

REA Energy Cooperative, Inc.

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



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OFFICE HOURS
Indiana Office: 7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Ebensburg Office: 7 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Closed Tuesday and Thursday

COOPERATIVE CONNECTION

Guest Column

Celebrating Co-op Month: Powering our Community, Together



**STACY
HILLIARD**

EACH OCTOBER, COOPERATIVES EVERYWHERE celebrate National Co-op Month, which showcases the strength, resilience and member-focused values that make each one unique. REA Energy is proud to be part of this tradition, serving our members not only with electricity, but also with a wide range of programs, services and benefits.


As a member-owned cooperative, our mission statement reaches beyond simply keeping the lights on by focusing on the following: “To provide our members with safe, reliable, and affordable electricity and offer innovative solutions to the rural community through our subsidiaries.”

Since 1937, we have offered our members safe and reliable electricity, all while working diligently to keep our rates among the lowest in the state. In recent years, we added two subsidiaries to provide additional programs and services.

REA Energy is part of the cooperative difference, which is showcased in several ways:

- ▶ **Local ownership:** Every member of REA Energy is an owner. That means decisions that affect our members are made locally and with their best interest in mind.
- ▶ **Capital credits:** Unlike other utilities, when financially feasible, any margins are returned to members in the form of capital credits, providing benefits to those we serve.
- ▶ **Commitment to community:** We invest in youth programs, such as the annual NRECA Youth Tour, offer safety education, including live high-voltage demonstrations, and visit local schools.
- ▶ **Reliable energy solutions:** We continue to modernize our system, provide outage restoration updates, and explore new technology to better serve our members. We offer home energy audits for members who request them, as well as an online home energy calculator at reaenergy.com.
- ▶ **Quality products and services:** REA Energy Services Inc. offers quality, innovative products and services, including electrical contracting, generator sales and service, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning solutions. Visit reaservices.com to learn more.
- ▶ **Member programs and services:** With our online payment system, SmartHub, our convenient REA Energy mobile app, and online sign-up for new members, we offer tools that make life easier, save money, and help members manage their monthly bill.
- ▶ **A connected future:** Through our subsidiary, In The Stix Broadband, we are bringing fiber and wireless internet services to our members and communities. Visit itxrea.com for more information.

The theme of this year’s Co-op Month is “Co-ops: Building Stronger Communities Together,” and that’s exactly what REA Energy strives to do every day. Our cooperative is more than poles and wires — it’s people, neighbors, and a shared vision for a brighter future.

We thank our members for being part of REA Energy Cooperative. This October, and every day, we celebrate the cooperative difference with you. 

STACY HILLIARD, CCC, CKAE
COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING MANAGER

Hooked on Success: Local Angler Lands World Titles with Team USA

KAYLA KING, CCC, MARKETING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST

WHILE MOST TEENAGERS SPEND THEIR free time scrolling on their phones, playing video games, or hanging out with friends, Landon Cook of Marion Center is knee-deep in fast-moving streams and rivers, honing his fishing skills with a fly rod in hand.

That dedication has taken him straight to the world stage.

At just 18 years old, Cook has already achieved what most anglers only dream about: winning multiple world championships with the USA Youth Fly Fishing Team. In July, Team USA earned another gold medal at the 22nd FIPS-Mouche World Fly Fishing Championship.

Cook and his teammates not only claimed team gold, but they also dominated the international field, catching 425 fish during the 15-hour competition. Team USA's nearest competitor, Poland, caught 295 fish for second place among the eight countries competing in the five-day event.

For Cook, this was more than just another tournament win. It marked his second consecutive world championship — he won a gold medal with Team USA in Vyssi Brod, Czech Republic, last year.

"It's pretty surreal for me," Cook says. "It's just now starting to sink in that I'm a two-time world champion."

Getting hooked

Cook's fly-fishing trip to the top began close to home.

"My dad was a huge part of my fly-fishing journey, and my childhood home had its own pond for me to practice in," he recalls.

His introduction to the Team USA Youth Fly Fishing Program came a few years later during a presentation from Team USA's Mike Komara at a Trout Unlimited meeting.

"That moment really opened the door for me, and I decided I wanted to give it a shot," Cook says.

What started as practicing his skills in his backyard pond has grown into daily discipline. Cook practices several days a week to master his craft. On a good day, he catches up to 40 fish.

"I have an extremely competitive mindset and a deep love of fishing," he says. "I think that's what drives me, knowing that the thousands of hours of practice are worth it."

His training and perseverance paid off at the individual and team level. This year in Idaho, Cook finished seventh overall, and his team claimed five of the top seven spots worldwide.

A big part of that success, he explains, comes from trust among his teammates.

"I have so much confidence in my teammates," Cook says. "We trust each other's skills and knowledge, and that gives us a winning edge. Everyone brings something different to the table, and together, it just works."

Giving back

Looking ahead, Cook wants to give back to the program he loves. His plans include helping as a guide at Team USA clinics and mentoring young anglers who hope to follow in his footsteps.

"Fly fishing has given me so much more throughout my life," he says. "I can't even begin to give back to it as much as it's given to me."

He also invests energy in his business, Nasty Nymph, a professional fly-tying venture based on his passion for the sport.

