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OFFICE HOURS

8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Monday-Friday

STREET ADDRESS

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P.O. Box 137, Albion, IN 46701

EMERGENCY POWER OUTAGES

To report a power outage, please call 800-933-7362. We are available to serve you 24 hours a day.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Doug Burnworth, *Vice Chairman*
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George Bennett
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Kevin Dreibelbis,
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Volunteer AND MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT



With the holiday season upon us and the new year just around the corner, I can't help but reflect on the gratitude I feel for our community. I think most will agree this has

been a year like no other — certainly in my lifetime. And while we've seen our share of challenges, I am heartened by the ways in which we have all pulled together to make our community stronger.

Like many of you, volunteerism and giving back are a part of who we are as a co-op.

Many of our co-op employees coach youth sports, teach Junior Achievement courses, serve on local boards or give their time to area nonprofits helping the community.

The co-op also happily volunteers when our specific set of skills are requested by community organizations, such as clearing downed trees and brush after a storm or using our bucket trucks to help local groups hang holiday decorations.

Noble REMC offers employees flexibility in their schedules to accommodate these volunteer opportunities. We look at co-op volunteerism as an investment in our community by enabling our employees to donate their time and expertise to help groups that are doing so much for our community.

I look at volunteerism as the gift that keeps on giving. While it's

difficult to quantify the impact that volunteers have, I do know they make a tremendous difference in our community and make our corner of the world a better place. Many organizations depend on volunteers to fulfill their mission. Volunteers fill in gaps and spread joy and compassion through their efforts. Even assisting with the smallest tasks can make a big impact in the lives of people, animals or an organization in need. Often a big commitment or special skills are not needed, just someone who cares.

I hope you'll consider volunteering. Give an organization or cause that you care about the gift of your compassion, time and talent. In addition to the organization and the community benefiting from your efforts, you will receive a gift as well. Not only will you enjoy the satisfaction of knowing you are helping a good cause, you will likely make new friends, expand your social network, strengthen existing skills or learn a new one.

Volunteering may provide additional dimension and purpose to your life, and show first-hand how one person can make a big difference and strengthen the community in which they live.

At the end of the day, the gift of volunteerism is a gift that will continue giving all year long. So, this holiday season, consider starting a new tradition — give the gift of time.

RON RAYPOLE
President/CEO

YOUR CHECK IS IN THE MAIL

A little extra cash in your pocket is never a bad thing, especially around the holiday season.

As Noble REMC does each year to give back to the people who built us – you! – we're once again returning our excess revenue to you, the members we serve.

This cash back is given over time, with disbursements benefiting members from as far back as 25 years ago to as recent as last year. The years and amounts are decided by the board of directors – members elected by you – each year.

This year, those receiving cash

back include members from the years **1990, 1991, 2002, 2003 and 2019**. With the retirement of funds totaling \$1,431,499, the amount each member receives is based on how much power the member used in those years.

So, how will you receive your cash back?

- Current members will receive a check for the amount allocated to them.
- But as many of you know, processing printed checks can become costly. For this reason, members will only receive a

check if the amount is \$10 or more.

- If you don't reach that \$10 threshold, don't worry. Your patronage capital will accumulate over time and be returned when the balance reaches at least \$10.

While a nice bonus in your pocket, what's more important is that this cash back shows Noble REMC's strength and financial stability, as well as serves as a reminder that you hold us accountable.

We don't answer to shareholders; we serve you, our members.

A time of *giving*

The holidays always bring with them a feeling of gratitude and warmth, whether it's for the small things, like your favorite pumpkin pie, or the big things, such as your family or the roof over your head.

For Noble REMC, we get to experience that every quarter when we witness our members' generosity in helping to fund much needed services in our community.

The more than 80% of you who participate in our Operation Round Up program should feel an extra pinch of sugar and spice and everything nice this holiday season. For choosing to round up your electric bills each month, the co-op is able to give back locally through community grants each quarter.

You may think it's just a bit of extra change, but to the nonprofit organizations who receive these grants, it's so much more.

With this most recent disbursement,

Noble REMC in 2020 has awarded 34 local nonprofit organizations with a total of more than \$48,000.

That includes the most recent distribution of the Operation Round Up Trust Fund, which totaled more than \$15,000 and helped:

- **Central Noble Food Pantry**, \$2,000, new facility building renovations
- **McMillen Health**, \$1,000, local preventative health education programs
- **Liberty Freewill Baptist Church Food Pantry**, \$1,500, food donations
- **Humane Society of Noble County**, \$1,620, computers for technology programs
- **Sparta Township Fire Department**, \$1,700, automated external defibrillator

- **DeKalb Chamber Partnership**, \$2,500, collaborative shared workspace
- **Community Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Indiana, Inc.**, \$1,500, Farm Wagon mobile pantry program
- **The Crew Youth Center**, \$2,000, youth program
- **Central Noble Elementary School Fifth Grade**, \$2,000, outdoor education

That's all thanks to you, our members, and your generosity, which is especially poignant in a year when so many needed so much.

