATER VALLEY REMC

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 2

Always Striving to Improve

PAGE 3

Employee News

ORU Fall Campaign

PAGE 4

Residential Rebate Program

Bill Credit Winners

Outage Texting Update

Office Closings

Our office will be closed in November for the following holidays: Thursday, Nov. 11 for Veteran's Day and Thursday and Friday, Nov. 25 and 26 for Thanksgiving.

November Due Dates

The due dates for payment of electric bills are **November 19 and 26**.

    
wwwremc.com

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Strategic Initiatives Update



MARY JO THOMAS,
CEO

Last November, I wrote about the board of directors and staff working together to develop some strategic initiatives used to set the direction of the cooperative and ensure that the cooperative works toward the fulfillment of its purpose and mission. The hidden account number is 391306. These initiatives are then developed into short-term and long-term goals. The board of directors and staff hold these planning sessions every two or three years.

MISSION STATEMENT To provide the power to our member-owners to enhance their quality of life.

VISION STATEMENT To be operationally efficient with excellent customer service and generate sound financial performance to benefit our members.

Staff created action plans for the strategic initiatives, and I promised to keep you updated on our progress.

- Continue promoting a Culture of Safety to be a leader in employee and public safety.
- WWVREMC participates in the Commitment to Zero safety program and safety culture subcommittee work continues to keep safety in the forefront of all employees. COVID has hampered some of our plans for public safety programs, but we hope to get these projects back on track as soon as possible.
- Develop a detailed facilities plan to address current needs for safety, security, space, and storage.
- The tax sale land purchase next to our existing office was completed this summer. This area will provide additional parking and storage for the cooperative now and will increase the value of the property. The land purchase on 101 south of Liberty was also finalized. This property was purchased for the purpose of building a new facility sometime in the future. Work so far includes environmental testing, remediation, and plans for demolition. A facilities committee comprised of board members and employees is overseeing this project.
- Develop a strategic approach to vegetation management to meet the cooperatives short and long-term goals.
- Vegetation management is one of our largest budget items each year. Good planning and management in this area is critical to the health of our distribution system and service to our members. Conversations and planning have begun and will continue into next year to ensure this initiative is completed to our satisfaction.
- Develop technology initiatives that address staffing, utilization, communication, and training.
- This initiative focuses on utilizing our current technology more effectively by enhancing the knowledge of co-op employees with quarterly training and cross-training. By investing in continuous learning for our employees, WWVREMC is making a commitment not just to individual professional and personal growth, but to the future of the co-op and the high

continued on page 2

quality of service our members expect and deserve.

- Develop a detailed succession plan that addresses short-term, long-term, and role-appropriate strategies.
 - Succession planning had begun given the number of employees who could retire in the next five years. Some of those plans became reality as two staff members retired in the summer and their positions were filled with current employees. Planning will continue in preparation for future retirements.
- Assess and implement strategies to encourage electric vehicle adoption including employee and member education, rate structures, and public charging.
 - The co-op rolled out the Residential EV Charger program with all our allotment in the initial phase taken by members and installed at their homes. We installed a Level 2 charger at the WWVREMC employee parking lot and the co-op plans to install at least one commercial charger within our service territory.
- Develop fair and uniform policies for encouraging and accommodating broadband vendors to serve WWV members.
 - We continue to take part in conversations as they come up to assess any potential assistance or partnerships that look to be feasible.

While it may seem like not a lot of progress has been made for some of these initiatives, keep in mind that most are long-term directives. Planning, implementing, and results from long-term strategic initiatives can range from two to over five years, depending on the project. These initiatives are developed to make sure your cooperative is keeping up with technology, current industry trends, and the needs of the membership. In the meantime, WWVREMC employees continue to be busy with our regular scope of work – that is providing members with dependable, affordable, and safe electric.

ALWAYS STRIVING TO IMPROVE

Providing reliable electricity is a challenge for any electric utility. Large chunks of annual budgets are spent for system improvements and reliability. But Mother Nature is a tough opponent — and it is impossible to eliminate outages and blinks altogether, despite everyone's best efforts. WWVREMC's primary goal is to safely deliver the highest possible quality electric service at the lowest possible price. Perhaps the key measure of quality in members' eyes are the number of times their lights blink or go out. Or maybe it is in the way WWVREMC communicates during power outages. While the cooperative has a right of way clearing and spraying program in place, we've also added budget dollars over the last few years to specifically address the dead ash tree issues in our service territory. We have made progress from these added measures, but it only takes one big storm to show us just how much more work is needed to meet our member's expectations.

One of those expectations is additional and improved ways WWVREMC communicates during power outages — offering outage notifications specific to each individual member's outage situation. Some of these requests are reflected in our customer satisfaction surveys. Others have come from members during or after an outage. After receiving this feedback, we went to work on solutions to this issue. It didn't take us long to realize that we have the tools available now – but are falling short when it comes to promoting the services to our members and making sure they take advantage of our outage reporting and notification services.

WWVREMC members can sign up to receive outage notifications right on their phone. Whether the problem is a line that only affects your location, or a wider outage that impacts your whole

neighborhood, you can rest assured knowing that wherever you are and whatever you are doing WWVREMC will keep you informed. Outage text and email notifications allow WWVREMC to directly contact you when power is out, to provide an estimated time of restoration, and to notify you when power has been restored. An estimated time of restoration (ETR) is the amount of time WWVREMC anticipates it will take to restore your power after an outage. This means your actual time of restoration could be more or less than this initial number, depending on the cause of your outage. When an outage is first reported, you can expect a system generated ETR based on historical outage data. As more information becomes available, WWVREMC may update the ETR. Additionally, in the event of a large-scale power outage, notifications may vary and ETRs may not be available.

