



ORU grants
\$8,046 to local
organizations



Don't forget
to RSVP for
Annual Meeting



Help us become
the best-rated
co-op in the state!

Members First!
HANCOCK-WOOD
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

HANCOCK-WOOD ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

MEMBER CONNECTIONS



1399 Business Park Drive South, P. O. Box 190, North Baltimore, OH 45872 • www.hwe.coop • info@hwe.coop • 800-445-4840

MEMBER VOICE PRECIPITATES CHANGE



A powerful value for
77 years.

George Walton,
Hancock-Wood
Electric Cooperative
President and CEO

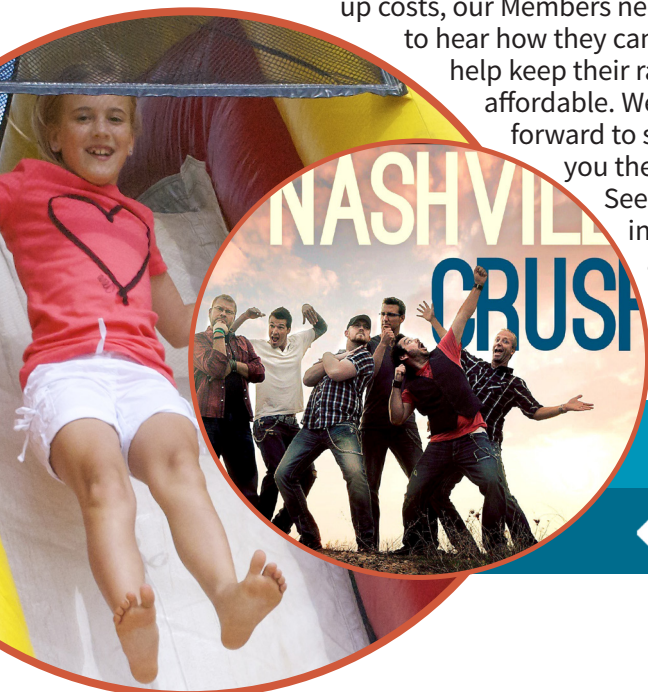
Because *Members First!* is the Hancock-Wood motto and focus, Members have seen changes lately in Co-op distribution upgrades,

communications and event scheduling. That is because we are listening to your feedback through surveys, online input and contact with Member Services. We then modify our strategic planning according to your input. Your voice counts.

One of the major changes you see is our Annual Meeting switching dates from fall to spring. Members filled out our survey afterward, and we discovered, for most, fall was a difficult time and that Saturday mornings or afternoons were easier. The Saturday, June 13, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. timeframe was intended to better meet Member needs.

At a time when electric co-ops need to defend against over-regulation and competition that drives up costs, our Members need to hear how they can help keep their rates affordable. We look forward to seeing you there.

See more info at right.



ANNUAL MEETING TO OFFER BIGGER PRIZES



Mark your calendars and check the cover wrap on this issue of *Country Living* to make your reservation for our June 13 Annual Business Meeting/Member

Appreciation Day. Call or write, but make sure you come or you will miss a great event catered by Harlan's BBQ, grand prizes such as a large-screen TV, a freezer full of meat and a Family Fun Destination Package – worth more than \$500 each – and giveaways for all.



We have moved the location to Hancock County Fairgrounds and booked Nashville Crush to perform, along with local singing sensation Gabbi Calvert. An award-winning country/rock music band, Nashville Crush has released its first national single, "Make it Bounce," which is being broadcast on radio stations. The band is best known locally for "This is Love" and "Country Girls."

There will be family-favorite activities, such as bungee jumps, pony rides, games, attractions, bingo and giveaways for each Member.

The board of trustees and management will briefly discuss cooperative business and the annual report, and election results will be announced.

Four district seats are up for election this year in districts 1, 4, 5 and 10; visit hwe.coop/about-hwec/trustees-elections or page 25 of this issue for more information on these elections.

Family Fun Day joins the Annual Meeting to meld business with pleasure for our Member families. Look for pony rides, attractions, inflatables, bingo and more!



Nashville Crush lead singer Brad Wright, center, made national news as the Grand Ole Opry's youngest singer. See the band at the Annual Meeting.