For local nonprofit organizations who are seeking funding for a project, please fill out and return an application to Noble REMC by Monday, Jan. 4, to be considered for the next round of Operation Round Up disbursements. Applications can be downloaded from the REMC website, nobleremc.com.

Hindsight is 2020

It's been a roller coaster of a year. What started out as a normal winter season soon spiraled with the spread of a novel virus, affecting everything from the closing of our lobby to our annual meeting to our members and the community's well-being.

But from these obstacles came an opportunity for the community to come together and help their neighbors and friends.

Looking back, here's how Noble REMC spent our 2020:

DEALING WITH COVID-19

COVID-19 first popped up on most people's radars in January or February, but hit home in March when the state put in place stay-at-home orders. The co-op went into action to keep our members and our employees safe by closing our office to the public and implementing proper precautions — masks, hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies — for our employees.

We also worked with our members to put payment arrangements in place for those adversely affected by the virus, and our annual meeting went virtual and our directors' election was conducted by mail for the first time in our history.

BROADBAND, BABY

Noble REMC took the first step in trying to help our community with its biggest obstacle — inadequate internet options.

High-speed broadband internet became a hot topic with COVID-19 forcing people to work from home, children to attend e-learning and others to attend doctor's appointments by video conference.

Just like we did nearly 85 years ago with electricity, we looked into how we could assist in providing this vital service to our members. To do this, we conducted a member feedback survey to see what's currently provided and what you'd like to see in the future. Thank you to the 2,200 members who participated!

GETTING CHARGED UP

Noble REMC is constantly researching technology advancements and new opportunities for our members, to stay ahead of the curve. That's why we jumped at the chance to work with Country Heritage Winery to install a new ChargePoint electric vehicle charger in its parking lot to help be the bridge between Fort Wayne and northeast Indiana for EV owners.

This charger is just a first step in our commitment to our members with electric vehicles and the promotion of information for those who have been on the fence about the switch.

GIVING BACK

Giving back to the community was more

important than ever this year, especially with all that's happened. The REMC didn't slow down in its usual programs and efforts, giving more than \$48,000 in Operation Round Up grants and \$4,500 in EnviroWatts funding throughout the year.

We were also fortunate to have anonymous employee donations to help our members with paying their electric bills during the pandemic, whether they were affected by unemployment, medical treatment costs or other unforeseen adversities.

COMMITMENT TO ZERO CONTACTS

Our safety program through our national organization, NRECA, continues to expand beyond the jobsite.

Commitment to Zero Contacts is our pledge to keep safety as the standard. While we started by ensuring the safety of our linemen and operations crew while out on our lines, we've now brought it inside our office to ensure your data is secure, to communicate with you as outages occur and to listen to our members and report any issues as soon as we're made aware.

We'll continue to investigate new ways to promote safety and sustain our high standards, just as it says in our mission statement: "Noble REMC: Where safety is the standard and members are the priority."



Right-of-Way Foreman Ray Burns, left, talks with tree trimmer and groundman Kyler Likes about the best way to trim a tree before he heads up in the bucket during a recent tree top training.



Noble REMC Marketing Coordinator Nic Engle, right, keeps an eye on our live feed of CEO Ron Raypole's (at podium in background) speech from our virtual annual meeting in June.

Ductless mini-splits? TELL ME MORE.

Maybe you were in the process of buying a home, watching the latest episode of your favorite house hunting reality show or just making small talk at the office when you heard the term “ductless mini-split.” Outside of the electric industry, many don’t know what it is or what it does, but Noble REMC is here to give you the basics so you can make informed decisions in the future.

Let’s first break down the name, ductless mini-split heat pump:

- **Heat pump:** In general, a heat pump extracts heat from one place and transfers it to another (similar to how an air conditioner or refrigerator cools). In warmer months, a heat pump takes heat from inside a home and relocates it outdoors, helping to make your home cooler. In the cooler months,

a heat pump produces heat energy from the outside and moves it inside, which helps to warm your home.

- **Mini-split:** As a heat pump system, it features both an indoor air handler and an outdoor compressor.
- **Ductless:** It’s exactly what it sounds like. The system works without any ductwork.

A ductless mini-split system is compact and independent of any ductwork system, so it offers more versatility than other systems. They’re a great option for supplemental heating and cooling, especially in room additions, finished basements



or attics, converted garages and enclosed porches.

What are the advantages to choosing mini-splits? They’re quieter, simpler to install, more energy efficient and provide individual control for each room.

For more information and to see how you may be able to receive cash back by choosing a mini-split, contact the Noble REMC office at 800-933-7362.

Interested in 4-H? Let us cover the cost

The first 200 youth who enroll in area county 4-H programs for 2021, and whose families are Noble REMC members, will have their 4-H program fee reimbursed by us.

When you enroll your child and pay the \$15 program fee, contact

the Purdue Extension office to ask for a credit voucher, which you can then mail to the REMC to receive a \$15 bill credit.

You get to enjoy the benefits of a wonderful organization, and we get to help our community. It’s as simple as that.

