



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# Member Newsletter

## January 2020



### Sierra Electric Cooperative, Inc.

“Owned by Those We Serve”

#### General Manager

Denise Barrera

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#### Office Hours

8:00 a.m.—5:00 p.m.

### Board of Trustees

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Thomas Stroup, District 2

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The Board of Trustees meets the third Friday of the month at 8:30 a.m. in the

Cooperative boardroom

### Making Washington Work for You

Electric cooperatives are deeply connected to the communities they serve and are focused on meeting consumers' energy needs today and into the future. Providing our consumer-members with safe, reliable and affordable power will always be our highest priority, but this requires much more than simply maintaining overhead power lines and other infrastructure.

It requires us to focus on what our elected leaders are doing in Washington to ensure they are acting in your best interest. Here are some of the things we're keeping an eye on in the nation's capital.

#### RURAL Act

Congress created a problem for electric co-ops when it made changes to the tax code in 2017 that inadvertently put co-ops' tax-exempt status at risk if they receive government grants. This could stick co-op members with the cost of paying taxes unless

Congress fixes the problem. Fortunately, the House passed bipartisan legislation known as the RURAL Act that makes it clear that electric co-ops won't lose their tax-exempt status just because they receive government grants.

#### Wind Energy

Recently, the U.S. Department of Energy selected the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)—our national trade association—to research small-scale, community-based wind energy solutions that can be deployed by electric co-ops. This research, to be conducted in partnership with Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, is critical to helping co-ops meet their members' desire for affordable renewable energy solutions.

#### Carbon Capture

In response to public policy discussions in Washington about ways to reduce emissions, electric co-ops are participating in cutting-

edge research to capture and use carbon emissions to make commercial products. This work is under way at the Integrated Test Center, just outside of Gillette, Wyo., where researchers will strive to advance technologies and expand understanding of what's possible in this new arena.

#### Rural Broadband

Many electric co-ops are working to help close the digital divide by bringing broadband to unserved and underserved areas. NRECA called on Congress to make more funds available for rural broadband deployment. Congress answered the call and funded ReConnect, a pilot program that supports efforts to make broadband possible in rural communities. The first grants were announced late last year, with several co-ops and their communities the beneficiaries.

These are just a few of the ways that electric co-ops are working in Washington to meet the needs of the communities we serve. Because, our commitment to you extends far beyond the edge of our service territory.

## Member Benefits & Services

Annual Meeting

Budget Payment Plan

Capital Credits

Energy Audits

Operation Round Up

Outage Listings

Energy Rebates

SmartHub

Auto Pay

Scheduled Payments

Pay Now

Paperless Billing

Payment Extension

Youth Tour

Scholarships

Surge Protection

As a member of the Cooperative, there are many benefits and services available to you. Please contact our office or visit our website at [www.sierraelectric.org](http://www.sierraelectric.org) for more information on any of these programs.

### Charitable Donations Made to Zia and Arrey PTOs

Contributions totaling \$1,530 were made to the Zia PTO and Arrey PTO on behalf of Sierra Electric Cooperative, Inc., a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative, for the attendance of the Touchstone Energy Hot Air Balloon at the 2019 Elephant Butte Balloon Regatta.

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives introduced the Touchstone Energy Hot Air Balloon in March 2000 as a *goodwill ambassador* for Touchstone Energy Cooperatives across the country. The Touchstone Energy Balloon is designed to provide a highly visible means of demonstrating good corporate citizenship at local civic and philanthropic events.

Sierra Electric Co-op is proud to be able to support community organizations like the Zia and Arrey PTOs that benefit our local youth.

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Let the sunshine in! For additional warmth, open drapes over windows that receive sunlight during the day. Close them at night, which can reduce heat loss from a warm room up to 10%.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



Rebecca Baquera, Arrey PTO President, accepts check from Jenny Stuckmeyer of Sierra Electric

### Education Foundation Scholarship Applications Available

The Sierra Electric Cooperative Education Foundation was created on December 12, 1986 and adopted by the membership at the 1986 Annual Meeting of the Members as a charitable trust for the Sierra Electric Cooperative limited to educational charitable purposes. The Foundation awards scholarships to active members, their dependents, active employee dependents and persons residing in Sierra Electric Cooperative service territory who are attending an accredited college or technical school full time in the state of New Mexico.

The Foundation is funded by unclaimed patronage capital credits and private donations, like those from the Operation Round Up program that active members voluntarily sign up for. The first scholarship was awarded in 1990 for \$250. Since then, Sierra Electric Cooperative Education Foundation has awarded tens of thousands of dollars in college scholarships to support local students in achieving their higher education goals.

Applications are only accepted once a year. For the school year 2020—2021, applications may be submitted until the deadline of April 10, 2020. Please pick up an application at our office or call us to have one electronically delivered.