ORU AWARDS \$8,046 IN LOCAL GRANTS



On Feb. 16, the Board of Trustees for the Hancock-Wood Electric Community Trust Fund awarded \$8,046.15 in first-quarter grants to a family in need and three nonprofit organizations. Trust Fund Board Chairman Daniel Branson presented checks to grant recipients in a ceremony at the cooperative's corporate headquarters.

Dollar amounts and grant recipients were: \$1,951.68 to a local family suffering a calamity; \$900 to Findlay Enrichment Program for Zoo Outreach; \$2,694.47 to Liberty Benton Elementary for Leveled Literacy Intervention, and \$2,500 to Habitat for Humanity Wood County for a North Baltimore house-building project, scheduled to begin this year.

The next round of grant applications are due Monday, April 7. More information on applying for a grant can be found online at hwe.coop/community-involvement.



The Community Trust Fund's February 2015 donation presentation.

THANK A LINEMAN NATIONALLY FEATURED



We invited northwest Ohio to thank a lineman via e-mail at ThankaLineman@hwe.coop, with great response. There will be an appreciation ceremony April 13 at the co-op. The story was picked up by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association publication *ECT.coop* and can be seen at <http://www.ect.coop/newsmakers/co-op-news-newsmakers/thank-a-lineman-program-launched/78900>

OUR STEPS TO RESTORE YOUR POWER



Hancock-Wood prepares for power outages caused by severe weather and wants you to be prepared as well.

Always report an outage. Call **800-445-4840** and select option 1. The more calls we receive, the faster we can determine a cause and restore service.

Our first goal is to safely restore power to the greatest number of Members in the shortest possible time. Tens of thousands of people could be served by one high-voltage transmission line supplying power to a substation. Our distribution lines could be affected, and so that is seen to first.

Next is our distribution substations; each serves thousands of Members. A problem here could be caused by failure in the transmission system supplying the substation. If the problem cannot be isolated to the substation, the main distribution supply lines are checked. These supply lines carry electricity to groups of Members, who may reside in a town or a housing development.

Finally, we inspect distribution lines carrying power to utility poles or underground transformers near residences or buildings. Sometimes, the issue is on the power line between your house and the transformer. This can explain why you have no power when your neighbor does.

For more information, visit hwe.coop/safety/electric-safety-tips/during-outages/

HWEC REBUILD PROGRAM UPDATE



In April, as part of its \$2.75 million Rebuild Program, Hancock-Wood crews plan to continue single-phase rebuild projects in Wood County in Center Township, along Cloverdale and Cucklee Creek roads. Also planned are a single-phase rebuild project along State Route 613 in Van Buren Township and a three-phase rebuild project in Amanda Township, both in Hancock County.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chair Ed Crawford, Vice Chair Tom Kagy, Secretary/Treasurer Tom Dierksheide, Assistant Secretary/Treasurer Marlene Barker, and trustees David Corbin, James Demler, John Edie, Steve Gerten, William Kale and Knut Lahrs.

HOVEST TAKES TOP HONORS IN OLSA



On March 3, Breana Hovest of Ottawa took top honors in the 2015 Ohio Line Supervisors Association Scholarship competition and was awarded a \$1,500 scholarship in the annual judging conducted at Ohio Rural Electric Cooperatives in Columbus.

A panel of judges interviews the finalists before deciding on the winners. Breana is a senior at Pandora-Gilboa High School and is the daughter of Chris Hovest and Jerry Hovest. Her mother is a financial and administrative supervisor at Hancock-Wood Electric Cooperative.

PELTON EARNS TOP SCHOLAR HONORS



On March 3, Jacob Pelton of North Baltimore and three other children of Ohio electric cooperative employees took top honors in Ohio Rural Electric Cooperatives' Louise Freeland Scholarship Awards. Jacob received \$2,700 toward his higher

education. A panel of independent judges decides the finalists. Jacob is a North Baltimore High School senior and the son of Jim and Mary Casey, a lineman and an accounting assistant, respectively, both employed at Hancock-Wood, and Kirk Pelton.

WIN \$300 OFF YOUR BILL!

Visit Hancock-Wood's website to sign up for e-mail alerts, news and online bill pay to enter to win a quarterly drawing for \$300 off your next electric bill. Click on Members Connect to complete the form.