In addition to the individual outage notifications, WWVREMC will continue to communicate outage information through our social media resources and through our outage map. The outage map is another great tool available through our website's outage center. This map is a graphical representation of outages displayed on a map of WWVREMC's service territory. It will show you where the outage is occurring, the number of members without power, and expected times for restoration. WWVREMC's outage map refreshes every 15 minutes and is a great resource for monitoring outage statuses in general.

Members interested in receiving outage notifications must have a SmartHub account and sign up to receive them. Once signed up, you can receive an email and/or text to notify you of outages affecting your location and when power has been restored. Outage notifications include alerts for a reported outage

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continued from page 2

affecting your account, updates for those outages, and a notice that your power has been restored. To learn how to sign up for outage alerts, please visit our website.

As a bonus, all members who sign up for outage notifications by December 31 will be entered into a drawing for an Outage Preparedness Kit valued at \$60! WWVREMC will give away 25 total kits.



Outage Preparedness Kit

As with anything new, we are always looking for feedback. If you have any suggestions, please feel free to submit those through the chat service the WWVREMC website or by calling us at 800-529-5557. We appreciate your patience and cooperation as we improve our outage notification efforts to all WWVREMC members.

Knowledge is power, and when it comes to outages, knowledge is also comforting. We hope you will take advantage of WWVREMC's method of outage communication and enjoy all the benefits it has to offer. Just keep in mind, ETRs are just that — an estimated time of restoration.

EMPLOYEE NEWS

Ryan Chappell and **Abrem Losekamp** both joined the cooperative in August as apprentice linemen.

Ryan grew up in Tyner, Kentucky. Ryan is a graduate of Annville Christian Academy and the Summerset Lineman Training Center. He enjoys spending time with his wife, Hailey, and their one-year-old son Owen.

Abrem grew up in Cedar Grove, Indiana and is a graduate of Franklin County High School. In his spare time, he enjoys helping on the family farm and spending time with friends and family.

The directors and employees of WWVREMC want to welcome Abrem and Ryan to the cooperative.



Pictured LR: Abrem Losekamp and Ryan Chappell.

Operation Round Up® Fall Membership Campaign Begins This Month

Our annual Operation Round Up membership drive continues. Sign-up now through the end of December and be entered for a chance to win prizes. Winners will be selected from all entries on Facebook Live at the end of the campaign.

PARTICIPATION IS EASY Operation Round Up is a great way to help your community. If you are not a participant, simply sign-up, and WWVREMC will automatically 'round-up' your monthly electric bill to help organizations within the cooperative service territory. You may also elect to contribute a one-time donation of a specified amount or contribute a specified amount to the fund monthly.

Since the program began in 2003, donations have resulted in nearly \$575,000 being awarded to organizations throughout our communities, showing how much our members care about making a difference.

While Operation Round Up is a voluntary program, the more support received from our members; the more lives will be changed!

Complete the form below, checking the appropriate box and fill in the amount of your donation where applicable. Mail form to WWVREMC, P.O. Box 349, Liberty IN 47353.

Yes! Sign me up for Operation Round-Up®.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Account Number: _____

- ☐ New participant, round-up my monthly bill.
- ☐ In addition to my round up, I want to contribute \$ _____ each month to Operation Round Up®. (fill in the additional dollar amount to be added to monthly electric bill)
- ☐ I want to make a one-time contribution. My check is enclosed.



Each month we hide an account number in the Powerlines. Did you find it?

TERRY WEDDLE

Terry Weddle, Fountain City, found his hidden account number in the September 2021 newsletter and won a \$25 bill credit. Keep reading your Powerlines each month because the next hidden account number could be yours!

Payment Options

US Mail

Whitewater Valley REMC, P.O. Box 3199, Martinsville, IN 46151-3168

SmartHub

Log-on at www.vremc.com.

Pay-by-Phone

Call 844-827-4759. Set up your PIN. Follow prompts.

Liberty Office

In person or in the drop box.

Automatic Withdrawal

Simply request a form and submit it to our office.

FCN or Franklin County National Bank

In person or in the drop box. (Bring payment stub.)

VanillaDirect

Visit vanilladirect.com for payment locations and details.



For more information about payment options, please call us:

765-458-5171 or 1-800-529-5557

Helpful Information

Liberty Office Hours

7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday

CLOSED SATURDAYS, SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS.

To Report an Outage or Emergency

Call 1-800-776-0493, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Login to your SmartHub account and report your outage.

Be ready to provide the following information:

- The name and account number under which your electric service is listed.
- Map location number.
- Your phone number - needed to call back or confirm power restoration.
- The type of problem you are experiencing - flickering lights, complete power outage, etc.

Deadline for Incentive Program Approaches

The 2021 residential rebate program ends December 31, 2021. Rebates are available for equipment installed between January 1 - December 31, 2021. Members should submit their requests for rebates on equipment that qualifies under the WVVREMC 2021 Incentive Program no later than December 31, 2021, to be eligible for reimbursement.

2022 energy incentive programs will be outlined in future publications of the newsletter and on our website.

Visit www.vremc.com/residential-incentives for more information.

Bill Credit Winners

Our monthly drawing for five \$20 bill credits from all voting members of the 2021 annual meeting continues. Here are the winners.

NOVEMBER

Elayne H. Bleill, Liberty

Craig Hale, Liberty

James A. Lewis, Liberty

Tracey A. McDermitt-Frame, Williamsburg

Lester Rowland, Connersville



We wanted to let you know of a small change to our text messaging. WVVREMC billing, account and outage notifications now come from a new number. They will no longer come from 768482. Messages will now come from (855) 940-3859. We have made this change to help ensure we continue to communicate effectively with you through text.



101 Brownsville Avenue, P.O. Box 349, Liberty, IN 47353
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