From Indiana County streams to international rivers, Landon Cook proves that dedication, teamwork, and love for the sport can turn a passion into world-class achievement. 🏆

PHOTO COURTESY OF USANGLING



GOING FOR GOLD: Team USA is shown at the 22nd FIPS-Mouche World Fly Fishing Championship. From left, Captain Lawson Braun, Blake Hall, Justin Hardie, Landon Cook, Ethan Campbell, Max Logan, Manager Jess Westbrook and Head Coach Josh Miller.

REA Energy and In The Stix Welcomes First Indiana County Fiber Internet Customers

REA ENERGY COOPERATIVE AND ITS SUBSIDIARY, In The Stix Broadband (ITX), have reached a major milestone in Indiana County, officially connecting their first fiber-optic broadband customers after years of planning.

In April 2022, the Indiana County commissioners awarded REA Energy/In The Stix a grant to build fiber-optic broadband infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas.

This build will expand the fiber infrastructure in Indiana County to Cambria County, totaling about 750 miles of fiber lines. Other builds will add to the cooperative's infrastructure to not only enhance communication between REA Energy substations, but also bring high-speed internet to rural consumers.

From plans to real-world service

In May, construction had advanced enough for ITX to activate its first residential accounts, a milestone that transformed plans on paper into a real-world service. With speeds limited only by current optic technology, the connection represents more than just faster downloads; it symbolizes opportunity, access and growth for the entire region.

REA Energy member Kathie Kirkland was excited to finally access dependable, lightning-fast internet.

"It has fundamentally changed our lives by enabling us to seamlessly work from home, stream entertainment, and use our cellphones, which was extremely limited or non-existent prior to In The Stix Broadband," she says. "We now have access to so much more that we didn't before."

Chad Carrick, president and CEO of REA Energy and ITX, says the service has been in the works for a long time.

"It has been a 20-year dream of REA Energy to bring high-speed internet to our membership, including those who live in unserved and underserved areas," he says. "We knew the solution was going to involve a team of focus groups and servant leadership."

"Your electric cooperative was formed in 1937 as a solution to bring electricity to rural areas, and now nearly 90 years later, we are doing the same thing with broadband," he adds. "We are excited and proud to serve our communities in so many ways, and we thank everyone involved in solving this rural issue."

ITX's Nick Weakland, meanwhile, highlighted the broader vision of the project.



FIRST FIBER CUSTOMER: REA Energy and In The Stix welcomes the first Indiana County fiber customer. From top left, Wayne Farabaugh, District 8 director; Rick Shope, District 2 director; Tom Beresnyank, District 1 director; and Anthony Enciso, District 7 director. Middle row: John Learn, District 6 director; Tom Aurandt, District 4 director; Sandra Dill, District 9 director; and Robert Neese, District 5 director. Bottom row: Rob Dillon and Nick Weakland, ITX; Kathie Kirkland, Indiana County's first REA/ITX fiber customer; Michael Bertolino, REA board chairman, District 3; and Chad Carrick, president & CEO.

"In The Stix has always had a focus on serving the rural and underserved areas of our community," he says. "We are incredibly grateful for the opportunity to work with the Indiana County commissioners, the Indiana County Planning Commission and REA Energy in bringing the gold standard of internet service to those who need it most. This project is just the beginning of what is yet to come."

Another step forward

Fiber broadband brings a multitude of benefits, including entertainment, telehealth support, remote-work options, online learning, public safety, precision agriculture, small business growth, and stronger communication for emergency responders and local governments.

In rural areas, the topography and lower population densities make broadband expansion challenging. Projects like this not only close the digital divide but also strengthen communities, create economic opportunities and ensure residents stay connected in an increasingly digital world.

With the 750-mile fiber network expanding across Indiana and Cambria counties, REA Energy and ITX are steadily advancing their mission to bring critical connectivity to rural Pennsylvania. Each new connection represents another step forward in ensuring every household, business, and farm has access to the tools and opportunities that high-speed internet provides. 📶



ON OCT. 10, REA ENERGY OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED FOR
EMPLOYEE TRAINING.

WE WILL REOPEN FOR BUSINESS ON OCT. 13.

IF YOU NEED TO REPORT AN OUTAGE OR MAKE A PAYMENT,
CALL 844-920-3395



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WINTER COAT Drive

This season, let's make a difference by participating in the REA Energy Winter Coat Drive. Donate new or gently used coats and new scarves, gloves and hats to help someone stay warm during the cold winter months.

Both children's and adult sizes are needed.

SCARVES | GLOVES | HATS | COATS

 **Items collected through Nov. 30**

 **REA Energy Indiana Office**
M-F 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

REA Energy Ebensburg Office
M, W, F 7:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

FOCUSED ON YOU.



October is National Co-op Month

Electric cooperatives were created to serve their members. Because REA Energy is a co-op, we're able to adapt to our community's unique needs. That's the power of cooperative membership.

Get a member appreciation gift this month at either of our offices.

If you couldn't attend this year's annual meeting, bring your annual meeting notice to an REA Energy office during Co-op Month to receive a member appreciation gift.

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Right-of-way management/facility construction news

REA Energy contractors will be completing tree-trimming work in the following areas in October:

Contractor crews from Penn Line Tree Service will be trimming the rights of way of the Fairview and Laurel substation service territories in addition to emergency maintenance areas.

Members in affected areas will be notified. Contractors will perform all right-of-way work per REA Energy specifications. All contractor employees will carry identification cards and their vehicles will display their company name.

If you have any questions, call 724-349-4800, or view the specifications at reaenergy.com.

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REA Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.