CONGRATULATIONS TO APRIL'S WINNER:

Barbara Schnittker of Kelleys Island!

www.HWE.coop

2015 VOTING SCHEDULE

An earlier-in-the-year Annual Business Meeting means an earlier-in-the-year voting schedule for trustees. The new schedule for 2015 follows:

Apr. 14 Return deadline for Nomination Ballots

May 12 Director Election Ballots mailed

May 26 Return Deadline for Election Ballots

June 13 Annual Meeting results announced

Visit hwe.coop/about-hwec/trustees-elections

HELP US TO BECOME THE BEST IN THE STATE



We are working with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) on our annual Member satisfaction phone/e-mail survey. Your opinions about Hancock-Wood help us to better serve you because we develop or discontinue programs and/or events based on that feedback. Our goal is 100 percent satisfaction. Last year, we received an above-average score of 83 on a zero-to-100 scale, placing us seven points above the national average for investor-owned utilities and six points above the national average for municipal energy utilities. Be assured, all information is confidential. Please contact us at 800-445-4840 if you have any questions.

we want to hear from you!

Your thoughts and opinions about the cooperative help us to serve you better.



Hancock-Wood is working with NRECA Market Research Services to complete our annual Member Satisfaction Survey by phone and e-mail. We strive to provide safe, affordable and reliable electric service. If you are contacted, please share your opinions of how we do this for you. By participating in the survey, you will help us make decisions that benefit you as a Member. Thank you for making us better!

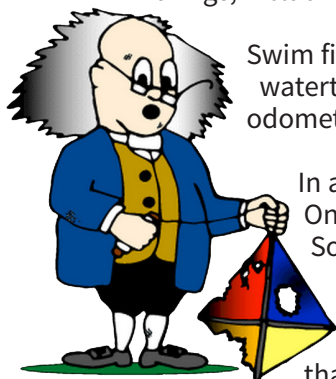


WHO IS THE GUY IN THE GLASSES WITH THE KITE?



Can you guess who this inventor is?

At the age of 42, I retired from printing to explore my other interests. I devoted this time to inventing. During my life, I invented many things, including:



Swim fins, bifocals, a glass armonica (like a harmonica), watertight bulkhead for ships, the lightning rod, an odometer and the wood stove (the Franklin stove – *hint*).

In addition to inventing, I enjoyed experimenting. One thing that always fascinated me was electricity. So one stormy night, my son William and I were experimenting with lightning.

You see, during my time, people thought that lightning was a mysterious force that was a punishment from God; however, I wanted to prove that lightning is a natural form of electricity.

I attached a pointed metal piece on the top of my kite and a metal key to the base of the string. Lightning struck the kite and traveled down the kite string to the key. When I touched the key with my knuckle, there was a spark!

It's a good thing I didn't electrocute myself (although I was knocked unconscious twice before when experimenting with electricity, **so don't try this at home!**), but I did prove that lightning is electricity! Afterward, I invented the lightning rod to protect buildings and ships from lightning damage.

Know who the inventor is now? The answer is upside down here:

Did you guess Ben Franklin? You are so right! Want more? Go online and visit <http://bensguide.gpo.gov/benfranklin/inventor.html>

THE SHOCKING TRUTH IS – STAY AWAY AND STAY SAFE

To be an energy smart and energy safe kid, you have to make sure you:

KEEP AWARE OF OVERHEAD LINES
DON'T TOUCH ELECTRIC OUTLETS
PLAY FAR AWAY FROM SUBSTATIONS
TELL OTHERS ABOUT SAFETY

DON'T CLIMB POWER POLES
DON'T CLIMB TREES NEAR POWER LINES
DON'T TOUCH DOWNED POWER LINES
DON'T MIX WATER WITH ELECTRICITY

CONNECT ONLINE

Energy Kids are online via the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

This is a fun way to learn about energy use basics. There is an energy-use Sudoku crossword puzzles for coal, electric power, word searches and more.



For games and activities, visit <http://www.eia.gov/kids/energy.cfm?page=5>

For energy information for kids, visit <http://www.eia.gov/kids/energy.cfm?page=3>

Get mom and dad or grandma or grandpa in on the fun and teach them new energy facts. These are recommended for children age 8 and up.

ENERGY BYTES

See what else LED Lucy has in store for you in the Kid's Corner!
hwe.coop/kids-corner